



CENTRE FOR  
STRATEGIC AND  
INTERNATIONAL  
STUDIES

KOREA **KF**  
FOUNDATION

한국국제교류재단

# Navigating Uncharted Waters

*Security Cooperation  
between ROK and ASEAN*



Edited by  
**Andrew W. Mantong & Waffaa Kharisma**

*Navigating Uncharted Waters:*  
**Security Cooperation  
between ROK and ASEAN**

**Navigating Uncharted Waters:  
Security Cooperation between ROK and ASEAN**

Editors:

*Andrew W. Mantong and Waffaa Kharisma*

Copyright© 2022

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior permission of the publisher.

Published by

Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)

Pakarti Centre

Jl. Tanah Abang III No. 23-27

Jakarta 10160

Indonesia

T: (62-21) 386 5532

F: (62-21) 384 7517

[www.csis.or.id](http://www.csis.or.id)

ISBN: 978-979-1295-45-1

Cover by Eko Razaki Wirman

Layout by Maria Catherine

November 2022

***Navigating Uncharted Waters:  
Security Cooperation between ROK and ASEAN***

**Andrew W. Mantong  
Waffaa Kharisma**

**CSIS Indonesia**  
Gedung Pakarti Centre  
Jl. Tanah Abang III No. 23-27  
Jakarta 10160  
csis.or.id



2022

## *Contents*

Contents	ii
Figures and Tables	iv
Preface and Acknowledgement	v
About the authors	viii
Introduction: Building a Case for ROK-Maritime Southeast Asia Security Cooperation <i>Waffaa Kharisma and Andrew W. Mantong</i>	1
Southeast Asia's Expectations of Korea's Middle Power Agency in the Regional Security Architecture <i>Hoo Chiew Ping</i>	23
Korean Geopolitical Outlook and Its Relations with ASEAN <i>Jaehyon Lee</i>	35
Indonesia-ROK Maritime Security Cooperation <i>Gilang Kembara</i>	49
Invigorating Philippines-South Korea Maritime Security Partnership <i>Aaron Jed Rabena</i>	59
Malaysia's Security Relations with the ROK: Exploring Maritime Security 2022 and Beyond <i>Zokhri Idris and Nurliana Kamaruddin</i>	71

Vietnam-Korea Security Relations: Current State and Prospect <i>Ha Anh Tuan</i>	85
The Unlikely Duo: Building the Case for Greater Security Cooperation between Brunei Darussalam and the Republic of Korea <i>Siu Tzyy Wei and Asyura Salleh</i>	99
Thailand-ROK Security Relations: Forging Closer Cooperation <i>Kasira Cheeppensook</i>	113
A Singaporean Perspective on Singapore-ROK Security Relations <i>Shawn Ho</i>	127
Learning for the New Southern Policy: Exploring the Security Dimensions of ASEAN-ROK Partnership <i>Wondeuk Cho</i>	139
Republic of Korea and Southeast Asia in the Era of Indo-Pacific <i>Hoang Thi Ha</i>	151
Becoming Middle Power: Challenges and Opportunities of ASEAN ROK Security Cooperation <i>Waffaa Kharisma and Andrew W. Mantong</i>	169
References	181
About CSIS	222

## *Figures and Tables*

Figure 1. ASEAN-ROK Trade in Goods (in billion USD)	3
Figure 2. Status of the ASEAN-Republic of Korea Cooperation Fund (Based on Budget Approved 1990-2020)	5
Figure 3. Total GDP Comparison of ROK-BIMP-EAGA Countries (in billion USD)	10
Figure 4. Total Export Value of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore to the ROK (in USD, 2017-2021)	11
Figure 5. Total Import Value of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore from the ROK (in USD, 2017-2021)	12
Figure 6. Conceptualizing ASEAN-ROK Areas of Security Cooperation	174
Table 1. Total GDP per Capita Comparison of ROK-BIMP-EAGA Countries plus Singapore (in USD, 2017-2021)	11
Table 2. Conceptualizing South Korea's Status as a Middle Power	26

## *Preface and Acknowledgement*

The Republic of Korea is an important dialogue partner for the Association of Southeast Asian Countries (ASEAN). Indeed, ASEAN cannot manage its regional affairs alone without enhanced interactions with its broader regional counterparts. Though not expanding formally, ASEAN nevertheless establishes special frameworks for interaction with important extra-regional players. The proliferation of ASEAN-led frameworks is the manifestation of this, and these frameworks are now central to establishing venues for dialogue.

And vice versa, ASEAN has featured more prominently in ROK's foreign policy documents in recent years, be it on the receiving ends of more visits and initiatives, as well as becoming key partners in economic and socio-cultural cooperation. With both seeking to further diversify their relationship amidst increasingly complex regional outlooks, the deepening relationship between ASEAN and the ROK has indeed been much appreciated.

Increasingly, however, the return of security dynamics, from arms proliferation, military deployments in sensitive areas, and proliferation of security challenges in a number of "under governed" and "under surveilled" areas in the region has provided the impetus for a more strategic cooperation between the two "middle powers." Without such collaboration between the middle powers, the region runs the risk of being dominated by the security narrative of competing great powers.

This edited volume takes note of the promising potential to explore potential cooperation between the ROK and Maritime Southeast Asian countries. Through a curation of policy analysis from partner authors around the region, this edited volume seeks to provide an understanding of the positions and perspectives of

the ROK and Maritime Southeast Asia with regard to the possibility and prospect of a deeper and/or wider security cooperation between them and identify the ways ahead to seize such potential.

I would like to thank the Korea Foundation for providing the financial support necessary for us to produce this edited volume. I would also like to congratulate Andrew W. Mantong, Waffaa Kharisma, and all of the authors, Gilang Kembara, Nurliana Kamaruddin, Zokhri Idris, Aaron Jed Rabena, Shawn Ho, Siu Tzyy Wei, Asyura Salleh, Kasira Cheeppensook, Ha Anh Tuan, Hoang Thi Ha, Hoo Chiew Ping, Won Deuk Cho, and Jaehyon Lee, who have contributed to the completion of this publication.

Jakarta, November 2022

**Shafiah F. Muhibat**

Deputy Executive Director for Research  
Centre for Strategic and International Studies

This edited volume seeks to provide a case for a Maritime Southeast Asia-ROK collaboration in the field of security cooperation, noting convergences such as capacities, the potential for strategic collaboration, and possible shared values, aside from also noting how many regional security challenges will likely come from the sea. Such sub-regional cooperation is definitely not strange to Southeast Asia, seeing the success of the ROK-Mekong sub-regional mechanism. Through furthering the prospect of such engagement going forward, we hope to also contribute to the overall Southeast Asia-Korea relations in an increasingly complex and “securitized” region.

We would like to thank Gilang Kembara, Nurliana Kamaruddin, Zokhri Idris, Aaron Jed Rabena, Shawn Ho, Siu Tzyy Wei, Asyura Salleh, Kasira Cheeppensook, Ha Anh Tuan, Hoang Thi Ha, Hoo Chiew Ping, Won Deuk Cho, and Jaehyon Lee for contributing their expert analyses to this edited volume.

We would like to express our gratitude to the Korea Foundation for their support of the project. Last but not least, we would like to also thank Farhan Julianto for his superb project assistance. Finally, we hope that policymakers, analysts, and students may find this edited volume engaging and thought-provoking to not only understand not only the prospect of security cooperation between the ROK and Maritime Southeast Asian countries, but also to grasp the incoming regional dynamics going forward and the crucial role for middle power collaborations.

**Andrew W. Mantong and Waffaa Kharisma**  
Centre for Strategic and International Studies

## *About the authors*

*Kasira Cheeppensook* is a lecturer of International Relations at the Faculty of Political Science, Chulalongkorn University, Assistant Dean in Academic Affairs, and Deputy Director of the Centre for Social and Development Studies. After receiving a BA in Political Science majoring in International Relations from Chulalongkorn University, she completed an MPhil in International Relations at the University of Cambridge and a Ph.D. in International Relations at the London School of Economics and Political Science. Her interests include ASEAN, normative transition, and human security.

*Won Deuk Cho* is a Research Professor at the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security (IFANS), Korea National Diplomatic Academy (KNDA), Republic of Korea. He is a current lecturer at Yonsei University Graduate School of International Studies. He is also a senior researcher at the Institute of Global Governance, SookMyung Women's University. Prof. Cho received his Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

*Hoang Thi Ha* is a Fellow and Co-coordinator of the Regional Strategic and Political Studies Programme at ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute. Before her current position, she was the Lead Researcher (Political-Security) at the ASEAN Studies Centre of ISEAS. Her research interests include major powers in Southeast Asia and political-security issues in ASEAN, especially the South China Sea disputes, ASEAN human rights cooperation, ASEAN in the Indo-Pacific discourse, and ASEAN's institutional building.

**Shawn Ho** is a Singaporean and an Associate Research Fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) in Singapore. He conducts research as a member of the Regional Security Architecture Programme at RSIS. He also contributes to and supports the work done by the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific (CSCAP) Singapore. Shawn obtained his Master's Degree in Asian Studies from RSIS and his Bachelor's Degree from the Singapore Management University (SMU) with a double major in Political Science and Economics. He also spent six months studying Korean intensively at the Yonsei University Korean Language Institute in Korea.

**Chiew-Ping Hoo** is Senior Lecturer in Strategic Studies and International Relations at the National University of Malaysia (UKM). She is concurrently a member of the Consultative Council on Foreign Policy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malaysia; Adjunct Lecturer at the Malaysian Armed Forces Defence College and the Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Relations of Malaysia. While her main research focus is on the Korean peninsula security, she also works on the security and economic linkages between Northeast Asia and Southeast Asia, Southeast Asia and smaller states' response to power and security issues, and external powers' influence (US, China, Japan, Korea, Australia) in Southeast Asia.

**Zokhri Idris** has held some academic positions in International Relations (IR) research and teaching, heralding as the Deputy Dean of Student Affairs at the Management and Science University, prior to joining IDEAS as Director of External Relations. His area of specialization focuses on the changing nature of the sovereignty of developing nations, especially Malaysia. His research activities varied from a local setting to a regional-setting agenda research firms both in Kuala Lumpur and

Seoul. He holds a Doctorate Degree in IR, looking into international terrorism proliferation and states' counterterrorism policies, expanding into the ambits of historical narratives, regional context, and foreign policies.

*Nurliana Kamaruddin* specializes in international security and development cooperation. Her Ph.D. research focused on the state-led rural development programs of Malaysia and South Korea. Nurliana was a recipient of the Korea Foundation ASEAN Fellowship (2013-2015), the POSCO TJ Park Foundation Asia Fellowship (2009-2011) and the Ewha Global Partnership Program (2006-2009). Prior to her appointment as Senior Lecturer at the Asia-Europe Institute (AEI), Nurliana was a Research Assistant at AEI (2011-2013) and before that, she was a lecturer at the English Language Centre, Stamford College, Selangor (2009).

*Gilang Kembara* is a Researcher at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Jakarta, Indonesia. Ever since he joined CSIS as an intern in 2015, Gilang has assisted in various projects, namely "Partnership for Regional Peace: Operationalising ASEAN-China Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in Southeast Asia" and "By Sea and Democracy: Operationalising Indonesia – Japan Strategic Partnership." He has also managed to contribute to several writings in local journals and newspapers. His background is in Strategic Studies and Asia-Pacific but is currently expanding his knowledge toward the maritime sector.

*Muhammad Waffaa Kharisma* is a Researcher at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) Jakarta, Indonesia. With CSIS, he has worked on a range of research topics on the intersection between geopolitics, sovereignty, and humanitarian issues, including on the security dynamics of the Indo-Pacific, the

role of ASEAN in regional geopolitics and humanitarian issues, Indonesian foreign policy, the geopolitics and foreign policy drivers around the Korean Peninsula, the humanitarian situation in Myanmar, and Indonesia's maritime security.

**Jaehyon Lee** is a research fellow and director of the Center for ASEAN and Oceania Studies at the Asan Institute for Policy Studies. Prior to joining the Asan Institute, Dr. Lee was a research fellow at the Korean Institute of Southeast Asian Studies and a visiting professor at the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security at the Korean National Diplomatic Academy. He writes extensively on international relations in Southeast Asia, ASEAN, and regional cooperation in East Asia. His research interests include Southeast Asian politics and international relations, regional cooperation in East Asia, and non-traditional and human security issues in general.

**Andrew Wiguna Mantong** is a researcher at CSIS Indonesia. Prior to joining CSIS, he served as the Secretary of the Undergraduate Program at the Department of International Relations, Universitas Indonesia. His research experience and activities include topics such as the uses of developmental measures for foreign policy and counter-terrorism objectives, cyberpolitics, non-traditional security, state-society relations, ASEAN, and Indonesian foreign policy.

**Aaron Jed Rabena** is a Research Fellow at the Asia-Pacific Pathways to Progress in Manila, Senior Lecturer at the Asian Center in the University of the Philippines, and a member of the Philippine Council for Foreign Relations (PCFR). He had served as Visiting Fellow at the China Institute of International Studies (CIIS), China Foreign Affairs University (CFAU), and ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute in Singapore. He is also a Pacific Forum

Young Leader, and is an alumnus of the East-West Center (EWC) in Hawaii and the U.S. State Department's International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP). Jed obtained his PhD in International Relations from Shandong University in the People's Republic of China and has an Executive Education in Risk Management from the Asian Institute of Management (AIM). His areas of interest include Strategic Studies, Greater East Asian Geopolitics and Multilateral Politics, Political Risk, and Chinese Politics and Foreign Policy.

*Asyura Salleh* is the Co-Founder of the Global Awareness & Impact Alliance (GAIA). She is also an Adjunct non-Resident Vasey Research Fellow for the Pacific Forum and the Special Advisor on Maritime Security for the Yokosuka Council on Asia Pacific Affairs (YCAPS). Her policy experience lies in her work for the UNODC Global Maritime Crime Programme, Stable Seas, and Brunei Prime Minister's Officer. Dr. Asyura has a research interest in maritime security in the Asia Pacific, with a focus on transnational maritime crime and maritime governance. Dr. Asyura gained a Masters in War Studies from King's College London and earned a doctorate in International Relations from the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies Singapore.

*Ha Anh Tuan* is the Assistant Director General of the East Sea (SCS) Institute, the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam. He also serves as Executive Director of the Foundation for East Sea (South China Sea) Studies, a non-governmental and not-for-profit institution established with a mission to advance knowledge and research in maritime affairs. He completed his Master's Degree at the Australian National University and Ph.D. Degree at the University of New South Wales (Australia). Tuan has a background in international relations and politics. His research interests are international security in the Asia-Pacific, with a

special focus on maritime security and international relations in the South China Sea.

*Siu Tzyy Wei* is a Volunteer Research Associate at the Global Awareness and Impact Alliance (GAIA). With a background in Sociology and Anthropology and an aim to develop a deeper understanding of how national factors can evolve and threaten the international system, Wei's research interest lies mainly in the politics of Asia.

*This page is intentionally left blank*

## CHAPTER 1

# *Introduction: Building a Case for ROK-Maritime Southeast Asia Security Cooperation*

Waffaa Kharisma and Andrew W. Mantong

In the last decade, the Republic of Korea (ROK) has stepped up its effort to engage beyond its traditional partners.<sup>1</sup> ROK's key objective is to expand its foreign policy horizon and diversify its relations amidst shifting geopolitical relations in the new age of the "Indo-Pacific."<sup>2</sup> Traditionally, the ROK, like many Southeast Asian countries, is engaged in security cooperation with the United States and enjoys the order provided by their military presence in the Asia Pacific whilst continuing their blossoming economic engagement with a rising China. However, stronger expression of decoupling coming from the United States (US)-China great power competition has meant the ROK has less room to interact strategically with one without risking certain aspects of its relationship with the other.<sup>3</sup> In recent years, domestic political impulses and economic conditions have also triggered certain nationalist policies that overshadow the traditional relationship between the US, ROK, and Japan, creating a lesser sense of reliability to the old alliance.<sup>4</sup>

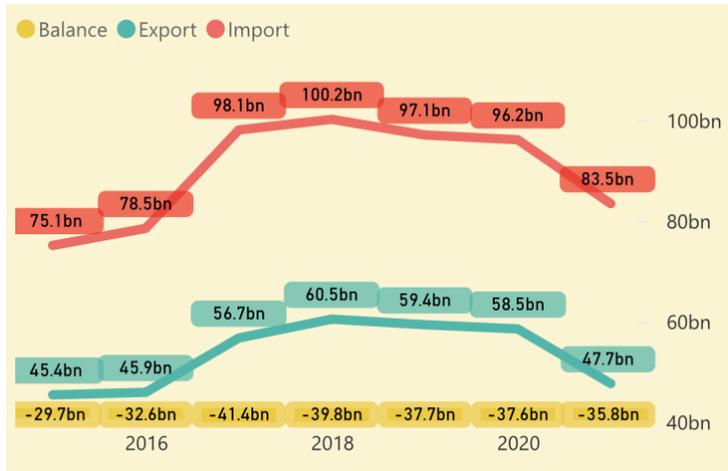
With the ROK seeking to continue to boost its power profile, whether in security, economic, or cultural people-to-people context, whilst mitigating the adverse impacts, or even backlash, from being swept into the US-China great power competition, *diversification of partners* seemed like the logical approach. Whilst the ROK remains a strong ally of the US and depends on the US' security partnership and umbrella to counter its security anxieties with its northern neighbors, a straightforward decoupling with China is likely not the answer. This is not only because of ROK's

strong economic relations with China – Korea-China trade volume has multiplied tremendously from 6.4 billion USD in 1992 to more than 240 billion USD in 2020, exceeding the total of ROK with both Japan and the United States.<sup>5</sup>

For resident powers, coexisting with a rising China is a fact of life. History suggests that isolating a great power never turns out great for regional peace and stability.<sup>6</sup> Incentivizing (and confronting when needed) China into its benign, friendly, and inclusive version is always the long-term goal, even for countries with strong concerns over China's coercive behaviors.<sup>7</sup> Under such a strategic context, diversifying strategic relations can help the ROK's resilience to navigate between geopolitical shifts and an increasingly tricky security environment.

ASEAN has been a key target of such diversification efforts, as exemplified by ROK's New Southern Policy (NSP) and New Southern Policy Plus (NSP Plus) Strategy. The product of President Moon Jae-in's administration, the NSP and the NSP Plus have worked well to complement the existing trajectory in the ASEAN-Korea relations - ROK's investment into Southeast Asia and India grew by 73 percent from 2017 to 2021, amounting to 111.9 billion USD in 2021.<sup>8</sup> ROK also has consistently featured as the fourth-largest ASEAN trading partner in the last seven years.

*Figure 1. ASEAN-ROK Trade in Goods (in billion USD)*



Source: ASEAN Stats Data Portal<sup>9</sup>

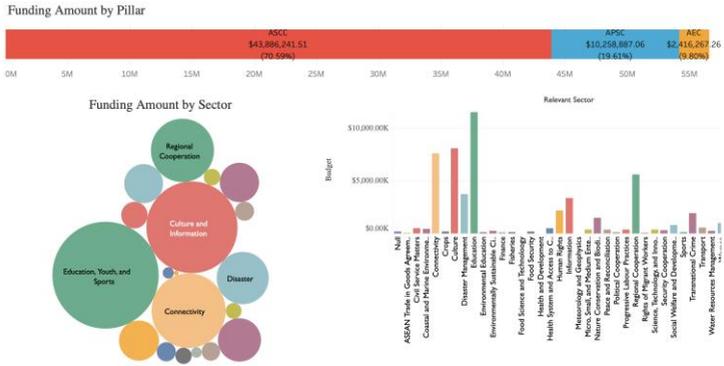
But NSP’s most important contribution is in providing a framework that can reassure ASEAN countries, along with India, that the ROK fully commits to its Southward venture. The institutional commitments made by the ROK, such as the establishment of the ASEAN and Southeast Asian Affairs Bureau in the Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the expansion of the Mission of ROK to ASEAN, also signal a sense of sustainability in ROK’s attention to Southeast Asia.<sup>10</sup> In the medium to long term, ASEAN countries hope that these institutional milestones will work to incentivize Korean officials to adopt more of ASEAN lexicons, echo more support on ASEAN-led mechanisms, and solidify the Southeast Asian region in Korea’s (government, businesses, and people) regional outlook.<sup>11</sup>

For ASEAN countries, compared to plenty of other regional powers and their Indo-Pacific-era strategic regional initiatives, the ROK has emerged as a promising partner. 2022’s Southeast Asia Survey published by ISEAS shows the top preferred “third-

party” partner for Southeast Asians to hedge against uncertainties of the US-China strategic rivalry: 1) European Union; 2) Japan; 3) Australia; 4) the United Kingdom; 5) ROK; 6) India.<sup>12</sup> Among these powers, ROK’s regional policy is often perceived as featuring less propensity towards a particular geopolitical intention that would burden Southeast Asian countries with political attachments or fear of repercussion.<sup>13</sup> Korean military has never been perceived as hostile to Southeast Asians. Korea’s foreign policy posture and behavior as a middle power in the region have also suited the values of multilateralism, a non-zero-sum mindset, and inclusivity championed by ASEAN.<sup>14</sup>

Furthermore, ROK has featured relatively well in the context of Southeast Asia’s pandemic management, public health cooperation, and post-pandemic recovery agenda, or Southeast Asia’s mission to improve regional connectivity, both being the popular common denominator in the region.<sup>15</sup> Bilateral ties between Southeast Asian countries and the ROK look strong economically and is reliable, with featured flagship projects such as plant construction in Vietnam, the light rail and renewable energy project in Indonesia, the electrical station in Myanmar, the smart city project in Singapore, and the IT master plan in Cambodia.<sup>16</sup> ROK has also done plenty beyond government-to-government interactions, investing in cooperation project that benefits non-governmental organizations, education and study centers, and other grounded projects involving the private sector. This latter form of cooperation further exemplifies a sense of relevance and practicality to the ASEAN-ROK relations and plays a part in the partnership’s attractiveness.

**Figure 2. Status of the ASEAN-Republic of Korea Cooperation Fund (Based on Budget Approved 1990-2020)**



Source: ASEAN-Korea Cooperation Fund<sup>17</sup>

Regardless, ROK’s engagement has also been criticized for being too timid for an increasingly unstable region. ROK’s cooperation with ASEAN has largely fallen into certain niches of cooperation sectors over which the ROK has a traditional modality, particularly in education, cultural, and trade facilitation cooperation. For instance, ROK’s NSP has not included extensive and leading security cooperation, even though “peace” is a third of its pillar. This sector remains underexplored under the NSP Plus Strategy. While certain forms of cooperation in non-traditional security issues (e.g., disaster management and transnational crimes) have been set under the New Southern Policy (and even before then), ROK’s growing capacity in the security sector leaves room for deepening cooperation.<sup>18</sup> The regional-level framework on security cooperation also remains limited and less strategic in nature, although more interaction in security dialogues since 2014 has suggested Korea’s rising attention to regional security issues.<sup>19</sup>

At least two reasons further underpin the argument for deepening security cooperation between Korea and ASEAN. First,

ROK's tremendous growth has given it enough power profile to explore security cooperation. Global and regional indexes have consistently ranked the ROK among the top major powers in economic, military, and overall state capability. In conventional security terms, the ROK spends relatively high in military expenditure, which is then invested in boosting its armed force's overall readiness and procurement of assets, placing it closely around countries like Japan and India in terms of possession of assets (especially for the Korean Army and Navy).<sup>20</sup> These elements of power locate Korea in a position where its foreign policy decision may affect the dynamics of the international, or at least regional, system.<sup>21</sup> Growing or strengthening ties between Korea and ASEAN may potentially shape the balance of power or alter regional security order.

Second, to shift our attention to more relational aspects, the Indo-Pacific region increasingly demands attention to security development and cooperation. The narrative of great power competition in the region has moved beyond mere economic competition for supply chain and intellectual properties dispute towards security competition, including in the proliferation of deployments of security assets in multiple domains, such as at sea, in the cyber domain, and so on. As China continues with its development of military installation and infrastructure on artificial islands, rival powers increase the frequency and scale of their military operations and deployments.<sup>22</sup> In turn, the former responded with high-scale exercises and drills, creating a chain of security dilemma. These dilemmas are further exemplified by the proliferation of major-power-sponsored security initiatives and the relative increase in military spending across the region.<sup>23</sup> However, the region cannot afford the overwhelming sweeping of great power competition narrative since there are specific needs in the region which fall outside policy areas of competition.

The need for a boost in Korea's role is further put forward by the fact that the dominating narrative of great power competition

has marginalized a lot of other urgent issues that are also pertinent to the region. Notably, these refer to non-traditional security issues, such as disaster relief and cyber security. For instance, the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction has recognized that the *global* battle to reduce disaster losses by 2030 will be won or lost in the *Asia Pacific*.<sup>24</sup> In fact, according to the World Meteorological Organization, Asia accounts for one-third of the globally reported weather, climate, and water-related disasters, nearly half of the global account for such disaster's deaths, and one-third of the associated economic losses.<sup>25</sup> But the region remains one of the more vulnerable and less covered by early disaster warning systems.<sup>26</sup>

The same goes for cyber security. Despite posing significant growth in the digital environment and internet connectivity, regions like Southeast Asia have suffered from growing cyber incidents due to the lack of governance, awareness, and capacity to adapt to newer threats in these unconventional domains.<sup>27</sup> Similarly, even though maritime security issues like piracy, armed robbery, and maritime terrorism have for long made the South China Sea and Indian Ocean feature around the top of the world's most dangerous waters, Southeast Asian national maritime agencies continue to pose insufficient assets and capacities.<sup>28</sup> Even worse, their activities and interactions with fellow agencies from neighboring states can also, at times, bring another source of insecurity and risks.<sup>29</sup>

Key to such a role would be in ROK's conviction in continuing with its Southward policies. As many analysts have argued, the ROK continues to be preoccupied with the North Korea question, which is the natural extension of their geopolitical situation. But for every Korean administration, such a question can either turn into an opportunity or a challenge for Korea-ASEAN relations. It could be an opportunity if the ROK decides that part of the answer to its foreign policy problems remains to find a way to deepen its engagement with ASEAN. It shall be a challenge if this

lingering question becomes a potential barrier that minimalizes or restricts Korea from seeking a bigger role beyond the Korean Peninsula. ASEAN countries, on the other hand, would continue to anticipate the ROK to strengthen its relationship with Southeast Asia.

### **ROK-Maritime Southeast Asia Relations as Drivers of Security Cooperation**

Past works of literature have hinted at the potential of Korea-Southeast Asia security ties, citing the growing number of Southeast Asian countries seeking ROK's defense capacities, or the converging recognition towards shared security challenges between the ROK and Southeast Asia.<sup>30</sup> However, these same pieces of literature often stated that there remain challenges in pursuing this cooperation, from the difference in priorities between the ROK and the Southeast Asian capitals, a potential lack of political will, or the difficulty in operationalizing commitments.<sup>31</sup> Going forward, though, the situation could be different.<sup>32</sup>

In the post-New Southern Policy era, Korea looks set to boost its recognition towards security developments in the Indo-Pacific and put more emphasis on exploring security cooperation – suggesting a potential political will for deepening security cooperation.<sup>33</sup> Further, issues such as barriers in operationalization or in differences in priorities may be able to be bridged via a configuration of a smaller number of countries. Through this edited volume, we argue that there is potential room to explore security cooperation between the ROK and Maritime Southeast Asian nations. Why does the ROK need to focus on Maritime Southeast Asia specifically? And how will it really play in strengthening the bigger ASEAN-ROK relations?

### ***Reason 1: ROK's Experience in Sub-Regional Mechanism***

First, in the Korea-ASEAN relations, and further emphasized after the adoption of the New Southern Policy, the ROK has established a sub-regional mechanism to put a focus on Mainland Southeast Asia, for instance, through engaging in crucial development assistance in the Mekong sub-region. The ROK's attention to the Mekong Region has crystalized in the introduction of an exclusive annual Mekong-ROK Summit. With such an initiative, the ROK seeks to contribute to Mainland Southeast Asia by bringing forward its experience and interest in strengthening river connectivity and infrastructure, institutionalizing people-to-people's mobility across the border, and overall preserving the ecological integrity of the river, from issues like natural disaster and water scarcity. These experiences in sub-regional engagement could be expanded to further strengthen Korea's engagement with Southeast Asia. The ROK, however, does not yet have a specific cooperation mechanism with maritime Southeast Asian countries.

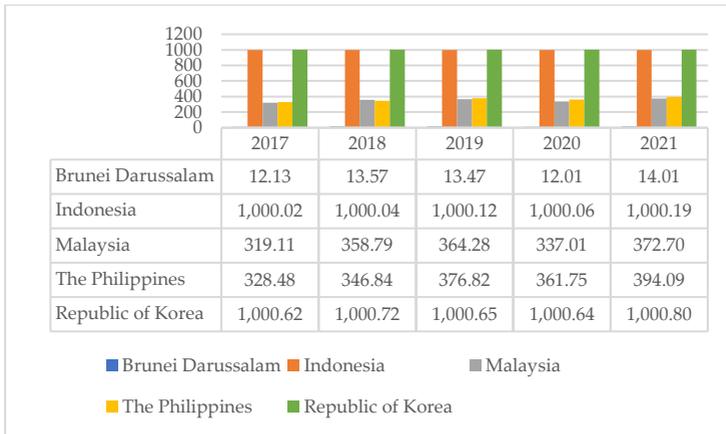
The dynamics surrounding maritime Southeast Asia are starkly different from that of its mainland counterparts. In terms of security, the peace, prosperity, and livelihood of its people do not come from issues like water scarcity from the river, but from the insecurities that threaten the sustainability of its sea resources, such as threats of illegal, unregulated, unreported fishing, piracy, armed robbery, to smuggling and territorial encroachment. Key to the problems in Southeast Asia would be the gap in capacity to patrol and surveil across its wide span of water. South China Sea issues and naval competition could also mount up, opening the potential for a middle-power partnership between Korea and some ASEAN member states. Noting the importance of these Maritime Southeast Asian nations to the region, how the ROK is also a maritime nation, in addition to the fact that more security challenges would come from the sea, a

similar initiative could emerge between Maritime Southeast Asia and the ROK.

### *Reason 2: Economic Development in Maritime Southeast Asia*

The second reason lies in economic development. Maritime Southeast Asian nations, some of which are founding nations of ASEAN, boast a promising rate of economic growth and performance. Economically speaking, historically established to accelerate socio-economic development, Maritime Southeast Asian nations already have experiences in having sub-regional multilateralism in the form of BIMP EAGA. The Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA) is a cooperation initiative established in 1994 with the purpose of narrowing development gaps between its members, particularly through connectivity and infrastructure, as well as trade and tourism.<sup>34</sup>

**Figure 3. Total GDP Comparison of ROK-BIMP-EAGA Countries (in billion USD)**



Source: World Bank<sup>35</sup>

**Table 1. Total GDP per Capita Comparison of ROK-BIMP-EAGA Countries plus Singapore (in USD, 2017-2021)**

Year	Countries					
	Brunei Darussalam	Indonesia	Malaysia	The Philippines	Singapore	Republic of Korea
2017	28.571,60	3.837,60	10.529,30	3.123,20	61.150,70	31.616,80
2018	31.628,50	3.893,60	11.380,10	3.252,10	66.859,30	33.436,90
2019	31.086,00	4.135,20	11.432,80	3.485,30	65.831,20	31.902,40
2020	27.443,00	3.870,60	10.412,30	3.301,20	60.729,50	31.597,50
2021	31.722,70	4.291,60	11.371,10	3.548,80	72.794,00	34.757,70

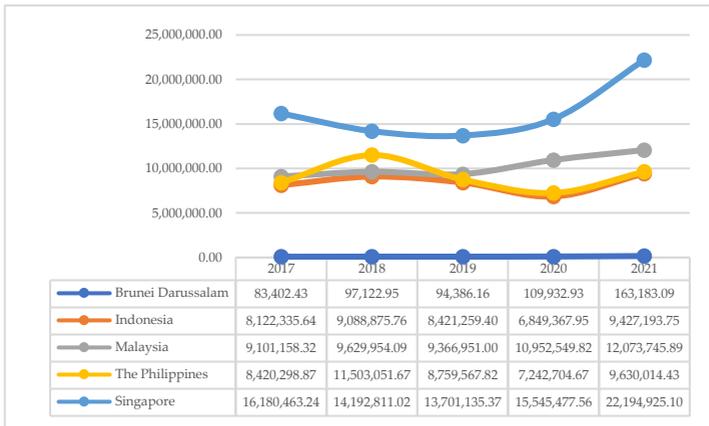
Source: World Bank<sup>36</sup>

**Figure 4. Total Export Value of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore to the ROK (in USD, 2017-2021)**



Source: Trading Economics<sup>37</sup>

**Figure 5. Total Import Value of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, and Singapore from the ROK (in USD, 2017-2021)**



Source: Trading Economics<sup>38</sup>

Amidst the uncertainties in the Indo-Pacific region, economic power would represent modalities and leverage for countries to better champion and advocate regional agendas. Korea’s partnership with these countries could also serve as a fulcrum to the greater ASEAN-level cooperation, such as in driving the push for further ASEAN community development or in promoting regional cooperation under frameworks like the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP).

### ***Reason 3: Relative Political and Economic Stability of Maritime Southeast Asia***

The third reason is related to the relative political and economic stability these countries posed. As these countries are relatively stable, they are (relative to other countries in Asia and Southeast Asia) more welcoming to the idea of cooperating in support of common values such as good governance, democracy, and human rights – values that are also dear to Korea – despite

their differences in political systems.<sup>39</sup> This is important, seeing how the new administration in Korea has come up with a stronger narrative in adopting liberal democratic values as an integral part of Korea's regional and global approach. It is also important, as we see that working with these countries will be crucial to drive progressive change in ASEAN as an institution.

Relative stability would also mean that these countries will be less likely to come up as being revisionist powers to international values and laws.<sup>40</sup> These traits would mean that they can share with the ROK a common interest in promoting respect for international law in the region. The two could start from common areas of concern, such as in promoting laws and order in the cyber and maritime domain or in creating governance standards in human-centered security issues, such as health security. The collaboration between the two sides could act as a mature cooperation model – one that is based on common progressive values – for the rest of Southeast Asia.

Fourth, cooperation with Maritime Southeast Asia may fit in with the current trend in security cooperation across the region. The current trend in regional security cooperation increasingly shows an inclination to the establishment of minilateralism, such as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, or security initiatives like AUKUS. Such a trend is part of the overall regional demand for mature, relevant, and functional cooperative frameworks. While these samples of minilateralism have been a source of worry to some countries, due to their potentially exclusive nature, in Southeast Asia, there exist samples of applied minilateralism that manage to package themselves as being inclusive. Minilaterals such as the Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines cooperative arrangement, with its trademark Trilateral Maritime Patrol in the Sulu-Sulawesi Seas, or the Malacca Straits Patrol between Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore have managed to frame their cooperation well by being focused and clear in the common issues

and challenges it seeks to respond – the fact that the challenges do not refer to any one country also helps.

Going forward, a potential and interesting area of security cooperation in Southeast Asia might start with the BIMP-EAGA countries, added with Thailand, a founding nation of ASEAN, and Vietnam, whose pivotal role in regional geopolitics and geoeconomics is recognized and apparent. Although the BIMP-EAGA framework itself is underdeveloped, the potential is there. Recent domestic contexts, such as Indonesia's plan to shift its capital to Kalimantan, shifting the country's center of gravity northward, would make coordination between BIMP EAGA countries more important.<sup>41</sup> Some studies have argued that the move would trigger different security dynamics in the eastern sphere of the South China Sea, requiring a new type of "security patch" and a more intensive confidence-building measure system between countries like Indonesia, Brunei, Malaysia, and the Philippines<sup>42</sup>, especially because these countries have outstanding sovereignty issues with one another in the form of overlapping territorial claims or border issues. Should Korea be interested in boosting its *middlepowermanship* in Southeast Asia through empowering this sub-regional framework, it would also create some positive externalities to the security dynamics surrounding the region by promoting a cooperative spirit over conflict.

To boost the prospect of such engagement going forward and contribute to the overall Southeast Asia-Korea relations, this edited volume seeks to identify some of the converging positions and perspectives between Maritime Southeast Asian nations and the ROK, as well as the challenges in progressing security cooperation between them. This edited volume serves as an early study to analyze the common denominator of security interests and recommend the best approaches to promote cooperation between ROK and Maritime Southeast Asian countries, contributing to the overall progression of ROK-ASEAN relations.

This volume brings up scholars and analysts from ROK and ASEAN to discuss existing and potential security ties between ROK and ASEAN countries, both within a bilateral and regional framework. The next couple of chapters brings the case for a greater Korean role in the region, especially through security cooperation. Hoo Chiew Ping utilizes the concept of middle power to describe ROK's influence in the region and its way ahead. Lee Jaehyon explains how Korea's geopolitical outlook has shaped its approach to ASEAN and shows how it can be adjusted to realize a greater security role for Korea in the region.

In building the case for an ROK-Maritime Southeast Asia cooperation initiative, the next following chapters bring focus of the maritime domain in discussing how ROK and ASEAN can develop security cooperation. Gilang Kembara highlights current bilateral ties around the maritime security agenda between ROK and Indonesia. Aaron Jed Rabena breaks down various issues of maritime security and shows how there is a demand for a greater ROK role in the region based on his observation of the needs of the Philippines. The maritime domain also becomes a focus of Ha Anh Tuan, who reveals an important linkage between defense and maritime policies in Korea-Vietnam relations.

Maritime security, however, is not the only driver of cooperation discussed. The chapter by Kaseera Cheeopensook provides broader dimensions of security cooperation between Thailand and the ROK. Zokhri Idris and Nurliana Kamaruddin also extend their analysis to include areas of security cooperation beyond maritime issues from the Malaysian perspective. Shawn Ho focuses on developing policy recommendations to improve existing security ties between ROK and Singapore in the area of maritime security, cybersecurity, and humanitarian and disaster relief. Siu Tzyy Wei and Asyura Salleh portray how advancing security cooperation between Brunei Darussalam and ROK requires pragmatism given complex relations with great powers in the region.

To give further contextual explanation about the kind of circumstances that could boost the prospect of security cooperation and give it a chance to be developed further, this volume is completed by two discussions on both strategy and perception of ROK's role in the region. Wondeuk Cho offers a thorough evaluation of President Moon Jae-in's New Southern Policy and highlights how security cooperation may be improved by learning about the policy. Hoang Thi Ha's essay offers a comprehensive Southeast Asian perspective on Korea and the shifts in its policy towards the region. Finally, our concluding chapter identifies both opportunities and challenges in improving security ties between ROK and ASEAN.

## Endnote

<sup>1</sup> Jaehyon Lee, "South Korea's New Southern Policy and the US FOIP: Convergence or Competition?" in Kyle Springer, *Embracing the Indo-Pacific? South Korea's Progress Towards a Regional Strategy*, Perth: Perth USAsia Centre, 2020, pp. 26-35.

<sup>2</sup> See for instance Kuik Cheng-Chwee, "A View from Southeast Asia," *The ASAN Forum*, 7 January 2020, <https://theasanforum.org/a-view-from-malaysia-2/>; Evan Laksmana, Waffaa Kharisma, and Rocky Intan, *Seeking Strategic Convergence: India, South Korea, and Australia in the Indo-Pacific*, Jakarta: CSIS Indonesia, 2021; Seonjou Kang, "Korea's New Southern Policy: Diversifying Economic and Strategic Portfolios," *Asia Pacific Bulletin*, no. 515 (16 July 2020), <https://www.eastwestcenter.org/system/tdf/private/apb515.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=37916>; Choe Wongi, "New Southern Policy: Korea's Newfound Ambition in Search of Strategic Autonomy," *Notes de l'Ifri: Asie Visions*, no. 118 (January 2021), [https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/choe\\_new\\_southern\\_policy\\_korea\\_2021.pdf](https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/choe_new_southern_policy_korea_2021.pdf).

<sup>3</sup> Kathryn Botto, "South Korea Beyond Northeast Asia: How Seoul Is Deepening Ties With India and ASEAN," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 19 October 2021, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2021/10/19/south-korea-beyond-northeast-asia-how-seoul-is-deepening-ties-with-india-and-asean-pub-85572>.

<sup>4</sup> Mung Hwan Yu, in Stanford APARC, "The Rippling Effects of the U.S.-China Competition: Where Does South Korea Stand?" Stanford APARC Webinar Series: Asian Perspectives on the US-China Competition, 20 October 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYR8i2O7wsE&list=WL&index=6&t=759s>; Rena Sasaki, "Old Wounds Water Down Japan-ROK-US Cooperation," *East Asia Forum*, 16 August 2022, <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2022/08/16/old-wounds-water-down-japan-rok-us-cooperation/>; Sakata Yasuyo, "The US-Japan-ROK Trilateral in the Indo-Pacific Era: Strategic Alignment or Still in Flux?" *The ASAN Forum*, 28 June 2021, <https://theasanforum.org/the-us-japan-rok-trilateral-in-the-indo-pacific-era-strategic-alignment-or-still-in-flux/>.

<sup>5</sup> World Integrated Trade Solution, "Korea, Rep. Trade," World Integrated Trade Solution, n.d., <https://wits.worldbank.org/CountrySnapshot/en/KOR>.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Gilpin, "The Theory of Hegemonic War," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18, no. 4, The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars (Spring, 1988): 591-613.

<sup>7</sup> Dani Rodrik and Stephen M. Walt, "How to Build a Better Order: Limiting Great Power Rivalry in an Anarchic World," *Foreign Affairs* 101, no. 5 (September/October 2022), <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/world/build-better-order-great-power-rivalry-dani-rodrik-stephen-walt>; Mark J. Valencia, "Three Scenarios for the South China Sea: the Good, the Bad and the Ugly," *South China Morning Post*, 9 May 2022, <https://www.scmp.com/comment/opinion/article/3176640/three-scenarios-south-china-sea-good-bad-and-ugly>.

<sup>8</sup> Sea Young Kim, "South Korea's New Southern Policy: Will Its 'Legacy' Continue Under the Next Administration?" *Korea Economic Institute: The Peninsula*, 2 March 2022, <https://keia.org/the-peninsula/south-koreas-new-southern-policy-will-its-legacy-continue-under-the-next-administration/>.

<sup>9</sup> ASEAN Stats Data Portal, "ASEAN Trade in Goods (IMTS) Dashboard," *ASEAN Stats Data Portal*, 2022, <https://data.aseanstats.org/dashboard/imts.hs2>.

<sup>10</sup> Laksmana, Kharisma, and Intan, *Seeking Strategic Convergence*, 30.

<sup>11</sup> Kathryn Botto, "South Korea Beyond Northeast Asia: How Seoul Is Deepening Ties with India and ASEAN," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 19 October 2021, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2021/10/19/south-korea-beyond-northeast-asia-how-seoul-is-deepening-ties-with-india-and-asean-pub-85572>.

<sup>12</sup> Sharon Seah, et.al., *The State of Southeast Asia 2022: Survey Report*, Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2022, [https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/The-State-of-SEA-2022\\_FA\\_Digital\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/The-State-of-SEA-2022_FA_Digital_FINAL.pdf).

<sup>13</sup> Hayley Channer, "South Korea Fails to Recognize Its Capacity to Shape the Indo-Pacific," *The Diplomat*, 30 June 2021, <https://thediplomat.com/2021/06/south-korea-fails-to-recognize-its-capacity-to-shape-the-indo-pacific/>.

<sup>14</sup> Kyle Ferrier, "South Korea President Stresses Peace, Inclusiveness, and Multilateralism at UN," *The Diplomat*, 23 September 2020, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/09/south-korea-president-stresses-peace-inclusiveness-and-multilateralism-at-un/>; Kim Won-soo, "Why Korea Should Make the Most of Multilateralism," *The Korea Times*, 18 July 2022, [https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/opinion/2022/07/788\\_332887.html](https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/opinion/2022/07/788_332887.html).

<sup>15</sup> "ASEAN-Republic of Korea Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Vision Statement for Peace, Prosperity and Partnership (2021-2025)," *ASEAN ROK Fund*, n.d., <https://www.aseanrokkfund.com/lib/upload/files/resources/ASEAN-ROK-POA-2021-2025-Final.pdf>; Vietnam News Agency, "ASEAN Collects COVID-19 Aid Worth over 1.2 Billion USD from Dialogue Partners," *Vietnam News Agency*, 9 August 2021, <https://ncov.vnnet.vn/en/news/asean-collects-covid-19-aid-worth-over-1-2-billion-usd-from-dialogue-partners/f2b0de10-8556-4536-941d-32c66ca23aef>.

<sup>16</sup> Nhan Dan, "RoK Firm Commences Construction of First Aero Engines Plant in Vietnam," *Nhan Dan*, 21 September 2021, <https://en.nhandan.vn/rok-firm-commences-construction-of-first-aero-engines-plant-in-vietnam-post54257.html>; VNA, "RoK Firm Invests in Coal-Fired Power Project in Vietnam," *Vietnam Plus*, 7 October 2020, VNA, "RoK firm invests in coal-fired power project in Vietnam," 7 October 2020, <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/rok-firm-invests-in-coalfired-power-project-in-vietnam/188202.vnp>; VNA, "RoK firm invests in building thermal power plant in Indonesia," *Vietnam Investment Review*, 1 September 2020, <https://vir.com.vn/rok-firm-invests-in-building-thermal-power-plant-in-indonesia-78969.html>; "Indonesia: ASEAN-South Korea to Increase Economic Cooperation" *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Republic of Indonesia*, 4 August 2022, <https://kemlu.go.id/portal/en/read/3876/berita/indonesia-asean-south-korea-to-increase-economic-cooperation>; Norman Harsono, "South Korean Power Company Eyes \$650m Renewable Energy Project in Indonesia," *The Jakarta Post*, 20 January 2020, <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2020/01/20/south-korean-power-company-eyes-650m-renewable-energy-project-in-indonesia.html>; "Myanmar Signs MoU with South Korea for a 500 MW Power Plant," *Power Insider*, 6 September 2013, <https://www.pimagazine-asia.com/myanmar-signs-mou-south-korea-500-mw-power-plant/>; Grace Park, "Korea and Singapore Cooperate on Smart City," *Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency*, [https://www.investkorea.org/upload/kotraexpress/2018/11/images/EVENT\\_OVERVIEW.pdf](https://www.investkorea.org/upload/kotraexpress/2018/11/images/EVENT_OVERVIEW.pdf); "The Republic of Korea's Country Partnership Strategy for the Kingdom of Cambodia 2021-2025," *The Government of the Republic of Korea*, March 2020, <http://cdc-crdb.gov.kh/en/donor-ngo/donor/Korea%20CPS%20for%20Cambodia%202021-2025.pdf>; Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), "Press Release: Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) Provides \$2 Million to Create a Master Plan of Eastern

Mekong Delta-IWRM (Integrated Water Resources Management) in Cambodia," *Open Development Cambodia*, 26 March 2021,

<https://opendevelopmentcambodia.net/announcements/press-release-korea-international-cooperation-agency-koica-provides-2-million-to-create-a-master-plan-of-eastern-mekong-delta-iwrm-integrated-water-resources-management-in-cambodia/>.

<sup>17</sup> ASEAN-Korea Cooperation Fund, "Status of the ASEAN-Republic of Korea Cooperation Fund," *ASEAN-Korea Cooperation Fund*, n.d., <https://www.aseanrofund.com/our-works-data-detail>.

<sup>18</sup> Evan A. Laksmana and Andrew Mantong, "Missing Pillars of Strategic Autonomy? Security Cooperation 180 Between Korea and ASEAN," in Kwon Hyung Lee and Yoon Jae Ro (eds.) *The New Southern Policy Plus: Progress and Way Forward*, Sejong: Korea Institute for International Economic Policy, 2021, pp. 180-203; Jaehyon Lee, "U.S.-ASEAN-ROK Cooperation on Nontraditional Security," *CFR Discussion Paper*, December 2017, [https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep05723#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep05723#metadata_info_tab_contents).

<sup>19</sup> Binh Thai Lai, Developing U.S.-ROK-ASEAN Cooperation, *CFR Discussion Paper*, January 2018,

<sup>20</sup> Lowy Institute, "Military Capability: Asia Power Index 2021 Edition," *Lowy Institute*, <https://power.lowyinstitute.org/data/military-capability/>; "2022 South Korea Military Strength," *Global Fire Power*, 4 September 2022, [https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.php?country\\_id=south-korea](https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.php?country_id=south-korea).

<sup>21</sup> For structural explanation of international system, see Kenneth Waltz

<sup>22</sup> Dan Parsons and Tyler Rogoway, "China's Man-Made South China Sea Islands Like You've Never Seen Them Before," *The Drive*, 27 October 2022, <https://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/chinas-manmade-island-fortresses-like-youve-never-seen-them-before>.

<sup>23</sup> James Guild, "Is There an Arms Race Underway in Southeast Asia?" *The Diplomat*, 8 February 2022, <https://thediplomat.com/2022/02/is-there-an-arms-race-underway-in-southeast-asia/>.

<sup>24</sup> Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, "Asia-Pacific is key to disaster risk reduction targets," *World Meteorological Organization*, 23 September 2022, <https://public.wmo.int/en/media/news/asia-pacific-key-disaster-risk-reduction-targets>.

<sup>25</sup> "Asia-Pacific is key to disaster risk reduction targets."

<sup>26</sup> "Asia-Pacific is key to disaster risk reduction targets."

<sup>27</sup> Benjamin Ang, "Technology and Security: Adapting to Changing Cyber Security Threats in South East Asia," *IFRI*, 26 November 2020, [https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/session\\_3\\_presentation\\_benjamin\\_ang\\_ifri\\_webinar\\_26\\_november\\_2020.pdf](https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/session_3_presentation_benjamin_ang_ifri_webinar_26_november_2020.pdf).

<sup>28</sup> To Anh Tuan, "Maritime Security in the Indo-Pacific: Mixed Opportunities and Challenges from Connectivity Strategies," *Responding to the Geopolitics of Connectivity* (2020): 125-137, [https://www.kas.de/documents/288143/10822438/Panorama\\_2019\\_02\\_4c\\_v5d\\_ToAnhTuan.pdf/bb017d3b-c195-681c-c5a3-19054947fec5?t=1606102327617](https://www.kas.de/documents/288143/10822438/Panorama_2019_02_4c_v5d_ToAnhTuan.pdf/bb017d3b-c195-681c-c5a3-19054947fec5?t=1606102327617); Geoffrey Till, "Order at

Sea: Southeast Asia's Maritime Security," *Lowy Institute*, 31 March 2022, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/order-sea-southeast-asia-s-maritime-security>.

<sup>29</sup> Prashanth Parameswaran, "Managing the Rise of Southeast Asia's Coast Guards," *Wilson Center*, February 2019, [https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/publication/2019-02\\_managing\\_the\\_rise\\_of\\_southeast\\_asias\\_coast\\_guardes.pdf](https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/publication/2019-02_managing_the_rise_of_southeast_asias_coast_guardes.pdf)

<sup>30</sup> See for instance Prashanth Parameswaran, "Advancing South Korea-Southeast Asia Security Ties: Between Opportunities and Challenges," *KEI*, 17 May 2021, <https://keia.org/publication/advancing-south-korea-southeast-asia-security-ties-between-opportunities-and-challenges/>.

<sup>31</sup> Parameswaran, "Advancing South Korea-Southeast Asia Security Ties: Between Opportunities and Challenges."; Gabriele Abbondanza, "Whither the Indo-Pacific? Middle power strategies from Australia, South Korea and Indonesia," *International Affairs* 98, no. 2 (2022): 403-421.

<sup>32</sup> Ki Hyun-Bae, "Divergent Ideas, Distant Friendship: Assessing Korea's 30 Years of Political-Security Diplomacy with ASEAN," *Korea Observer* 51, no. 4 (2020): 523-550.

<sup>33</sup> Lin, "ASEAN'S Relevance for the New South Korean Administration."

<sup>34</sup> Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA), "What is Vision 2025?" *BIMP-EAGA*, <https://bimp-eaga.asia/goals/what-vision-2025>.

<sup>35</sup> World Bank, "GDP (Current US\$) - Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Korea, Rep.," *World Bank*, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?end=2021&locations=BN-ID-MY-PH-SG-KR&start=2017>.

<sup>36</sup> World Bank, "GDP per capita (current US\$) - Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Korea, Rep.," *World Bank*, <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?end=2021&locations=BN-ID-MY-PH-SG-KR&start=2017&view=chart>.

<sup>37</sup> Trading Economics, "Brunei Exports to South Korea," *Trading Economics*, November 2022, <https://tradingeconomics.com/brunei/exports/south-korea>; Trading Economics, "Malaysia Exports to South Korea," *Trading Economics*, November 2022, <https://tradingeconomics.com/malaysia/exports/south-korea>; Trading Economics, "Indonesia Exports to South Korea," *Trading Economics*, November 2022, <https://tradingeconomics.com/indonesia/exports/south-korea>; Trading Economics, "The Philippines Exports to South Korea," *Trading Economics*, November 2022, <https://tradingeconomics.com/philippines/exports/south-korea>; Trading Economics, "Singapore Exports to South Korea," *Trading Economics*, November 2022, <https://tradingeconomics.com/singapore/exports/south-korea>.

<sup>38</sup> Trading Economics, "Brunei Imports to South Korea," *Trading Economics*, November 2022, <https://tradingeconomics.com/brunei/imports/south-korea>; Trading Economics, "Malaysia Imports to South Korea," *Trading Economics*, November 2022, <https://tradingeconomics.com/malaysia/imports/south-korea>; Trading Economics, "Indonesia Imports to South Korea," *Trading Economics*, November 2022, <https://tradingeconomics.com/indonesia/imports/south-korea>; Trading Economics, "The Philippines Imports to South Korea," *Trading Economics*, November 2022, <https://tradingeconomics.com/philippines/imports/south-korea>; Trading Economics,

"Singapore Imports to South Korea," *Trading Economics*, November 2022, <https://tradingeconomics.com/singapore/imports/south-korea>.

<sup>39</sup> Anthony J. Langlois, *The Politics of Justices and Human Rights: Southeast Asia and Universalist Theory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001, p. 21.

<sup>40</sup> Jason W. Davidson, *The Origins of Revisionist and Status-Quo States*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

<sup>41</sup> Lembaga Ketahanan Nasional Republik Indonesia (Lemhannas), "Gubernur Lemhannas RI: Kerawanan Utama Ibu Kota Baru adalah Ruang Udara," *Lemhannas*, <https://www.lemhannas.go.id/index.php/berita/berita-utama/1432-gubernur-lemhannas-ri-kerawanan-utama-ibu-kota-baru-adalah-ruang-udara>.

<sup>42</sup> Curie Maharani, et.al, "Pertahanan Ibu Kota Negara: Strategi dan Gelar Militer," *LAB 45 Monograf*, Jakarta: Laboratorium Indonesia 2045, <https://img.lab45.id/images/article/2022/06/21/205/2767pertahanan-ibu-kota-negara-strategi-dan-gelar-militer.pdf>; Andi Widjajanto, "Pertahanan Laut di Era Geopolitik V," *Lemhannas*, 27 July 2022, [https://www.lemhannas.go.id/images/2022/MATERI\\_KUP/27072022\\_Pertahanan\\_Laut\\_d\\_i\\_Era\\_Geopolitik\\_V.pdf](https://www.lemhannas.go.id/images/2022/MATERI_KUP/27072022_Pertahanan_Laut_d_i_Era_Geopolitik_V.pdf).

*Geopolitical Considerations  
and Security Cooperation*

*Southeast Asia's Expectations of Korea's  
Middle Power Agency in the Regional  
Security Architecture*

Hoo Chiew Ping

**Introduction**

Relationships between Southeast Asia and the Republic of Korea (ROK or South Korea) have improved significantly, especially under President Moon Jae-In's administration, whose 2017 New Southern Policy elevated Southeast Asia's status as a vital part of South Korea's foreign policy agenda. President Moon visited all ten ASEAN countries, further institutionalized the New Southern Policy within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and initiated new policies to deepen cooperation and engagement with the region. The Moon administration's efforts have been generally and genuinely welcomed by Southeast Asian countries. South Korea is presently ASEAN's fifth largest trade partner (after China, the United States, the European Union, and Japan) and the second largest source of tourists (after China), underscoring the robust trade and people-to-people ties.

President Yoon Suk-yeol's administration is likely to continue this strong engagement with Southeast Asia, albeit under a different or modified label. After decades of strong economic performance, escalating soft power, democratic consolidation, and proactive diplomacy, South Korea is rightly viewed today as a dynamic middle power. It is the 10th largest economy in the world which has made significant progress in science and technology. South Korea's military and defence industry is powerful and modernized, but unlike other major powers, it has never had any hegemonic designs. In numerous ways, South Korea stands out as an ideal partner for ASEAN countries.

What could Southeast Asian countries expect of South Korea as an East Asian middle power and what role could South Korea play in the Asian regional security architecture? This paper addresses these questions in four sections. The first section deals with the conceptual framework of South Korea as a middle power. The second section discusses the perceptions and expectations of Southeast Asian countries towards South Korea, especially in the areas of maritime cooperation. The third section discusses what South Korea's potential roles in the regional security architecture. The fourth offers an analytical conclusion.

### **South Korea as a Middle Power**

South Korea is extensively recognized as an East Asian or Indo-Pacific middle power. It exemplifies a constructive middle power which supports international order, rule of law, multilateralism, and cooperation.<sup>1</sup> Using the role theory, Karim (2018) explains that the South Korean leadership's self-identification as a middle power has led to its foreign policy activism, characterized by such concepts as "regional balancer," "bridge builder" and "Global Korea."<sup>2</sup> Hyunh (2021), however, argues that South Korea's ambiguous and cautious reactions to the United States' Indo-Pacific Strategy, while understandable, limit potential cooperation with other Indo-Pacific middle powers.<sup>3</sup>

This paper conceptualizes middle power at two levels. At the conception level, a middle power is characterized by activism, agency and autonomy.<sup>4</sup> While there are considerable overlaps among the three features, they are conceptually different. Activism involves the proactive undertaking of actions to effect positive changes and, thus, is always dynamic. Agency is the conscious adoption of these actions in accordance with the actor's national interests. Autonomy is relative to agency in the sense that these actions are undertaken despite such structural constraints as the US-ROK alliance.

At the practical level, South Korea's status as a middle power is manifested at the ideational, material, and strategic dimensions which can be analysed to determine how South Korea's resources as a middle power are deployed to support its normative, economic and security objectives.<sup>5</sup> The table below is the result of combining the action and subject levels.

*Table 2. Conceptualizing South Korea's Status as a Middle Power*

<b>Strategic</b>	<b>Material</b>	<b>Ideational</b>	<b>Activism</b>
<p>Participation in ASEAN regional security architecture, initiating dialogues on cyber security and maritime security</p>	<p>Korea's economic initiatives, foreign aid, and investments in developing countries</p> <p>Korea-Mekong Cooperation</p>	<p>Promote globalization via Internationalization of Korea (Kim Young-sam); Korean wave as ROK's cultural diplomacy (Kim Dae-jung); Global Korea (Lee Myung-bak); sustainable development (since Park Geun-hye)</p>	
<p>Participation in nuclear non-proliferation initiatives</p> <p>Increasing arms sales</p> <p>Deeper partnership with other middle powers, e.g., India and Australia</p>	<p>Korea-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement 2005</p> <p>Hosting of G20 in 2010</p>	<p>Various discourses and narratives underlying South Korea's middle-power aspirations (Global Korea, Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative--NAPCI, New Northern Policy, New Southern Policy).</p>	<b>Agency</b>
<p>The Park Administration's measures to achieve equidistance between the US and China</p> <p>President Moon's "Three No" policy</p>	<p>China-South Korea economic cooperation</p> <p>AIIB</p> <p>RCEP</p>	<p>Sunshine Policy (Kim Dae-jung)</p> <p>Korea as "regional balancer" (Roh Myung-hyun)</p> <p>Cautious distancing from the U.S.'s Indo-Pacific Strategy in policy statements (Moon Jae-in)</p>	<b>Autonomy</b>

South Korea began embracing middle power status during the Kim Dae-jung Presidency in the 1990s. In the following two decades, South Korea's diplomatic outreach has become progressively more activist, influential, and global-oriented. It engages with more actors in the world, has become more conscious of its own potential and capabilities, and from time to time, asserts its strategic autonomy *vis-a-vis* the US-ROK alliance.

For example, South Korea's omnidirectional foreign policy (namely Global Korea, NAPCI, and New Southern Policy) was launched primarily on its own initiative, without consultation with the United States. South Korea's autonomy has faced criticism from the US and Japan, especially when it aligned closer to China. For example, President Park Geun-hye's 2015 attendance of a military parade in China was deemed "controversial" by the US and Japan. After China's economic retaliation over THAAD deployment in South Korea, the succeeding Moon Jae-in government carefully positioned itself as it toed the fine line between engagement and appeasement. The ROK agreed to join Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), with China as a major player in both institutions, while it's worth emphasizing that RCEP is an ASEAN initiative, driven by ASEAN.

South Korea's agency in crafting its own pathway outside of alliance alignment is similar to Southeast Asia's, as both are manoeuvring between the US and China, while being careful not to offend either. The roles and potential of South Korea (as a rising global economic power) and the ASEAN states (as a viable community for global trade and investments) converge as all parties enhance their respective agencies and stabilize the regional security architecture. With an increasingly volatile security environment in the Indo-Pacific, South Korea needs to consider stepping beyond its comfort zone, enhancing defence partnership with the Southeast Asian countries in military

security, in order to be recognized as a more credible security actor in the region.

### **ASEAN's and Southeast Asia's Expectations of South Korea**

With its widespread soft power and successful economy, South Korea is an enormously appealing country to ASEAN countries. Just as Japan played an important role in assisting some Southeast Asian countries with their industrial development in the 1970s, and China, to a lesser extent, in the present era, through massive foreign direct investments via the Belt and Road Initiatives (BRI) which bring in capital, technology, and export market, Southeast Asian countries hope that the ROK will strengthen investment projects that drive their industrial and economic developments and technological upgrades.

The US-China rivalry and the potential decoupling of the two major powers make South Korea a much sought-after alternative as the non-aligned ASEAN countries seek to diversify their major strategic and economic partners. Credible middle powers, such as South Korea, provide the useful and necessary space for Southeast Asian countries to navigate the increasingly tense and politicized geo-economic contours. In turn, South Korea's strengthening its relationships with Southeast Asia – the professed goal of the New Southern Policy – also extends its foreign policy horizon beyond its traditional focus, thereby increasing its standing and credibility as a middle power.

Until a few years ago, the Southeast Asian countries were expected to engage with South Korea in the economics and capacity building spheres.<sup>6</sup> The Southeast Asian elites perceived that South Korea would be predominantly occupied with the Korean Peninsula issue and its attention on Southeast Asia would not last. South Korea's strengths and advantages were viewed primarily viewed through economic and cultural lenses, as K-pop mass culture became increasingly appealing to Southeast Asian

youths. As the ASEAN states interacted with South Korea, geostrategic and geopolitical issues were secondary to economic cooperation.

In recent years, South Korea has become an active actor in defence industrial cooperation with Southeast Asia. It has become a consistent arms supplier to several Southeast Asian countries which desperately need to modernize their militaries. In 2021, South Korea registered more than USD 7 billion in arms sales and from 2017 to 2021, its weapons sales grew 177 percent, compared to the 2012-2016 period. Southeast Asia is a major market of South Korean-made weapons.<sup>7</sup> Indonesia, Thailand and the Philippines, for example, are major purchasers of South Korean jet fighters. The appeal of South Korea's defence equipment is clear. Technologically sophisticated and compatible with Western-made equipment, South Korean defence equipment is much more affordable.

Amidst the strategic rivalry between China and the US (together with other members of the "Quad"), South Korea can be a regional stabilizing force for Southeast Asian countries. ASEAN has steadfastly been non-aligned and neutral *vis-a-vis* the two powers, but finds it increasingly difficult to uphold the notion of ASEAN Centrality within this strategic rivalry. Although South Korea is a US ally, its strategic posture and autonomy ensure that it is not viewed as a US proxy but as a credible actor and partner in its own right. This is where South Korea would be challenged in its ideational and practical foreign policy agenda.

### **South Korea's Possible Roles in Southeast Asian Regional Security Architecture**

To garner even more strategic goodwill from Southeast Asia, South Korea should endorse the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) and align its own vision of the Indo-Pacific with the AOIP. Under President Yoon, South Korea is likely to publish

its first Indo-Pacific document laying out its strategic vision of the Indo-Pacific region, with Southeast Asia as the geographical centre. The AOIP envisions an Indo-Pacific region on the basis of cooperation, sustainable development, multilateralism, rule-based order, and inclusiveness. There are no inherent contradictions between South Korea's and AOIP's postures and this should be emphasized in an official manner.

Before and during the implementation of the NSP, South Korea has been actively engaged in the Mekong region through the Mekong-ROK Cooperation. Riparian disputes along the Mekong (between upstream and downstream countries) may increasingly become a security issue. In recent years, US-based NGOs and scientists have released studies charging that China is weaponizing its upstream advantages, but these findings have been disputed by other scientists. While South Korea does not need to insert itself into these often acrimonious debates, it can be a trustworthy and constructive actor in the development of the Mekong region.

Maritime security is an even more sensitive issue. Under the NSP, South Korea has been careful not to be overly involved in maritime security issues in Southeast Asia. Nevertheless, a bolder outreach by South Korea to engage in maritime cooperation will significantly enhance its status as a resourceful and strategic middle power. South Korea, for example, can expand its capacity building programs to Southeast Asia's maritime domains. South Korea should strongly support the rule of law, in particular the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), as the basis of managing and resolving ongoing disputes among the different countries in the region. Concurrently, South Korea should enhance regional efforts to manage the disputes, such as the Code of Conduct that is still being negotiated. South Korea, with the participation of the Southeast Asian littoral states, can initiate and participate in projects that address non-traditional maritime security issues. In building capacity, South Korea can

set up a maritime training centre (with possible support from the Korea International Cooperation Agency or KOICA). These initiatives, of course, would require careful study and strong affirmation from the maritime Southeast Asian countries.

Other niches include cyber security, digital connectivity through the ASEAN Smart Cities network, and health diplomacy which were launched during the global pandemic outbreak. Sustainability has been a key component of KOICA and Korean overseas investments and there is demand for South Korea to share its New Deal (composed of Digital and Green Economy) with developing countries which look up to the Korean model. The climate and environmental agenda are also among the converging interests between ASEAN member states and South Korea, where the potentials are not yet fully explored and exhausted.

## **Conclusion**

As a well-recognized and credible middle power, South Korea has built up a large stock of strategic goodwill in Southeast Asia. While South Korea has fulfilled its middle-power status in the economic sphere, it should now become more actively involved in the strategic and security spheres as well. On 11 November, while attending the ASEAN Summit in Phnom Penh, President Yoon Suk-yeol unveiled the Korea-ASEAN Solidarity Initiative, and emphasized it as a core element of South Korea's Indo-Pacific strategy.

The former NSP and the rebranded KASI indicate that South Korea has exercised much agency in formulating its own foreign policy visions and horizon. In the security sphere, a more "activist" South Korea will become more engaged in security/strategic issues, such as those related to maritime and cyber securities. Beyond the security sphere, South Korea can advocate actively for a global agenda that is appealing to

Southeast Asia, such as climate, green policy, sustainability, and the conduct of responsible statecraft.

As South Korea is allied with the United States, its ability to maintain its autonomy amidst major power competition will help Southeast Asian states to ascertain the viability of its middle power status. As an autonomous middle power, how South Korea manages its relations with the US and China wisely will be closely observed. Unlike “traditional” middle powers such as Canada and Australia, South Korea is a contemporary Asian middle power and its activism in issues without being an interventionist has had its status as an exemplary model granted by developing and developed countries alike. South Korea is capable of managing its relations with the US and China in the long-term matters because the majority of Southeast Asian countries have no other choice but to remain steadfastly neutral and non-aligned.

In conclusion, as a middle power, South Korea must be agile and smart as it navigates strategic uncertainties in all critical domains, while projecting itself as a reliable partner to Southeast Asian countries. As a result, South Korean power projection and initiatives will be an added pillar to the already multi-layered Asian regional security architecture.

## Endnote

<sup>1</sup> Jongryn Mo, "South Korea's middle power diplomacy: A case of growing compatibility between regional and global roles," *International Journal* 71 no. 4(2016): 587-607. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020702016686380>

<sup>2</sup> M.F. Karim, "Middle power, status-seeking and role conceptions: the cases of Indonesia and South Korea," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 72 no. 4 (2018): 343-363. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357718.2018.1443428>.

<sup>3</sup> Tam-Sang Huynh, "Bolstering middle power standing: South Korea's response to U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy from Trump to Biden," *Pacific Review* (2021): 1-30. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2021.1928737>

<sup>4</sup> Inspiration for these conceptualization include Ravenhill (1998) on activism, Carlsnaes (1992) on agency, and Pinheiro and de Lima (2018) on national autonomy in foreign policy.

<sup>5</sup> Drezner (2000) expounds the ideational element in middle power foreign policy, Mitzen & Larson (2017) re-examine the physical and material considerations in foreign policy making, while Jordaan (2003) considers the strategic considerations by emerging and traditional middle powers.

<sup>6</sup> Sarah Teo, Bhubinar Singh, and See Sng Tan, "Southeast Asian Perspectives on South Korea's Middle Power Engagement Initiative," *Asian Survey* 56 no. 3 (2016): 555-580.

<sup>7</sup> Min-ho Jung, "South Korea emerges as fastest-growing arms exporter," *The Korea Times*, July 24, 2022. [https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2022/07/205\\_333257.html](https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2022/07/205_333257.html).

*This page is intentionally left blank*

## CHAPTER 3

# *Korean Geopolitical Outlook and Its Relations with ASEAN*

Jaehyon Lee

Despite good relations in general between Southeast Asian countries or the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) collectively, and South Korea, the former does not constitute a central or big part of the latter's geopolitical outlook. ASEAN is Korea's No. 2 trading partner and foreign direct investment destination. ASEAN is the No 1. destination of Korean official development or ODA. Prior to Covid-19, the number of visitors between the two was more than 10 million a year. This substantial economic and sociocultural nexus between the two and the ever-deepening bilateral relations in economic and socio-cultural areas do not automatically guarantee a comparable strategic and security cooperation.<sup>1</sup>

South Korea has its own strategic constraints which were shaped by the historical experience and by the strategic and security environments surrounding the Korean Peninsula. Subsequently, the constraints had its footprints on Korea's geopolitical and strategic outlook that determines Korea's foreign policy in general and regional strategy in specific. The geopolitical outlook hardly values the strategic weight of ASEAN. This partly explains the lack of substantial strategic cooperation between Korea and ASEAN. There are, however, signs of change in the geopolitical outlook in recent years. Taking the opportunity, Korea has to take a serious look on ASEAN's strategic value and needs to find a right place for ASEAN in Korea's regional geopolitical outlook.

## **Korea's Dilemmatic Geopolitical Outlook**

It is often said that Korea does not have a geopolitical outlook and strategy for wider region – be it Asia-Pacific, East Asia or Indo-Pacific. Alternatively, Korea has a very narrowly defined geopolitical perspective at the level of both government and policy circle. Perhaps South Korea is a single-issue country as far as security matter is concerned.<sup>2</sup> This is in contradiction with the wide-spread perception on Korea's capacities - one of the 10th largest economies in the world, 6th largest military power with advanced technology and significant soft power.<sup>3</sup> The absence of Korea's own geopolitical outlook and strategy has made it hard for Korea to seek the strategic importance and value of ASEAN.

Korea's deep-rooted security dilemma may explain the absence of Korea's own geopolitical outlook and strategy. A sense of dilemma or an inherent lack of confidence in itself has been with the country from the beginning and is still in place. The fundamental source of the sense of dilemma, non-confidence or insecurity is none other than the divided Korean Peninsula and North Korean threat since the end of Korean War in 1953. It has put substantial constraints on Korean geopolitical outlook.

Once ingrained, the sense of insecurity hardly goes away. The lack of confidence still dominates the hearts and minds of Korean people. One of the outstanding side effects of this sense of insecurity is a narrow geopolitical and strategic scope of South Korea which creates an obsession with the security in the Korean Peninsula. This threat perception and the obsession long have been draining South Korea's defense and foreign policy resources. The Ministry of National Defense is almost exclusively preoccupied with Korean Peninsula and North Korean threat. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs gives utmost priority to Korea's relations with four major powers - the United States, China, Japan and Russia - surrounding the Korean Peninsula.<sup>4</sup>

The historical experience of South Korea and the subsequent narrowly defined geopolitical outlook has a few inter-related consequences on Korean foreign policy, particularly on regional strategy. First, Korea's foreign policy is biased towards major powers.<sup>5</sup> The country has no choice but to prioritize its relations with the US, China, Japan, and Russia. Relations with the United States, China, Japan, and Russia had to be prioritized. These countries have been the most important players in Korean Peninsula issues and in deterring North Korea's militant behavior towards the South. Most of Korea's resources have been invested in managing good terms with these major powers, leaving only marginal energy and resources for remaining countries, regions, and issues.

Second, another side effect of this bias is underestimation of Korea's capacity. Such orientation limits South Korea's scope to Northeast Asia in which those big powers compete. The orientation further promotes a view that South Korea is sandwiched among superpowers and the latter will determine the fate of the Korean Peninsula. This brings about a self-image of South Korea - a shrimp in between whales. This image has dominated Korean people's worldview for the past 70 years. This subsequently caused black and white thinking to dominate South Korean strategic outlook. For example, in today's strategic circumstance, the strategic 'shrimp' has only two options for its survival - either the US or China, while other countries entertain more options and varieties of strategies. This either/or thinking leaves little room for South Korea's strategic maneuvers.

Third, as a natural consequence of these side-effects, South Korea has not been allocating enough foreign policy and strategic resources to its neighboring countries. The Cold War hub-and-spoke system has limited incentive for a meaningful cooperation among regional countries in Asia including South Korea. Furthermore, South Korea found little reasons to cooperate with its immediate neighbors and to expand its strategic scope beyond

the Peninsula and Northeast Asia, when the country believed that the fate of the Peninsula and South Korea is in the hands of four major powers. This means that Korea until recently did not have an incentive to develop a wider regional outlook and strategy. So much so, the country did not have opportunity to estimate the strategic value and importance of regional players including ASEAN countries.

### **ASEAN in South Korea's Strategic Calculation**

Korea and ASEAN first made formal tie in 1989 when ASEAN accepted South Korea as a sectoral dialogue partner. In 2019, the two parties celebrated 30th anniversary of relation by holding the 3rd ASEAN-Korea special summit. In the past 30+ years, South Korea and ASEAN have developed meaningful bilateral cooperative relations. Annual bilateral trade chalked USD 950 billion from January to September 2021. ASEAN is the 2nd largest trade partner of South Korea, accounting to 14.4% of South Korea's total trade. ASEAN is the 2nd biggest South Korean FDI destination after the US in 2020. South Korea's ODA almost reached USD 600 million in 2020. ASEAN countries has been the biggest beneficiary of South Korean ODA, accounting for 25 to 30% of the total South Korean ODA. In 2019, more than 2,000 flight a week transported more than 10 million people between South Korea and ASEAN countries. It is estimated that more than 350,000 South Korean reside in ASEAN countries and almost equal number of ASEAN nationals stay in South Korea in 2018.<sup>6</sup>

Despite this substantial relation between South Korea and ASEAN in economic, socio-cultural and people-to-people exchange, strategic and security cooperation is undeveloped.<sup>7</sup> Moon Jae-in administration's New Southern Policy (NSP) is arguably South Korea's most ambitious initiative taken towards ASEAN thus far. The NSP, however, was still weak in strategic and security cooperation. The original NSP's strategic cooperation initiative announced in 2017 was not as concrete as

other pillars of the policy.<sup>8</sup> The NSP Plus announced at the end of 2020 to reduce the number of strategic and security cooperation initiative into just two despite growing request to expand strategic and security cooperation.<sup>9</sup>

ASEAN's strategic value is underestimated in South Korea. The relative weakness of strategic and security cooperation under the NSP mentioned above proves this point. The bias and dilemma in Korea's strategic outlook are responsible for this weakness. It is hard to imagine that decision-making elites with such strategic outlook be giving priority to the strategic cooperation with ASEAN. The underestimation of ASEAN's strategic value is not just among decision-making elites, but also among the general public as well. An opinion survey on South Korea-ASEAN relations conducted around the 3rd ASEAN-Korea Special Summit in 2019, evidenced this point. Among the areas of cooperation, only 17.4% of South Korean people responded security and strategic cooperation with ASEAN is the most important, while almost half (48.5%) and 19.5% responded economic cooperation and sociocultural cooperation respectively are still mostly valued. After adding up to the second choices, 68.3% of respondents answered economic cooperation with ASEAN as most important.<sup>10</sup>

Existing defense and strategic cooperation including non-traditional security is intermittent, fragmented and narrow in scope. It is not certain if Korea has an integrated strategic direction for its security-strategic cooperation with ASEAN countries, let alone a bigger picture on regional vision and strategy. There are a few defense and strategic cooperation done or under progress between the two. In the area of strategic cooperation, an annual strategic dialogue of track 1.5 is being held, hosted by Korean National Diplomatic Academy and ASEAN Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ASEAN ISIS). There are questions marks if the strategic dialogue is sufficiently thorough and if the outcomes of discussion are

adequately reflected by track 1 decision-making processes of individual countries.

Quite often, Korea views the Korea-ASEAN defense cooperation from commercial perspective or ODA viewpoint. For example, many defense industry cooperation projects - notably between Korea and Indonesia - are pursued not only for the development of defense industry of partnering countries, but also for Korea's commercial purpose. Or quite often the commercial benefit of selling further defense equipment starting from defense industry and science cooperation, carries more weight in many cases. Korea also hands over old navy ships and other equipment to developing ASEAN countries. This type of cooperation is generally perceived as helping out developing ASEAN countries rather than a serious defense cooperation from the Korean perspective.

Furthermore, the defense cooperation is not well strategically coordinated. They are mostly based on demands and needs from the recipient countries. This fragmented approach of defense cooperation is largely due to the fact that Korea does not have an integrated strategy. This strategy should indicate how to position the defense cooperation with ASEAN or with individual ASEAN countries in a Korea's defense cooperation framework which is under a bigger vision of Korea's regional strategy. It does not mean that Korea's defense and strategic cooperation with ASEAN and ASEAN countries has to serve Korea's strategic interests only. The cooperation has to meet both the needs and demands of ASEAN beneficiaries as well as Korea's strategic intention in the region. Individual projects have to complete its own goals and at the same time should be integrated to wider Korea's regional strategic intention.

## **The Strategic Way Forwards for ASEAN and Korea**

Now the question is how to build a sustainable and solid security and strategic partnership between Korea and ASEAN. This task should start from Korea's new appreciation of the ASEAN's strategic values. The appreciation of ASEAN's strategic value comes from Korea's refreshed regional geopolitical outlook. When Korea, beyond the Peninsula and four major powers bias, develops its own regional geopolitical outlook and regional vision, the country is likely to revisit the strategic and geopolitical importance of the regional grouping.

Fortunate enough, the awareness of Korea's duty and responsibility in the regional geopolitical reality is rising in Korea.<sup>11</sup> This awareness is the most important precondition for South Korea to develop its own regional geopolitical outlook and therefore to revisit the strategic importance of ASEAN. Korean society as a whole slowly but surely recognizes it has the potential and capacity as one of the leading countries in economy, science and technology, soft power etc., setting the global agenda and standard.<sup>12</sup> This recognition results in the realization of its duty and responsibility in the region - its interests and concern should not be confined just in the Korean Peninsula, but the country now has to do more for the wider region.

With this reassessment of Korea's role and capacity, it is likely that Korea refresh its geopolitical and strategic outlook. The question given the context of this paper is how to connect this new outlook to Korea-ASEAN relations. What does Korea have to do to further advance strategic, security and defense cooperation with ASEAN? How does Korea perceive regional strategic reality and the value of ASEAN in the context? First, South Korea has to realize its bridging role between two different groups. On the one hand, Korea is a part of the so-called liberal bloc, led by the US, given its military alliance with the US and past track-record of strategic and security cooperation with the countries in the bloc.

On the other hand, Korea has a close and cordial relation with ASEAN countries thanks to the economic and socio-cultural relations. Furthermore, Korea's image as a country with no historical baggage to carry and with no hidden strategic agenda is widely accepted among ASEAN countries.<sup>13</sup> Korea is exactly located at the confluence of the two circles - the US-led liberal bloc and ASEAN-centered regional small and medium power group.

As Korea is in good terms with both groups, the country is in an ideal position to bridge the perception gaps between the groups. Korea, on behalf of regional small and medium powers, particularly ASEAN countries, can voice their concerns on the superpower competition and on potential disruption of regional peace and stability due to the rivalry. Korea also can promote the ideas of regional order favored by regional small/medium countries. On the other hand, Korea can convey messages of liberal regional order, as an insider of the bloc, to ASEAN and other regional countries. Through this, Korea can promote regional countries' support for the efforts to sustain and re-strengthen the existing orders. At the same time, Korea needs to make contribution for the revising and improving existing regional order, reflecting the interest of regional small and medium countries as well.

The second way to expedite strategic and security cooperation has something to do with upholding ASEAN centrality and regional multilateral cooperation. ASEAN centrality is an essential element for making ASEAN a meaningful player in regional strategic scene.<sup>14</sup> Other than internal unity of ASEAN, regional multilateral institutions led by ASEAN is a must for the viability of the ASEAN centrality concept. When ASEAN effectively engages with and checks regional major powers in regional multilateral platforms, the concept of ASEAN centrality may be effectively preserved and strengthened.

It is also Korea's interests to strengthen regional multilateral institutions through which regional small and medium players

could reduce the negative impacts of superpowers' unilateral behaviors and of strategic competition among superpowers. The negative impacts may include increasing strategic and economic uncertainty which go against the wishes of regional small and medium powers that put priority on regional stability as a precondition of economic growth, and superpowers' pressure on small and medium powers to choose side. ASEAN and Korea have an identical interest on managing the behaviors of regional superpowers through multilateral institutions. ASEAN can restrengthen ASEAN centrality through multilateral institutions. Korea can deepen its strategic cooperation with ASEAN by putting its hands together with ASEAN in invigorating regional multilateralism.

Last, but not the least both Korea and ASEAN have a common interest in building regional order. In the past decade or so, existing regional order has been under challenge. The regional order written after the World War II has been in place for more than a few decades. Today, we are witnessing the erosion of existing one, but the new one is not on the horizon. The new order emerging has to reflect the transformed power balance in the region - not the power balance between two superpowers, but the very power balance between superpowers on the one hand and the middle and small powers on the other. The existing order presumed a clear-cut power imbalance between superpowers and the rest. The narrower power gap between the two groups today requires a new configuration.

Korea and ASEAN countries can cooperate to reflect the small and medium countries' strategic interests to an emerging regional order. Supposing the new power balance, existing order cannot be justified. Regional small and medium power cannot just let the superpowers to write a new order only reflecting their own interests only.<sup>15</sup> With combined forces and leverage, small and medium powers have to negotiate a new terms and order. It is not easy for multiple players without a clear leading force to have

their actions coordinated. A leadership among small and medium powers is all the more essential to maximize their leverage against superpowers. When ASEAN and Korea coordinate their strategic actions first, the group can be such a leading force for the re-writing regional order in this part of the world.

## Endnote

<sup>1</sup> Strategic, security and defence cooperation between Korea and ASEAN/ASEAN countries have many different aspects. It could mean a bilateral one between the two. It also could mean a group of bilateral cooperation between Korea and individual Southeast Asian countries or many separate bilateral cooperation between Korea and individual ASEAN countries. Given the nature of ASEAN and the level of ASEAN defence and security cooperation among its members, large part of defence and security cooperation between Korea and ASEAN means bilateral cooperation between Korea and individual ASEAN members. In a limited area, such as some non-traditional security issues, a cooperation between Korea and ASEAN countries collectively is conceivable.

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Yeo, "South Korea and the Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy," CSIS, July 20, 2020, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/south-korea-and-free-and-open-indo-pacific-strategy>; Hayley Channer, "South Korea Fails to Recognise Its Capacity to Shape the Indo-Pacific," *The Diplomat*, June 30, 2021, <https://thediplomat.com/2021/06/south-korea-fails-to-recognize-its-capacity-to-shape-the-indo-pacific/>; and also in the context of Korea's New Southern Policy, Lee Jaehyon, "A Need to Rethink Peace Cooperation in Korea's New Southern Policy," *Asia Pacific Bulletin*, No. 514 (2020), <https://www.eastwestcenter.org/publications/need-rethink-peace-cooperation-in-koreas-new-southern-policy>.

<sup>3</sup> Yonhap News Agency, "S. Korea estimated to have ranked 10th in 2020 global GDP rankings," *Yonhap News*, July 13, 2021, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20210315001000320>; Yonhap News Agency, "S. Korea's military strength 6th in world, N. Korea at 28th: report," *Yonhap News*, January 16, 2021, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20210116001500325>; Michelle Jamrisko, Wei Lu and Alexandra Tanzi, "South Korea Leads World in Innovation as U.S. Exists Top Tel," *Bloomberg*, February 3, 2021, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-02-03/south-korea-leads-world-in-innovation-u-s-drops-out-of-top-10>; Michael Josem and Shreya Hiwale, "Global Soft Power Index: South Korea Ranks 11<sup>th</sup>," Brand Finance, last modified February 25, 2021, <https://brandfinance.com/press-releases/global-soft-power-index-south-korea-ranks-11th>.

<sup>4</sup> The term, 'four major power' which refer the US, China, Japan and Russia is a well-established term in Korean foreign policy. They are powers surrounding the Korean Peninsula and were major stakeholder in the Korean War except Japan. They are also member of Six Party Talks dealing with Korean Peninsula issue. In the past, these four countries had substantial influence on Korea's foreign policy.

<sup>5</sup> The bias is partly reflected in the structure of the Foreign Ministry. For example, all three divisions in the Northeast Asia Bureau are dedicated to China affairs and only a small part of a division out of the three looks after Mongolia affairs. In the case of North America, all four divisions under the North America Bureau take care of the US affairs while a part of a division deals tie Canada affairs. In other words, Northeast Asia bureau is in fact China bureau while North America Bureau is US bureau. Remaining five bureaus cover all other countries and geographical regions - all countries, regions, regional organisations except two, the US and China.

<sup>6</sup> The statistical numbers are all from ASEAN-Korea Centre, *2021 ASEAN & Korea in Figures* (Seoul: ASEAN-Korea Centre, 2022), x, xv, xviii. For people-to-people exchange statistics, the numbers in 2019/19 show the peak of exchange between Korea and ASEAN countries. Since then, the impact of COVID-19 reduced the numbers of exchange substantially.

<sup>7</sup> For example, the most recent document that details bilateral cooperation between Korea and ASEAN, “ASEAN-Republic of Korea Pan of Action to Implement the Joint Vision Statement for Peace, Prosperity and Partnership (2021-2025)” (<https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/ASEAN-ROK-POA-2021-2025-Final.pdf>) is 17 pages long. Out of 17 pages, only 3 pages over 7 categories and 20 items are for political-security cooperation which even include good governance and human right cooperation. Meanwhile, economic cooperation accounts for 6 pages over 12 categories of co-operation with 44 cooperation items and sociocultural cooperation occupies another 6 pages, covering 12 categories with 50 items. Remaining pages are for cross-sectional cooperation.

<sup>8</sup> Lee Jaehyon, “New Emphasis Needed: South Korea’s New Southern Policy and ASEAN,” *ISEAS perspective*, No. 2020-110.

<sup>9</sup> Hoo Chiew-Ping, “What’s in the New Southern Policy Plus? An ASEAN Perspective on Building Niche-based Pragmatic Cooperation with South Korea,” *World Economic Brief*, March 31, 2021, [https://www.kiep.go.kr/gallery.es?mid=a20301000000&bid=0007&list\\_no=9394&act=view](https://www.kiep.go.kr/gallery.es?mid=a20301000000&bid=0007&list_no=9394&act=view).

<sup>10</sup> Lee Jaehyon, “Korean Perception on ASEAN and New Southern Policy: differences by political orientations and gap between generations,” *Asan Institute Issue Brief*, No. 2020-03 (in Korean).

<sup>11</sup> Lim Sung-Mi, “South Korea’s Middle-Power Diplomacy: Changes and Challenges,” *Chatham House Research Paper* (June 2016), <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/publications/research/2016-06-22-south-korea-middle-power-kim.pdf>; Kathryn Botto, “The Coronavirus Pandemic and South Korea’s Global Leadership Potential,” in *The Case for South Korean Soft Power*, eds. Chung Min Lee and Kathryn Botto (Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2020); Choe Wongi, “New Southern Policy: Korea’s Newfound Ambition in Search of Strategic Autonomy,” *Asie. Visions*, No. 118, Ifri (January 2021)

<sup>12</sup> Particularly, Moon Jae-in administration adopted a term, ‘a global leading country’. This term reflects Korea’s elevated status in the global community after a successful response to the COVID-19, and particularly after President Moon’s attending G-7 summit in 2021. President’s Moon’s New Year Speech in 2022 reflects this confidence very well. “2022 New Year’s Address by President Moon Jae-in,” Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations, last modified January 3, 2022, [https://overseas.mofa.go.kr/un-en/brd/m\\_4986/view.do?seq=760749](https://overseas.mofa.go.kr/un-en/brd/m_4986/view.do?seq=760749).

<sup>13</sup> Frances A. Cruz, “Prospects for Soft and Middle Power Projection in the New Southern Policy,” in *The New Southern Policy: Catalyst for Deepening ASEAN-ROK Cooperation*, ed. Hoo Chiew-Ping (Kuala Lumpur: Institute of Strategic and International Studies, 2020).

<sup>14</sup> See Seng Tan, “ASEAN and multilateralism 2.0: Locating ASEAN centrality within the FOIP and the BRI,” in *Contested Multilateralism 2.0 and Asian Security Dynamics*, ed. Kai He (New York: Routledge, 2020), 149-150.; Amitav Acharya, *ASEAN and Regional Order: Revisiting Security Community in Southeast Asia* (New York: Routledge, 2021), 23-27.

<sup>15</sup> There are discussions on the erosion of global order and the role of middle powers although they have different ideation on the direction of eventual global order - strengthening existing order or writing a modified one. For example, Herve Lemahieu, “Middle Powers will Determine the Future of the Asian Order,” *Lowy Institute Commentary*, February 29, 2020, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/middle-powers-will-determine-future-asian-order>; Roland Paris, “Can Middle Powers Save the Liberal World Order?,” *Chatham House Briefing*, June 18, 2019, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2019/06/can-middle-powers-save-liberal-world-order-0/summary>; Umud Aydin, “Emerging middle powers and the liberal International order,” *International Affairs* 97:5 (2021).

*This page is intentionally left blank*

*Maritime Focus as Main Drivers*

*Indonesia-ROK Maritime Security  
Cooperation*

Gilang Kembara

**Introduction**

Relations between the Republic of Indonesia and the Republic of Korea will reach its 50 years milestone in 2023. Within the span of half-a-century, Indonesia and South Korea have grown to become important economic, political, trade, and security partners. South Korea is among Indonesia's top 10 trading and investment partner, with a record trade number between two countries reaching up to US\$18.4 billion in 2021.<sup>1</sup> As a sign of deepening relations, Indonesia and South Korea agreed to sign a comprehensive economic partnership agreement (IK-CEPA) in December 2020. Under the agreement, Indonesia is committed to eliminate 92% of its tariffs line, and South Korea to eliminate 95.54% of its tariffs. The agreement was seen as a commitment by both countries towards the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) deal, which was agreed in November 2020.

In 2021, Indonesia and South Korea conducted two high-level meetings. In June 2021, the former foreign minister of Korea, Chung Eui-yong, visited Indonesia as part of a three-country tour to promote the government's implementation of its New Southern Policy. In his meeting with Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi, and President Joko Widodo, Foreign Minister Chung emphasised Indonesia-Korean cooperation on health, particularly on COVID-19 management, defense, and sustainable investment.<sup>2</sup> Indonesia and Korea held another bilateral meeting in October 2021, which primarily focused on bolstering cooperation in the maritime sector between the two countries. Various cooperation projects were signed between Indonesia and Korea namely on mangrove

forest restoration, marine debris management, climate change, and several other issues.<sup>3</sup>

The various deals, agreements, and visits made signify the substantial commitment being put forward by the Republic of Korea towards Indonesia, and largely, towards Southeast Asia. However, elements of maritime security cooperation between Indonesia and Korea have thus far been limited. Government and media reports actively flaunt Korea's economic engagement in Indonesia, such as LG's investment in the battery industry, Hyundai Motors manufacturing investment, and a glass factory in Central Java. However, reports on security cooperation, especially maritime security cooperation have been limited. Whilst New Southern Policy is substantially appealing towards maritime cooperation as an element of a larger security relations. It would appear that Seoul's inclination towards maritime security issues is limited towards establishing visible presence in its disputed maritime territories with both Japan, and China. However, the new administration under President Yoon Suk-yeol has signaled Korea's intention to pay a bigger focus towards maritime security issues, both on the non-traditional issues, as well as traditional issues, such as his eagerness to be involved in the South China Sea issue.<sup>4</sup>

### **Indonesia's Maritime Security Assessment**

Maritime security is formally undefined by the government of Indonesia in any of its official document. However, the government puts forward the allusion that the Indonesian concept of maritime security means the ability of the state to mitigate threats that emanate from within and outside of the country, as contained within *Presidential Decree No.16/2017 on Indonesian Ocean Policy*.<sup>5</sup>

Regardless of the above, as the world's largest archipelagic state, Indonesia experienced a variety of security issues that emanate from its maritime domain. At the traditional security

domain, Indonesia is always wary on the situation developing out of the South China Sea issue, especially coercive activities carried out by China. Despite the cordial relationship of both countries, the Indonesian elites perceived China as a threat, and that it is logical for Indonesia to respond through the increase of its defensive capability.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, a focus towards improving Indonesia's maritime capability over at the North Natuna Sea, which borders the South China Sea, has been pursued by the government over the past years.

An increasing number of grey-zone activities by China in Indonesia's Exclusive Economic Zones in the North Natuna Sea have been left unchecked for many months in 2020 as well as in 2021. These activities were conducted by mobilizing Chinese fishing vessels, accompanied by China Coast Guard vessels, as well as its maritime militias as it violated Indonesia's rights in its maritime domain. One such incident discovered a Chinese survey vessel spent seven weeks from August to October 2021 conducting intensive seabed mapping inside Indonesia's Exclusive Economic Zone, south of the Harbor Energy Tuna Block concession.<sup>7</sup>

In the non-traditional security realm, Southeast Asia has been globally considered to be 'the principal location for trafficking in persons for forced labor into the fishing industry.'<sup>8</sup> Whilst it is estimated that in the early 2010s, 'up to 1,000 fishing vessels conduct IUU Fishing in 12 per cent of Indonesia's territorial waters each year.'<sup>9</sup> For Indonesia, IUU Fishing has always been considered as the predominant challenge in the country. Despite that, fisheries crime such as smuggling and trafficking of humans, drugs, weapons, and wildlife by sea are also quite high on the priorities list too.<sup>10</sup> Recognizing the interconnectedness of these security issues, Indonesia has vehemently pushed for IUU Fishing to be classified as a Transnational Organized Crime (TOC).

Lastly, it has to be noted that Indonesia experiences natural disasters on a regular basis throughout the year. Owing to its

geographical position within the Pacific Ring of Fire, disaster resilience has become a key focus by the Indonesian government to ensure that people's livelihood could resume back to normalcy after a natural disaster. In order to do so, an effective coordination is carried out between government institutions in the central and local government. Coupled this with an effective military force that could carried out 'Military Operations other than War,' as well as with the National Search and Rescue Agency to conduct recovery operations.

### **Indonesia-ROK Areas of Cooperation in Maritime Security**

Indonesia is in dire need to improve its defense industry, especially on its maritime/naval capability, Korea has been one of Indonesia's most important defense partners by cooperating in the development of various naval technology, vessels, and proficiency. The cooperation between PT. PAL Indonesia with Daewoo Shipbuilding & Marine Engineering (DSME) to develop the *Nagapasa*-class submarine was a pivotal cooperation between the two countries, as it provides Indonesia with an expertise to design and build submarines. This cooperation came on the heels of previous cooperation between PT. PAL and DSME to develop the *Makassar*-class landing platform dock vessel.

Aside from maritime cooperation in the field of defense, Korea is pursuing greater cooperation in the field of maritime law enforcement between Korea Coast Guard (KCG), and BAKAMLA. It began with a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two institutions in September 2018, which led to two bilateral meetings in 2019. The cooperation aims to boost information sharing, assign points of contact, establishment of a communication platform, and a planned bilateral exercise.<sup>11</sup> Unfortunately, it would seem that cooperation in this field may be hampered due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nonetheless, cooperation in maritime law enforcement offers a plethora of opportunity. In the years to come implementation of the MoU between KCG and BAKAMLA would need to take into shape. An area that has been previously discussed and would become a beneficial cooperation is on disaster response. Indonesia heavily relies on maritime transportation as a means to connect its people from one place to another. Although improving, Indonesia's maritime safety compliance is still alarmingly low in certain areas. As such, maritime accidents are quite common. Therefore, both maritime law enforcement agencies of Indonesia and Korea would do well to explore joint cooperation to improve maritime safety compliance by its people.

Furthermore, in the field of maritime law enforcement cooperation, South Korea has established a coast guard academy that helps to develop and train new cadets and officers of the KCG. Such coast guard academy model, and the human resource development implemented by the KCG could perhaps be emulated by BAKAMLA to develop their own cadets and officers.

Moreover, improving the capacity of Indonesia's maritime law enforcement agency would also serve well to ensure the security and stability of Indonesia's vast maritime domain. With an increasing trade partnership between the two countries, maritime traffic between both nations is bound to increase, which may result in an increased risk of criminal activities, either physically or digitally. As Korea is renowned in leading in cybersecurity practices, Indonesia would do well to learn and implement best practices in dealing in cyber-criminal activities, especially those that have the potential to disrupt the crucial maritime connection between Indonesia and Korea.

Disruptions by cyber-criminal activities could cause harmful effect to the commercial and logistical industry of both countries. Cyber-attacks could cripple a nation's infrastructure in an instance, or ransom people out of their personal data (i.e. WannaCry Malware). As such, the newly inked agreement

between the National Cyber and Encryption Agency (BSSN), and the Korea Internet Security Agency (KISA) to build and develop human resources in this field is a good start to a cybersecurity cooperation.<sup>12</sup>

Such cooperation would ensure regular exchange between the two actors, given the fluid dynamics of maritime security issues. Should it be well-thought, the opportunity to expand maritime security cooperation between Indonesia and Korea shall be endless.

### **Challenges Faced & The Way Forward**

The commitment Korea established to expand maritime security cooperation within its NSP framework is encouraging, especially as it pursues greater engagement with ASEAN, and later the QUAD. But it seems that there's very little follow-up in regards with the commitment made by Korea. Within its bilateral relations with Indonesia, Korea has been more comfortable in pursuing cooperation within the field of economy, social, and culture. Security cooperation has thus far been relegated to a minimum, with engagements mainly concerned between defense establishment or coast guards.

Nonetheless, despite a strong defense cooperation, Indonesia-Korea cooperation on the field is at risk to be scaled down substantially. This consideration came after the Indonesian Navy was reported to be reviewing the contract made with DSME regarding the second batch of the submarine orders. It was planned at the beginning that Indonesia was to procure up to six submarines from South Korea, which was to be divided into two batches of production. However, dissatisfaction was raised with the quality of the submarines by Indonesia, which puts into question the continuation of the submarine contract with DSME. As such, further procurement of submarine by the Indonesian Navy are now being considered outside of South Korea, with

other manufacturing companies that are able to provide more advanced submarine technology.<sup>13</sup>

In short, defense cooperation with South Korea has so far been halted. Aside from the submarine production issue, there is also the controversy of Indonesia failing to uphold its contribution to the development of the KF-X fighter jet project. It would seem that there is a certain gap in technological understanding to pursue this project. With South Korea being more advanced mastery of defense technology, it is challenging for both countries to continue pursuing the defense cooperation without addressing the this “technological gap” that exists between the two countries.

In addition, with most of the security issues that Indonesia faces coming from the non-traditional domain (i.e., transnational organized crime, IUU Fishing), there’s very little practicality to assist Indonesia in mitigating these issues where there is little implication towards the Korean populace. Korea’s experience with traditional security issues that emanates from North Korea, and, to an extent, intrusions by China and Japan in its maritime domain has led Seoul focused in bolstering its defense capability, and military might to stand up against these traditional security issues. Hence, a focus is established by Korea to take up more defense cooperation with Indonesia as a part of its maritime security focus.

Notwithstanding the situation, the newly appointed Yoon Suk-yeol administration has promised to pay closer attention to more crucial geopolitical security issues, such as the South China Sea. President Yoon also admitted that it would bring Seoul closer to unilateral organizations, such as QUAD, to pursue stronger ties with Washington and Tokyo. Such course may put a strain towards Seoul’s relations with Beijing. However, putting South Korea closer to like-minded nations through engagement in QUAD may emboldened President Yoon to condemn Chinese activities, which may result in putting greater emphasis in assisting Southeast Asian states in balancing out Chinese coercive

activities in the disputed waters of South China Sea. Such example could be seen by how Japan is actively providing security development assistance, in the form of providing coast guard vessels, conducting exercises, and personnel exchanges. The successes of these assistances may depend on whether or not Jakarta would want to seize this opportunity, or withdraw out of fear of drawing the ire of Beijing. Only time will eventually tell whether the new South Korean administration will put its money where its mouth is.

## Endnote

<sup>1</sup> Antara News Agency, "Indonesia Targets Trade Worth \$20 Billion with South Korea," *Medcom.id*, February 23, 2022, <https://www.medcom.id/english/business/3NOz9PWK-indonesia-targets-trade-worth-20-billion-with-south-korea>.

<sup>2</sup> Yashinta Difa and Suharto, "Foreign Minister Asks South Korea to Protect Indonesian Sailors," *ANTARA*, June 6, 2022. <https://en.antaranews.com/news/177510/foreign-minister-asks-south-korea-to-protect-indonesian-sailors>.

<sup>3</sup> Raka Adji and Ade Irma, "Indonesia, South Korea Intensify Cooperation in Maritime Sector," *ANTARA*, June 6, 2022. <https://en.antaranews.com/news/194229/indonesia-south-korea-intensify-cooperation-in-maritime-sector>.

<sup>4</sup> Terence Roehrig, "South Korea, the Quad, and Maritime Security," *KIMS Periscope*, April 11, 2022, 1–6.

<sup>5</sup> Gilang Kembara, "Indonesia's Conceptualizations of Maritime Security," *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*, November 23, 2021, <https://amti.csis.org/indonesias-conceptualizations-of-maritime-security/>.

<sup>6</sup> Yohanes Sulaiman, "What Threat? Leadership, Strategic Culture, and Indonesian Foreign Policy in the South China Sea," *Asian Politics & Policy* 11, no. 4 (2019): 606–622.

<sup>7</sup> Evan A. Laksmana, "China Making Inroads with Grey Zone Tactics against Indonesia," *The Straits Times*, July 14, 2022, <https://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/china-making-inroads-with-grey-zone-tactics-against-indonesia>.

<sup>8</sup> Euan Graham, "Transnational crime in the fishing industry: Asia's problem?" *RSIS Commentaries*. No. 62/ 2011, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies: Singapore.

<sup>9</sup> M. Caballero-Anthony and Hangzo PKK, "Transnational crime," in *Non-traditional security in Asia: issues, challenges and framework for action*, ed. M. Caballero-Anthony and Cook A, (Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2013).

<sup>10</sup> I. Chapsos and Malcolm J, "Maritime security in Indonesia: towards a comprehensive agenda?" *Maritime Policy* 76 (2017): 178–184.

<sup>11</sup> "Bakamla Dan Korea Coast Guard Gelar 1st Bilateral Meeting," *RadarJakarta.com*, March 14, 2019, <http://radarjakarta.com/berita-9852-bakamla-dan-korea-coast-guard-gelar-1st-bilateral-meeting.html>.

<sup>12</sup> Eka Arifa and Adji Raka, "BSSN, South Korean agency ink pact to boost cyberspace security," *ANTARA*, July 21, 2022, <https://en.antaranews.com/news/240601/bssn-south-korean-agency-ink-pact-to-boost-cyberspace-security>.

<sup>13</sup> "Setahun Tragedi Kri-Nanggala (402) Dan Pentingnya Modernisasi Armada Kapal Selam Indonesia," *Lembaga Kajian Pertahanan Strategis "KERIS"*, June 15, 2022. <https://lembagakeris.net/setahun-tragedi-kri-nanggala-402-dan-pentingnya-modernisasi-armada-kapal-selam-indonesia/>.

*This page is intentionally left blank*

## CHAPTER 5

# *Invigorating Philippines-South Korea Maritime Security Partnership*

Aaron Jed Rabena

This year marks an important turning point in the political lives of the Philippines and South Korea as both countries have elected new presidents, Ferdinand Bongbong Marcos Jr. and Yoon Suk-yeol, respectively. Under the former South Korean President Moon Jae-in, South Korea made substantial gains as a result of the New Southern Policy (NSP), which eventually evolved into NSP-Plus. The NSP sat well then-Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte's independent foreign policy which aimed to deepen cooperation with traditional partners such as South Korea. Consequently, apart from increases in trade, investments, official development assistance (ODA), people-to-people exchanges and security cooperation, both countries have concluded the negotiations for a bilateral free trade agreement (FTA) last year and are set to sign the same this year.

Though the new Yoon Administration has not yet explicitly announced that it would carry on (or abandon) the Moon Administration's NSP, President Yoon has nevertheless mentioned policies that conceive a larger and more active role for South Korea by way of the so-called ABCD Strategy and Global Vision for a New Korea and make South Korea a "global pivotal state." It is also said that the Yoon Administration will soon announce its own Indo-Pacific Policy, which will likely feature the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as a national priority.<sup>1</sup> Thus far, President Yoon's foreign policy behavior has exhibited an early alignment with the US -- an indicator that his regional policies will likely keep in step with that of Washington, including its values diplomacy. There are already manifestations

that South Korea under President Yoon might join the Quad.<sup>2</sup> The Philippines, under Marcos, has stated that he will continue his predecessor's "independent foreign policy."

### **The State of Philippines-ROK Defense and Security Cooperation**

From being actual allies during the Korean War, South Korea and the Philippines are in practice *de facto* allies. This is due to the fact that, in the absence of a formal defense treaty, the Philippines' remains as a member of the UN Command (UNC) that helped South Korea in the Korean War whose present aim is to support the UN mission of peace and reconciliation in the Korean Peninsula. Bilaterally, and multilaterally through ASEAN, both countries have a consensus on a range of political issues from the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula to South China Sea (SCS).<sup>3</sup> In addition, South Korea is a major security partner which has long played an active role in the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) Modernization Program and in enhancing the Philippines' conventional deterrence capability.

Under the Peace Pillar of then President Moon's NSP, the Philippines has emerged as a key market for the Korean defense industry and is a leading recipient of Korean military (naval and air) assets such as guided missile frigates and corvettes (Pohang-class) which complement the Philippine Navy's (PN) Corvette Acquisition Program.<sup>4</sup> In pursuit of the PN's offshore patrol vessel (OPV) program, South Korea's Hyundai Heavy Industries (HHI) was selected to build six OPVs for the Philippines which makes South Korea the largest source of the Philippines' naval assets. Notably, talks on submarine cooperation have started since last year. All these complement the PN's aim to become a modern and multi-capable force responsive to maritime defense and development by 2028. Additionally, there is deepening mil-to-mil cooperation by way of student officer exchanges, Meeting Procedures and Passing Exercises, the AFP's active attendance to

Korean defense exhibits, and the commitment to further cooperation on technical support of acquired and donated assets, education and training, arms industry cooperation, and other capability development programs.<sup>5</sup>

Early this year, both countries signed a Terms of Reference (TOR) for Army-to-Army Cooperation in which the agreement aims to strengthen partnership on: reciprocal visits; mutual exchange of army-related insights and information; military education and training; logistics and maintenance; humanitarian assistance and disaster relief; military medicine and medical support; subject matter expert exchanges; military technology cooperation; research and development; military sports and cultural activities, and other areas of mutual interest. Philippine Army Chief Romeo Brawner had expressed that the Agreement hopefully leads to an “iron clad alliance.” This supplements the Navy-to-Navy Talks between the Philippine and South Korean Navy that was created in 2020. Last June, there was an announcement that both countries will form a vice-ministerial defense talk, and Seoul even proposed to join the KAMANDAG Military Exercise which involves the US and Philippine Marine Corps.

### **Broadening Areas of Maritime Convergence**

Needless to say, the importance of maritime security is elementary to a maritime nation such as the Philippines which has one of the longest coastlines in the world and being the world’s second largest archipelagic country. The Philippines is also one of the world’s most natural hazard-prone countries. Moreover, in terms of geographical disposition, the Philippines is “is located in a nexus of numerous competing maritime interests at domestic, regional, and global scales.”<sup>6</sup> This includes non-traditional security challenges in the tri-border area between the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia, and geopolitical flashpoints in strategic

chokepoints that straddle the SCS (i.e., Straits of Malacca, Lombok, and Makassar).<sup>7</sup>

As a Naval Commander put it, the vastness of Philippine waters is a challenge to maritime domain awareness and because of the Philippines' "strategic location and rich marine biodiversity, the Philippines has great maritime potential to be a logistics and transport, ship repair and information fusion, and a marine [regional] research hub."<sup>8</sup> It is thus not surprising why the Philippines, as an archipelagic state, reiterated its commitment to maritime security as a priority during the ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Retreat held in Phnom Penh, Cambodia in February this year. This was manifested in Philippine support for the Code of Conduct in the SCS and continued participation in foras such as ASEAN Maritime Forum and (AMF) and Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF).<sup>9</sup>

For the Philippines, maritime security pertains to issues such as coastal and marine resources protection, maritime trade, maritime safety (i.e., from piracy, robbery, poaching, illegal intrusion, terrorism/maritime terrorism, gun/human/drug trafficking), maritime law enforcement, environmental protection, and fisheries and resource management.<sup>10</sup> These challenges and the lack of national maritime consciousness or "sea blindness" makes maritime domain awareness (MDA) all the more important for the Philippines.<sup>11</sup>

In addition to inadequacies in policy planning and strategy, other problems concerning the Philippines' maritime domain include shortage of proper assets (in the Navy, Coast Guard and other maritime agencies) and platforms for sustained participation in international cooperation initiatives, lack of common doctrine, and interoperability of equipment.<sup>12</sup> Fleet modernization is also an issue considering that maritime services compete with each other and non-maritime agencies for limited resources.<sup>13</sup> Compounding this is the presence of weak physical and digital infrastructure (e.g., lack of modern ports, combined

naval exercises, combined law enforcement patrols and intelligence exchanges; inadequacy of coordinated, secure and updated communication systems and information databases) which constrain the Philippines' MDA activities.<sup>14</sup>

The most urgent maritime challenges for the Philippines are border security, crimes at sea, and maritime counter-terrorism.<sup>15</sup> This is why areas for collaboration and cooperation with other countries such as South Korea could incorporate maritime safety, MDA, search and rescue, coastal welfare, fisheries (fish stock data collection), maritime connectivity, illicit trade, marine environmental protection, rule of law and good order at sea, and disaster response and resiliency.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, the Philippines needs to develop its MDA capability given that maritime intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) are part of the AFP's capability upgrade program.<sup>17</sup>

With the country's limited surveillance resources, there is a need for littoral monitoring stations that are low-cost and low-maintenance that can provide 24/7 real-time information and integrate raw data into actionable knowledge so as to better contribute crucial inputs to policy stakeholders.<sup>18</sup> Besides the acquisition of platforms to better capability to detect, monitor and manage maritime threats, there could be educational opportunities and tech transfer to develop own capacity for MDA, maritime infrastructure and maritime scientific research.<sup>19</sup> These would substantially help underpin the military and non-military efforts of the Philippines such as search and rescue operations, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR).<sup>20</sup>

Much can be learned from the Philippines' security cooperation with other countries such as France, Japan, US, and even China. Bilaterally, last June, the Philippines signed the Bantay Dagat (Guardian of the Sea) Framework with the US which aims to upgrade MDA capability and joint response to maritime challenges and intergovernmental approach to national security. Both countries also convened the inaugural Maritime

Dialogue in April to follow through on shared maritime priorities and challenges. In terms of defense industry, France's Naval Group plans to open an office in Manila which marks a long-term commitment by France to help in developing the Philippines' naval capability.

With Japan, apart from naval exercises -- with plans to have a large-scale joint military exercise with the US similar to Balikatan – the first 2+2 Meetings with Japan was initiated in April. Minilaterally, in July, the AFP conducted a trilateral joint staff talks with counterparts from the US and Japan, and the agenda was to boost interoperability and maintenance of freedom of navigation in the Indo-Pacific. Most recently, the EU has expressed willingness to beef up maritime cooperation with the Philippines in combating maritime crimes and terrorism, and advance partnership on information sharing, capacity building, and training.<sup>21</sup>

### **Imperatives for Philippines and South Korea Coast Guard Diplomacy**

There is a growing trend in Southeast Asia on the use of Coast Guard diplomacy. France, Japan and the US have made significant advances in employing Coast Guard diplomacy with the Philippines. There are several advantages for South Korea in engaging in Coast Guard diplomacy with the Philippines. For one, it has been widely said that Coast Guard or white-hulled cooperation is “less controversial” because of its non-military nature and non-traditional security threats (maritime safety, navigational safety) that it aims to address thus making it more insulated from geopolitics.<sup>22</sup> Also, “coast guard cooperation” can “complement future military engagements.”<sup>23</sup> Another reason is that, unlike in the AFP, the PCG's acquisition agreement with foreign countries is less bureaucratic.<sup>24</sup>

This is already being done as the Philippines has entered into a soft loan or ODA agreements with or had received grants from

Japan and France under the Benigno Aquino and Duterte administrations. Specifically, Japan's Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) had funded the construction and delivery of 10 44-meter Multi-Role Response Vessels (MRRV) and, for this year, two 94-meter Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPV) for the PCG. Additionally, JICA has gone beyond maritime asset provision and has sponsored training and educational activities (counter-piracy operations and acquisition of new vessels) for PCG personnel and had supported the construction of lighthouses and vessel traffic monitoring systems.<sup>25</sup> Japan has resorted to regional coastguard diplomacy through ODA to build the capacities of regional states so as to strengthen their maritime law enforcement and maritime security.<sup>26</sup> As for France, it has funded and built four 24-meter Patrol Boats and the PCG's first 82-meter OPV under the Philippine Ports and Philippine Coast Guard Capability Development Project.

In regard to the US, US Coast Guard USCG (USCG) and PCG engagements underscore non-traditional security threats and the promotion of a rules-based governance and secure waterways.<sup>27</sup> In 2018, the USCG *Stratton* took part in the Maritime Training Activity *Sama-Sama* with the maritime forces of Japan, the United States, and the Philippines.<sup>28</sup> Another maritime drill was conducted between the USCG and the PCG in Subic Bay in 2021, which covered counter-terrorism, disaster response, and maritime law enforcement.<sup>29</sup> The US has likewise increased the PCG personnel it trains which include low-ranking technicians.<sup>30</sup> Other courses that the USCG has offered to the Philippines include Small Boat Operations which aims to enhance Surface Support Force capabilities for search and rescue operations, and Basic Life Saving and Tactical Combat Casualty Care by members of the US Civilian Military Support Element-Philippines (CMSE PHL). Last year, members of Personnel of the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), Philippine National Police Maritime Group (PNP

MG), and Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) took the advanced boarding officer given by the USCG.

On marine environmental protection, search and rescue, firefighting and oil spill response, the PCG, together with the Japanese Coast Guard (JCG) and the Indonesian Coast Guard, have conducted the Maritime Pollution Training Exercises (MARPOLEX) last May.<sup>31</sup> The PCG also signed a memorandum of understanding with the Indonesian Maritime Security Agency on maritime security in 2019.<sup>32</sup> With India, there have been coast guard exercises in 2017 which focused on cross boarding, maritime pollution response and containment.<sup>33</sup> And with China, there is the Joint Coast Guard Committee (JCGC) which serves as a platform to manage maritime issues and expand areas of collaboration. These coast guard cooperation is much needed because of the presence of robbery at sea in maritime Southeast Asia (Strait of Malacca or in Sulu and Sulawesi Seas) that warrants an exchange of information on vessel registration and regulation, and vessel monitoring system.<sup>34</sup> The PCG urgently needs continuous support for capability development in maritime safety, marine environmental protection, search and rescue, and maritime law enforcement.<sup>35</sup> In view of these, South Korea can play a role in the PCG's plan to procure high-endurance boats, rigid hull inflatable boats (RHIBs), and smaller watercraft from other countries.<sup>36</sup>

### **Conclusion and Policy Considerations**

Manila's so-called independent foreign policy could be bolstered by having robust security partnerships let alone maritime security partnerships with traditional partners. This can be subsumed under a strategic partnership between the Philippines and South Korea which was already being discussed during the Duterte and Moon administrations. In this regard, certain recommendations in promoting mil-to-mil and maritime cooperation between the Philippines and South Korea may be

considered. First, apart from the maritime exercises mentioned above, there can be a TOR for Navy-to-Navy Cooperation just as there is for the Philippine and South Korean Army. Through the Joint Defense Cooperation Committee and Joint Committee Meeting on Logistics and Defense Industry Cooperation of the Philippines and South Korea, South Korean support for a possible Philippine submarine project could be reviewed given that Indonesia's T PAL has already partnered with Daewoo Shipbuilding and Marine Engineering to build Indonesian submarines.

As per a retired Philippine Rear Admiral, South Korea may further aid the Philippines in the following areas: submarine rescue training program; common equipment for surface warfare requirements (e.g., anti-ship, anti-air missiles, mine warfare systems); co-development and co-production ventures under a G2G arrangement with Korean defense industries hub for ship parts and sub-systems; joint naval exercises to improve interoperability and testing of new systems; naval staff-to-staff talks; development of local supply chain to support the maintenance of Jose Rizal-class frigate; contribute to the Philippines' Self-Reliant Defense Posture (SRDP) for the Navy (e.g., design of fast attack craft, transfer of technology, technical skills training for civilian workers, investment in STEM skills for local schools; assistance in integrating sealines of communications (SLOC) defense system in terms of surveillance, patrol, interdiction and Command, Control, Communication and Intelligence (C3I) systems).<sup>37</sup>

It also has to be noted that South Korea recently unveiled its plan for an anti-access/area denial (A2/AD) weapons system which the Philippines could study and consider for the defense of its maritime core interests.<sup>38</sup> Second, based on Coast Guard cooperation stated earlier and the Philippines and Japan Coast Guard cooperation, there can be a PCG-SKCG [South Korean Coast Guard] Bilateral Summit or bilateral coast guard

mechanism similar to that with China. There can further be port visits by the South Korean Coast Guard so as to intensify coast guard diplomacy and interservice cooperation. Relatedly, a cooperation agreement could be made between both countries' Bureau of Fisheries as they play supplementary roles in maritime law enforcement operations. In addition to invest early on in maritime security partnership, institutional cooperation between South Korean and Philippine maritime academies/institutions such as the Philippine Merchant Marine Academy (PMMMA), the pioneer maritime institution in the Philippines where PCG personnel are also being trained, can be operationalized.

In this regard, both countries can commence and even regularize both naval and coast guard exercises in order to share best practices and operational experiences as what the Philippines has with other countries. Significantly, interservice cooperation should not only include the Navy and the Coast Guard but also the Philippines' National Police Maritime Group and National Coast Watch Center (NCWC) as they form "the core of a web of institutions mandated to contribute to aspects of maritime security" despite their overlapping functions and roles.<sup>39</sup> All these matters would be helpful in fulfilling the mission and vision stated in the 2020-2024 Philippine Maritime Strategy.<sup>40</sup> Finally, since minilaterals are on the rise in the region, a proposal for a Trilateral Security Initiative, which would increase security policy coordination and cooperation between Manila, Seoul and Washington, could be explored.<sup>41</sup>

## Endnote

<sup>1</sup> Joanne Lin, "ASEAN's Relevance for the New South Korean Administration," Fulcrum, May 20, 2022, <https://fulcrum.sg/aseans-relevance-for-the-new-south-korean-administration/>

<sup>2</sup> Yonhap, "Yoon says will 'positively review joining' Quad if invited: report," The Korea Herald, April 26, 2022, <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20220426000151>

<sup>3</sup> See "ASEAN, Republic of Korea renew commitment to strengthen partnership," ASEAN, <https://asean.org/asean-republic-of-korea-renew-commitment-to-strengthen-partnership-2/>; see also ASEAN -ROK Plan of Action to Implement the Joint Vision for Peace, Prosperity and Partnership (2021-2025).

<sup>4</sup> "Philippines fast becoming key market for Korean military hardware," Asia New Agency, May 14, 2022, <https://greatawakeningmusic.com/world/philippines-fast-becoming-key-market-for-korean-military-hardware/>

<sup>5</sup> Priam Nepomuceno, "Ph, S. Korea to deepen maritime security ties," Philippine New Agency, March 25, 2021, <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1134805>; Yonhap, "South Korean, Filipino defense chides discuss arms industry cooperation," The Korea Times, June 3, 2022, <https://m.koreatimes.co.kr/pages/article.asp?newsIdx=330389>

<sup>6</sup> Jay Batongbacal, "The Philippines' Conceptualization of National Security," Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, November 4, 2021, <https://amti.csis.org/philippine-conceptualization-of-maritime-security/>.

<sup>7</sup> Batongbacal, "The Philippines' Conceptualization of National Security."

<sup>8</sup> Xylee Paculba, "Oceans of Opportunity: Southeast Asia's Shared Maritime Challenges," CSIS, June 7, 2021, <https://www.csis.org/events/oceans-opportunity-southeast-asias-shared-maritime-challenges-session-one>

<sup>9</sup> "SFA Locsin Highlights PH Focus on Maritime Security Cooperation in ASEAN at FM Retreat," Department of Foreign Affairs, <https://dfa.gov.ph/dfa-news/dfa-releasesupdate/30144-sfa-locsin-highlights-ph-focus-on-maritime-security-cooperation-in-asean-at-fm-retreat>

<sup>10</sup> National Marine Policy and National Security Policy cited in Jay Batongbacal, Terrorists include ISIS, Maute Group and Abu Sayyaf.

<sup>11</sup> Xylee Paculba, "Oceans of opportunity."

<sup>12</sup> Dianne Faye Despi, "Developing a Framework for Philippine Security Cooperation in a Changing Maritime Milieu," APPFI Research Paper MDS 2019-01, 16-17.

<sup>13</sup> Despi, "Developing a Framework for Philippine Security Cooperation in a Changing Maritime Milieu." There are said to be more than 30 Philippine maritime agencies.

<sup>14</sup> Despi, 16-17.

<sup>15</sup> Despi, 16-17.

<sup>16</sup> Despi, 16-17.

<sup>17</sup> Paculba, "Oceans of Opportunity."

<sup>18</sup> Paculba.

<sup>19</sup> Paculba.

<sup>20</sup> Despi, "Developing a Framework for Philippine Security Cooperation in a Changing Maritime Milieu." 19.

<sup>21</sup> Jekki Pascual, "EU wants to beef up maritime cooperation with the Philippines," ABS-CBN News, February 28, 2022, <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/02/28/22/eu-wants-to-beef-up-maritime-cooperation-with-ph>

- <sup>22</sup> Jay Tristan Tarriela, "Coast Guard Engagement as Interim Alternative to Bilateral Maritime Cooperation," in *Resilient Alliance: Moving the US-Philippines Security Relations Forward* eds. Jeffery Ordaniel and Carl Baker, Issues and Insights Vol. 22.1 (March 2022), [https://pacforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Resilient-Alliance-Edited-Volume\\_ver2.pdf](https://pacforum.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Resilient-Alliance-Edited-Volume_ver2.pdf), 28.
- <sup>23</sup> Tarriela, "Coast Guard Engagement as Interim Alternative to Bilateral Maritime Cooperation," 29.
- <sup>24</sup> Tarriela, 29.
- <sup>25</sup> Tarriela, 27.
- <sup>26</sup> Tarriela, 27.
- <sup>27</sup> Tarriela, 27.
- <sup>28</sup> Tarriela, 28.
- <sup>29</sup> Tarriela, 28.
- <sup>30</sup> Tarriela, 28.
- <sup>31</sup> "PCG bolsters interoperability with Indonesia, Japan counterparts," Philippine Coast Guard, May 26, 2022, <https://coastguard.gov.ph/index.php/transparency/2015-score-card/4655-pcg-bolsters-interoperability-with-indonesia-japan-counterparts>
- <sup>32</sup> "PCG and Maritime Security Agency of Indonesia forge MOU to strengthen Maritime Security Cooperation," Philippine Coast Guard, <https://coastguard.gov.ph/index.php/related-links/145-news/news-2019/3408-pcg-and-maritime-security-agency-of-indonesia-forge-mou-to-strengthen-maritime-security-cooperation>
- <sup>33</sup> "PCG, ICG conduct joint maritime drill in Cavite," Philippine Coast Guard, <https://coastguard.gov.ph/index.php/related-links/11-news/1433-pcg-icg-conduct-joint-maritime-drill-in-cavite>
- <sup>34</sup> Tarriela, "Coast Guard Engagement," 28.
- <sup>35</sup> Tarriela, 25.
- <sup>36</sup> Paculba, "Oceans of Opportunity."
- <sup>37</sup> Rommel Jude Ong, "South Korea's New Southern Policy: Opportunities for Defense and Naval Cooperation" (paper presented in a Webinar on Maritime Security and Strengthening Maritime Governance in the Philippines by the ROK Embassy and University of the Philippines Korea Research Center on August 20, 2020).
- <sup>38</sup> Daehan Lee, "South Korea Reveals Plans To Deter China Via A2/AD," January 12, 2022, <https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2022/01/south-korea-reveals-plans-to-deter-china-via-a2-ad/>
- <sup>39</sup> Dr. Scot Edwards, "Maritime Security Efforts Grow in the Philippines," Indo-Pacific Defense Forum, September 14, 2021, <https://ipdefenseforum.com/2021/09/maritime-security-efforts-grow-in-the-philippines/>
- <sup>40</sup> See "Philippine Maritime Strategy on the Implementation and Enforcement of Relevant Instruments of International Maritime Organization," <https://marina.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Philippine-Maritime-Strategy-on-the-Implementation-and-Enforcement-of-Relevant-IMO-Instruments-2020-2024.pdf>
- <sup>41</sup> Julio Amador III, "US-South Korea and the Philippines: Towards a Trilateral Security Initiative," *Asia-Pacific Bulletin*, January 27, 2022, [https://www.eastwestcenter.org/system/tdf/private/us-south\\_korea\\_and\\_the\\_philippines-towards\\_a\\_trilateral\\_security\\_initiative.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=41851](https://www.eastwestcenter.org/system/tdf/private/us-south_korea_and_the_philippines-towards_a_trilateral_security_initiative.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=41851)

*Malaysia's Security Relations with the ROK:  
Exploring Maritime Security 2022 and  
Beyond*

Zokhri Idris and Nurliana Kamaruddin

**Introduction and Background of Discussion**

Discussion on maritime security for both Malaysia and ROK has intensified in the recent months due to the launch of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) strategy by the Biden-Harris administration.<sup>1</sup> The current U.S. administration following its predecessors is continuing its pivot back to the region. What was formerly recognized as the Asia-Pacific has now been expanded to include the Indian Ocean and has realigned the U.S.'s maritime security interest, particularly the South China Sea (SCS). The SCS has always been a contentious topic in Asia, depending on China's behavior in the area due to its seemingly expansionist ambition in claiming the Spratly Islands (involving contesting claims by Malaysia, Vietnam, Brunei and The Philippines) as well as The Paracels (involving Taiwan and Vietnam).

At the same time, the Republic of Korea (ROK), through its New Southern Policy Plus (NSP+) has been increasing its engagement with ASEAN as well as presenting itself as an option in balancing the great-powers competition. ROK's current President, President Yoon Seok-yeol is also taking "initiative to formulate ROK's own Indo-Pacific strategy framework."<sup>2</sup> The new framework will incorporate the work already done through the NSP and NSP+. Overall, continued tension and possible maritime conflict due to China's expansionism in the Southeast Asian region are common cause of concern for both Malaysia and the ROK.

Despite being a maritime nation, Malaysia lacks clear parameters for its maritime security, thus affecting its security focus. With the recent launch of FOIP, Malaysia and ROK should creatively craft new approaches to mitigate competition in Southeast Asia. This paper explores the current standing of Maritime Security of both countries and the need for both to support ASEAN-led mechanisms to further mitigate future dynamism in the SCS (and surrounding bodies of water such as the Straits of Melaka).

### **Statement of Issue**

Both Malaysia and ROK have concerns when it comes to maritime security and some of the key issues are:

#### ***Ambiguity in Malaysia's Concept and Parameters for Maritime Security***

The Malaysian Defense White Paper in 2020 claims that the 'geographical attribute positions Malaysia as a maritime nation with continental roots, the bridging linchpin between the two ocean regions.'<sup>3</sup> Malaysia is a maritime nation due to its geographical features but arguably does not behave like one.<sup>4</sup> The nation is surrounded by the Straits of Malacca and the SCS. The White Paper statement implies that Malaysia's government treats maritime security as one of its critical securitization aspects, however it is argued that the strategic culture of Malaysia does not reflect that.<sup>5</sup> This is seen in the lack of one coherent maritime security framework.

There are several policy documents that guide Malaysia's maritime security. They are the National Security Policy which touches on maritime security aspects of overlapping claims, trans-border crimes, illegal immigrants, and resource management.<sup>6</sup> Second is Malaysia's Defense White Paper, which laid out the defense plans for the Malaysian Armed Forces covering both land and sea territories. Thirdly, the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement

Agency (MMEA) Act. Fourth, is Maritime Defense Strategy 2009 and lastly the Maritime Security Act (a working draft bill from 2011).

Relevant ministries will have their internal parameters and action plans on how to deal with issues and oftentimes, these are brought to cabinet discussion if it is an inter-ministries' concern. This lack of coherency and conflicting prioritization is a problem when discussing matters related to Malaysia's maritime security. Its lack of objectives and goals requires ad-hoc intervention from relevant ministries, which is often delayed. From Malaysia's perspective, 'maritime security is used in a sense that is flexible enough to encompass any issue related to maritime interest.'<sup>7</sup>

### *ROK's Maritime Security Dilemma*

Although the ROK has no maritime issue in the ASEAN region per se, the increased militarization of the SCS and resulting conflict would also impact South Korea as sea trading routes towards South Korea pass through the area. Additionally, its tumultuous relations with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) lend to much of its maritime security concern. The Cheonan incident and the Yeongpyeong Island bombing, both in 2010 would still suggest that DPRK is an imminent threat to the ROK. Issues concerning the enforcement of sanctions on the DPRK, border violations as well as IUU fishing (illegal, unreported and unregulated) are all examples of the ROK's maritime security concerns. Although the two countries signed the Comprehensive Military Agreement (CMA) concerning the maritime security buffer between them, the DPRK has not ceased provocations.<sup>8</sup> Malaysia has also had issues with the DPRK using its ports for its illegal activities<sup>9</sup> although recent diplomatic fallout meant that this is less of an issue currently and in the near future.

### *China's Expansion in the SCS for both Malaysia and ROK*

In 2022, China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) enters its 9th year of operationalization. China's presence in ASEAN through its mega-investment in infrastructure aims to "promote the connectivity of Asian, European and African continents and their adjacent seas,"<sup>10</sup> had integrated the Silk Road Economic Belt (via land) and the 21st Maritime Silk Road (from the Indian Ocean to the Straits of Malacca and towards the SCS).

On a separate dimension, territorial disputes over the Spratly Islands and the Paracels have been seen as an aggressive expansionism move which alarms stakeholder countries like Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and The Philippines. However, due to greater economic dependency and entanglement brought about through increased trade and BRI investments, these countries cannot afford to antagonize China despite China's assertiveness into the region.

For the ROK, China's assertiveness in the SCS would also contribute to the ROK effectively being trapped in the increasing U.S.-China competition. China has long made its displeasure known concerning the U.S.-ROK military cooperation. The US-ROK joint naval exercises in the Yellow Sea that the ROK embarked on as a show of strength due to its 2010 clash with DPRK were strongly criticized by China. Recent exercises in 2021 have also drawn criticism.<sup>11</sup> Maritime tension would continue to rise as the ROK has made clear interest in joining the Quad.<sup>12</sup> Should the ongoing tension in the SCS spill over into overt conflict, then no doubt the ROK would not be able to claim neutrality in the matter.

### *Current Cooperation Framework*

Malaysia and the ROK established diplomatic relations in 1960 and the inclusion of the ROK in Malaysia's Look East Policy in 1983 has ensured steady cooperation between the two countries.

However, as development-oriented countries, both Malaysia and the ROK prioritize economic stability and growth. This means that bilateral cooperation is generally geared toward development even when similar security concerns driven by anti-communist tendencies became the motivation for establishing diplomatic relationships and cooperation. Therefore, official cooperation between the two countries has mostly focused on trade, education, and socio-cultural exchanges. The ROK is Malaysia's 11<sup>th</sup> largest trade partner, number 9 in terms of export value and number 7 in terms of import value.<sup>13</sup>

This does not mean that security cooperation has not existed between the two countries. In 1987, Malaysia and the ROK began defense cooperation folded into economic cooperation with the focus on "defense acquisition and defense technology and industry."<sup>14</sup> This was followed by the establishment of a "joint committee for weapons production" in 1992.<sup>15</sup> When it comes to formal security cooperation between Malaysia and the ROK, it is only recently that more concrete ventures on a bilateral scale have begun to happen. The two countries signed a defense cooperation in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in April 2022 after 3 years of negotiation.<sup>16</sup> The MoU is meant to cover "people-to-people exchanges, military education and cooperation in the defense industry and logistics."<sup>17</sup> This formalization is a positive avenue to open more concrete security cooperation in other sectors.

For both countries, security cooperation has mostly been approached through a multilateral platform. Malaysia's foremost focus in foreign policy is ASEAN and much of its security cooperation is conducted via the ASEAN regional platforms. This includes the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) as well as the ASEAN Defense Ministerial Meeting (ADMM) and ADMM+. In fact, it was through Malaysia's support the ROK was elevated as full dialogue partner with ASEAN.<sup>18</sup> As a participant in both the ARF and ADMM, Malaysia and the ROK engage in the various security

issues that concern the region, including that of the SCS, disarmament, and nuclear non-proliferation. Additionally, the militaries of Malaysia and the ROK have also worked together in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations for example in missions in Somalia and East Timor. Malaysia and the ROK military also recently conducted training under UN peacekeeping operations in Lebanon.<sup>19</sup>

Overall, Malaysia and the ROK have ample areas of common security concerns where cooperation can be better expanded with more concrete initiatives carried out. The next section looks at several areas of potential security cooperation which would fit under the aegis of non-traditional and development-based security.

## **Other Potential Security Cooperation**

### *Food Security*

Food security is a concern for both countries due to factors of war, climate change and disruption in the supply chain. In the long run, food security continues to dominate important aspects of non-traditional security. Malaysia and ROK share similar dietary consumption whereby rice is the main consumption with every meal but also in the consumption of seafood products. This falls naturally under the realm of marine security as well. The security of fishing vessels in volatile waters is an immediate concern but can and should encompass the sustainability of fisheries and fishing practices.

In the larger realm of food security, both countries can share experience and expertise in the mitigation of food security risks. ROK has developed technology-based farming to accustom production to all weather. Malaysia has an abundance of arable land and is still developing when it comes to tech-agriculture. Additionally, Malaysia is looking to transition from plantation

and commercial crops into returning to better self-sufficient in food production.<sup>20</sup>

### ***Technological Advancement (Digitalization and 5G)***

The introduction of 5G in Malaysia, scheduled to happen in 2022 is a step forward in improving the network capacity of the country. 5G technology will enable a larger network capacity with higher network speed. This would also allow the introduction of new platforms and sensors, the utilization of IoT devices and a transition from legacy systems in use by the Malaysian Armed Forces. In maritime security, this would translate to the possibility of new generation unmanned vehicles both for air and over water, a more effective surveillance and response network, as well as the utilization of newer maritime to land communication and navigation systems.

The ROK's leading capacity in 5G and ICT technology would make the country a perfect partner when it comes to upgrading its maritime military technology. Additionally, the introduction of increased digital assets would require new protocols and policies dealing with cybersecurity issues to ensure the rollout and digitalization of maritime assets are not compromised. Naturally, cooperation on cybersecurity could, and should, also extend beyond the maritime sector. Malaysia's own progress with the digitalization of various manufacturing industries means an increasing need to incorporate cybersecurity concerns in all efforts be it in public and private sectors.

### ***Green New Deal***

The Ukraine-Russian War has severely impacted oil production which in turn caused disruptions to the global supply chain of other commodities including food and services. The volatility of oil production and consumption in the current decade has resulted in a more aggressive exploration of

renewable energy. The ROK ranks 112<sup>th</sup> while Malaysia ranks 132<sup>nd</sup> in the Global Sustainability Index in 2022. Similar concerns and opportunities could possibly exist in both countries, which open more doors of collaboration when it comes to policy making, pollution reduction, climate change, oceans, biodiversity, and energy. A Green New Deal is a dire need for developing and least developed countries. Bilateral cooperation between ROK and Malaysia could be developed into more tangible future multilateral corporations for sustainability.

### **Policy Recommendations, Feasibility, and Implementation Strategies**

As discussed earlier, Malaysia's maritime security is not clearly codified in a single document. Rather, it exists in various sources and needs to be consolidated. Based on the National Defense Policy, National Security Policy, the Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency, as well as the 2019 Defense White Paper three perimeters of Maritime Security Policy (MSP) for Malaysia can be derived for recommendation. First, MSP should consider Malaysia's geographical interest as the country is surrounded by the Straits of Malacca, the SCS, the Singapore Strait, the Sunda Strait, the Lombok Strait and is connected via land with Thailand and Indonesia. Therefore, peace and stability in its core areas, offshore economic zones, and strategic waterway and airspace must be given priority.

Second, focus should be given to manage traditional and non-traditional security threats. Traditional security includes encroachment in Malaysian territorial sovereignty due to China's expansionist behavior. A highly securitized SCS will pose a threat to Malaysia as Malaysian waters exist 200 nautical miles into the SCS and will have a direct impact to Malaysia's Sea Lines of Communications (SLOC). For non-traditional security activities ranging from maritime crime, drugs and arms trafficking, illegal fishing, terrorism and foreign armed ship activities, pollution

would have to be mitigated. This includes not only Malaysia's own maritime security efforts but joint-efforts with neighboring countries (including South Korea) to constantly patrol and share information.

The third parameter would be to protect the national interest and territorial sovereignty of Malaysia. Apart from its geographical interests, economic interests and territorial sovereignty should be important perimeters in constructing the MSP. As a trading nation, economic activities in the SLOC must be safeguarded to ensure safe and smooth passage of vessels in and out of the country. This directly becomes a national interest for Malaysia as a hub of regional and world trade activities. At the same time, overlapping claims of territories with other nations must be dealt constructively by the Malaysian government in ensuring its waters and islands are safe to be navigated under the control of Malaysian government and its laws.

In consideration of this, Malaysia and ROK must consolidate their approach toward FOIP, IPS, as well as IPEF. Malaysia's stance on the FOIP is in line with its neutral foreign policy approach as well as the ASEAN's Outlook on the Indo-Pacific. Malaysia is also in line with ASEAN taking the proactive role in the region.<sup>21</sup> While Malaysia welcomes all US-led policies on a neutral basis, Malaysia should be clear on its level of integration so as not to antagonize China as its main trade partner. Similarly, ROK does not want to alienate China either considering the geopolitical influence on its safety and relations with the DPRK. Both ASEAN and the ROK should work on allowing the FOIP to be more inclusive as well as take into consideration China's role in the region. China remains an important state actor in the region, as well as to both Malaysia and China.

While Malaysia and the ROK have ratified the Regional and Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), both countries should leverage the Partnership to balance the superpower competition. While the RCEP's economic benefit is undeniable

and brings greater exporting opportunities for both Malaysia and ROK, it could also be leveraged as a cushion from future friction between China and the RCEP's member countries. RCEP's strength lies in its 16 member states, a mixture of diverse economies in the Asia-Pacific which could impact the interests of U.S. and China. ASEAN believes that China's expansionism should be mitigated through discussion and dialogue and the RCEP is one of the mediums which could be utilized to that purpose.

Malaysia should support the institutionalization of the ASEAN-Korea Defense Meeting, by pushing other ASEAN countries to support Korea-ASEAN Maritime Security and Safety Forum. At the same time, ROK should support ASEAN's security autonomy by empowering ASEAN-led mechanisms in maritime security. Institutionalism would formalize work relations between Malaysia and ROK, as well as between ASEAN and ROK. The absence of superpower influence in ASEAN-led mechanisms will give confidence to ASEAN's regional capacity in managing future conflicts. This requires ASEAN to step up its game and be a leader of its own destiny. No doubt, ASEAN has its security baggage (dealing with Myanmar), but its method of consensus in decision making has managed to prevent serious conflicts in the region.

Malaysia and ROK could also explore a mutual approach to deal with the contentious territorial claim of China and various ASEAN members in the SCS. A different approach would include bringing in international partners in the upcoming discussion on the Code of Conduct<sup>22</sup> to explore neutral views beyond that of ASEAN and Beijing's perspectives. Areas of collaboration as detailed in the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the SCS (Para 6 A to E)<sup>23</sup> should be given emphasis rather than the claims. This will include for all stakeholders in the overlapping territorial claims and the importance to safeguard the overall territorial value.

By forging cooperation rather than focusing on individual claims, all parties would be able to work on trust-building which leads to possible negotiations in the future. As the SCS remains one of the biggest concerns for surrounding member states, countries should not give up on searching for new models of cooperation. Usage of force and retaliation could and should be eradicated while working toward a peaceful settlement of the issue. Malaysia and the ROK could spearhead such an initiative.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

The Southeast Asia region is expected to be in the limelight of the U.S.-China rivalry even as we progress beyond 2022. China is strengthening its non-military presence by investing in infrastructure financing like the BRI. As a developing nation, Malaysia welcomes any FDI into the country and would work to increase its intraregional and interregional competitiveness. However, when it comes to maritime security, Malaysia and ROK are not at the same level, and this could be a challenge for both parties. At the same time, China remains an external factor that requires both Malaysia and the ROK to work together to mitigate the impact of an increasingly self-assured China. However, this discussion does not suggest that framework/agreements should be made anew to counter failing arrangements. An improvisation of existing frameworks and efforts is needed to seek greater harmonization between Malaysia with ASEAN, ROK and China.

It is more challenging for Malaysia, due to the absence of a concrete framework for maritime security when maritime security issues continue evolving. There needs to be a strategy at par with the ROK. This is to create compatible relations and cooperation between the two countries to weather ever-growing threats in the SCS and the Malacca Strait. On a regional level, both countries could jointly construct ASEAN's strategic autonomy as a balancing strategy against the great powers' rivalry. ASEAN needs capacity building for it to lead when communicating with

both China and the U.S. The future should project more narratives from ASEAN when the region is dealing with great-power rivalry in the region.

## Endnote

<sup>1</sup> "Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States," *The White House*, February 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/U.S.-Indo-Pacific-Strategy.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> "United States-Republic of Korea Leaders' Joint Statement - The White House", *The White House*, 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/05/21/united-states-republic-of-korea-leaders-joint-statement/>.

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Defence (MINDEF), *Defence White Paper: A Secure, Sovereign and Prosperous Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: Ministry of Defence, 2020), 4.

<sup>4</sup> Adam K.W. Leong, "Is Malaysia Really a 'Maritime' Nation?" *The Diplomat*, 2022, <https://thediplomat.com/2021/05/is-malaysia-really-a-maritime-nation/>.

<sup>5</sup> Leong, "Is Malaysia Really a 'Maritime' Nation?"

<sup>6</sup> Majlis Keselamatan Negara [National Security Council], *National Security Policy* (repr., Kuala Lumpur: Malaysia's National Security Council, 2019).

<sup>7</sup> Leong, "Is Malaysia Really a 'Maritime' Nation?"

<sup>8</sup> Draudt, Darcie. "The Politics of Implementing the Korean Comprehensive Military Agreement in the Maritime Domain," *Maritime Awareness Project Analysis*, 2021. <https://www.nbr.org/publication/the-politics-of-implementing-the-korean-comprehensive-military-agreement-in-the-maritime-domain/>.

<sup>9</sup> Daniel Salisbury and Endi Mato, "How North Korea Evades Sanctions in Southeast Asia: The Malaysia Case", *The Diplomat*, July 20, 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/07/how-north-korea-evades-sanctions-in-southeast-asia-the-malaysia-case/>.

<sup>10</sup> "Belt and Road Initiative," *Belt and Road Initiative*, <https://www.beltroad-initiative.com/belt-and-road/>.

<sup>11</sup> "China's Remarks on S. Korea-U.S. Military Exercise at ARF 'Unusual': Official | Yonhap News Agency", *Yonhap News Agency*, August 9, 2022, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20210809006900325.v>

<sup>12</sup> Kang, Seung-woo. "Why Doesn't US Want to Add South Korea to Quad?" *The Korea Times*, 2022. [https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2022/05/120\\_329904.html](https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2022/05/120_329904.html).

<sup>13</sup> "Malaysia Trade Balance, Exports, Imports by Country 2019 | WITS Data", *Wits World Bank*, 2022, <https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/MYS/Year/2019/TradeFlow/EXPI MP/Partner/by-country>.

<sup>14</sup> "Malaysia's National Defence Policy," *Malaysia's National Defence Policy (Prime Minister's Office of Malaysia)*, July 22, 2019, <https://www.pmo.gov.my/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/National-Defence-Policy.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> Hyung-Jong Kim and Hanafi Hussin, *South Korea-Malaysia Relations: Political and Economic Interactions from the Perspective of Bilateralism and Regionalism* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 2021).

<sup>16</sup> "Hishammuddin: Malaysia, S. Korea Sign MoU to Strengthen Defence Cooperation," *Malay Mail*, April 27, 2022, <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2022/04/27/hishammuddin-malaysia-s.-korea-sign-mou-to-strengthen-defence-cooperation/2055993>.

<sup>17</sup> "Defense Chiefs of S. Korea, Malaysia Hold Virtual Talks on Defense Cooperation | Yonhap News Agency", *Yonhap News Agency*, April 27, 2022, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20220427009500325>.

<sup>18</sup> Hyung-Jong Kim and Hanafi Hussin, 2021, p.60.

<sup>19</sup> "Korean, Malaysian and Italian Peacekeepers Offer Unique Training Programme to LAF," *UNIFIL*, March 4, 2020, <https://unifil.unmissions.org/korean-malaysian-and-italian-peacekeepers-offer-unique-training-programme-laf>.

<sup>20</sup> Abu Dardak Rozhan, "Addressing Food Security in Challenging Times," *FFTC-AP*, accessed on June 3, 2022. [https://ap.ffmpeg.org.tw/article/2634#:~:text=In Malaysia%2C the food production,\(PPP\)%3D2004-2006](https://ap.ffmpeg.org.tw/article/2634#:~:text=In%20Malaysia%2C%20the%20food%20production,(PPP)%3D2004-2006).

<sup>21</sup> "ASEAN Should Claim Leadership In Indo-Pacific, Says Saifuddin", *Malay Mail*, 2022, <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2022/06/20/asean-should-claim-leadership-in-indo-pacific-says-saifuddin/13300>.

<sup>22</sup> "China, ASEAN to Hold SCS Code of Conduct Talks This Month", *Radio Free Asia*, May 16, 2022, <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/asean-southchinasea-05162022091755.html>.

<sup>23</sup> "Declaration On the Conduct of Parties In The SCS," *ASEAN*, May 15, 2012, <https://asean.org/declaration-on-the-conduct-of-parties-in-the-south-china-sea-2/>.

*Vietnam-Korea Security Relations:  
Current State and Prospect*

Ha Anh Tuan

**Introduction**

As the Cold War was coming to an end in the late 1980s, Vietnam initiated its *Doi Moi* process in 1986, deciding to open its relations with all countries and international organizations on the principle of co-existence to minimize security threats emerged after the collapse of the socialist bloc. In December 1992, Vietnam and the Republic of Korea (ROK) established diplomatic relations, making a remarkable milestone in bilateral relations, given their bitter immediate history. During its struggle against the US for independence, also known as the Vietnam War in the West, Vietnam had to fight against about 320,000 South Korean troops deployed in Vietnamese territory throughout the period from 1964 to 1973.<sup>1</sup> This period witnessed ROK soldiers' committing in serious atrocities against Vietnamese civilians, including an estimated of 45 civilian massacres.<sup>2,3</sup> Furthermore, Vietnam was a close friend of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) within the socialist camp during the Cold War.

Against this context, the newly established Vietnam-ROK relations in the early days focused on economic cooperation. This choice proved to be successful as bilateral trade and investment has grown steadily, leading to higher mutual trust and open further cooperation in security areas. The signing of the Comprehensive Partnership in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century in 2001 and its subsequent upgrade to strategic cooperative partnership in 2009 presented Hanoi and Seoul with better frameworks to deepen bilateral security cooperation.

## **The Current Stage of Vietnam-ROK Relations**

The spearhead of Vietnam-ROK cooperation has been economic partnership. Total trade between Vietnam and the ROK was 2.1 billion USD in 2001 when the Comprehensive Partnership relations was established, rose to 9.5 billion USD in 2009 just as the two countries upgraded the relations to Strategic Partnership. After the two sides inked a free trade agreement in 2015, bilateral trade continue to expand rapidly, from 37.6 billion USD in 2015 to 80.7 billion USD in 2021.<sup>4</sup> The two sides committed to bring bilateral trade to 100 billion by 2023 and 150 billion USD by 2030.<sup>5,6</sup> Vietnam jumped from ROK's 59<sup>th</sup> largest export partner in 1989 to the third rank in 2019, making Hanoi as the most rapidly grown partner in terms of trading with Seoul. The ROK is currently Vietnam's 3<sup>rd</sup> largest trading partner and ranks the second in terms of Vietnam's FDI and ODA.<sup>7</sup> Vietnam is the biggest ODA recipient of ROK's ODA.<sup>8</sup>

Strong economic ties between Vietnam and the ROK spill over into bilateral security cooperation. As early as 2006, Hanoi and Seoul reached an MOU on mutual support in UN peacekeeping operations and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. After upgrading their relations to strategic partnership in 2009, the two countries signed several security-related agreements, including the 2012 MOU on Information Safety and Security, the 2014 MOU on Military Information Security, the 2016 MOU on the Clearance of Unexploded Ordnances (UXOs), and especially the 2018 Joint Vision Statement on Defense Cooperation for the period from 2018 to 2030.

From 2012, Hanoi and Seoul established an annual Defense Strategy Dialogue at vice defense minister level. This dialogue mechanism is held annually on the rotational basis between the two countries, except for 2020 when the Covid-19 limited international travels. By 2021, nine of such dialogues have been held and the areas for bilateral security cooperation have been expanded. At the 9<sup>th</sup> Dialogue held in Hanoi, the two sides have

identified exchanges of senior-level officials, defense training and education, arms industry, maritime security, cybersecurity, settlement of war consequences, activities related to UN peacekeeping, and coordination activities at multilateral frameworks as key areas for security cooperation.<sup>9,10</sup> This is in line with the 2018 Joint Vision Statement on Defense Cooperation.

These agreements laid a solid foundation for Vietnam-ROK security cooperation and the identified priority areas have been implemented. The ROK provided Vietnam with 20 million USD financial assistance to carry out Korea-Viet Nam Mine Action Project in four years (2018-2021) which aims at, *inter alia*, landmine clearance, mine risk education, and victim assistance. By November 2020, 16,880ha was surveyed and 9,086ha of land were cleared under this project.<sup>11</sup> The success of the project led to a bigger Vietnam-ROK cooperation project worth of USD 33 million for the period from 2022-2026, in which Seoul would provide USD 25 million, to clear land-contaminated with bombs, mines, and explosives; aid victims of explosive devices, and create safe livelihoods for people in three provinces in the central of Vietnam.<sup>12</sup>

Trade in arms between Vietnam and the ROK, however, is limited. Since 1992, the two countries only reached trade deal in arms in 2017 and 2018. In both years, the ROK exported 60 million USD of arms to Vietnam. This represents only 1.66 percent of the ROK's arms export and 1.33 percent of Vietnam's arms import value in this period.<sup>13</sup>

### **Security Cooperation in the Maritime Domain**

Vietnam-ROK security cooperation between Vietnam and the ROK in the maritime domains only gained attention in recent years. Maritime domains play a vital part in Vietnam and the ROK security and socio-economic development. Both countries dispute with their respective neighboring states concerning sovereignty

over structures and sovereign rights over different bodies of water in the seas around them. They, however, shy away from supporting each other's claim as a part of their strategy not to take side with any specific country concerning maritime and territorial disputes. Maritime domain cooperation, therefore, involve the supports of fundamental principles of international relations and law, development of human resources, technical supports, and assistance of ships.

Increasing mutual concerns on maritime security cooperation is reflected in Vietnam – ROK high level statements. The 2009 Vietnam-ROK joint statement on the occasion of ROK President Lee Myung-bak's visit to Vietnam only referred to countering piracy as one among many areas for bilateral cooperation in international affairs.<sup>14</sup> The two sides, at the 2011 Vietnam-ROK Join Statement on the occasion of the State Visit of Vietnamese President Truong Tan Sang to the ROK, committed to strengthen cooperation to maintain peace, stability, and freedom of navigation in regional maritime domains in accordance with the international law.<sup>15</sup> In their high-level joint statements in 2014 and 2018, the two sides highlighted the need to maintain peace, security, safety and freedom of navigation and stress on peaceful settlement of maritime related disputes in accordance with international law. They also supported an effective and comprehensive implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) and to accelerate the signing of a substantive and effective Code of Conduct (COC) in the South China Sea.<sup>16</sup>

Political commitment demonstrated in these statements lays solid foundation for an actual cooperation between Hanoi and Seoul on maritime security issues. Ship transfer is the most remarkable area in this regard. Ships transfer program from the ROK to Hanoi is on donation or favorable price-basis. In 2013, the ROK donated Vietnamese Coastguard with three patrol vessels, one of which was among Vietnam's largest patrol vessels with the

capacity of 1,400-ton.<sup>17</sup> Vietnamese Navy was also a beneficiary of the patrol transfer program as it received three refurbished Pohang-class corvettes from the ROK Navy in 2015, 2017 and 2018 respectively.<sup>18</sup>

On the field of personnel training, in October 2019, Vietnamese Ministry of Transport and South Korean Ministry of Oceans and Fisheries signed an MOU on maritime cooperation and crew training.<sup>19</sup> While this MOU is a civilian maritime cooperation initiative by nature, it has security implications as the trained sailors work in different industries, including law enforcement agencies and the navy. The visit of ROK President Moon Jae-in to Vietnam in 2018 also led to an agreement on ROK's transfer of the Hannara training vessel as non-refundable assistance to Vietnam in 2020. This large vessel is capable of training 152 students at one time with advanced equipment, including two training rooms along with classrooms, a library, and a gym area. It was presented to Vietnam's National Maritime University, helping train 400 trainees and 60 lecturers to date.<sup>20</sup>

### **The Future of Vietnam-ROK Security Relations**

The fast-changing dynamics in the region and the current excellent state of bilateral cooperation may propel stronger security ties between Hanoi and Seoul in the coming years.

Externally, a shifting in regional and international power balance, an intensifying Sino-US strategic competition, and the complex security threats caused by potential flashpoints in East Asia, including maritime disputes in the East China Sea and the South China Sea suggest possible adjustments, or even forthcoming significant changes in global and regional architecture.<sup>21,22</sup> This compels regional middle powers, including Vietnam and the ROK, to combine efforts to influence the making of a new regional order favorable to them. Confronting similar geopolitical challenges, Hanoi and Seoul consistently opt for

maintaining relations with both China and the US and seek to enhance their security through bilateral and multilateral cooperation with regional countries.

ROK prioritizes its relations with Hanoi in its reach to Southeast Asia.<sup>23,24</sup> Geographically, Vietnam lies at the heart of Southeast Asia and border with the South China Sea, of which roughly is half of ROK export traverses through.<sup>25,26</sup> Vietnam is also an important member of ASEAN, with which the ROK has an FTA and many other cooperation mechanisms. As a single country, Vietnam's political stability and its vibrant economy offer ROK's companies with obvious opportunities to conduct business. Hanoi's historical experience in dealing with and even fighting against major powers may also be an asset if the ROK has an interest to learn about. Hanoi is currently pro-active in multilateral mechanisms and upholds a regional rules-based order in East Asia. In due course, Hanoi could be an importer of Seoul's defense products.

Conversely, Hanoi eyes Seoul as a potential security partner after witnessing decades of successful economic cooperation. A large part of Hanoi's arms purchase is currently from Russia.<sup>27</sup> The armed conflict in Ukraine and US-led tightened sanctions against Russia may require Vietnam to beef up the diversification of its arsenal and arms purchase. The ROK military strength is the sixth in the world with 45.7 billion USD military spending in 2020, accounting for 2.4 percent of global military spending.<sup>28,29</sup> It has a modern defense industry and is a large military exporter, producing advanced weapons from Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) system to aircrafts, ammunition, explosives, artillery, and patrol ships.<sup>30</sup> Seoul has tripled its military export, from 1.2 billion USD in the period 2011-2015 to 3.8 billion USD in the period 2016-2020. In 2020, ROK's defense exports ranked sixth in value in the world.<sup>31</sup> Seoul is, therefore, a potential arms supplier for Vietnam in the coming decades.

In the maritime domain, the ROK and Vietnam encounter similar challenges. The ROK disputes with China over maritime claims and the permanently submerged Socotra Rock (known as Ieodo by the ROK and Sunyan Jiao by China), and with Japan over Dokdo/Takeshima island and their entitled waters.<sup>32,33</sup> Vietnam disputes with Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Taiwan in some parts of the Spratlys and with China in the Paracels and Spratlys and their entitled waters. As the major parts of trade in goods and energy traversing through the South China Sea has one end in Northeast Asia, the East China Sea and the South China Sea are geographically interconnected, an incident at one area would have legal, political, and security impacts to the other and to the broader regional security.

### **Recommendations for Vietnam-ROK Security Cooperation**

The outstanding all-rounded bilateral relations, their needs, and capabilities allow Vietnam and the ROK to strengthen their security cooperation and play greater role in regional affairs. Defense industry and maritime domain are among potential areas for cooperation.

With regards to defense industry, Hanoi and Seoul could explore the possibility for arms and defense technology transfers, given ROK's capability as a large arms exporter and Vietnam's needs to diversify its arsenal. Arms transfer should focus on high-tech areas, such as cybersecurity, unmanned equipment and weapons, intelligence, and surveillance.

In the maritime domain, the two countries could cooperate in different layers. First, as both Hanoi and Seoul highly value UNCLOS as the most important and comprehensive legal framework governing all activities in the sea, the two countries should join forces, at both official and academic tracks, to promote the rule of law, particularly the UNCLOS as the legal

regime to peacefully manage maritime disputes. Regular international conferences and exchanges between experts of the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam and Diplomatic Academy of Korea could be a starting point for further academic cooperation between the two countries in maritime security. Secondly, Hanoi and Seoul could cooperate and strengthen technical and information sharing on maritime domain to improve maritime domain awareness capabilities. Thirdly, Vietnam and the ROK could further current exchange of naval and law enforcement agencies' vessels and conduct regular joint training exercises both bilaterally and at multilateral mechanisms to improve their performance on the ground. Fourthly, the ROK may make greater contribution to assist Vietnam in enhancing stability and freedom of navigation in the SCS as it directly serves the interest of ROK's trade and investment. Finally, Vietnam and the ROK could actively pool resources within multilateral mechanisms to promote rules based maritime order in the wider region. As the coordinator of ROK-ASEAN relations for the period 2021-2024 Vietnam can consult with the ROK to advance ASEAN-ROK security cooperation, put forth in the 2010 Joint Declaration on ASEAN-ROK Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity and the 2021 Plan of Action to implement it in the period from 2021-2025.<sup>34,35</sup> One issue is to substantialize the role of ASEAN-led mechanisms, such as the ARF, ADMM+, ASEAN+1, and ASEAN+3 by developing concrete and actionable plans within these frameworks and executing them, especially at operational level.

## **Conclusion**

Vietnam-ROK security ties have great potential to expand and deepen as the two countries enjoy strong economic cooperation and socio-cultural connection. Hanoi and Seoul should focus on areas already identified in the bilateral joint communications, especially in high-tech defense industry, information sharing, and maritime domain awareness. A strong security cooperation

between Vietnam and the ROK is of their mutual interests and at the same time contributes to strengthen regional order, peace, and stability.

## Endnote

- <sup>1</sup> Hong-koo Han, "South Korea and the Vietnam War," in *Developmental Dictatorship and the Park Chung-hee Era: The Shaping of Modernity in the Republic of Korea*, ed. Lee Byeong-cheon, (Paramus, NJ: Homa & Sekey Books, 2003) 248.
- <sup>2</sup> Frank Baldwin, "America's Rented Troops: South Koreans in Vietnam." *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars (American Friends Service Committee)* 7, no. 1 (1975): 33-40;
- <sup>3</sup> Heonik Kwon, "Anatomy of US and South Korean Massacres in the Vietnamese Year of the Monkey, 1968." *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 5, no. 6(2007): 1-30.
- <sup>4</sup> "Korea Customs Service," *Korea Customs*, accessed on August 1, 2022. [https://unipass.customs.go.kr/ets/index\\_eng.do](https://unipass.customs.go.kr/ets/index_eng.do).
- <sup>5</sup> Sea Young Kim, "How South Korea Can Upgrade its Strategic Partnership with Vietnam," *Korea Economic Institute of America*, June 7, 2021, accessed on July 7, 2022, <https://keia.org/the-peninsula/how-south-korea-can-upgrade-its-strategic-partnership-with-vietnam/>.
- <sup>6</sup> Hoang Viet, "Sẽ nâng kim ngạch thương mại Việt Nam - Hàn Quốc đạt 150 tỷ USD vào năm 2030 [Increase Vietnam-Korea bilateral trade to 150 billion USD in 2030]." *VnEconomy*, March 25, 2022, accessed on June 12, 2022, <https://vneconomy.vn/se-nang-kim-ngach-thuong-mai-viet-nam-han-quoc-dat-150-ty-usd-vao-nam-2030.htm>.
- <sup>7</sup> Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Socialist of Vietnam, "Vietnam, RoK eye bringing two-way trade to 100 billion USD." *Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Socialist of Vietnam*, December 13, 2021, accessed on July 10, 2022, <https://moit.gov.vn/en/news/latest-news/vietnam-rok-eye-bringing-two-way-trade-to-100-billion-usd.html#:~:text=The%20RoK%20is%20Vietnam's%20third,of%20nearly%2019.1%20billion%20USD;%20http://m.hanoitimes.vn/vietnam-asks-south-korea-to-relax-oda-conditions.>
- <sup>8</sup> Minh Vu, "Vietnam asks South Korea to relax ODA conditions," December 14, 2021, accessed on July 15, 2022. <https://m.hanoitimes.vn/vietnam-asks-south-korea-to-relax-oda-conditions-319543.html>.
- <sup>9</sup> "S. Korea, Vietnam Hold Defense Strategy Talks," *KBS News*, September 17 2021, accessed on July 23, 2022. [https://world.kbs.co.kr/service/news\\_view.htm?lang=e&Seq\\_Code=164327](https://world.kbs.co.kr/service/news_view.htm?lang=e&Seq_Code=164327).
- <sup>10</sup> "Việt Nam-Hàn Quốc tăng cường hợp tác công nghiệp quốc phòng, an ninh biển... [Vietnam and the ROK strengthen cooperation in defense industry and maritime security]." *Vietnam Government News*, September 17, 2021, accessed on June 30, 2022, <https://baochinhphu.vn/viet-nam-han-quoc-tang-cuong-hop-tac-cong-nghiep-quoc-phong-an-ninh-bien-102300593.htm>.
- <sup>11</sup> "KVMAP - Korea-Viet Nam Mine Action Project," *UNDP Vietnam*, 30 June 2020, accessed on July 2, 2022. <https://www.undp.org/vietnam/news/kvmap-korea-viet-nam-mine-action-project>.
- <sup>12</sup> Lan Huong, "33 triệu USD xử lý bom mìn tại 3 tỉnh [Thirty three million USD to clear land mines in three provinces]," *Daidoanket*, August 31, 2021, accessed on July 5, 2022. <http://daidoanket.vn/33-trieu-usd-xu-ly-bom-min-tai-3-tinh-5664091.html#source>.
- <sup>13</sup> "Importer/Exporter TIV Tables," *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute*, accessed on July 22, 2022. <https://armstrade.sipri.org/armstrade/page/values.php>.
- <sup>14</sup> "Tuyên bố chung Việt Nam - Hàn Quốc [Vietnam-ROK Joint Statement], *Nhan Dan News*, October 21, 2009, accessed on July 20, 2022, <https://nhandan.vn/tin-tuc-sukien/Tuy%C3%AAn-b%E1%BB%91c-chung-Vi%E1%BB%87t-Nam--H%C3%A0n-Qu%E1%BB%91c-553832>.

- <sup>15</sup> “Toàn văn Tuyên bố chung Việt Nam - Hàn Quốc [Full text of Vietnam-ROK Joint Statement],” *Vietnam News Agency*, November 9, 2021, accessed on June 4, 2022, <https://www.vietnamplus.vn/toan-van-tuyen-bo-chung-viet-nam-han-quoc/115266.vnp>.
- <sup>16</sup> “VN, RoK issue joint statement,” *Vietnam Government News*, March 25, 2018, accessed on June 5, 2022, <https://en.baohinhphu.vn/vn-rok-issue-joint-statement-11131902.htm>.
- <sup>17</sup> Alex Vuving, “Tracking Vietnam’s Force Build-up in the South China Sea,” *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*, November 3, 2017, accessed on July 4, 2022, <https://amti.csis.org/tracking-vietnams-force-build-south-china-sea/>.
- <sup>18</sup> Felix K. Chang, “Southeast Asian Naval Modernization and Hedging Strategies,” *The ASAN Forum*, December 29, 2021, accessed on July 23, 2022, <https://theasanforum.org/southeast-asian-naval-modernization-and-hedging-strategies/>.
- <sup>19</sup> “RoK to strengthen cooperation with Vietnam in sailor training,” *Vietnam News Agency*, March 8, 2022, accessed on July 17, 2022, <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/rok-to-strengthen-cooperation-with-vietnam-in-sailor-training/223138.vnp>.
- <sup>20</sup> Giang Chinh, “South Korea gifts Vietnam university \$8-million ship,” *VnExpress*, October 23, 2020, accessed on July 12, 2022, <https://e.vnexpress.net/news/news/south-korea-gifts-vietnam-university-8-million-ship-4181225.html>.
- <sup>21</sup> Kei Koga, “Japan’s ‘Indo-Pacific’ question: countering China or shaping a new regional order?” *International Affairs* 96, no. 1(2020): 49–73. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiz241>.
- <sup>22</sup> David Arase, “The Question of Regional Order in East Asia,” in *China’s Rise and Changing Order in East Asia* ed. David Arase (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017) 3–34. doi:[https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-352-00023-8\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-352-00023-8_1).
- <sup>23</sup> Sungil Kwak, “Korea’s New Southern Policy: Vision and Challenges,” *Korea Institute for International Economic Policy*, November 11, 2018, accessed on August 2, 2022, <https://kiep.go.kr>.
- <sup>24</sup> “RoK considers Vietnam key partner in New Southern Policy: President.” *VietnamPlus*, February 9, 2022, accessed on August 2, 2022, <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/rok-considers-vietnam-key-partner-in-new-southern-policy-president/221816.vnp>.
- <sup>25</sup> “How Much Trade Transits the South China Sea?” *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, accessed on July 26, 2022, <https://chinapower.csis.org/much-trade-transits-south-china-sea/>.
- <sup>26</sup> “Korea, Rep. Exports by country and region 2016,” *WITS World Bank*, accessed on July 26, 2022, [https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/KOR/Year/2016/TradeFlow/Export/Show/NMBR-XPRT-HS6-PRDCT;XPRT-TRD-VL;XPRT-PRTNR-SHR;/Sort/Export%20\(US\\$%20Thousand\)](https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/KOR/Year/2016/TradeFlow/Export/Show/NMBR-XPRT-HS6-PRDCT;XPRT-TRD-VL;XPRT-PRTNR-SHR;/Sort/Export%20(US$%20Thousand)).
- <sup>27</sup> “Military expenditure,” *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute*, accessed on July 3, 2022. <https://www.sipri.org/research/armament-and-disarmament/arms-and-military-expenditure/military-expenditure>.
- <sup>28</sup> “Military expenditure.”
- <sup>29</sup> “Military expenditure (current USD),” *World Bank*, accessed on July 5, 2022. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.CD>.
- <sup>30</sup> “Korea Defense Products Guide,” *Korea Defense Industry Association*, accessed on July 25, 2022. <https://www.kdia.or.kr/resource/mozilla/web/viewer.html?file=english.pdf>.
- <sup>31</sup> Eunwoo Lee, “President Moon’s Legacy: Boosted Arms Exports for South Korea,” *The Diplomat*, March 23, 2022, accessed on August 3, 2022, <https://thediplomat.com/2022/03/president-moons-legacy-boosted-arms-exports-for-south-korea/>.

<sup>32</sup> Shuxian Luo, "China-South Korea Disputes in the Yellow Sea: Why a More Conciliatory Chinese Posture," *Journal of Contemporary China* 31, no. 138(2022):913-930.

<sup>33</sup> Rebecca Strating, "Maritime and Sovereignty Disputes in the East China Sea," *The National Bureau of Asian Research*, February 29, 2021, accessed on July 22, 2022, <https://www.nbr.org/publication/maritime-and-sovereignty-disputes-in-the-east-china-sea/>.

<sup>34</sup> "ASEAN-Republic of Korea Plan of Action to implement the Joint Vision Statement for Peace, Prosperity and Partnership (2021-2025)," *ASEAN Secretariat*, accessed on July 23, 2022, <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/ASEAN-ROK-POA-2021-2025-Final.pdf>.

<sup>35</sup> "Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Cooperation Partnership between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Republic of Korea," *ASEAN Secretariat*, accessed August 2, 2022, <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Joint-Declaration-on-Comprehensive-Cooperation-Partnership-between-the-Association-of-Southeast-Asian-Nations-and-the-Republic-of-Korea.pdf>.

*This page is intentionally left blank*

## *Catalyst for Security*

## CHAPTER 8

# *The Unlikely Duo: Building the Case for Greater Security Cooperation between Brunei Darussalam and the Republic of Korea*

Siu Tzyy Wei and Asyura Salleh

As the fourth country to establish a diplomatic relationship with Brunei Darussalam, the Republic of Korea (ROK) has exercised active bilateral and international cooperation with its partner in both bilateral and multilateral arenas. However, with rising multipolarity in the region, current diplomatic relations are now being influenced by behavior exhibited by geopolitical actors such as China and groupings like the Quad. As a claimant state to the South China Sea, Brunei's foreign relations with the ROK are heavily shaped by a significant perception of threat emanating from growing regional tensions that can threaten to undermine the Sultanate's claim. Nevertheless, both Brunei and ROK continue to strive to advance their cooperation in areas that expand beyond a traditional security perspective to ensure longevity in their bilateral relations

In light of foreseeable changes in ROK's foreign policy, this paper aims to establish a strong premise for continued cooperation between Brunei and ROK which are rooted in common denominators, shared priorities and common security interests between the two countries. Within the context of maritime security, these interests materialize in terms of economic and infrastructure diplomacy and defense cooperation, in addition to non-traditional security concerns such as climate change. This paper will then proceed to provide several

recommendations and a pragmatic assessment of Brunei-ROK cooperation in maritime security.

### **Common Ground Grows Security Partners**

Despite appearing as unlikely security partners, ROK and Brunei possess common denominators that provide the foundation for stronger security cooperation. Although both countries are set distances apart in two disparate regions, ROK and Brunei encounter common security challenges in their geopolitical environment and share similar priorities in foreign policy. These conditions demand greater cooperation between both countries, particularly in the realm of maritime security.

As maritime states navigating an increasingly complex geopolitical environment, ROK and Brunei share similar values for a free, open, and rules-based order embedded in international law. Brunei's Defense White Paper 2021 recognizes the debilitating impact of global shifts on the international order and thus calls for norms and behaviors in accordance with international law such as the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). This stance aligns with the values echoed during President Yoon's bilateral meeting to deepen ties with President Joe Biden of the United States (US) which included upholding a rules-based international order.<sup>1</sup>

ROK and Brunei are also faced with similar incentives in advocating for such a rules-based order. Growing economic relations with China have ushered the two countries into a catch-22 situation, in which heavy economic dependence on a key trading partner produced strategic ambiguity and influenced -- the direction of cooperation between Brunei and ROK. In 2021, China accounted for 25 percent of South Korea's total trade while the United States' share was a relatively lower fifteen percent.<sup>2</sup> In 2020, South Korea imported US\$17.93 billion worth of these partly completed semi-finished chips from China, comprising 39.5 percent of the total value of imported semiconductors for South

Korea. Meanwhile, Brunei's bilateral trade with China continues to skyrocket as total trade in 2021 reached US\$2.85 billion, exceeding the trade volume in the year before by 46.6 percent.<sup>3</sup>

To offset China's growing economic clout, Brunei and ROK are both seeking to strengthen relations with other states through a variety of measures. For ROK, this was reflected in President Yoon's announcement of the exclusive ABCD Strategy – a reiteration of his predecessor's New Southern Policy but with a greater emphasis on establishing relations with Southeast Asian states through human capital and cultural exchanges, health and medical cooperation, and boosting the region's digital infrastructure.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, ROK proposed membership into the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (also known as the Quad) which would prove critical in facilitating the participation of the other Quad members in the region.

Meanwhile, Brunei sought the opportunity as ASEAN Chair in 2021 to encourage a multilateral order by advocating for the United Kingdom's ascension as a Dialogue Partner to ASEAN.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, Singh (2022) also noted that Brunei has also joined ROK as founding partners of the US-led Indo Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF)<sup>6</sup> which aims to focus on areas like free and fair trade, resilient supply chains, clean energy, and anti-corruption.<sup>7</sup>

In light of the shared security interests that revolve around concerns of undermining a rules-based order and growing economic clout from external countries, it remains evident that Brunei-ROK relations are heavily shaped by a shared significant threat perception. This perception is embedded in the perceived growing assertiveness of China and the increasingly complex multipolar fabric in the region facilitated by entities such as the Quad. As will be discussed in the next section, these incentives have led both Brunei and ROK to be extremely selective in the areas of maritime security that they seek to explore in strengthening bilateral cooperation one another.

## **Existing Security Cooperation**

Under Moon Jae-in's ROK presidency from 2017 to 2022, there has been an increased effort by Seoul to strike a diplomatic balance in its foreign policy priorities vis-à-vis ASEAN by seeking to place the regional organization along a similar par with long-standing partners like the United States and Japan. Additionally, Southeast Asia witnessed Moon as the first South Korean president to officially visit all ten ASEAN member states during his tenure as president, including Brunei in 2019.<sup>8</sup> These bilateral visits set the precedence for heightened security cooperation levels between ROK and ASEAN member states - including Brunei - particularly in the areas of economic diplomacy and defense cooperation.

### ***1. Economic and Infrastructure Diplomacy***

Under the NSP, ROK formally joined the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)<sup>9</sup> which is predicted to boost trade between ASEAN and the ROK. Between Brunei and ROK, both countries signed three memorandums of understanding (MoU) in 2019, namely the MoU on Investment Promotion Cooperation, the MoU on Intellectual Property and the MoU on scientific and technological cooperation. Under the NSP, Seoul proved its commitment to elevate Brunei as a priority diplomatic partner with their direct involvement in Brunei's largest infrastructure projects. South Korean firm Daelim Industrial handled the B\$ 122.7 million contract<sup>10</sup> for Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajah Saleha Bridge<sup>11</sup> as well as a B\$ 592.2 million contract<sup>12</sup> for Sultan Haji Omar Ali Saifuddien Bridge<sup>13</sup>, which was also a joint venture<sup>14</sup> with the Chinese firm China State Construction Engineering Corporation (CSCEC). The latter's successful completion in 2019 and opening in 2020 quickly gained reputation as the region's longest overseas bridge; through connecting lands across a water body, transport can be improved, thus further promoting the prospects for expanding business

investment opportunities between both states. Meanwhile, in the oil and gas sector – many of which are discovered recently offshore<sup>15</sup> - trade volume between Brunei and ROK surpassed B\$1 billion per annum for the past decade.<sup>16</sup> Brunei also chaired the 15<sup>th</sup> East Asia Summit (EAS) in September 2021 where ROK, along with other member states, agreed upon the needed emphasis for heightened synergy with other, non-overlapping ASEAN-led mechanisms like that of Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF), among others, in line with the 2015 EAS Statement on Enhancing Regional Maritime Cooperation and the Manila Plan of Action.

## *2. Defense Cooperation*

Given the shared security interests between Brunei and ROK, efforts to develop the bilateral relationship in the defense sector remains mainly at the policy level. In this context however, the ROK-Brunei defense pact in 2018 inked on the side-lines of the Seoul Defense Dialogue did not reveal enough detail on collaboration and simply “affirmed the longstanding defense relations” between the two countries.<sup>17</sup>

For the most part, efforts to improve defense ties occur under the umbrella of ASEAN-led mechanisms like the East Asian Summit (EAS), and the ASEAN Defense Minister Meeting Plus (ADMM+), among others. In 2022, at the 29<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Ministers Meeting, both Brunei and ROK addressed maritime challenges under the ARF and other ASEAN-led frameworks like the Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum (EAMF), ADMM+ and the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crime (AMMTC). In contrast, however, the lack of progress on the ASEAN Code of Conduct despite the increasing polarity at the South China Sea is a concern that can hinder both Brunei-ROK and ASEAN-ROK relations. That being said, current interactions beyond the policy level are visible in the contexts of the visit of

South Korean naval vessels<sup>18</sup> and multilateral joint military exercises<sup>19</sup>, both of which last took place in May 2016.

### **Advancing Security Cooperation**

Due to Brunei's claimant status in the South China Sea, the country's maritime security objectives may appear to heavily fall along traditional security concerns. However, other emerging concerns demand a re-evaluation of Brunei's maritime security interests which are increasingly aligned with the country's economy, infrastructure development, and defence procurement decisions designed to counter non-traditional security threats including climate change.

ROK's ABCD Strategy also appears to expand its emphasis towards economic, humanitarian and health engagements. However, unlike his predecessor, President Yoon is likely to adopt a more assertive foreign policy approach towards fulfilling ROK's "responsibility as one of the top 10 economies in the world"<sup>20</sup> and to become a "global pivotal state"<sup>21</sup>. As one of ROK's key foreign policy priorities, Yoon is expected to seek strategies that have broader repercussions upon maritime security. This would offer benefits to Brunei, who already perceives gains in strengthening cooperation in the areas of economy and public health. It is therefore critical to begin reviewing potential areas for further cooperation that can address the interests of both countries and advance broader maritime security.

#### ***1. Economic and Infrastructure Diplomacy***

A significant component of Brunei-ROK relations is focused on the energy sector<sup>22</sup>; foreign direct investments on liquefied natural gas (LNG) value chain significantly contributes to the sultanate's overall GDP.<sup>23</sup> As Brunei works towards diversifying its economy<sup>24</sup>, South Korea is also searching for its footing in the journey to an accelerated energy transition.

Given that both nations have shared a successful track record in their shared economic pursuits, both nations can consider advancing a more secure and sustainable economic relationship by collaborating in areas such as alternative energy generation. This can be achieved through solidifying concrete efforts in joint research with benefits to the countries' broader socio-economic environments. With the recent development of the Brunei Climate Change Secretariat (BCCS), the Sultanate now has the opportunity to heighten investments in joint research on climate change, grassroots initiatives, educational, training, and comprehensive exchanges. Simultaneously, ROK as a technological powerhouse, can share knowledge on alternative energy options like smart grid<sup>25</sup>, solar power<sup>26</sup>, and wind turbines.<sup>27</sup>

At the multilateral level, both ASEAN and ROK can forge better relations in creating and co-leading working groups in tackling climate change. Together, both countries can ensure effective partnership in the minimization of wastage on power and natural resources through long-term joint capacity building to generate renewable and alternative energy extracted from the seas surrounding Brunei.

That being said, Yoon's pessimism of reaching a net-zero carbon emission by 2030<sup>28</sup> may undermine the country's prioritization of climate change as a foreign policy priority. These risks prolonging ROK's transition to clean energy sources and also towards advancing bilateral and multilateral cooperation in tackling climate change at a regional level. In this context, while the new presidency brings in a refreshed set of expectations, it is important for both Brunei and the ROK to be pragmatic about each other's priorities.

## ***2. Defense Cooperation***

In the maritime domain, Yoon's expected endorsement of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" may risk undermining existing

territorial claims and weakening ASEAN cohesion. In line with Brunei's identity as a silent claimant of the South China Sea, Brunei risks becoming further embroiled in a complex multipolar environment which risks direct exposure to the growing tensions. Thus, Yoon's advancement into the Quad could also include proposing solutions that takes into consideration the sensitive position of Southeast Asian claimant states.

Brunei and ROK can thus work towards realistically levelling to each other's expectations and eagerness in two stages. First, both nations need to establish common expectations for defense cooperation. More frequent high-level dialogues are necessary for both countries to review, renew, and expand the goals and actions of the 2018 Brunei-ROK defense pact and in solidifying Yoon's foreign policy priorities as he transitions into his presidency. The initial expectations for greater defense cooperation can be established through more frequent Track II engagements that can take place between other sectors such as think tanks, academic institutions, and the civil society of both countries.

The second and more challenging step is to practically implement discussions at the dialogue level into actual action. For example, as of May 2022, Brunei Darussalam announced a net-centric coastal surveillance system<sup>29</sup> and a new squadron of drones that are expected to be employed for humanitarian and disaster relief, search operations, border control and law enforcement operations<sup>30</sup>, and surveillance and intelligence gathering purposes.<sup>31</sup> With the ROK investing US\$479 million in 2021 to domestically manufacture its reconnaissance and surveillance drones by 2031<sup>32</sup>, this developing capability can also be used to advance defense cooperation by supporting Brunei's goal of advancing coastal surveillance systems. In addition to procurement support, joint surveillance exercises with ROK can provide Brunei with the ability to enhance its maritime domain awareness and deterrence capabilities. Meanwhile, ROK is able to further instill growing trust with Brunei as a key security partner.

This quid pro quo relationship is essential in maintaining regional stability and security, and represents a clear demonstration of taking into consideration the countries' different expectations and capabilities.

### **From Moon to Yoon: The Changing Future of ROK's SEA Policy**

In sum, this paper has highlighted current areas of cooperation between Brunei and the ROK at the bilateral and multilateral arenas. From initiating working groups and grassroots initiatives to tackle climate change to conducting joint exercises with increased investment in defense procurement, both countries recognize the potential for Brunei -ROK relations to reach new heights against an increasingly complex multipolar maritime horizon.

As ROK begins a new chapter with their new President Yoon Suk-yeol, expectations run high with his eagerness to enhance ROK-Southeast Asia relations. While Yoon is expected to retain certain aspects of his predecessor's New Southern Policy, he expected to also emphasize a vision of a new future of Southeast Asia becoming "the future markets that will replace China".<sup>33</sup> However, Yoon's ambitious vision for Southeast Asia may also result in significant changes in the nature of Brunei-ROK relations in the midst of the US-China rivalry.

That being said, despite the many areas of potential cooperation fueling optimism for the future of Brunei-ROK relations, it is also critical to exercise pragmatism in considering cooperative measures that are feasible and achievable for both countries. With Yoon's current inward approach as the President of ROK, this brings forth the possibility that there might not be any significant advancement in the current areas of external, bilateral cooperation. In retrospect, while there is opportunity for progress in areas such as climate change and defense

procurement capabilities, most cooperation is likely to take place through multilateral platforms like that of ASEAN and its associated working groups. This reliance on ASEAN underscores the importance for extra-regional partners like ROK to continue upholding values and norms advocated in multilateral platforms as a conduit to build stronger bilateral relations with regional countries that have strong maritime security interests, including Brunei.

## Endnote

- <sup>1</sup> “Statement on Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity,” *The White House*, May 23, 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefingroom/statements-releases/2022/05/23/statement-on-indo-pacific-economic-framework-for-prosperity/>.
- <sup>2</sup> Bo-eun Kim, “South Korea looks to break China import dependence and establish ‘supply chain alliances,’” *South China Morning Post*, May 20, 2022. <https://www.scmp.com/economy/global-economy/article/3178370/south-korea-looks-break-china-import-dependence-and>.
- <sup>3</sup> “Brunei-China bilateral trade reaches US\$2.85bil in 2021,” *The Star*, February 18, 2022, <https://www.thestar.com.my/aseanplus/aseanplus-news/2022/02/18/brunei-china-bilateral-trade-reaches-us285bil-in-2021>.
- <sup>4</sup> “Yoon Suk Yeol’s Foreign and Security Policy: Confident Diplomacy and Strong National Security,” *NK News*, 2022, <https://www.nknews.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/20220314-YSYFOPO.docx?t=1655858645883>.
- <sup>5</sup> Ain Bandial, “UK on fast track to become ASEAN dialogue partner,” *The Scoop*, May 6, 2021, <https://thescoop.co/2021/05/06/uk-on-fast-track-to-become-asean-dialogue-partner/>.
- <sup>6</sup> Kavaljit Singh, “The what, where, how and why of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework,” *Bilaterals.org*, May 27, 2022, <https://www.bilaterals.org/?the-what-where-how-and-why-of-the>.
- <sup>7</sup> “United States-Republic of Korea Leaders’ Joint Statement,” *The White House*, May 21, 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/05/21/united-states-republic-of-korea-leaders-joint-statement/>.
- <sup>8</sup> “Remarks by President Moon Jae-in at ASEAN-Republic of Korea Commemorative Summit,” *Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Korea*, November 27, 2019, [https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/brd/m\\_5674/view.do?seq=319995](https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/brd/m_5674/view.do?seq=319995).
- <sup>9</sup> Kim and Chang, “RCEP – Certain Key Provisions,” *Kim & Chang*, April 13, 2022, [https://www.kimchang.com/en/insights/detail.kc?sch\\_section=4&idx=24747](https://www.kimchang.com/en/insights/detail.kc?sch_section=4&idx=24747)
- <sup>10</sup> “Daelim Industrial secures contract for construction of Sungai Brunei Bridge,” *Southeast Asia Infrastructure*, June 27, 2013, <https://southeastasiainfra.com/daelim-industrial-secures-contract-for-construction-of-sungai-brunei-bridge/>
- <sup>11</sup> “Brunei’s landmark bridge opens, heralds new era of development,” *The Scoop*, October 14, 2017. <https://thescoop.co/2017/10/14/bruneis-landmark-bridge-opens-heralds-new-era-development/>
- <sup>12</sup> “Daelim Industrial wins \$439 mln Brunei bridge project,” *The Korea Herald*, February 5, 2015, <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20150205000540>.
- <sup>13</sup> Hj. Rasidah Abu Bakar, “Temburong mega bridge completion on track for November 2019 deadline,” *The Scoop*, February 15, 2019, <https://thescoop.co/2019/02/15/temburong-mega-bridge-completion-on-track-for-november-2019-deadline/>.
- <sup>14</sup> “Brunei names mega cross-sea bridge partly built by Chinese contractor,” *Xinhua*, July 14, 2020, [://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-07/14/c\\_139212574.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-07/14/c_139212574.htm).
- <sup>15</sup> Damon Evans, “Brunei hopes to boost oil and gas production after new discovery,” March 14, 2022, <https://www.energyvoice.com/oilandgas/asia/394964/brunei-hopes-to-boost-oil-and-gas-production-after-new-discovery/>.
- <sup>16</sup> Hj Rasidah Abu Bakar and Ain Bandial, “Brunei, Korea sign three agreements vowing deeper cooperation,” *The Scoop*, March 12, 2019, <https://thescoop.co/2019/03/12/brunei-korea-sign-three-agreements-vowing-deeper-cooperation/>.

- <sup>17</sup> Prashanth Parameswaran, "What's in the New Brunei-South Korea Defense Pact?," *The Diplomat*, September 18, 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/09/whats-in-the-new-brunei-south-korea-defense-pact/>.
- <sup>18</sup> Darren Chin, "South Korean navy ship to dock in Brunei," *The BT Archive*, April 28, 2016, <https://btarchive.org/news/national/2016/04/28/south-korean-navy-ship-dock-brunei>.
- <sup>19</sup> Prashanth Parameswaran, "Singapore, Brunei to Host Multilateral Military Exercise in May," *The Diplomat*, April 20, 2016, <https://thediplomat.com/2016/04/singapore-brunei-to-host-multilateral-military-exercise-in-may/>
- <sup>20</sup> Min Joo Kim, "Interview with South Korea's next president, Yoon Suk-yeol," *The Washington Post*, April 14, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/04/14/south-korea-president-yoon-transcript/>.
- <sup>21</sup> Joanne Lin, "ASEAN's Relevance for the New South Korean Administration," *Fulcrum*, May 20, 2022, <https://fulcrum.sg/aseans-relevance-for-the-new-south-korean-administration/>.
- <sup>22</sup> Gil-ja Park and Hana Lee, "Korea, Brunei to boost cooperation in energy, infrastructure," *Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Korea*, March 11, 2019, [https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/brd/m\\_5674/view.do?seq=319837&srchFr=&srchTo=&srchWord=&srchTp=&multi\\_itm\\_seq=0&itm\\_seq\\_1=0&itm\\_seq\\_2=0&company\\_cd=&company\\_nm=](https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/brd/m_5674/view.do?seq=319837&srchFr=&srchTo=&srchWord=&srchTp=&multi_itm_seq=0&itm_seq_1=0&itm_seq_2=0&company_cd=&company_nm=).
- <sup>23</sup> "Brunei Darussalam Energy White Paper," *Prime Minister's Office Brunei Darussalam*, 2013, <https://policy.asiapacificenergy.org/sites/default/files/Energy%20White%20Paper%202014%281%29.pdf>.
- <sup>24</sup> James Fox, "Moving away from oil: How can Brunei diversify its economy," *ASEAN Briefing*, May 23, 2022, <https://www.aseanbriefing.com/news/moving-away-from-oil-how-can-brunei-diversify-its-economy/#:~:text=Brunei's%20government%20has%20in%20recent,communication%20technology%20and%20halal%20manufacturing>.
- <sup>25</sup> Bernie Bulkin, "South Koreans are leading the way in their vision for 'smart grid'," *The Guardian*, May 2, 2014, <https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/smart-grid-south-korea-rethinking-electricity>.
- <sup>26</sup> "Solar Power to Retain Lead in South Korea's Green Plans," *BloombergNEF*, April 15, 2021, <https://about.bnef.com/blog/solar-power-to-retain-lead-in-south-koreas-green-plans/>.
- <sup>27</sup> Adnan Durakovic, "Korea's Largest Offshore Wind Turbine Stands Complete," *Offshore Wind*, January 27, 2022, <https://www.offshorewind.biz/2022/01/27/koreas-largest-offshore-wind-turbine-stands-complete/>.
- <sup>28</sup> Jun-tae Ko, "Yoon Suk-yeol says '100% renewable energy not possible'," *Korea Herald*, February 3, 2022, <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20220203000944>.
- <sup>29</sup> Adib Noor, "Coastal surveillance system to thwart maritime security threats," *Borne Bulletin*, May 29, 2022. <https://bornebulletin.com.bn/coastal-surveillance-system-to-thwart-maritime-security-threats-2/>.
- <sup>30</sup> Shareen Han, "RBAF to use drones for maritime security surveillance," *The Scoop*, May 31, 2021, <https://thescoop.co/2021/05/31/rbaf-to-use-drones-for-maritime-security-surveillance/>

<sup>31</sup> Nabilah Haris and Ain Bandial, "MinDef tables \$597 million budget to support national security," *The Scoop*, February 28, 2022, <https://thescoop.co/2022/02/28/mindef-tables-597-million-budget-to-support-national-security/>.

<sup>32</sup> Joe Saballa, "S. Korea to Invest \$479M in Indigenous Surveillance Drones," *The Defense Post*, December 28, 2021, <https://www.thedefensepost.com/2021/12/28/south-korea-surveillance-drones/>

<sup>33</sup> Bo-ram Yoon, "Announcement of 'Economic Security'-Centered Trade Policy and Expansion of the ROK-US alliance and international cooperation," *Yonhap News Agency*, March 10, 2022, <https://www.yna.co.kr/view/AKR20220309065400003?input=1195m>

*This page is intentionally left blank*

*Thailand-ROK Security Relations:  
Forging Closer Cooperation*

Kasira Cheeppensook

**Overview of Thailand-ROK Bilateral Security Relations**

Thailand and the ROK have enjoyed long-established relations. The Korean War first sealed Thailand-ROK friendly relations. Thailand sent troops to help fight the war in 1950, becoming one of the first responders to the United Nations' request. The "little tigers", as they were known, were praised for their courage and memorialized in Korea as manifested in a monument and Thai pavilion built in Pocheon. There was also Thai Soldier Memorial at the UN Memorial Cemetery in Busan.<sup>1</sup>

Thailand recognized the ROK as a country since October 1949, and established diplomatic relations for more than 60 years since October 1958. They were also united in conceptualizing communism as threats.<sup>2</sup>

Due to the historical ties mentioned above, President Chun Doo-hwan pledged in 1980 that the ROK would also send troops to help in case Vietnam invaded Thailand, as a reciprocity to Thailand's aid during the Korean War. Both countries had conducted seminars on intelligence exchange and military training such as personnel exchange and co-training.

Thailand deployed approximately ten military personnel to UN Command stationed in Seoul. The first group consisting of four personnel was in charge of communications while the rest were Honor Guards in charge of ceremonial events concerning Korean War. In December 1997, Thai administration planned to stop sending Honor Guards following budget decrease in international posts approved by Thai Prime Minister as well as

Minister of Defense. In the end, this did not happen since the ROK deemed this kind of symbolic support to be crucial and Thailand agreed to continue stationing the guards.<sup>3</sup>

The current challenge remained also in how both countries could deepen meaningful security relations from capitalizing on long-established bonds, to concretize the ties beyond symbolic functions. In this regard, both countries embarked on strategic partnership in 2012, which also encompassed other aspects; for example, economic, social and cultural. The natural step forward from strategic partnership was to establish a Joint Action Plan to follow through. The Joint Action Plan (2022-2027) was recently finalized, which could provide more concrete plans to achieve the Strategic Partnership.<sup>4</sup>

The two countries definitely saw potentials in the compatibility of strategic goals namely addressing non-traditional security threats in multi-polar system and peace and security maintenance in key strategic routes, especially the South China Sea. Being able to rely on each other both normatively and strategically was deemed important towards peace and stability in the geopolitical area crucial to both countries' national security, whether on maritime or not. For example, regarding the South China Sea issue which involved a number of ASEAN member countries in the conflict, both Thailand and South Korea were non-claimants, neutral parties and proclaimed themselves adhering to and supporting the legal international principles. The ROK was also reassured by Thailand's consistent attitude regarding nuclear weapon testing.

The Joint Action Plan was still in very early stage which is needed to be followed through with viable implementation; therefore, cooperation related to maritime security was more visible in multilateral venue such as ASEM and the ARF. The main 'security provider' in the picture of this budding maritime cooperation is undeniably the US as demonstrated in the longstanding Cobra Gold exercise. The core principle of naval

diplomacy guiding emerging bilateral security cooperation follows the region's cooperative security, which is to forge peaceful and sustainable cooperation through institutional consent and not through coercion or threats.

Apart from the strategic partnership, both countries maintained close ministerial level cooperation. Apart from high level exchanges and visits from Ministers of Defense, both countries have established policy consultations between Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Policy consultations were considered as mechanism to push forward the Strategic Partnership as well.

Other bilateral venues that at first glance may not seem to be directly related to security issues also served as parallel forums. There existed bilateral consultations within multilateral arena such as Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Through this kind of channel, ROK Parliamentary Chairperson raised military cooperation and defense, among other non-security related areas (in a traditional sense) such as restoring Korean banking services and financial institutions.

## **Key Areas of Cooperation and Potential Further Collaborations**

Thailand and the ROK have conducted security cooperation in a number of areas with potential for further collaboration. These are outlined below in five key areas:

### ***1. Technology Transfer and Defense Industry***

Thailand and the ROK attempted to strengthen cooperation in national defense, illustrated in recent projects such as cooperation between the Korea Aerospace Industries (KAI) and Thailand to acquire more T-50TH lead-in fighter trainers<sup>5</sup> to empower the Royal Thai Air Force. Procurement of an additional frigate was also discussed.<sup>6</sup> The plan was that while the frigate was being constructed, Thai Royal Navy will send personnel to attend

platform system as well as combat system training in the ROK. While the public tended to frown upon the Navy buying from China, the ROK seemed to be a safer choice.<sup>7</sup> Daewoo Shipbuilding & Marine Engineering Co., Ltd. (DSME) that won Frigate model selection from Royal Thai Navy also offered technology transfer to shipbuilding companies in Thailand as a way for capacity building.<sup>8</sup> Thailand intended to expand defense cooperation even more through ROK Defense Acquisition Program Administration (DAPA).<sup>9</sup>

## ***2. Military Training***

Exchange programs, joint exercises, and consultative groups established across armed forces were among the collaborative efforts discussed between ROK Defense Minister and Thai Prime Minister who also occupies Defense Minister position. Military personnel from the ROK also joined the long-standing Cobra Gold training co-sponsored by Thailand and the US since 2010. Cobra Gold according to the US “supports a free and open Indo-Pacific and ensures effective responses to regional crises”.<sup>10</sup> In early 2022, the Cobra Gold exercise was somewhat scaled down and did not include Myanmar along with a number of previous observer countries, but the ROK remained among the main participants joining in combat exercises. In addition, there were trilateral projects (Thailand-US-ROK) in humanitarian/civic assistance.<sup>11</sup> Other countries such as China and Australia also participated in humanitarian exercises.<sup>12</sup>

## ***3. Non-traditional Security (NTS)***

Further areas of cooperation need to include NTS. Deemed ‘low-hanging fruit’ by some, NTS issues held tremendous potential in sustain security cooperation as well as trust building among participants. This will help maintain channel of communication and long-term partnership. A number of key areas are:

**Cybersecurity.** Recently in March 2022, the first Thailand-ROK Cybersecurity Dialogue was conducted remotely.<sup>13</sup> The focus was on threats and cooperative trends both in bilateral level between Thailand and the ROK and multilateral level such as ASEAN. ROK has initiated this framework with Thailand first in Southeast Asia. Cybersecurity was high on Thailand's agenda, and both countries had cooperation in place since 2016 when Thailand's Electronic Transactions Development Agency (ETDA) and Korea Internet Security Agency (KISA) collaborated in countering cyberthreats and exchange. This was to facilitate digital economy and modern management in data privacy and e-Authentication.<sup>14</sup>

**Migration.** The ROK remains popular as destination for migrant workers from Thailand. The worrying trend was increasing number of undocumented workers and illegal labor (known as 'little ghosts' or '*phi noi*' in Thai) who faced abuse and got involved in illegal businesses. They were also among the groups that were hit the hardest during Covid-19. The legal channel (Employment Permit System - EPS) was deemed slow and costly, pushing more workers to sought illegal stay. For example, EPS demanded certificates from Korean language school that the majority of workers could not afford. EPS accommodated less than ten thousand workers in 2018, far less than the actual demands.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, under the EPS, there were still cases of neglect from employers regarding healthcare. There have been efforts to increase quotas of Thai workers sent to work in the ROK as well as to speed up the process to remedy the situation.

**Health security.** Since the pandemic, both sides saw necessities to bring closer cooperation in terms of health security and vaccines against covid. Thailand received AstraZeneca donation from the ROK directly and both countries aimed to tighten public health collaboration as well as post-pandemic recovery. Both countries saw opportunities to cooperate in covid vaccine production.<sup>16</sup>

#### ***4. Korean Peninsular Denuclearization***

Stability of the area is of mutual interest to the countries, and Thailand continued to support denuclearization and peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. Thailand in no uncertain terms condemned nuclear weapons test conducted by the DPRK. It referred to North Korea's "repeated violations of UNSC resolutions" as "encroachments of international peace and security."<sup>17</sup> Along this line, Thailand held the same stance that the ROK could rely upon. It also expressed concerns with other provocative actions. Thailand continued to support peace dialogues and tolerance.

#### ***5. Middle Power's Role in Conflict Transformation***

With special reference to the situation in the South China Sea, this is budding area of interest since the development of the COC which Thailand expressed commitment to help coordinate the consultations (together with other ASEAN countries). The principle of freedom of navigation and rule of law were shared by the ROK which would also benefit from the stable and peaceful situation. Both the ROK and Thailand remained non-claimants in the sense that they were not directly involved in the conflict nor they staked any territorial claims. Hence, both were in the position to exercise potential as honest brokers - keeping the channel of communications open as well as involving China in relevant maritime cooperation such as marine conservation, debris management, and blue economy.

### **Complementarity within ASEAN Framework**

Even though the paper deals primarily with Thailand and the ROK's bilateral security relations and further collaborations therein, it is important to contextualize the relations within ASEAN framework to provide potential venues of cooperation in regional architecture. A number of possible venues and by no

means exhaustive list that both countries could explore and/or forge closer relations are:

### ***1. Strengthening ASEAN Connectivity***

In a bid to tighten ties with both India and Southeast Asia through Moon Jae-in's New Southern Policy, ROK has seen Thailand as key in enhancing connectivity in the Mekong sub-region. The recent forum co-hosted by the ROK Embassy in Thailand entitled "Mekong-ROK Cooperation Seeking Synergies in the Mekong Sub-region" aimed in particular "to identify recommendations on potential synergies among Development Partners (DPs) and Mekong countries"<sup>18</sup> especially regarding non-traditional threats.

With the change of presidency, it seems countries in ASEAN still retain strategic significance through ABCD strategy, which comprises of 1) vitalization of human capital exchange; 2) promotion of health and medical cooperation; 3) realization of two-way cultural exchange; 4) realization of digital Asia.<sup>19</sup> According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the ROK, "The ROK is helping ASEAN to implement MPAC and Initiative for ASEAN Integration Programs by conducting various programs such as the ASEAN Public Data Development Project, Technical Vocational Education and Training(TVET), and the K-City Network International Cooperation Program."<sup>20</sup> One of the key seven priority sectors supported by the Mekong-ROK cooperation fund is non-traditional security challenges.

### ***2. ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)***

The ARF became important venues for the ROK to spearhead novel security issues that are of importance to its national interests as well as Asia Pacific's. For example, trust building regarding cybersecurity. The ARF was among the few multilateral venues in the region involving North Korea, although it has not

been very active in participation lately. Together with the ADMM+, the ARF holds particular significance to the ROK even when it used to prioritize bilateral relations to uphold national security; for instance, with the US. For the ROK, the Korean Peninsula remained of utmost importance, but it was undeniable that stable regional security helped contribute to peace and security in that particular area as well.

### ***3. Humanitarian Relief***

The ROK has been active with providing help regarding humanitarian relief in a number of areas. Several notable ones include:

**Disaster relief** - This was high on Thailand's agenda when it chaired ASEAN in 2019. One of Thailand's chairmanship deliverables was Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA) Satellite Warehouse in Chainat which aimed to help the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) in Indonesia to distribute relief more effectively.<sup>21</sup> This bridged seamlessly with the ASEAN-National Civil Defense and Disaster Management Training Institute (NDTI) Disaster Risk Management Capacity Building Project In-Country Training for ASEAN Member States supported by the ASEAN-Korea Cooperation Fund.<sup>22</sup> The NDTI is affiliated with the Ministry of Interior and Safety (MOIS) of the ROK.

**Mine clearance** - Thailand as a party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction pledged to clear all mines in the country by 2023.<sup>23</sup> ASEAN recently set up ASEAN Regional Mine Action Centre (ARMAC) which the ROK through the ASEAN-ROK Cooperation Fund invested over 2\$ million for the 3-year long project "Enhance Victim Assistance Program in ASEAN Member States (AMSs)" through to 2023.<sup>24</sup> ASEAN continued to engage member countries still having the situation

and the victim assistance program implemented could be of tremendous help.

**Humanitarian aid in Rakhine** - Apart from development assistance, Thailand together with other ASEAN member states as well as officials from the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management (AHA Centre) formed the ASEAN-Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ASEAN-ERAT). ASEAN-ERAT sent its first ever mission called the Preliminary Needs Assessment Mission to Rakhine in 2019.<sup>25</sup> In 2020 as a result of needs-based assessment, the ROK contributed money to ASEAN to support repatriation and information dissemination in Rakhine state.<sup>26</sup> This was to expedite a number of ASEAN projects in Rakhine.

#### ***4. Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) and Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (Bangkok Treaty)***

This corresponds with the new presidency emphasis on denuclearization. Together with settlement plans and economic incentives proposed by President Yoon, should successful the nuclear free zone be further extended beyond Southeast Asian region. This is of particular interest when we view it against closer security ties Yoon pledged with the US as well as missile capability enhancement plans. During the 26th ASEAN-ROK Dialogue in 2022, commitment towards the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific was renewed with the ROK's willingness "to enhance practical cooperation in its key areas".<sup>27</sup> One of the key areas outlined in the AOIP included maritime cooperation such as peaceful settlement of disputes; addressing transnational crimes and management of marine resources<sup>28</sup>, *inter alia*.

## Policy Recommendation

In order to strengthen and deepen security cooperation between Thailand and ROK, the following recommendations might be considered:

*Prioritize the Joint Action Plan implementation* as means towards strengthening the strategic partnership between Thailand and the ROK. Apart from military training and capacity building as well as cooperation in procurement, this could include strengthening communication channels in various levels, continued regular engagement, and commitment towards shared principles of rule of law and freedom of navigation.

*Increasing people-to-people exchange including high level contacts* as well as knowledge transfer and exchange on issues of mutual interests which would not be limited only to traditional security such as anti-terrorism, cybersecurity, disaster relief, and maritime conservation. This was also in line with the Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Cooperation Partnership between ASEAN and the ROK. The Plan of Action to implement the Joint Declaration on ASEAN-ROK Strategic Partnership for Peace and Prosperity (2021-2025) should be useful as point of interest which would go hand in hand with the Joint Action Plan at the bilateral level.

*Considering developing early warning system and coordinating information* which would be highly useful in disaster management, search and rescue, and maritime commerce. This could also be done through regional commitment and focusing on strengthening bilateral ties such as the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy (ReCAAP) which aimed to combat sea piracy as well as armed robbery. Both Thailand and the ROK are contracting parties of ReCAAP. Other contracting parties came from all over Asia as well as Europe, Australia, and the US. One of its key organs is information sharing center which was Centre of Excellence for information sharing since 2018.

## Endnote

<sup>1</sup> Chaiyong Satjipanon, "Heroism of the Little Tigers," *Korea Herald*, last modified June 22, 2010, <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20100622000561>.

<sup>2</sup> Witchu Vejajiva, "Kwam sampan thai-satharanarat gaolee: Jaak adeet lae patjuban suu anakhot [Thailand-Republic of Korea Relations: From the Past and the Present to the Future]," *Thai Journal of East Asian Studies* 11, no. 1 (January-June 2000): 13, <https://so02.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/easttu/article/view/51319>.

<sup>3</sup> Vejajiva, "Kwam sampan thai-satharanarat gaolee: Jaak adeet lae patjuban suu anakhot [Thailand-Republic of Korea Relations: From the Past and the Present to the Future]."

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Thailand (MFA), "Ambassador of the Republic of Korea (ROK) to Thailand paid a courtesy call on Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand on the occasion of the Ambassador's assumption of duty," last modified April 12, 2022, <https://www.mfa.go.th/en/content/ambrokcallonvfm11042565-2?cate=5d5bcb4e15e39c306000683e>.

<sup>5</sup> Kim Byung Wook, "KAI sells two T-50 trainer jets worth \$78m to Thailand," *Korea Herald*, last modified August 2, 2021, <https://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20210802000772>.

<sup>6</sup> "'Frigate phikhat' sanchad 'gaoleetai' chomnamai 'navy thai' tuareuabap 'stealth' longhon lod kanchapkum [Cabinet approved the Royal Thai Navy's plan to procure South Korean-built frigate with stealth technology]," *Thai Publica*, last modified August 14, 2013, <https://thaipublica.org/2013/08/frigate/>.

<sup>7</sup> "'Frigate phikhat' sanchad 'gaoleetai' chomnamai 'navy thai' tuareuabap 'stealth' longhon lod kanchapkum [Cabinet approved the Royal Thai Navy's plan to procure South Korean-built frigate with stealth technology]."

<sup>8</sup> "'Frigate phikhat' sanchad 'gaoleetai' chomnamai 'navy thai' tuareuabap 'stealth' longhon lod kanchapkum [Cabinet approved the Royal Thai Navy's plan to procure South Korean-built frigate with stealth technology]."

<sup>9</sup> Lee Dae Han, "Thailand Mulls Second Frigate Order from South Korea's DSME," *Naval News*, last modified January 18, 2022, <https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2022/01/thailand-mulls-second-frigate-order-from-south-koreas-dsme/>.

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Embassy and Consulate in Thailand, "Cobra Gold 21 Showcases Strength of our Security and Health Partnerships," last modified August 23, 2021, <https://th.usembassy.gov/cobra-gold-21-showcases-strength-of-our-security-and-health-partnerships/>.

<sup>11</sup> Thai Post, "Tahan sam aunchart ruam kortang akarn prom pheuk buntao sataranapai nai 'Cobra Gold 2022' [Soldiers of three nationalities collaborated in constructing building, ready for disaster relief training in 'Cobra Gold 2022']," *Thai Post*, last modified February 19, 2022, <https://www.thaipost.net/general-news/89067/>

<sup>12</sup> Wilawan Watcharasakwet, "Scaled-Down Cobra Gold Exercise to Exclude Myanmar, Other Observer Nations," *Benar News*, last modified February 4, 2022, <https://www.benarnews.org/english/news/thai/cobra-gold-02042022134420.html>.

<sup>13</sup> MFA Thailand, "Thailand and the Republic of Korea held the 1st virtual Cybersecurity Dialogue," last modified March 29, 2022, <https://www.mfa.go.th/en/content/throkcyberdialogue29032565->

2?cate=5d5bcb4e15e39c30  
6000683e.

<sup>14</sup> “ETDA chapmue KISA gaoleetai ruam yok radap kwamsamard kanchadkan paikukkam online [ETDA and KISA signed MOU on cybersecurity to mutually enhance their capabilities in handling with online threats],” *Tech Talk Thai*, last modified April 4, 2016, <https://www.techtalkthai.com/etda-kisa-cybersecurity/>.

<sup>15</sup> Wajana Walayangkul, “Phinoy thai nai gaolee tang rod jaak sangkom rai tang leuak [Being Thai illegal migrant workers in South Korea: An escape plan from choiceless society],” *The101.world*, last modified January 14, 2019, <https://www.the101.world/little-ghost-in-south-korea/>.

<sup>16</sup> Thanapich Kaewka, “Thai-gaoleetai yuenyan krachap khamruammue dansettakij lae satharanasuk doychapraw kanfuenfoo lang covid-19 [Thailand and Republic of Korea agreed to strengthen economic and health cooperation, especially in post-pandemic recovery],” *National News Bureau of Thailand*, last modified August 27, 2021, [https://thainews.prd.go.th/th/news/print\\_news/TCATG210827182746101](https://thainews.prd.go.th/th/news/print_news/TCATG210827182746101).

<sup>17</sup> MFA Thailand, “Statement of the Royal Thai Government on Nuclear Test by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea on 3 September 2017,” last modified September 6, 2017, <https://www.mfa.go.th/th/content/5d5bd0cf15e39c306002175f?cate=5d5bcb4e15e39c306000683d>.

<sup>18</sup> Thailand International Cooperation Agency [TICA], “The Regional Forum on ‘Mekong-RoK Cooperation Seeking Synergies in the Mekong Sub-region’,” last modified June 21, 2022, <https://tica-thaigov.mfa.go.th/en/content/the-regional-forum-on-mekong-rok-cooperation-seeki?cate=5d7da8d015e39c3fbc007416>.

<sup>19</sup> “Yun Seok-Yeol’s Elected Economic and Security-oriented Trade Policy Announcement... Expansion of the ROK-U.S. alliance and international cooperation,” *Archyde*, last modified March 9, 2022, <https://www.archyde.com/yun-seok-yeols-elected-economic-and-security-oriented-trade-policy-announcement-expansion-of-the-rok-u-s-alliance-and-international-cooperation/>.

<sup>20</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea, “ROK-ASEAN Relations,” accessed July 11, 2022, [https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/wpge/m\\_5466/contents.do](https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/wpge/m_5466/contents.do).

<sup>21</sup> ASEAN-Thailand Secretariat, “Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN: DELSA,” accessed July 11, 2022, <https://asean2019.go.th/en/infographic/disaster-emergency-logistics-system-for-asean-delsa/>.

<sup>22</sup> “ASEAN strengthens partnerships at the 7th Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction,” *Thailand Business News*, last modified June 6, 2022, <https://www.thailand-business-news.com/asean/90522-asean-strengthens-partnerships-at-the-7th-global-platform-for-disaster-risk-reduction>.

<sup>23</sup> MFA Thailand, “Thailand announced its success in reducing landmine-contaminated areas in Chiang Mai, Mae Hong Son, Chumphon and Chanthaburi, and emphasized the efforts towards international disarmament,” last modified December 1, 2020, <https://www.mfa.go.th/th/content/25631201-thailand-success-demining-ottawa-treaty?cate=5d5bcb4e15e39c306000683d>.

<sup>24</sup> ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center [ARMAC], “ARMAC Welcomed Visit of the Ambassador of the Mission of the Republic of Korea to ASEAN,” accessed July 12, 2022, <https://aseanmineaction.org/armac-welcomed-visit-of-the-ambassador-of-the-mission-of-the-republic-of-korea-to-asean/>.

<sup>25</sup> ASEAN-Thailand Secretariat, “ASEAN Enhances Its Role on the Situation in Rakhine State,” last modified March 14, 2019, <https://asean2019.go.th/en/news/asean-enhances-its-role-on-the-situation-in-rakhine-state/>.

<sup>26</sup> Association of Southeast Asian Nations [ASEAN], “ROK contributes US\$500,000 to support ASEAN efforts in Rakhine State,” last modified January 28, 2020, <https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/rok-contributes-us500000-support-asean-efforts-rakhine-state>.

<sup>27</sup> ASEAN, “ASEAN, Republic of Korea renew commitment to strengthen partnership,” last modified July 5, 2022, <https://asean.org/asean-republic-of-korea-renew-commitment-to-strengthen-partnership-2/>.

<sup>28</sup> ASEAN-Thailand Secretariat, “ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific,” last modified June 23, 2019, <https://asean2019.go.th/en/news/asean-outlook-on-the-indo-pacific/>.

*This page is intentionally left blank*

## CHAPTER 10

# *A Singaporean Perspective on Singapore-ROK Security Relations*

Shawn Ho

Singapore and the Republic of Korea (ROK) have enjoyed warm relations since their diplomatic ties were established in 1975. These ties have been focused more on developing economic and socio-cultural relations between the governments and peoples of the two countries. On the security front, however, there is comparatively less of a focus in this area at the bilateral level as both countries do not regard the other among its top tier of security partners. This is due to the lack of convergence in security priorities of the two nations – the ROK's main security focus is the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) whereas Singapore is primarily concerned about security issues in the Southeast Asian region. Therefore, security ties between the two nations are arguably manifested less so at the bilateral level but more so in the context of regional, multilateral or minilateral cooperation which deal with regional/global issues that are of mutual interest.

This paper aims to provide an overview of the state of security cooperation between Singapore and the ROK in recent years during the Moon Jae-in administration's term of office and to look ahead to the future years of cooperation under the new Yoon Suk-yeol administration.

This paper will also provide some policy recommendations in terms of the areas that both countries can further cooperate together so as to contribute to regional peace and stability. These areas include: maritime security and the fight against piracy, cybersecurity, and humanitarian and disaster relief (HADR) efforts.

## **Overview of Recent Singapore-ROK Security Ties during the Moon Administration**

At the bilateral level, there have been regular high-level exchanges during the Moon administration's term of office and security issues have been frequently raised in the agenda.

In January 2022, senior defense officials from Singapore and the ROK agreed to reinforce defense cooperation during a bilateral strategic defense dialogue in Singapore. At the meeting between Singapore's Deputy Secretary (Policy) at the Ministry of Defense Teo Eng Dih and the ROK's Deputy Defense Minister Kim Man-ki, they agreed to revise the two countries' MOU on defense cooperation (which was first signed in 2009<sup>1</sup>) to expand areas of collaboration, including cybersecurity and counter-terrorism. Deputy Minister Kim also delivered a speech at the Fullerton Forum in Singapore which served as a Sherpa meeting to the Shangri-la Dialogue.<sup>2</sup>

A month before that in December 2021, ROK's Defense Minister Suh Wook visited Singapore for talks with Singapore's Defense Minister Ng Eng Hen. Both sides exchanged views on the regional security developments and discussed areas in which bilateral and multilateral cooperation can be strengthened, such as Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives (CBRNE) defense, HADR, the fight against terrorism, cybersecurity and strategic communications.<sup>3</sup> Minister Suh also reiterated the ROK's desire to deepen defense cooperation with ASEAN and to seek "harmonious" defense cooperation between the ROK's New Southern Policy Plus (NSP Plus) and the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP).<sup>4</sup>

The emphasis on seeking synergy between the NSP Plus and the AOIP was also timely given at the backdrop of the inaugural session of the ASEAN-ROK Informal Defense Ministers Meeting which was held via video conference in November 2021. At that meeting, Minister Suh had unveiled Seoul's action plan for

defense cooperation with ASEAN, which consists of various joint tasks related to maritime security, cybersecurity, disaster responses, peacekeeping operations, counterterrorism efforts and other areas. The Ministers also exchanged views on multilateral cooperation and capacity-building to overcome non-traditional security threats such as in the domains of cybersecurity and CBR (Chemical, Biological, Radiological).<sup>5</sup>

At the Summit level, Singapore's Prime Minister (PM) Lee Hsien Loong had met with the then-ROK President Moon Jae-in in Seoul in November 2019. During their meeting, they welcomed the further enhancement of security cooperation between both countries through the upcoming conclusion of an information exchange agreement in chemical biological defense.<sup>6</sup> PM Lee also witnessed the signing of a MOU to enhance cooperation and information sharing on cybersecurity with the then President Moon Jae-in. The MOU would facilitate more exchanges and information-sharing across the strategic, policy, and technical domains, including in the areas of protection of critical information infrastructure, promotion of the cybersecurity ecosystem, as well as human resource development, so as to strengthen the ability of both nations to address and tackle the transboundary challenge of cybersecurity.<sup>7</sup>

Earlier on during the Moon administration's term in office, in his introductory visit to Singapore in January 2018, the then-ROK Minister of National Defense Song Youngmoo called on Singapore's Minister for Defense Ng Eng Hen and PM Lee. During their meeting, the Defense Ministers exchanged views on the regional security situation and proposed ways to enhance the bilateral defense relationship. They also reaffirmed their cooperation in the ADMM-Plus especially the co-chairmanship of Singapore and the ROK of the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Maritime Security (2017 to 2020).<sup>8</sup> While in Singapore, Minister Song was also the keynote speaker at the Fullerton Forum which reflects the important convening role that the

Forum and the Shangri-la Dialogue plays in regional security matters.<sup>9</sup>

## **Policy Recommendations to Enhance Singapore-ROK Security Relations**

There has been a change in administration in the ROK from the liberal Moon administration to the conservative Yoon Suk-yeol administration following the presidential election on 9 March 2022. The Yoon administration has stated that it wishes the ROK to become a “global pivotal state” that plays a bigger role in and makes a larger contribution to regional and international affairs. It is expected that there will be significant changes in the ROK’s foreign policy.

Therefore, it is timely to conduct a review of the current state of Singapore-ROK security ties (which has been conducted in the preceding section) and to also identify/propose policy recommendations in order to strengthen this relationship in the coming years. The choice of cooperation topics has to be carefully considered in light of ongoing cooperation efforts/mechanisms and also sensitivities regarding the topics.

In my opinion, given the two countries’ strengths, experiences and commonalities as maritime nations, there is stronger potential for further security cooperation between them in maritime security and the fight against piracy, cybersecurity, and humanitarian and disaster relief (HADR). These topics have consistently been raised in various high-level meetings between officials from Singapore and the ROK.

It is a boon (and pure coincidence) that these three areas of cooperation are already among the seven priority areas of the ADMM-Plus which are: humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, maritime security, military medicine, counter terrorism, peace-keeping operations, humanitarian mine action, and cyber security. Both countries can therefore leverage upon existing links

and networks that have already been established in these spheres. For instance, Singapore and the ROK were co-chairs of the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group on Maritime Security. Therefore, officials on both sides are already familiar with one another.

In addition, the areas of cooperation should also not be of a sensitive nature since that will make it easier for both sides to work together without facing significant opposition both domestically and internationally. Given the strong preference of ASEAN-led mechanisms to focus on less sensitive areas of cooperation, the fact that the 18 member states of the ADMM-Plus had managed to agree upon these seven areas of cooperation show that they have been deemed to not to be of a sensitive nature.

The next section of this paper will examine how Singapore and the ROK could possibly do more together in these three areas.

### ***1. Maritime Security and the Fight against Piracy***

Both Singapore and the ROK are maritime nations that share a common emphasis on maritime trade, freedom of navigation and the safety of their ships in international waterways. It is in the common interests of Singapore and the ROK to cooperate to better deal with the threat posed by piracy to their ships along the seas from the Indian Ocean to the Straits of Malacca and then to the South China Sea.<sup>10</sup>

This common stake and interest in the fight against piracy is reflected in the strong commitment by Singapore and the ROK to the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) which has one of its main aims stated as the suppression of piracy.<sup>11</sup> Singapore and the ROK have each commanded the Combined Task Force 151 (CTF 151) – one of the CMF's three task forces that specifically focuses on deterring and suppressing piracy and armed robbery at sea – five

times. Only Turkey and Pakistan have commanded the CTF 151 more times than Singapore and the ROK.<sup>12</sup>

In the joint fight against piracy, Singapore and the ROK could better leverage upon the presence of the Information Fusion Centre (IFC) and the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia Information Sharing Centre (ReCAAP ISC) which are both based in Singapore.

The IFC is a regional maritime security center that facilitates information-sharing and collaboration between its partners to resolve common maritime security concerns. To date, 168 International Liaison Officers (ILOs) from 25 countries have been deployed to the IFC, and 20 ILOs from 19 countries currently serve alongside 12 personnel from Singapore's Navy. The IFC has at present 97 linkages with other maritime agencies from 41 countries.<sup>13</sup>

In addition, Singapore also hosts the ReCAAP ISC which was the first regional government-to-government agreement to promote and enhance cooperation against piracy and armed robbery against ships in Asia. The ReCAAP ISC was launched in Singapore in 2006 and Singapore recently committed to hosting it for another five years till 31 March 2027.<sup>14</sup>

While the waters around Singapore are patrolled by regional states such as Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand, there is certainly potential for the ROK to cooperate with Singapore to co-lead efforts in the fight against the transnational threats posed by pirates in selected hotspots from the Indian Ocean to the South China Sea. In order to safeguard its own maritime interests and assets, it is also in the interests of countries like the ROK to assign more resources to fight against piracy (along with its ASEAN member state counterparts) in the Asia-Pacific region. In addition, Singapore and the ROK could also cooperate to provide capacity-building support and training for other third-party regional states to fight piracy and illegal trafficking.

## ***2. Cybersecurity***

The Singapore military (formally known as the Singapore Armed Forces or SAF) will launch a fourth service (after the Army, Air Force and Navy) known as the “Digital and Intelligence Service” (DIS) by the end of this year. The DIS will provide early warning and operational intelligence, as well as advance C4 (command, control, communications, computers) connectivity for the SAF to operate as a “networked” force. It will also be responsible for the digital defense of the SAF.<sup>15</sup>

In this regard, especially since Singapore and the ROK already have a cybersecurity MOU, Singapore could work more closely together with the ROK on cybersecurity issues both in the civilian and military sectors (especially as Singapore builds up its nascent DIS). Given the ROK’s wide ranging experiences in dealing with cybersecurity threats in both sectors and with both countries seeking to further digitalize (therefore indirectly opening up more avenues to cyber attacks), there is scope for more bilateral cooperation in exchanging best practices to safeguard against these increasingly sophisticated cyber-attacks.

## ***3. Humanitarian and Disaster Relief (HADR)***

Singapore and the ROK are both well equipped to deal with HADR issues within their respective territories. That being said, both countries could also cooperate to help with HADR efforts in third countries especially in the Southeast Asian region. Some of their military personnel and resources would come in very handy to assist other countries in the region when they are facing devastating natural disasters such as floods and earthquakes.

Both countries can also leverage upon the networks and resources that are already available via the Changi Regional HADR Coordination Centre in Singapore. This center shares information on disasters in the region and it also helps to facilitate military-to-military coordination, engagement, deployment and

exercises. By hosting military officers from various countries, the center also has a network of international liaison officers.<sup>16</sup>

Such bilateral cooperation to assist other Southeast Asian countries in times of need would also help to strengthen ASEAN-ROK ties and encourage other ASEAN dialogue partners to do likewise and to do more to help contribute to HADR efforts in the region.

## **Conclusion**

This paper's focus is on the bilateral security relationship between Singapore and the ROK especially as it has transited from the Moon to Yoon administration. An examination of Singapore-ROK bilateral security ties during the Moon administration has shown that both countries maintain warm relations via a series of regular high-level exchanges. While both countries do not regard the other among its top tier of security partners, there is still great potential for bilateral cooperation for mutual benefits and also for both countries to co-lead security efforts at the regional level.

With a new Yoon administration in power in the ROK, it is also timely to re-examine the areas of bilateral security cooperation with a view to determining which areas of such cooperation should be prioritized in the coming years. Three areas have been highlighted as possessing strong potential for future security cooperation: maritime security and the fight against piracy, cybersecurity, and HADR.

Among countries in the region, Singapore and the ROK (given both their resources and experiences) are well positioned to work more closely together in these three less sensitive areas so as to further contribute to regional peace and stability. If such cooperation between Singapore and the ROK can be extended to the ASEAN-ROK level and if the latter proves to be successful, it might also provide a useful model for similar cooperation efforts between ASEAN and its other dialogue partners.

## Endnote

- <sup>1</sup> In December 2009, the then Singapore Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Teo Chee Hean and the then ROK's Minister of National Defense Kim Tae-Young signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on defence cooperation between their two ministries. The MOU was the first bilateral defence agreement to be signed at the ministerial level. It aimed to strengthen bilateral defence relations between Singapore and the ROK by formalising existing defence interactions such as policy dialogues, exchanges of visits by defence officials and cross-attendance of courses and seminars between the defence establishments of both countries. The MOU also allowed both countries to broaden their defence cooperation to include areas like humanitarian assistance and military medicine. Source: "Singapore and the Republic of Korea Sign Memorandum of Understanding on Defence Cooperation", *MINDEF Singapore*, December 2, 2009, [https://www.mindef.gov.sg/web/portal/mindef/news-and-events/latest-releases/article-detail/2009/december/2009dec02-news-releases-00542/tut/p/z1/vVLLbsIWEPwWDhyt3YQkTo6BVjzEq7zxpTKOA26JA4kFbb--BsqpAtrLfbA0650djz3AYAFM84Nac6NyzbcWL1nwSgdPjRZ6bn\\_gTxyMZ5NJ16\\_321Ma wAwYMKHNzmxgm5mddyJlXBUptTRU3eSarqOWxJFwnRB5stazilhZGILireSltAUXMap iLoXMVrK4YIvQJWfutZEg-p57EtWJlcBSRctKUXmQwMeIeBgi4YndRCJE4mPqpNyB-SMHZB7jjRXjD3\\_w4jUdD93uoDfyLT-KwggOXWzSM\\_\\_O-Av\\_jbBDPju33LvBlw\\_srsiI\\_pKYNaltGLaDTjR28LkGS-uC3r4mhflBvSNMdV5kNbjp355C6Hz6CFsFNXbfs9im7dTWD4MLP4ncFbZLXqN3tp64mZDIeSzWJw4sLjOuODbM3ZZFtY-ISLvo9ZXvU-a87CM40rlG7QpVH0!/">https://www.mindef.gov.sg/web/portal/mindef/news-and-events/latest-releases/article-detail/2009/december/2009dec02-news-releases-00542/tut/p/z1/vVLLbsIWEPwWDhyt3YQkTo6BVjzEq7zxpTKOA26JA4kFbb--BsqpAtrLfbA0650djz3AYAFM84Nac6NyzbcWL1nwSgdPjRZ6bn\\_gTxyMZ5NJ16\\_321Ma wAwYMKHNzmxgm5mddyJlXBUptTRU3eSarqOWxJFwnRB5stazilhZGILireSltAUXMap iLoXMVrK4YIvQJWfutZEg-p57EtWJlcBSRctKUXmQwMeIeBgi4YndRCJE4mPqpNyB-SMHZB7jjRXjD3\\_w4jUdD93uoDfyLT-KwggOXWzSM\\_\\_O-Av\\_jbBDPju33LvBlw\\_srsiI\\_pKYNaltGLaDTjR28LkGS-uC3r4mhflBvSNMdV5kNbjp355C6Hz6CFsFNXbfs9im7dTWD4MLP4ncFbZLXqN3tp64mZDIeSzWJw4sLjOuODbM3ZZFtY-ISLvo9ZXvU-a87CM40rlG7QpVH0!/](https://www.mindef.gov.sg/web/portal/mindef/news-and-events/latest-releases/article-detail/2009/december/2009dec02-news-releases-00542/tut/p/z1/vVLLbsIWEPwWDhyt3YQkTo6BVjzEq7zxpTKOA26JA4kFbb--BsqpAtrLfbA0650djz3AYAFM84Nac6NyzbcWL1nwSgdPjRZ6bn_gTxyMZ5NJ16_321Ma wAwYMKHNzmxgm5mddyJlXBUptTRU3eSarqOWxJFwnRB5stazilhZGILireSltAUXMap iLoXMVrK4YIvQJWfutZEg-p57EtWJlcBSRctKUXmQwMeIeBgi4YndRCJE4mPqpNyB-SMHZB7jjRXjD3_w4jUdD93uoDfyLT-KwggOXWzSM__O-Av_jbBDPju33LvBlw_srsiI_pKYNaltGLaDTjR28LkGS-uC3r4mhflBvSNMdV5kNbjp355C6Hz6CFsFNXbfs9im7dTWD4MLP4ncFbZLXqN3tp64mZDIeSzWJw4sLjOuODbM3ZZFtY-ISLvo9ZXvU-a87CM40rlG7QpVH0!/)
- <sup>2</sup> "Defense officials of S. Korea, Singapore agree on cooperation in cybersecurity, counterterrorism", *Yonhap News Agency*, January 26, 2022, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20220126012800325>
- <sup>3</sup> "Republic of Korea's Minister of National Defense Makes Introductory Visit to Singapore", *MINDEF Singapore*, December 23, 2021, [https://www.mindef.gov.sg/web/portal/mindef/news-and-events/latest-releases/article-detail/2021/December/23dec21\\_nr](https://www.mindef.gov.sg/web/portal/mindef/news-and-events/latest-releases/article-detail/2021/December/23dec21_nr)
- <sup>4</sup> "Defense chiefs of S. Korea, Singapore discuss security cooperation", *The Korea Herald*, December 23, 2021, <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20211223000891>
- <sup>5</sup> "Singapore Affirms Commitment to Multilateral Cooperation and an Open and Inclusive Regional Security Environment", *MINDEF Singapore*, November 10, 2021, [https://www.mindef.gov.sg/web/portal/mindef/news-and-events/latest-releases/article-detail/2021/november/10nov21\\_nr/tut/p/z0/fY29DsIwEIOhSFjdNeIwIwXgAMTfUFDIggIcJdBeoIKj09AQmJisy3bHxjQYNi2rrDBebZl9FvT2\\_WXo-EYU2qxTPMEs02ez9LBYrLu92AK5n8hPqh6PpwXYG42nKXjkwetUCWg2bdU7akGnWDUKtlx\\_R64y\\_1uMjAHz4GeAXTI-Egn-fEcBJ59RQKZH020fJTUxrQRWNpATZA11WQbisEbi\\_CLEfiDuV3NdjXLOi8Giop/](https://www.mindef.gov.sg/web/portal/mindef/news-and-events/latest-releases/article-detail/2021/november/10nov21_nr/tut/p/z0/fY29DsIwEIOhSFjdNeIwIwXgAMTfUFDIggIcJdBeoIKj09AQmJisy3bHxjQYNi2rrDBebZl9FvT2_WXo-EYU2qxTPMEs02ez9LBYrLu92AK5n8hPqh6PpwXYG42nKXjkwetUCWg2bdU7akGnWDUKtlx_R64y_1uMjAHz4GeAXTI-Egn-fEcBJ59RQKZH020fJTUxrQRWNpATZA11WQbisEbi_CLEfiDuV3NdjXLOi8Giop/)
- <sup>6</sup> "Official Visit by PM Lee Hsien Loong to the Republic of Korea, 22 to 27 November 2019", *MFA Singapore*, November 23, 2019, [https://www.mfa.gov.sg/Newsroom/Press-Statements-Transcripts-and-Photos/2019/11/2311\\_ASEAN-ROK](https://www.mfa.gov.sg/Newsroom/Press-Statements-Transcripts-and-Photos/2019/11/2311_ASEAN-ROK)
- <sup>7</sup> "Singapore signs MOU with the Republic of Korea to enhance cybersecurity cooperation", *Cyber Security Agency of Singapore*, November 23, 2019, <https://www.csa.gov.sg/news/press-releases/singapore-signs-mou-with-the-republic-of-korea>

<sup>8</sup> The ADMM-Plus was established in 2010 to promote stable military-to-military relations and to enhance regional peace and stability. Under their co-chairmanship of Singapore and the ROK, the ADMM-Plus navies agreed in November 2017 to adopt and practise the Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea. Both countries also conducted the Future Leader's Programme in June 2018 to encourage collaboration within the ADMM-Plus community on maritime security. Source: "Singapore and Republic of Korea Navies Co-Host Maritime Security Exercise to Strengthen ADMM-Plus Cooperation", *MINDEF Singapore*, April 28, 2019, [https://www.mindef.gov.sg/web/portal/mindef/news-and-events/latest-releases/article-detail/2019/april/28apr19\\_nr](https://www.mindef.gov.sg/web/portal/mindef/news-and-events/latest-releases/article-detail/2019/april/28apr19_nr)

<sup>9</sup> "Singapore and the Republic of Korea Reaffirm Warm and Friendly Bilateral Defence Relations", *MINDEF Singapore*, January 29, 2018, [https://www.mindef.gov.sg/web/portal/mindef/news-and-events/latest-releases/article-detail/2018/january/29jan18\\_nr/!ut/p/z/1rVLLTsMwEPwWDJm63rzq1Ft4qIAayqPQxpFKT Z0HJHZxTEP\\_nm2phJAoCAmfPOPZ9ezYINMZ5Uqsq0LYSitRI055f87GZ6cXEHjX43DiQvw4mYzCk-vLB9anj5RTvsqqJU2jpVzIDBhhrshIgIcAeE-T5EEROCudlWnSm7siVNm0otZU4yraxU1oFSN9IBJbuWCLUkco1s60AtrGwtMbkWpV IeOBGDjwJ9SrMBuEA240V4ZO3PL8RgOrBiwnu8k49tg6AbgjcjXYgdBoNoAjceDnIe8 EOPFD2wwx4Yna4r2dEHpU2DAd\\_\\_Mb8LoFc7Cz9MiY9WPb288Biz3ob7Zuns\\_8PGWzyTnCYF-he2JJXKNZ1t9XS21yP81KPtotalj08Vq4UfyWRuTTS9F4N0qW1q\\_bYAQe6rusVWhe17G W6ceC7kIk3ONdXJV01TeRyvHOenP'sBX2y6PLFhGh-9A9FXG2E!/dz/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEH/?urile=wcm%3Apath%3A%2Fmindef-content%2Fhome%2Fnews-and-events%2F2F2018%2Fjanuary%2F29jan18\\_nr](https://www.mindef.gov.sg/web/portal/mindef/news-and-events/latest-releases/article-detail/2018/january/29jan18_nr/!ut/p/z/1rVLLTsMwEPwWDJm63rzq1Ft4qIAayqPQxpFKT Z0HJHZxTEP_nm2phJAoCAmfPOPZ9ezYINMZ5Uqsq0LYSitRI055f87GZ6cXEHjX43DiQvw4mYzCk-vLB9anj5RTvsqqJU2jpVzIDBhhrshIgIcAeE-T5EEROCudlWnSm7siVNm0otZU4yraxU1oFSN9IBJbuWCLUkco1s60AtrGwtMbkWpV IeOBGDjwJ9SrMBuEA240V4ZO3PL8RgOrBiwnu8k49tg6AbgjcjXYgdBoNoAjceDnIe8 EOPFD2wwx4Yna4r2dEHpU2DAd__Mb8LoFc7Cz9MiY9WPb288Biz3ob7Zuns_8PGWzyTnCYF-he2JJXKNZ1t9XS21yP81KPtotalj08Vq4UfyWRuTTS9F4N0qW1q_bYAQe6rusVWhe17G W6ceC7kIk3ONdXJV01TeRyvHOenP'sBX2y6PLFhGh-9A9FXG2E!/dz/d5/L2dBISEvZ0FBIS9nQSEH/?urile=wcm%3Apath%3A%2Fmindef-content%2Fhome%2Fnews-and-events%2F2F2018%2Fjanuary%2F29jan18_nr)

<sup>10</sup> This paper does not focus on the South China Sea territorial disputes or claims especially since both Singapore and the ROK are not claimant states and their interests lie in other aspects of the South China Sea. Given the sensitivities over the South China Sea territorial disputes and with both Singapore and the ROK wishing to maintain a fine balance in their respective relations with China and the US, the suggestions made in this paper are limited to the issue of the fight against piracy (which is of a less sensitive nature and therefore it is an area in which more practical action can be taken in).

<sup>11</sup> The CMF is a multinational maritime partnership, which exists to uphold the Rules-Based International Order (RBI) by countering illicit non-state actors on the high seas and promoting security, stability, and prosperity across approximately 3.2 million square miles of international waters, which encompass some of the world's most important shipping lanes. Source: *Combined Maritime Forces (CMF)*, <https://combinedmaritimeforces.com/>

<sup>12</sup> "CTF 151: Counter-piracy", *Combined Maritime Forces (CMF)*, <https://combinedmaritimeforces.com/ctf-151-counter-piracy/>

<sup>13</sup> "Fact Sheet: Restructuring the RSN's Capabilities to Strengthen Singapore's Maritime Security Capabilities", *MINDEF Singapore*, June 29, 2020, [https://www.mindef.gov.sg/web/portal/mindef/news-and-events/latest-releases/article-detail/2020/June/29jun20\\_fs3](https://www.mindef.gov.sg/web/portal/mindef/news-and-events/latest-releases/article-detail/2020/June/29jun20_fs3)

<sup>14</sup> In recognition of its success as a model of strong inter-governmental cooperation against piracy and armed robbery at sea through information sharing, capacity building, and cooperative arrangements between member countries, maritime organisations and the industry, ReCAAP has seen its number of Contracting Parties grow from 14 since its inception to 21 today. The 14 Contracting Parties to ReCAAP at its inception were Bangladesh, Brunei, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, South Korea, Laos, Myanmar,

Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam. Today, ReCAAP's Contracting Parties also include Australia, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom, and the United States; Source: "Singapore to Host the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) Information Sharing Centre (Isc) for Further Five Years", *Ministry of Transport Singapore*, March 30, 2022, [https://www.mot.gov.sg/news/details/singapore-to-host-the-regional-cooperation-agreement-on-combating-piracy-and-armed-robbery-against-ships-in-asia-\(recaap\)-information-sharing-centre-\(isc\)-for-further-five-years](https://www.mot.gov.sg/news/details/singapore-to-host-the-regional-cooperation-agreement-on-combating-piracy-and-armed-robbery-against-ships-in-asia-(recaap)-information-sharing-centre-(isc)-for-further-five-years)

<sup>15</sup> The DIS is an evolution of the SAF's C4I community combined with its Defence Cyber Organisation. Since its inauguration in 2012, the C4I community has been involved in a number of SAF operations, including the deployment of imagery analysis teams to the Middle East in 2015. In 2017, the Defence Cyber Organisation was formed to lead and coordinate MINDEF's and SAF's cybersecurity efforts across the defence clusters. Source: "Army, air force, navy and soon, digital and intelligence: SAF to launch 4th service to deal with new threats", *CNA*, March 2, 2022, <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/singapore/saf-digital-intelligence-fourth-service-ng-eng-hen-2532456>

<sup>16</sup> "Defence diplomacy as a tool to cope with the climate crisis", *East Asia Forum*, March 31, 2022, <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2022/03/31/defence-diplomacy-as-a-tool-to-cope-with-the-climate-crisis/>

## *Opportunities and Challenges*

*Learning for the New Southern Policy:  
Exploring the Security Dimensions of  
ASEAN-ROK Partnership*

Wondeuk Cho

**Introduction**

The security and strategic environment of the Indo-Pacific is undergoing significant changes that tend to advance global system-oriented changes. At the same time, over the past several years, countries in the Indo-Pacific have experienced the toxic side effects of the Covid-19 pandemics on socio-economic and security dimensions. The Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated ongoing geopolitical and geo-economic fluctuations, which could narrow down strategic options for small and middle powers, with China's increasing assertiveness and influence in the region, a relative decline of US leadership, and the intensifying US-China strategic competition. Now what is even worse, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has made the world even more ideologically polarized.<sup>1</sup> The US, Russia, and China are constructing the polarized structure of the international system. There are two distinct features of current strategic circumstances among others. On the one hand, we are facing challenges on all fronts. On the other hand, the Indo-Pacific has increasingly seen a rising wave of unilateralism.

First, a dramatic shift in the geopolitical and strategic environment posed unprecedented challenges on all fronts. The world is becoming more complicated and polarized, with transactional challenges ranging from US-China competition to climate change to supply chain disruptions to health security

from the pandemic to political nationalism and the decline of democracy. So many countries realized that very few great powers, such as the US and China might face difficulty addressing challenges on all fronts globally and even regionally. Those great powers may not have sufficient capacity to deal with them or not have a strong willingness to do so due to their dependency to their own national interests and domestic political dynamics to some extent.

Second, multilateralism has been declining while minilateralism is growing in the Indo-Pacific. The changing balance of power dynamics at the regional and global levels undermines the effective functioning of the larger multilateral institutions. Once a strong supporter for multilateralism, the US has been prioritizing minilateral alignments with its like-minded allies and partners rather than multilateral platforms to deal with global challenges and China's rise, for instance, through QUAD, AUKUS, and even IPEF. In contrast, the ASEAN centrality is losing ground and the recent geopolitical shift tends to marginalize the role of ASEAN-led multilateral platforms such as the East Asia Summit and ASEAN Regional Forum, to address regional challenges and issues. In that sense, it is said that ASEAN is increasingly looking for alternative or third-parties options amid US-China strategic rivalry. According to ISEAS 2022 Survey Report, ASEAN member countries tend to share a common approach to seeking out third parties to broaden their strategic space and options to some extent. On average, ASEAN opinion leaders prefer to find an alternative to superpowers for broadening their strategic options with 12.9% in 2021, increasing to 16.2% in 2022. In cases of specific ASEAN member states, countries like Indonesia (18.3% in 2022 from 8.5% in 2021), Singapore (18.0% in 2022 from 14.6% in 2021), Thailand (17.1% in 2022 from 13.7% in 2021), Vietnam (21.5% in 2022 from 8.0% in 2021) tend to put more weight on expanding their diversification

to the third parties beyond the US and China than other ASEAN member countries.<sup>2</sup>

How about South Korea? South Korea is also under the strategic environment to navigate the great power rivalry. China is Korea's major trading partner and *de facto* neighboring country. In contrast, the US is its most important security ally. Even if the new ROK government attempts to recover and rejuvenate the US-ROK alliance, it can hardly completely disregard China's relations. In that sense, ASEAN and South Korea are on the same page to explore ways to navigate the great power competition and at the same time the two sides have a strong incentive to cooperate and collaborate with each other to deliver regional public goods for the stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region, in particular, Southeast Asia region. In this context, the stable and prosperous regional order requires comprehensive security cooperation between ASEAN and South Korea in non-traditional and traditional security, especially maritime security and maritime domain awareness capacity building in Southeast Asia.

Against this backdrop, I will review the security dimension of Korea's New Southern Policy (NSP) to draw some lessons to improve the ASEAN-ROK security partnership.

## **Limitations and Achievements of Security Cooperation under the New Southern Policy**

### ***1. NSP and Its Achievements***

Former President Moon Jae-in unveiled his flagship foreign policy initiative, the so-called the New Southern Policy in 2017. Korea intended to diversify its economic and diplomatic alignments through the NSP, upgrading its relations with ASEAN and India to the level of its relations with four major powers surrounding the Korean peninsula. Seoul has sought to diversify its external economic relations, reorient its approaches towards

Southeast Asia and beyond, and promote active regional cooperation. The NSP focuses on three policy pillars to implement Seoul's foreign policy towards ASEAN: *the people pillar* like people-to-people exchanges and social-cultural cooperation, *the prosperity pillar* such as economy and investment cooperation, and *the peace pillar* such as diplomatic and security cooperation. Seoul's NSP implementation resulted in somewhat of a success in terms of stepping up its relations with ASEAN. Since the implementation of the NSP, ROK's initiative has been enthusiastically received by ASEAN member states and the general performances and outcomes of the NSP for the last five years have been positive overall. The NSP has played a major role in developing relations between Korea and ASEAN in economic and people-to-people exchanges. At the same time, there were some important achievements in the peace pillar of ROK-ASEAN cooperation.

First of all, Seoul strengthened its political and diplomatic relations with ASEAN and ASEAN member countries. Regarding the summit and high-level exchanges, former president Moon Jae-in completed his promise to visit all 10 ASEAN member countries within his term of office. More importantly, Korea successfully held the 3<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN-ROK Commemorative Summit on November 26, 2019 in Busan. The Moon administration also launched the ROK-Mekong summit in 2019 and upgraded Korea's relations with the Mekong Subregion to the strategic partnership in 2020. In addition, ASEAN has continuously supported the Korean peninsula peace process and expressed its willingness to strengthening cooperation for peace and prosperity on the Korean peninsula. In that regard, Singapore and Vietnam hosted the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> US-DPRK historic summits in 2018 and 2019, respectively.

Second, Korea tried to improve its security and defense cooperation with the ASEAN and ASEAN member countries. Seoul has actively participated in the ASEAN-led multilateral

security forums, such as East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and ADMM-Plus (ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting-Plus). The Moon administration tried to expand the bilateral security cooperation to some extent, launching ASEAN-ROK Informal Defense Minister's meeting in November 2021. This must pave the way to further focusing on Korea's traditional security cooperation with ASEAN by creating an opportunity to figure out "a new action plan for advancing the defense aspect of its ties with ASEAN as a grouping over the next few years."<sup>3</sup>

In addition, Korea intends to promote defense cooperation with ASEAN member states by signing MOUs for defense cooperation at the bilateral level and expanding defense industry cooperation. Korea also expands its participation in joint military exercises involving Southeast Asian countries to combat pirates and respond to maritime terrorism. Above all, retired naval ships were transferred to contribute in strengthening the maritime security capacity of Southeast Asian countries. Korea provided second-handed naval ships and coast guard vessels: transferring 20 naval patrol killers, one logistics ship and one frigate to the Philippines, two frigates to Vietnam, and coast guard vessels to Cambodia. Seoul has exported 6 Chang Bogo-class submarines to Indonesia while transferring a 3,650-ton Daegu-class frigate to Thailand. Over the past few years, South Korea has become the 6th largest arms supplier to Southeast Asia.<sup>4</sup>

ROK Ministry of National Defense established an internet-based Naval International Logistics Information Support System (NILISS) and has been operating the system since 2020 to support the efficient operation of transferred Korean naval vessels and strengthen defense cooperation. So far, a total of seven ASEAN countries, including Vietnam, Cambodia, and the Philippines, have participated as members. Regarding joint maritime exercises with ASEAN member countries, South Korea has joined the

RIMPAC exercises which include Indonesia, Singapore, the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, and Brunei. It has also attended the Thailand-led Cobra Gold, inviting Singapore, Indonesia, and Malaysia. South Korea has participated in a triennial Asia-Pacific submarine rescue exercise in November 2019 in which the US, Japan, Australia, Singapore, and Malaysia with 12 countries as an observer in Western Australia. In addition, South Korea co-organized the ADMM-Plus Maritime Security FTX with Singapore in April 30, 2019, as “part of the two countries’ co-chairmanship of the ADMM-Plus Experts’ Working Group on Maritime Security from 2017 to 2020.”<sup>5</sup>

Third, South Korea’s NSP has some achievements in the sense that it has tried to contribute to improving non-traditional security in Southeast Asia, such as environmental disasters, climate change, sustainable development of marine resources and marine environmental protection. At the same time, South Korea focuses on some important security issues in the maritime Southeast Asian region, including maritime security and safety cooperation. According to ‘The State of Southeast Asia 2022: Survey Report’ by ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, the three biggest challenges facing Southeast Asia are “the Covid-19 pandemic’s threat to health,” “unemployment and economic recession,” and “climate change and more intense and frequent weather events.” In addition, according to a CSIS 2020 Survey of strategic elites in major Southeast Asian countries, the most challenging issues in Southeast Asia are climate change, natural disasters, human security needs, terrorism, and territorial disputes. It shows that non-traditional security challenges are more critical to ASEAN than traditional security problems.<sup>6</sup> The above-mentioned survey reports show that the NSP-Plus’ direction towards prioritizing non-traditional security challenges in Southeast Asia seems to put South Korea on the right path to the security cooperation that the ASEAN wants.

## ***2. NSP's Limitations***

Despite some achievements in the field of peace policy pillar, a lasting criticism of the NSP is its relatively underdeveloped, under-specified and under-resourced security dimension compared with other two dimensions. The NSP received criticisms for focusing too much on economic issues while lacking policy initiative on strategic and security issues. Experts criticize South Korea's negligible contributions to regional strategic and security issues. So, ASEAN does not currently see South Korea as a preferred and trusted strategic partner partly because of its strategic ambiguity in addressing security issues central to ASEAN's concerns, including the South China Sea issues. Even it is said that NSP's security dimension has focused much on non-traditional security issues.<sup>7</sup> Seoul has been unsuccessful to realize "strategic" partnerships with ASEAN with little sharing of the long-term perspective on regional order.<sup>8</sup> "If ASEAN were to seek out third parties to hedge against the uncertainties of the US-China strategic rivalry, who is your most preferred and trusted strategic partner for ASEAN?: ROK-3.5% (2021), 6.8%(2022). The rate increased with 6.8% in 2022 compared with 3.5% in 2021, but still much lower than Australia, the EU, Japan and UK.<sup>9</sup> Even according to a South Korean expert, the NSP lacks "any strategic and security elements in its operational programs" while leaving "sensitive security and defense issues" aside due to Seoul's aversion to be caught in a risky vortex of US-China strategic rivalry.<sup>10</sup> In addition, an ASEAN expert criticized that South Korea pays more attention to defense industry cooperation, mainly with commercial opportunities instead of strategic imperatives.<sup>11</sup>

### **Lessons from the New Southern Policy**

There are four lessons from the NSP in order to further step-up Korea-ASEAN security cooperation.

**First**, the Moon government implemented the NSP with little serious strategic consideration at the beginning of its policy towards ASEAN, in reaction to China's economic retaliation against the THAAD deployment to a large extent. For South Korea to strengthen its partnership with ASEAN, it should develop dialogue channels to share its strategic vision and consult on regional security issues with ASEAN, such as the Asian security dialogue-the Shangri-La Dialogue. In this regard, it should be noted that South Korea and ASEAN launched ASEAN-ROK Defense Ministerial Meeting, which needs to be developed in a more substantive and comprehensive way. In particular, the two sides can establish several working-level dialogue platforms regarding some security issues based on the issue-based minilateral working groupings with ASEAN member states. In addition, Korea needs to shift away from its approach of strategic ambiguity on sensitive but crucial regional issues related with the rules-based order, such as South China Sea issues. In this context, it is expected that Seoul's new government would be more actively engaged in security issues in the region, even when dealing with sensitive security agendas. Park Jin, the new ROK foreign minister, recently said during his confirmation hearing that Korea should take a more active role and stressed that Korea would work with the US to defend the rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific, making an active contribution to freedom of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea. ASEAN countries would want nothing more than for Korea to make a clear and active position on the South China Sea issues during the ASEAN-ROK summit meeting in November this year.

**Second**, some ASEAN experts emphasize that South Korea's defense industry cooperation has been mainly commercial-based rather than in a broader strategic context, even if it has been one of the major arms suppliers to Southeast Asia, especially Thailand, the Philippines, and Indonesia. The criticism mainly

results from Korea's lack of strategic considerations as it has implemented defense industry cooperation with ASEAN member countries. So, Korea's defense industry cooperation will be implemented in a direction to strategically improve regional security and ASEAN members' defense capacity building. For instance, Seoul can consider

**Third**, non-traditional security initiatives that the NSP-Plus attempted to implement are still relevant to enhance regional peace, stability, and prosperity because many AMS perceive non-traditional security issues as some of the most challenges they are now facing. What is more necessary is that South Korea needs to bring more specified and substantial cooperation targeting specific ASEAN member states. For instance, South Korea should expand the scope of cooperation with Vietnam as its key strategic partner in the Southeast Asia region not only to economic and people-to-people exchanges, but also through the security and defense. Both Korea and Vietnam can work together to promote responsible stakeholders in tackling various traditional and non-traditional security challenges in the Indo-Pacific. In addition, South Korea has strengthened cooperation with Indonesia at various dimensions, sharing ideas and interests on international issues in multilateral platforms such as G-20 and MIKTA, and expanding security partnerships in the fields of defense industry cooperation through joint arms production. In the future, South Korea and Indonesia should pursue sustainable middle-power partnerships by strengthening major defense partnerships and strategic cooperation to address regional problems in the Indo-Pacific. In that sense, the two countries need to come up with long-term ways to strengthen their special strategic partnership as they celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic relations in 2023.

**Fourth**, South Korea can significantly contribute to Southeast Asian security with regard to traditional security dimensions,

particularly maritime security and domain awareness. For instance, South Korea can also explore exchange programs for improving maritime capacity building of Southeast Asia through its Coast Guard and Navy. In addition, Korea may play a crucial role in improving the non-traditional maritime security in the maritime Southeast Asia, producing regional public goods such as measures to maintain rules-based order and helping Southeast Asian countries counter illegal fishing, etc., in the region

Last but not least, ROK and ASEAN need to find ways to enhance mutual trust given that the relatively low level of trust in South Korea as an important strategic partner among ASEAN member states. To this end, South Korea should make efforts to establish a multi-layered dialogue channel through which it can share strategic visions and interests with ASEAN to navigate the US-China competition and geopolitical transformation in the Indo-Pacific. At the same time, the current Yoon Suk-yeol government should continue to pursue and step-up policies to strengthen ROK-ASEAN strategic and security cooperation.

### **Conclusion**

Despite some successful aspects of the NSP, Seoul faced criticism for being relatively negligent in its engagement and cooperation in ASEAN's regional security issues. Now, the new Korean government would abandon Korea's past cautious and ambiguous stance on regional issues and take a more confident approach to Indo-Pacific regional security architecture. So, Seoul will take on a more active role in the Indo-Pacific region, which will strengthen its security cooperation with Southeast Asian countries.

There are some challenges for South Korea to strengthen its security cooperation with Southeast Asian countries. Southeast Asian countries may still cast doubt on whether the Yoon government can "keep the focuses on Southeast Asia for its own

sake” while implementing its foreign policy initiatives to deal with security issues such as its alliance relationship with the US, China’s growing assertiveness and North Korean nuclear proliferation and military provocations.<sup>12</sup> At the same time, Southeast Asia might look at whether the new government will “play a more active role in addressing security issues, such as freedom of navigation in the South China Sea and other issues that China may react sensitively to.”<sup>13</sup>

Finally, Korea and ASEAN need to strengthen cooperation in the Indo-Pacific while at the same time taking into account a fundamental difference in the threat perceptions. In other words, North Korea and its nuclearization are perceived as the top priority to South Korea. On the other hand, ASEAN and its member states are primarily concerned about non-traditional security threats and maritime security threats in the South China Sea. For this reason, it is desirable to gradually and incrementally expand the security cooperation from soft security to hard security issues such as those where threat perceptions of the two converge to promote security cooperation between ROK and ASEAN.

## Endnote

<sup>1</sup> Lakhvinder Singh and Dalbir Ahlawat, "India in Indo-Pacific: a way forward." *Asia Times*, June 13, 2022, <https://asiatimes.com/2022/06/india-in-indo-pacific-a-way-forward/>.

<sup>2</sup> S. Seah, et al., *The State of Southeast Asia: 2022 Survey Report* (Singapore: ISEAS Yusok-Ishak Institute, 2022), <https://www.iseas.edu.sg/articles-commentaries/state-of-southeast-asia-survey/the-state-of-southeast-asia-2022-survey-report/>.

<sup>3</sup> Prashanth Parameswaran, "What's Next for ASEAN-South Korea Security Ties?" *The Diplomat*, January 6, 2022. <https://thediplomat.com/2022/01/whats-next-for-asean-south-korea-security-ties/>.

<sup>4</sup> Victor Teo, "South Korea's Southeast Asian Potential," *ISEAS Commentaries*, October 30, 2020, <https://www.iseas.edu.sg/media/commentaries/south-koreas-southeast-asian-potential/>.

<sup>5</sup> Teo Benita. "ADMM-Plus Navies Kick Off Major Sea Security Exercise." *PIONEER*. April 30, 2019 (Government of Singapore). [https://www.mindef.gov.sg/web/portal/pioneer/article/regular-article-detail/ops-and-training/2019-Q2/30apr19\\_news1](https://www.mindef.gov.sg/web/portal/pioneer/article/regular-article-detail/ops-and-training/2019-Q2/30apr19_news1).

<sup>6</sup> "Powers, Norms, and Institutions: The Future of the Indo-Pacific from a Southeast Asia Perspective-Results of a CSIS Survey of Strategic Elites," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, June 2020, [https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/20624\\_Green\\_PowersNormsandInstitutions\\_WEB%20FINAL%20UPDATED.pdf](https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/20624_Green_PowersNormsandInstitutions_WEB%20FINAL%20UPDATED.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> Kathryn Botto, "South Korea Beyond Northeast Asia: How Seoul Is Deepening Ties with India and ASEAN," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, October 19, 2021, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2021/10/19/south-korea-beyond-northeast-asia-how-seoul-is-deepening-ties-with-india-and-asean-pub-85572>.

<sup>8</sup> Botto, "South Korea Beyond Northeast Asia."

<sup>9</sup> S. Seah, et al., *The State of Southeast Asia: 2022 Survey Report*.

<sup>10</sup> Wongi Choe, "New Southern Policy: Korea's Newfound Ambition in Search of Strategic Autonomy," *Notes de l'Ifri:Asie.Visions118*, January 2021, [https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/choe\\_new\\_southern\\_policy\\_korea\\_2021.pdf](https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/choe_new_southern_policy_korea_2021.pdf).

<sup>11</sup> Hoang Thi Ha and Glenn Ong, "Assessing the ROK's New Southern Policy towards ASEAN," *ISEAS Perspective*, 2020. No. 7, [https://www.iseas.edu.sg/images/pdf/ISEAS\\_Perspective\\_2020\\_7.pdf](https://www.iseas.edu.sg/images/pdf/ISEAS_Perspective_2020_7.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> Prashanth Parameswaran, "Advancing ASEAN-South Korea Cooperation Under the Yoon Administration." *Korea On Point*, June 6, 2022., [https://koreaponpoint.org/view.php?topic\\_idx=29&idx=91](https://koreaponpoint.org/view.php?topic_idx=29&idx=91).

<sup>13</sup> Wondeuk Cho. "ASEAN's Expectations and Concerns about the New ROK Government." *Korea on Point*, May 27, 2022., [https://koreaponpoint.org/view.php?topic\\_idx=29&idx=87](https://koreaponpoint.org/view.php?topic_idx=29&idx=87).

## CHAPTER 12

# *Republic of Korea and Southeast Asia in the Era of Indo-Pacific*

Hoang Thi Ha

Speaking at the Shangri-La Dialogue (SLD) 2019, Jeong Kyeong-Doo, then-defense minister of President Moon Jae-in administration of the Republic of Korea (ROK), pledged to “strengthen national defense cooperation with nations in the Asia-Pacific region and actively work to establish common and *cooperative peace* in East Asia”.<sup>1</sup> Three years later at the SLD2022, his successor Lee Jong-sup of the conservative Yoon Suk-yeol administration struck a very different note, affirming that the ROK will “strengthen capabilities to better implement *the US extended deterrence* and will dramatically enhance *response capabilities* of the Republic of Korea military to deter North Korea’s nuclear and missile threats.”<sup>2</sup> Whereas Jeong faithfully viewed the region as ‘Asia-Pacific’ and did not mention the term ‘Indo-Pacific’, Lee referred to ‘Indo-Pacific’ 19 times in his speech. ‘Cooperative peace’ has given way to ‘deterrence and response’, and ‘Indo-Pacific’ replaced ‘Asia-Pacific’ as the paradigm through which the ROK will approach international relations in the region, at least for the next five years.

The change of government has heralded qualitative adjustments to the ROK’s foreign policy, including its repositioning in the US-China strategic competition. As Seoul is taking concrete steps to be closely aligned with the US on the Indo-Pacific, would this signify any change to the ROK’s approach to Southeast Asia? Would its relations with ASEAN and Southeast Asian states continue the progressive trajectory with the high-water mark set out by President Moon’s signature New

Southern Policy (NSP)? How to move forward ROK-Southeast Asia relations, bilaterally and multilaterally through ASEAN-led mechanisms, at this moment of change and flux? This article attempts to address these questions. It starts with an overview of the regional security landscape in the era of great power competition. It then examines how the Yoon administration's foreign policy shift from the NSP to the Global Pivotal State (GPS) agenda may affect the ROK's relations with Southeast Asia, and ponders challenges and opportunities for the relations going forward.

### **From Cooperative Asia-Pacific to Contested Indo-Pacific**

In the immediate decades after the Cold War between the 1990s and mid-2010s, the 'relative strategic calm'<sup>3</sup> in great power relations, especially between the US and China, led to the proliferation of cooperative economic and security institutions in the broader Asian region known as "Asia-Pacific". While the balance of power never subsided, it fell under the radar whereas cooperative security and economic integration took the centre stage. This rather benign geopolitical landscape heralded an era of unprecedented globalization and economic interdependence with the ROK and Southeast Asian countries becoming the key nodes in the regional trade and industrial supply chains. This period of 'strategic calm' also enabled the ROK to project its 'middle power agency' and created a conducive environment for ASEAN to become the hub of Asia's multilateral diplomacy through multiple ASEAN-led mechanisms. The 'Asia-Pacific age' was characterized by broad-based multilateralism, optimism about ASEAN's convening power, and the hope that economic integration and socialization with international norms and institutions would eventually turn China into a "responsible stakeholder" in a US-led liberal order.

These expectations did not come to pass. Strategic competition has replaced the policy of engagement as the new paradigm of US-China relations, and is becoming a key-defining feature of the Indo-Pacific era. While the US-China rivalry dominates regional politics, China's re-emergence as a great power, its revanchist nationalism and its increasingly assertive – and at times coercive – foreign policy have also invoked pushback from other major powers. The contested character of the region's geopolitics is the manifest in the contestation over the term 'Indo-Pacific' itself. The Indo-Pacific construct has been actively embraced by the US and its like-minded partners and allies – Japan, India, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, the EU and European countries, and most recently the ROK. Conversely, China and Russia – the US' strategic competitors and systemic rivals – have rejected this construct with equal vigor. From 'Asia-Pacific' to 'Indo-Pacific', has the region's geography changed? Not really. To paraphrase scholar Arif Dirlik's perceptive comment about the 'Pacific' in the early 1990s, there is no Indo-Pacific region as an ontological reality, "but only a competing set of ideational constructs that project upon a certain location on the globe the imperatives of interest, power or vision of these historically produced relationships".<sup>4</sup>

The contestations over the interest, power, and vision among these major powers in the Indo-Pacific are impacting the region's security in profound ways.

First, they have aggravated the security dilemma in the region, unleashed arms race including in nuclear capabilities, and fueled further tensions to the existing flashpoints in the Taiwan Strait, the South China Sea, and the East China Sea. This means a greater focus on and investment in deterrence capabilities and hard power balancing among the major powers. Although balance of power is "a perennial element" of the human history, it has its ebbs and flows with time. It is currently at the most salient point in the regional system since the end of the Cold War.

As the policy of engagement is deemed to have failed to change China's behavior, the importance of hard balancing in the strategic calculus of the US and its Indo-Pacific partners has been elevated to respond to the China challenge. This has gathered further momentum after Russia's invasion of Ukraine which came on the heels of the 4 February 2022 joint statement of a "friendship with no limits" and "cooperation with no forbidden areas" between Beijing and Moscow. The key message from the US – and its allies and partners – at the SLD2022 was that the deterrence of war and the assurance of peace can only be achieved from a position of strength. They have committed to substantially increase their defense budgets and to strengthen multilateral coalitions such as the Australia-United Kingdom-United States trilateral pact (AUKUS), the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) and other security arrangements so as to increase their interoperability and coordination on strategic issues. What US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin emphasized at the SLD2022 was not solely American military strength but "integrated deterrence" and "the strategic power of partnership" with its allies and partners.<sup>5</sup>

As for China, despite its claim of being a different great power whose rise is peaceful with no hegemonic or imperialist ambitions, Beijing is also embarking on the well-trodden path of expanding its military projection and setting up overseas bases and military access in foreign places such as Djibouti in the Indian Ocean and most recently the Solomon Islands and reportedly Cambodia's Ream Naval Base. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) is pushing forward its modernization drive to become "an elite force that is capable of fighting and winning wars".<sup>6</sup> In 2021, China was reported to successfully launch an "around-the-world" hypersonic missile test, and in June 2022, it launched the third aircraft carrier, making another step closer towards narrowing the strategic edge that the US is maintaining in the Pacific.

Second, strategic contestations in the Indo-Pacific have led to the securitization of non-traditional domains, including trade, investment, finance, energy, food, health, cyber-space and supply chains. This whole-spectrum competition means that all the connectors that link peoples and economies together in a globalized, interdependent world are increasingly seen as vulnerabilities that adversaries/competitors can exploit for a strategic edge or coercive purpose. As a matter of fact, the Covid-19 pandemic failed to rally Washington and Beijing together as was the case in previous health crises; instead, it widened the strategic gasps between the two countries as they competed vigorously in vaccine diplomacy, waged information warfare on the origins of the Covid-19 virus, and raised the urgency to decouple the pharmaceutical chains.

An emergent trend to be watched from this whole-spectrum competition is ‘decoupling’ between the US and China in critical industries and emerging technologies. The ROK and Southeast Asian countries would be deeply affected by this trend because they are very open economies with extensive links to both America and China. There are certainly opportunities to be gained from the diversification of supply chains to avoid over-exposure to any single country. However, there are also attendant risks from supply chain disruptions due to export controls and secondary sanctions, among others.

Third, as US-China mutual distrust continues to entrench and both sides ramp up their rhetoric against each other, the sense of the inevitability upon other states to make a binary choice between the US and China has increased. According to the 2022 State of Southeast Asia (SSEA) survey by ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, when asked about ASEAN’s best response to the US-China competition, 10.1% of the respondents think thought “ASEAN has to choose between one of the two major powers as remaining neutral is impractical”, up from 3.1% in the 2021 survey.<sup>7</sup> It is not going to be a grand sweeping decision to side with

either the US or China but an accumulation of choices to be made over a range of specific issues,<sup>8</sup> for instance, who is the preferred partner for the development of 5G network or high-speed railway, or in the procurement of military equipment or Covid-19 vaccines.

So far, most Southeast Asian states have steadfastly maintained their strategic ambivalence and omni-enmeshment strategy, continuing to welcome and engage both the US and China and other major and middle powers through the ASEAN-led architecture. Southeast Asian countries have projected their own ASEAN Outlook for the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) to advocate cooperative security in an inclusive regional order.<sup>9</sup> Neither Washington nor Beijing has entirely won the discourse competition to win the trust and confidence of Southeast Asians. Each country comes with its own advantages and baggage. The US engagement is much welcomed and solicited as an offshore balancer, a technological powerhouse, and still the world's biggest economy and top soft power. Yet, Washington's sporadic unilateralism and isolationist lurches have been perturbing to many. US presence in the region is essentially not a geographical fact but "the consequence of a geopolitical calculation", hence the twin dilemma of entrapment and abandonment confronting regional states as the political winds in Washington keep blowing.<sup>10</sup> As for China, its growing economic clout, pragmatism in dealing with political systems of all stripes, and adherence to non-interference have enabled Beijing to win significant influence over many ruling regimes and business communities in Southeast Asia. However, geographic proximity and power asymmetry with China also structurally induce fear and mistrust among its smaller neighbors. The annual SSEA survey – which tracks the trust and distrust ratings of major powers in the region since 2019 – consistently shows that China is simultaneously the most influential and the most distrusted power in Southeast Asia.<sup>11</sup>

## **From New Southern Policy to Global Pivotal State: Challenges and Opportunities for ROK-Southeast Asia Relations**

During the last five years, the Moon Jae-in government studiously adopted “strategic ambiguity” to avoid putting the ROK in the minefield of US-China rivalry. His foreign policy initiative NSP sought to stay above the fray of great power politics and focused instead on elevating Southeast Asia and ASEAN to a higher priority in the ROK’s external relations. The initiative was arguably not guided by a strategic thrust but was mainly driven by economic and commercial interests. The ROK’s economic and diplomatic engagements with ASEAN and Southeast Asian countries in the last five years have been robust but Seoul persistently stayed low-key and kept its voice mute on the region’s pressing strategic-security challenges such as the South China Sea disputes and the Indo-Pacific construct.<sup>12</sup> This approach has been criticized by the Yoon government for not being commensurate with the country’s status as one of the world’s leading powers in democracy, economy and technology.<sup>13</sup> It is also pointed out that the focus on economic and socio-cultural cooperation “does not automatically translate into strategic confidence upon which political-security cooperation between ASEAN and South Korea can be built”.<sup>14</sup>

There have been clear signs about the Yoon administration’s departure from ‘strategic ambiguity’ towards ‘strategic clarity’ – by reinstating the importance of the alliance with the US as the foundation of the ROK’s foreign policy,<sup>15</sup> returning to a hardline position on North Korea, adopting a more cautious and less accommodating approach towards China, and pivoting towards the Indo-Pacific. As far as Southeast Asia is concerned, the Yoon administration is expected to continue to invest in the region with the ABCD priorities – Advancing human capital, Building health security, Connecting cultures, and Digitalizing Asian

infrastructure.<sup>16</sup> These priorities are very much a continuation of the NSP in the Prosperity and People pillars. That being said, the change of government in Seoul and its foreign policy adjustments vis-à-vis the US, China and the Indo-Pacific will likely introduce new dynamism and complexity to its relations with Southeast Asia and ASEAN. The region should keep an open mind about emerging opportunities while watching out for some attendant risks in these new developments.

### ***Beyond the Korean Peninsula to a Global Pivotal State***

President Yoon sought to rectify the narrow focus on peace-making with North Korea as the central axis of the Moon administration's foreign policy. In his *Foreign Affairs* article in March 2022, Yoon said: "A foreign policy tailored mostly to improving relations with North Korea has allowed Seoul's role in the global community to shrink". From his perspective, "[d]ealing with North Korea is an important task for any South Korean government. But it should not represent the whole of Seoul's diplomacy."<sup>17</sup> This is a welcome shift since it stands to broaden the ROK's strategic horizons beyond the Korean Peninsula, and hopefully enable Seoul to expend more bandwidth and resources to address regional and global common challenges.

During the Moon administration, securing ASEAN's support for his agenda of rapprochement with North Korea was central to the NSP's Peace pillar. Some analysts viewed this narrow focus on the Korean Peninsula as posing an obstacle to security cooperation because Seoul's hierarchy of security priorities differs from its NSP partners, and as placing undue and unrealistic expectations on ASEAN's leverage over North Korea.<sup>18</sup> For example, Moon made a unilateral decision to invite North Korean leader Kim Jong-un to attend the ASEAN-ROK special summit in 2019 in Busan, without prior consultation with and consent of ASEAN states, which potentially obscured the event's primary agenda to celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ASEAN-ROK

dialogue relations. Despite ASEAN's positive energy and assets, including its peace-oriented values and its bridging role for a reclusive North Korea to connect with the international community through the ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEAN remains a marginal player in the Korean Peninsula, where deterrence and balance of power feature overwhelming – if not decisive – in the strategic calculus of all parties concerned. In this regard, the Yoon administration's *realpolitik* assessment of the situation in the Korean Peninsula and a deterrence-based approach towards North Korea would allow for the ROK's engagement with Southeast Asia to "shine by its own light rather than be filtered through the lens of Northeast Asian geopolitics".<sup>19</sup>

President Yoon's ambition to project the ROK as a 'global pivotal state' – at least from his rhetoric thus far with Western allies and partners – is tinted with a values-based approach. For instance, according to the ROK's National Security Adviser Kim Sung-han, Yoon's participation at the NATO summit in July 2022 – the first ever for a South Korean president – was intended to, among others, strengthen the "value alliance" based on liberal democracy with NATO members and partners.<sup>20</sup> At Yoon's summit with US President Joe Biden in May 2022, both leaders reaffirmed "their commitments to a global comprehensive strategic alliance firmly rooted in the shared values of promoting democracy and the rules-based international order, fighting corruption, and advancing human rights", and welcomed the ROK "taking a leadership role in the Summit for Democracy process".<sup>21</sup>

While it is fitting to highlight the importance of democracy and human rights in concord with the US and other like-minded partners, especially given that President Yoon is reportedly a firm believer in and advocate for democratic values,<sup>22</sup> it would be ill-advised to adopt the same approach towards Southeast Asia. The 'democracy versus autocracy' discourse is certainly not a pleasant music to the ears of Southeast Asian ruling elites, and is not an

effective way to rally their support for either the unfolding US-China strategic competition or for international condemnation of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. For one thing, democratic backsliding and authoritarian consolidation have been a trend in Southeast Asian politics in the past decade. As such, it is a delicate act for any liberal democracy to reconcile its innate urge to uphold liberal ideals with its geopolitical and economic imperatives to engage Southeast Asia. Yet, even the US under the Biden administration is arguably putting pragmatism and geopolitics above ideology in its Southeast Asia policy.<sup>23</sup> The ROK's approach to Southeast Asia has traditionally been driven by pragmatism rather values, and despite all the rhetoric, it is expected that the Yoon administration will continue rather than deviate from this tradition.

### *South Korea's Pivot to the Indo-Pacific*

The pivot to the Indo-Pacific under President Yoon is perhaps the most substantive departure from the previous administration. At the SLD2022, minister Lee announced that "Korea will formulate its own Indo-Pacific strategy framework" which is seen as a pathway for Seoul to "go beyond its diplomacy that was focused on Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asian affairs to play its necessary role as a 'global pivotal state'".<sup>24</sup> The formulation of the strategy framework would take some time, but general contours are taking shape.

First, there will be no more Korean reticence towards the Quad. Yoon made it clear that his country "will positively review joining" the four-way grouping, if invited. Short of membership, Yoon has pledged to increase the ROK's participation in the Quad working groups.<sup>25</sup> The Yoon government's forward-looking approach towards the Quad – as well as sub-Quad or Quad-plus arrangements – is driven by its strategic repositioning in the US-China rivalry. His government not only reinstates the alliance with the US as the foundation of South Korea's foreign policy but

also commits greater contribution and collaboration with the US on regional and international issues. Yoon viewed the alliance as involving “complex networks of cooperation on a diverse set of issues, including privacy, supply chains and public health”.<sup>26</sup> His foreign minister Park Jin outlined it in three aspects – military security alliance, economic and technological alliance, and promotion of rules-based order in regional and global affairs.<sup>27</sup> This would entail greater synergy and connectivity between the GPS agenda and the US Indo-Pacific strategy for what is now termed as a “global comprehensive strategic alliance”. In fact, all the priority areas of the US-ROK alliance as highlighted in the joint statement of Biden-Yoon summit in May 2022 are aligned with the Quad’s focus on critical and emerging technologies, resilient global supply chains, climate and energy, cyber and space, Covid-19 response and global health security.

Second, South Korea’s pivot towards the Indo-Pacific and its prioritization of the alliance with the US are taking place alongside Seoul’s shift towards a more cautious and less accommodating approach towards China. As a presidential candidate, Yoon criticized the Moon government for “overly accommodating gestures meant to placate China”, wanted to “retool its complex relationship with Beijing”, and demanded that China “should accept, rather than oppose, South Korea’s cooperative system with its allies”.<sup>28</sup> This posturing is unsettling for Beijing, which views the US-ROK strengthened alliance as increasing strategic containment and encirclement against China.<sup>29</sup>

Against this backdrop, there is a risk of greater divergence between South Korea and most Southeast Asian countries in their strategic outlooks. While the Yoon administration is taking concrete steps to display its ‘strategic clarity’ through a deeper and more comprehensive alliance with the US, Southeast Asian countries remain steadfast in maintaining their strategic ambiguity in the US-China contest. South Korea’s willingness to

join the Quad and strengthen cooperation with all the Quad partners through different institutional pathways also inherently heightens the risk of diminishing relevance of ASEAN-led multilateral platforms amid the proliferation of many minilateral groupings that are exclusive and major power-centric.<sup>30</sup>

That being said, the picture going forward does not need to be bleak. ROK-Southeast Asia relations are driven by their shared interests in securing regional peace and prosperity, high degrees of economic complementarity and cultural affinity, and the pragmatism by both sides to focus on economic development and people-to-people exchanges. These fundamentals have not changed. Rather, they have been strengthened over time and will be even more so in the coming decades.

Besides, despite all the posturing by the Yoon administration thus far, a number of factors put South Korea distinctively apart from the US and other American allies/partners in terms of the strategic outlook and threat perception vis-à-vis China. Unlike Japan and India, South Korea does not have active territorial disputes and does not harbor deep-rooted historical animosity towards China. China's growing influence in East Asia, South Asia and Pacific Islands sets alarm bells for Washington, Tokyo, New Delhi and Canberra, whereas South Korea does not register such acute geopolitical anxieties. While being a vibrant democracy itself, South Korea's foreign policy tradition has always been pragmatic rather than values-based, and has little qualms about the statist nature of China's political system. Maintaining the relevance of these factors should not be underestimated, regardless of who is in power in Seoul. There are also structural constraints that would impact the Yoon government's GPS agenda, especially the escalation of threat from North Korea and the pushback from China – South Korea's largest trading partner. It remains to be seen whether Yoon's shift towards further strategic alignment with the US in the Indo-Pacific will be toned down or doubled down in the coming years.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

Going forward, it is important that both the ROK and Southeast Asia be forward-looking and open-minded in exploring new opportunities of mutual benefit while continuing to strengthen existing areas of cooperation.

First of all, economic cooperation remains the most important driver of the ROK's relations with Southeast Asia. Deepening trade and investment links would help both sides diversify their markets and increase their economic resilience against geopolitical shocks, coercive trade sanctions or supply chain disruptions. The Yoon administration is talking about building "supply chain alliances", driven by South Korea's own need to secure supply chain resilience and also in strategic alignment with the US and other Indo-Pacific partners. It is expected that this diversification drive will boost the shifting of high value-added manufacturing investments into Southeast Asia. Many Korean multinational corporations have started to increase and expand their regional investments in emerging technologies, including electrical vehicle batteries, R&D and innovation centers, automotive, smartphone and electronics manufacturing, LNG power plant, AI system and Internet of Things technology, smart factory and autonomous cars.<sup>31</sup> Korean investments in digital infrastructure and semiconductors in the region, however, remain underwhelming. Despite being the most trusted provider of 5G infrastructure among Southeast Asians according to the 2020 SSEA survey, Samsung accounts for only 15% of the region's 5G market, compared to Huawei (40%) and Ericsson (20%).<sup>32</sup>

Given its economic and technological capabilities, South Korea could contribute meaningfully to the Quad's ongoing efforts to provide regional public goods for Southeast Asia in such areas as Covid-19 vaccines, climate change, energy security, critical technologies and quality infrastructure. Such contributions would potentially amplify the positive agenda of the Quad which would enable the grouping to present itself as a

force for good rather than simply a geopolitical ploy. By doing so, their competition with China would definitely become a more effective, responsible and healthy one than being a purely military circle. There are multiple avenues for South Korea to connect the dots, for example: Implementing its 2021 Memorandum of Understanding with Australia<sup>33</sup> on digital, cyber and critical technology cooperation in Southeast Asia; linking the Quad Vaccine Partnership with the US-ROK Global Vaccine Partnership; and working with Quad members – at the bilateral and trilateral levels and through the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness – to support capacity building and maritime domain awareness for Southeast Asian navies and coastguards.<sup>34</sup>

Interviews with South Korean foreign policy observers suggest that the country's approach to Southeast Asia will have some adjustments befitting the new administration's GPS agenda, particularly a greater emphasis on defense-security cooperation.<sup>35</sup> This would be welcomed in the region. To its credit, the Moon administration actively pushed for Korean defense exports to Southeast Asia, and the major clients were actually South China Sea claimant states – Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam.<sup>36</sup> However, this push for defense industry cooperation appeared to be driven more by commercial interests than by a strategic vision with the Moon administration studiously maintaining its silence on the South China Sea disputes. With President Yoon calling for “clarity and boldness” and expressing his “commitment to principles”, it is expected that South Korea would take a more robust and principled position on regional and international security challenges, including over the South China Sea disputes.

Last but not least, while pursuing substantive cooperation with Southeast Asian countries, it is important that South Korea continue its longstanding and active multilateral engagement through the ASEAN-ROK dialogue relations and other ASEAN-

led mechanisms such as the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), ASEAN Plus Three (APT), East Asia Summit (EAS), ASEAN Defense Ministers Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus), and the recently established ASEAN-ROK defense ministers meeting. In this regard, the Yoon government should build upon, rather than undermine, the political will, institutional structures and resources assigned for enhancing ROK-ASEAN relations under the NSP. Keeping engaged with ASEAN-led mechanisms – which are based on inclusiveness, dialogue, consultation and practical cooperation – helps to inject a sense of balance and diversity of perspectives to the ongoing debate on how to position oneself between the US and China which tends to be polarizing and zero-sum. It may also go to show that working with ASEAN and leveraging other institutional pathways does not need to be mutually exclusive. In fact, as the regional order is currently in flux, all countries are on an exploratory journey to finding a new equilibrium in their own strategic positioning as well as in the still evolving regional order.

# Endnote

- <sup>1</sup> Remarks by Jeong Kyong-Doo, Minister of National Defense, Republic of Korea, at the 18th Shangri-La Dialogue, June 1, 2019, <https://www.iiss.org/-/media/files/shangri-la-dialogue/2019/speeches/plenary-2---minister-of-national-defense-rok-as-delivered.pdf>.
- <sup>2</sup> Remarks by Lee Jong-Sup, Minister of National Defense, Republic of Korea, at the 19th Shangri-La Dialogue, June 12, 2019, <https://www.iiss.org/-/media/files/shangri-la-dialogue/2022/transcripts/p6/as-delivered/lee-jongsup-minister-of-national-defense-republic-of-korea-as-delivered.pdf>.
- <sup>3</sup> Sebastian Strangio, "What Does the New AUKUS Alliance Mean for Southeast Asia?," *The Diplomat*, September 17 2021, <https://thediplomat.com/2021/09/what-does-the-new-aukus-alliance-mean-for-southeast-asia/>.
- <sup>4</sup> Arif Dirlik , "The Asia-Pacific Idea: Reality and Representation in the Invention of a Regional Structure", *Journal of World History* 3, no. 1(1992): pp. 55–79. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/20078512](http://www.jstor.org/stable/20078512), accessed April 7, 2021.
- <sup>5</sup> Hoang Thi Ha, "Shangri-La Dialogue 2022: The Paradox of Peace and Power", *Fulcrum*, June 13, 2022, <https://fulcrum.sg/shangri-la-dialogue-2022-the-paradox-of-peace-and-power/>.
- <sup>6</sup> "Xi signs mobilization order for military training", *Xinhuanet*, January 4, 2022, [http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2022-01/04/content\\_10120563.htm](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2022-01/04/content_10120563.htm).
- <sup>7</sup> S. Seah, et al., *The State of Southeast Asia: 2022* (Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2022), [https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/The-State-of-SEA-2022\\_FA\\_Digital\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/The-State-of-SEA-2022_FA_Digital_FINAL.pdf).
- <sup>8</sup> Drew Thompson, "Intensifying U.S.-China Competition Creates New Challenges for Southeast Asia", *global-is-asian*, May 29, 2020, <https://lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/gia/article/intensifying-u.s.-china-competition-creates-new-challenges-for-southeast-asia>.
- <sup>9</sup> "The ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific", June 2019, [https://asean.org/storage/2019/06/ASEAN-Outlook-on-the-Indo-Pacific\\_FINAL\\_22062019.pdf](https://asean.org/storage/2019/06/ASEAN-Outlook-on-the-Indo-Pacific_FINAL_22062019.pdf).
- <sup>10</sup> Bilahari Kausikan, "Lecture III: ASEAN & US-China Competition in Southeast Asia," *IPS-Nathan Lectures*, March 30, 2016, [https://lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/docs/default-source/ips/mr-bilahari-kausikan-s-speech7d7b0a7b46bc6210a3aaff0100138661.pdf?sfvrsn=cec7680a\\_0](https://lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/docs/default-source/ips/mr-bilahari-kausikan-s-speech7d7b0a7b46bc6210a3aaff0100138661.pdf?sfvrsn=cec7680a_0).
- <sup>11</sup> Hoang Thi Ha, "Southeast Asians' Declining Trust in China", *ISEAS Perspective* No. 2021/15, February 18, 2021, <https://www.iseas.edu.sg/articles-commentaries/iseas-perspective/iseas-perspective-2021-15-southeast-asians-declining-trust-in-china-by-hoang-thi-ha/>.
- <sup>12</sup> For more critique of the New Southern Policy's underwhelming performance on political-security cooperation with ASEAN/Southeast Asia, see Jaehyon Lee, "New Emphasis Needed: South Korea's New Southern Policy and ASEAN", *ISEAS Perspective* No. 2020/110, October 5, 2020, [https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/ISEAS\\_Perspective\\_2020\\_110.pdf](https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/ISEAS_Perspective_2020_110.pdf); Hoang Thi Ha and Glenn Ong, "Assessing the ROK's New Southern Policy towards ASEAN," *ISEAS Perspective* No. 2020/7, January 30, 2020, [https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/ISEAS\\_Perspective\\_2020\\_7.pdf](https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/ISEAS_Perspective_2020_7.pdf); Choe Wongi, "'New Southern Policy': Korea's Newfound Ambition in Search of Strategic Autonomy", *Asie.Visions*, No. 118, Ifri, January 2021,

[https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/choe\\_new\\_southern\\_policy\\_korea\\_2021.pdf](https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/choe_new_southern_policy_korea_2021.pdf).

<sup>13</sup> Yoon Suk-yeol, “South Korea Needs to Step Up: The Country’s Next President on His Foreign Policy Vision”, *Foreign Affairs*, February 8, 2022, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/south-korea/2022-02-08/south-korea-needs-step>.

<sup>14</sup> Lee, “New Emphasis Needed: South Korea’s New Southern Policy and ASEAN.”

<sup>15</sup> United States-Republic of Korea Leaders’ Joint Statement, May 22, 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/05/21/united-states-republic-of-korea-leaders-joint-statement/>.

<sup>16</sup> “South Korea’s Role in the Indo-Pacific: Opportunities and challenges under the Yoon Administration”, The Brookings Institution event, May 18, 2022, [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/tp\\_20220518\\_rok\\_indopacific\\_transcript.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/tp_20220518_rok_indopacific_transcript.pdf).

<sup>17</sup> Yoon, “South Korea Needs to Step Up: The Country’s Next President on His Foreign Policy Vision.”

<sup>18</sup> See Kathryn Botto, *South Korea Beyond Northeast Asia: How Seoul Is Deepening Ties With India and ASEAN*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, October 19 2021, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2021/10/19/south-korea-beyond-northeast-asia-how-seoul-is-deepening-ties-with-india-and-asean-pub-85572>; Hoang Thi Ha and Glenn Ong, “Assessing the ROK’s New Southern Policy towards ASEAN.”

<sup>19</sup> Hoang Thi Ha and Glenn Ong, “Assessing the ROK’s New Southern Policy towards ASEAN.”

<sup>20</sup> Lee Haye-ah, “S. Korea to establish mission to NATO in Brussels”, *Yonhap News Agency*, June 22, 2022, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20220622007451315>.

<sup>21</sup> United States-Republic of Korea Leaders’ Joint Statement.

<sup>22</sup> See Young Ho Kim, Scott Snyder, Jeong-yeop Woo, “The Future of South Korean Foreign Policy Under the Yoon Administration”, *GMF’s Asia Program event*, May 23, 2022, <https://www.gmfus.org/event/future-south-korean-foreign-policy-under-yoon-administration>; Opening Speech by Foreign Minister Park Jin at CSIS Roundtable, CSIS, June 14, 2022, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/opening-speech-foreign-minister-park-jin-csis-roundtable>.

<sup>23</sup> Hoang Thi Ha, “Biden’s Foreign Policy to Southeast Asia: More Pragmatism than Ideology”, *Fulcrum*, August 17, 2021, <https://fulcrum.sg/bidens-foreign-policy-to-southeast-asia-more-pragmatism-than-ideology/>.

<sup>24</sup> Remarks by Lee Jong-Sup, Minister of National Defense, Republic of Korea, at the 19th Shangri-La Dialogue.

<sup>25</sup> “Yoon says will ‘positively review joining’ Quad if invited: report”, *Yonhap News Agency*, April 9, 2022, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20220426001000315>.

<sup>26</sup> Yoon, “South Korea Needs to Step Up: The Country’s Next President on His Foreign Policy Vision.”

<sup>27</sup> Opening Speech by Foreign Minister Park Jin at CSIS Roundtable.

<sup>28</sup> Yoon, “South Korea Needs to Step Up: The Country’s Next President on His Foreign Policy Vision.”

<sup>29</sup> “Yoon’s China policy ‘founded on S. Korea-U.S. alliance’: Chinese scholar”, *Yonhap News Agency*, June 24, 2022, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20220624005700325>.

<sup>30</sup> Hoang Thi Ha, “Understanding the Institutional Challenge of Indo-Pacific Minilaterals to ASEAN”, *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 44, no. 1 (APR 2022): pp. 1-30.

<sup>31</sup> ASEAN Secretariat and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, “ASEAN Investment Report 2020–2021 Investing in Industry 4.0”, ASEAN Secretariat, September 2021, <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/AIR-2020-2021.pdf>.

<sup>32</sup> Melinda Martinus, “The Intricacies of 5G Development in Southeast Asia”, ISEAS Perspective, No. 2020/130, 13 November 2020, [https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/ISEAS\\_Perspective\\_2020\\_130.pdf](https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/ISEAS_Perspective_2020_130.pdf).

<sup>33</sup> “Australia and the Republic of Korea sign new MoU on a Digital Cooperation Initiative in Southeast Asia”, website of the Australian Government, <https://www.internationalcybertech.gov.au/node/155>.

<sup>34</sup> Kristi Govella, Garima Mohan, and Bonnie Glaser, “Expanding Engagement among South Korea and the Quad Countries in the Indo-Pacific”, GMF Policy Paper, June 2022, <https://www.gmfus.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/Expanding%20Engagement%20among%20South%20Korea%20and%20the%20Quad%20Countries%20in%20the%20Indo-Pacific.pdf>.

<sup>35</sup> Author’s discussion with Korean scholars, June 2022.

<sup>36</sup> Felix K. Chang, Foreign Policy Research Institute, Southeast Asian Naval Modernization and Hedging Strategies, The Asan Forum, 29 December 2021, <https://theasanforum.org/southeast-asian-naval-modernization-and-hedging-strategies/>.

## CHAPTER 13

# *Becoming Middle Power: Challenges and Opportunities of ASEAN ROK Security Cooperation*

Waffaa Kharisma and Andrew W. Mantong

This volume begins with a policy puzzle on why there is only a limited security role of ROK while Seoul increases its regional standing to ASEAN and, thus, limited areas of security cooperation between ASEAN and ROK despite the elevation of ASEAN's position in Korean's foreign policy. Several authors in this volume have taken different angles in exploring the historical background of both ASEAN's and its individual ASEAN countries' relations with ROK, as well as existing ties and potential areas of security cooperation. However, it now seems clear that the answer to the puzzle lies in the fact that convergences between security priorities between ROK and ASEAN remain limited. Despite facing similar structural constraints where both sides have welcomed growing economic ties with China but always assumed extensive security roles of the U.S. in the wider region, ROK's geopolitical outlook has always been dominated by the imminent threat of North Korea's hostility and inter-Korean relations in the Peninsula.

However, different priorities do not mean a lack of similarities and a common outlook. Korea's geopolitical outlook has arguably limited Seoul's ambition of power projection into security realms, but it somewhat fits well with the ASEAN outlook, which tends to filter geopolitical issues through the lens of economic development. Combined with the absence of Korea's colonial image, it has created confidence on the ASEAN side who has always been cautious about power projection into their territories. Furthermore, ASEAN countries generally do not seek to

antagonize China and tend to choose to enmesh China into regional mechanisms centered on the ASEAN process to make their relations with Beijing more predictable and sustained.

Different priorities reflect the structural framework to which ASEAN-ROK security relations must be contextualized. It explains why NSP reverberated with the ASEAN Outlook on Indo-Pacific and also suggested that President Yoon's choice of engaging ASEAN may be contextualized, or even shaped by path dependence laid out by his predecessor. Looking into a range of analyses and suggestions made by authors in this volume, ROK's role for ASEAN represents a big potential to cover the gap at times left behind in between the guise of the bigger great power competition narrative: *public good provision for the small-and-middle powers*. For the ROK, ASEAN countries represent partners in navigating the dilemmas of great power competition.<sup>1</sup>

### **From Prioritizing Economic Interests to Security Provision**

Some authors have discussed and used the middle power concept to describe and analyze the ROK security role in different ways. Some refer to its potential role in conflict transformation, pushing forward regional cooperation and institutions, or promoting maritime domain awareness. Critical to the realization of these expectations for Koreans is how to translate its economic standing into modalities of becoming a security actor in the region. Some authors specifically mention the necessity of changing Korea's geopolitical outlook since various capabilities, from economic incentives to maritime capabilities, already in hands. It requires ROK not only to acknowledge ASEAN's strategic position in its foreign policy – which has already been done by the NSP in pretty much a socio-economic lens – but also to illuminate regional dynamics pertaining to Korea's security interest in the region.

The current administration in Korea has pushed for a greater role in strategic issues by asserting the importance of ROK's alliance with the U.S. However, ASEAN may be more interested in seeing more autonomy, hence the agency and role of Korea in engaging the region. However, beyond the widely shared focus on economic development that has driven ASEAN-ROK relations so far, in the age of the Indo-Pacific marked by the coming proliferation of military competition, the notion of relevance and practicality may increasingly be associated with security cooperation. Going forward, it would likely be more difficult for countries in the Indo-Pacific to isolate their foreign policy to merely stick into "pure economic interactions." In fact, geopolitics has returned to trespass, disturb, or even make use of the economic sector. An idea of security as a public good could be seen as a frame to which ROK and ASEAN can mutually evade.

ROK's power projection potential, though, lies less inside the grand balance of power and conventional security competition but more so in its ability to provide for regional public goods.<sup>2</sup> ROK's soft power continues to gain respect not only because of the massive success of its pop culture exports and corporate giants but also because of its ability to respond to a crisis, like the COVID-19 pandemic, and the way it has helped other countries to do the same.<sup>3</sup> ROK's big investment in the research and development sector (4.5 percent of its total GDP) has allowed it to produce high-tech assets, such as digital infrastructure, that it can then export to others.<sup>4</sup>

Korea also increasingly becomes an important regional investor in the Indo-Pacific and looks firmly established as being among the models of development for countries in Asia. It is a world-leading powerhouse in information and communication technologies, flexing one of the world's best digital infrastructures with at least 530 registered cybersecurity firms.<sup>5</sup> ROK's Navy and Coast Guard have been recognized for their patrolling and surveillance capacity, posing modern assets and

operational frameworks.<sup>6</sup> In security terms, these capacities respectively add up to ROK's potential role in the health, economic, cyber, and maritime security sectors.

While it made sense to compete for major powers, trends of deterrence and counter-deterrence would cause the middle and smaller powers to suffer from having to keep up with the gap in the advancement of military capacities around them.<sup>7</sup> For smaller powers, increased assets could only mean a bigger potential for miscalculation and escalation, leading to regional instability, not to mention disturbance to the supply chain and connectivity at sea.<sup>8</sup> Compared with other major powers, Korea appears to be one of the security actors in the region that both understands this dilemma for the smaller power and has the ability to expand security cooperation with others.

For the developing countries in Southeast Asia, these issues have less to do with the US-China great power competition but more about the demand for state infrastructure and institutions to conduct good governance, thereby contributing to the overall national and regional capacity and resilience to address them. At the moment, these less strategic issues are also less covered by collective action mechanisms that have existed in the region. Some scholars noted that regional multilateral and minilateral groupings have been failing to put enough emphasis on cooperating on issues like Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief when there is no clear intersectionality with the top members' geopolitical interests.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, without a sustained security cooperation framework with the right actors, these issues will continue to be sidelined compared to the other issues more related to the US-China competition narrative. This is where a country like Korea can come in to fill in the void.

Security issues, thus, cannot simply be attributed to the lack of deterrence capacity and security umbrella from the West. They are also related to the lack of defense to the regional order in the form of the lack of a strong regional security architecture,

arrangements, and institutions that could accommodate discontents or even provide dispute resolution mechanisms between regional actors. Amidst great power competition, some scholars have argued for a collective middle power bargain to support and fill in the role and share the burden of providing “order” as public goods.<sup>10</sup>

### **Identifying Challenges and Opportunities**

Economists define public goods as goods made available to the public despite how much every member’ shares in the provision. While the provisioning burden is carried collectively, everyone will enjoy the same benefit even when their share is less significant compared to others. Security is defined as public goods in this sense since both economically advantaged and disadvantaged segments of society enjoy the same degree of safety, predictability, and survivability. Authors in this volume have made various suggestions on areas of cooperation for which Korea can actualize its role as a security actor in the region, namely defense equipment and industry, maritime security, cyber security, and human security. These areas show different potential on how ROK can move beyond its economic interest and to the provision of the public goods. Choosing policy closer to the provision of public good requires Korea to stretch more of its resource, readjust its geopolitical outlook and embark more on intellectual innovation.

*Figure 6. Conceptualizing ASEAN-ROK Areas of Security Cooperation*

Areas of Cooperation	Policy Consideration		
	existing condition	channels of engagement	driver
defence equipment and industry	<i>high</i>	<i>bilateral</i>	<i>economic interest</i>
maritime security	<i>growing</i>	<i>multiple</i>	<i>strategic interest</i>
cyber security	<i>promising</i>	<i>multiple</i>	<i>strategic interest</i>
human security	<i>steady</i>	<i>multiple</i>	<i>public good provision</i>

Cooperation in defense equipment and industry has already existed with high intensity. It involves a bilateral partnership between ROK and ASEAN maritime countries. However, this area is also perceived as driven mainly by the economy, especially commercial interest of ROK. While such ties provide the basis for mutual understanding and opportunities to further develop security cooperation, as some authors have argued, it lacks strategic consideration. ASEAN countries have been struggling to ensure the sufficiency of their defense equipment, and ROK supply consideration was mainly driven by this demand and less by ROK’s strategic objective in the region. Naval competition, coast guard capacity development, 4<sup>th</sup> Generation of Warfare as well as surveillance capacity might be the area where ROK can

pursue strategic convergence with ASEAN Countries, especially in the area where the incentive of economic prices can be merged with the potential for transfer of technology.

Maritime and cyber security, therefore, can elevate Seoul's calculation from economic-heavy to strategic calculus. These two areas are among the center points of U.S.-China competition in the region, but where ROK is better positioned to have more engagement in the region. The key to develop cooperation in this area is to find the balance between finding Korea's strategic interest, understanding the need of ASEAN countries, and reverberating a sense of autonomy. Bilateral measures here must be combined by investing in a regional platform based on the ASEAN mechanism. ROK, thus, might have an interest in providing support for further institutionalization of ASEAN-led mechanisms, such as ADMM+, EAMF, or other relevant mechanisms.

Challenges here are also faced by ASEAN to find which mechanism works best to serve this need. There is no single ASEAN body or sectoral body that specifically deal with these two issues, as they are scattered among different bodies and agency. As some authors have argued, efforts might be started by promoting regional forums and dialogue from Track II to find and identify the best channels of promoting cooperation in these areas. Examples and details of need and existing cooperation, including MoU and agreement, in these two areas, have illustrated that there is a range of policy issues that can be addressed in the dialogue. For maritime security, they include promotion of maritime domain awareness, coast guard diplomacy, institutionalization of exchange and joint training, as well as continuous effort to uphold rule-based order centered on UNCLOS in the region. For cyber security issues, they include promoting and developing regional cyber norms and best practices, joint research and development, digitalization of law

enforcement agency, and transparent methods of applying cyber technology in health security.

The area of human security consists of various policy issues, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, health security, food security, environmental protection, and addressing the threat of climate change. These are the areas which, despite their growth of politicization, even securitization, as shown by the recent Covid-19 pandemic, continuously demand solutions for collective action problems since the transnational nature of disasters, diseases, or extreme climate conditions cannot be dealt with by a single country alone. ROK has already possessed some good track records working on these issues since Seoul's policies have touched on different issues such as vaccine diplomacy, efforts against landmines spread in Indo-China, and even its recent focus on green-oriented development. Continuous efforts are needed while ROK and ASEAN can continue to promote a cooperative and inclusive outlook on Indo-Pacific in these issues. Such promotion can be done by improving regional mechanism, especially investing in the way ASEAN work with a different mechanism and with multiple international actors.

### **Remaining Problems and Way Forward**

Analyzing the challenges and opportunities of ASEAN-ROK cooperation through an explanatory typology, as mentioned above, has put aside several issues of one-sided concern. For ROK, there is always an issue of the Korean Peninsula, while for ASEAN, issues like Myanmar Post-2021 Coup have increasingly constituted baggage for the Association to fulfill a greater role at a wider regional level. These are particular issues where both sides need to think in terms of public good, beyond short-term or individual countries' interests, for at least one simple reason: dealing every day with the same problem might make a policy do little but muddling through difficult circumstances. Creating

regular dialogue and keeping opened marketplace of ideas are most likely critical in dealing with ever-changing situations.

The typology above has suggested several implications for policy recommendations. First and foremost, changing the outlook and calculation is both normative and discursive efforts. Ideas and innovation are continuously needed to develop what has already been strong in security ties between ASEAN and ROK into something that is relevant through time. Ties between government agencies must be complemented by ties between scholars and experts.

Second, ASEAN is a regional association working through a series of meetings and dialogues. A more active ROK requires some good commands in navigating through the institutional process of ASEAN. To effectively work with ASEAN, both sides must understand how different issues are tackled differently in various ASEAN mechanisms. This is particularly important in cyber and maritime security issues where different ASEAN sectoral bodies deal with these issues differently and mostly separately. For maritime security, for example, ROK may be willing to choose to work with the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Transnational Crimes (AMMTC) if the issues are on piracy or illegal practices at sea or with ADMM if it involves naval cooperation. The multidimensional character of both maritime and cybersecurity requires transcending boundaries between agencies and ROK, and once ROK decides that maritime and cyber security constitute strategic interests, setting up objectives, developing a plan, and envisaging resource mobilization might be tricky.

Third, investing in the multilateral and regional process will accentuate ROK' image as a security actor in the region. As several authors have mentioned in this volume ROK can utilize its non-provocative image to play a greater role in becoming a bridge between the developing and developed worlds. This all means that ROK must invest in creating a forum both at the

strategic and operational levels. ROK may consider establishing a regular ASEAN-ROK Maritime Security and Safety forum that will discuss maritime domain awareness, implementation of UNCLOS, managing risks of ship and sailing practices, and promoting sustainable maritime transportation practices. These are the areas where ROK and ASEAN can work together in promoting new norms that are applicable to a wider region. There are also variations among ASEAN countries on the digitalization of economy and governance as well as on how to regulate new trends in the economy, such as cryptocurrency. Meanwhile, in the digitalized economy, countries can also coordinate on how to ensure a balance between the security and privacy of citizens in the networked cyber realm. Gathering Asian countries' practices might be instrumental to stepping up the effort to the global level. Today's discussion on economic security may also touch on some trade and finance issues as the world pays more attention to the security and sustainability of the supply chain. Geostrategic agenda such as Belt and Road Initiatives from China or the US-backed Indo-Pacific Economic Framework provides opportunities for ROK to play a leading role in realizing expected regional function as a bridge or honest broker.

Building multiple channels involving beyond Track I measures, investing in the regional process as well as leading initiatives in bridging the developing and developed world will eventually translate ROK's middle power into a security agency. In doing so, ROK and ASEAN prove that middle powers work best within collective settings, and it goes beyond the structural sense: becoming in the middle not only between great and lesser powers but also in the middle of most strategic agenda and interests in the era of Indo-Pacific.

## Endnote

<sup>1</sup> Joanne Lin, "ASEAN'S Relevance for the New South Korean Administration," *Fulcrum*, 20 May 2022, <https://fulcrum.sg/aseans-relevance-for-the-new-south-korean-administration/>.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen R. Nagy, "Middle-Power Alignment In the Free and Open Indo-Pacific: Securing Agency through Neo-Middle-Power Diplomacy," *Asia Policy* 29, no. 3 (2022): 161-179, <https://www.nbr.org/publication/middle-power-alignment-in-the-free-and-open-indo-pacific-securing-agency-through-neo-middle-power-diplomacy/>

<sup>3</sup> "Global Soft Power Index 2021: South Korea Ranks 11th," *Brand Finance*, 25 February 2021, [https://brandfinance.com/press-releases/global-soft-power-index-south-korea-ranks-11th](https://brandfinance.com/press-releases/global-soft-power-index-south-korea-ranks-11th;); "Soft Power 30: South Korea," *Portland Communication*, <https://softpower30.com/country/south-korea/>.

<sup>4</sup> "R&D Spending (% of GDP): Asia Power Index 2021 Edition," *Lowy Institute*, <https://power.lowyinstitute.org/data/economic-capability/technology/rnd-spending-of-gdp/>.

<sup>5</sup> Kan Hyeong-woo, "Korea Eyes World No. 3 Spot in Digital Competitiveness by 2027," *The Korea Herald*, 28 September 2022, <https://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20220928000706>; "South Korea - Country Commercial Guide: Information and Communication Technology," *International Trade Administration, U.S. Government*, 2 August 2022, <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/south-korea-information-and-communication-technology>; Zaki Khoury and Yulia Lesnichaya, "Applying Korea's experience to accelerate digital transformation," *World Bank Blogs*, 27 October 2021, <https://blogs.worldbank.org/digital-development/applying-koreas-experience-accelerate-digital-transformation>

<sup>6</sup> Yonhap, "S. Korea's Navy Creates Aviation Unit Tasked with Bolstering Maritime Security," *The Korea Times*, 15 July 2022, [https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2022/07/205\\_332828.html](https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2022/07/205_332828.html); Terence Roehrig, "South Korea, the Quad, and Maritime Security," *The National Bureau of Asian Research*, 26 March 2022, <https://www.nbr.org/publication/south-korea-the-quad-and-maritime-security/>.

<sup>7</sup> Dewy Sim, "South China Sea aerial arms race catches Southeast Asia off guard," *South China Morning Post*, 25 September 2021, <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3149749/south-china-sea-aerial-arms-race-catches-southeast-asia-guard>; Ravi Buddhavarapu, "South China Sea faces higher risk of conflict as arms race builds up, says weapons expert," *CNBC*, 28 April 2022, <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/04/27/south-china-sea-region-at-a-higher-risk-for-conflict-weapons-expert.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Andrew W. Mantong, "A South Korean' Indo-Pacific Strategy: Views from ASEAN," *Korea on Point, The Sejong Institute*, 23 September 2022, <https://koreaonpoint.org/view.php?tag=%7CSecurity%7C&idx=135>.

<sup>9</sup> Such as the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), and the Lancang Mekong Cooperation (LMC). See Lina Gong and S. Nanthini, "Collective Response to Disasters in the Indo-Pacific: Opportunities and Challenges," *RSIS*, 20 July 2022, <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/collective-response-disasters-indo-pacific-opportunities-and-challenges>.

<sup>10</sup> Gabriele Abbondanza, "Whither the Indo-Pacific? Middle Power Strategies from Australia, South Korea and Indonesia," *International Affairs* 98, no. 2 (2022): 403-421; Bonnie

Bley, "A Middle-Power Moment," *The Interpreter*, 23 August 2019,  
<https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/middle-power-moment>.

## References

### Book

- Acharya, Amitav. *ASEAN and Regional Order: Revisiting Security Community in Southeast Asia*. New York: Routledge, 2021.
- Arase, David. "The Question of Regional Order in East Asia." In *China's Rise and Changing Order in East Asia*, ed. David Arase. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017.
- Botto, Kathryn. "The Coronavirus Pandemic and South Korea's Global Leadership Potential." In *The Case for South Korean Soft Power*, eds. Chung Min Lee and Kathryn Botto. Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2020.
- Caballero-Anthony, M, Hangzo PKK. "Transnational crime." In *Non-traditional security in Asia: issues, challenges and framework for action*, eds. Caballero-Anthony M and Cook A. Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2013.
- Cruz, Frances A. "Prospects for Soft and Middle Power Projection in the New Southern Policy." In *The New Southern Policy: Catalyst for Deepening ASEAN-ROK Cooperation*, ed. Hoo Chiew-Ping. Kuala Lumpur: Institute of Strategic and International Studies, 2020.
- Davidson, Jason W. *The Origins of Revisionist and Status-Quo States*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.
- Han, Hong-koo. "South Korea and the Vietnam War." In *Developmental Dictatorship and the Park Chung-hee Era: The Shaping of Modernity in the Republic of Korea*, ed. Lee Byeong-cheon. Paramus, NJ: Homa & Sekey Books, 2003.
- Kim, Hyung-Jong and Hanafi Hussin. *South Korea-Malaysia Relations: Political and Economic Interactions from the Perspective of Bilateralism and Regionalism*. Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 2021.

- Laksmiana, Evan A. and Andrew Mantong. "Missing Pillars of Strategic Autonomy? Security Cooperation 180 Between Korea and ASEAN." In *The New Southern Policy Plus: Progress and Way Forward*, eds. Kwon Hyung Lee and Yoon Jae Ro. Sejong: Korea Institute for International Economic Policy, 2021.
- Laksmiana, Evan A., Waffaa Kharisma, and Rocky Intan. *Seeking Strategic Convergence: India, South Korea, and Australia in the Indo-Pacific*. Jakarta: CSIS Indonesia, 2021.
- Langlois, Anthony J. *The Politics of Justices and Human Rights: Southeast Asia and Universalist Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Lee, Jaehyon. "South Korea's New Southern Policy and the US FOIP: Convergence or Competition?" In *Embracing the Indo-Pacific? South Korea's Progress Towards a Regional Strategy*, ed. Kyle Springer. Perth: Perth US-Asia Centre, 2020.
- Tan, See Seng. "ASEAN and multilateralism 2.0: Locating ASEAN centrality within the FOIP and the BRI," In *Contested Multilateralism 2.0 and Asian Security Dynamics*, ed. Kai He. New York: Routledge, 2020.
- Tarriela, Jay Tristan. "Coast Guard Engagement as Interim Alternative to Bilateral Maritime Cooperation." In *Resilient Alliance: Moving the US-Philippines Security Relations Forward*, eds. Jeffery Ordaniel and Carl Baker. Hawaii: Pacific Forum, 2022.

### **Journal Article**

- Abbondanza, Gabriele. "Whither the Indo-Pacific? Middle Power Strategies from Australia, South Korea and Indonesia." *International Affairs* 98, no. 2 (2022): 403-421.
- Aydin, Umur. "Emerging middle powers and the liberal International order." *International Affairs* 97, no.5 (2021): 1377-1394.

- Baldwin, Frank. "America's Rented Troops: South Koreans in Vietnam." *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars (American Friends Service Committee)* 7, no. 1 (1975): 33-40.
- Carlsnaes, W. "The agency-structure problem in foreign policy analysis." *International Studies Quarterly* 36, no. 3 (1992): 245-270.
- Chapsos, I, Malcolm J. "Maritime security in Indonesia: towards a comprehensive agenda?" *Maritime Policy* 76, (2017):178-184.
- Dirlik, Arif. "The Asia-Pacific Idea: Reality and Representation in the Invention of a Regional Structure." *Journal of World History* 3, no. 1(1992): 55-79.
- Drezner, D. W. "Ideas, bureaucratic politics, and the crafting of foreign policy." *American Journal of Political Science* 44, no.4 (2000): 733-749.
- Gilpin, Robert. "The Theory of Hegemonic War." *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18, no. 4, The Origin and Prevention of Major Wars (Spring, 1988): 591-613.
- Ha, Hoang Thi and Glenn Ong. "Assessing the ROK's New Southern Policy towards ASEAN." *ISEAS Perspective*, no. 7 (2020): 1-12.
- Ha, Hoang Thi. "Understanding the Institutional Challenge of Indo-Pacific Minilaterals to ASEAN." *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 44, no. 1 (2022): 1-30.
- Ha, Hoang Thi. "Southeast Asians' Declining Trust in China." *ISEAS Perspective* no. 15 (2021): 1-10.
- Harnisch, S. & Friedrichs, G. "Alliances Rebalanced? The Social Meaning of the U.S. Pivot and Allies' Responses in Northeast Asia." *The Korean Journal of International Studies* 15, no. 1 (2017): 1-39.
- Howe, B. and M.J. Park. "South Korea's (incomplete) middle-power diplomacy toward ASEAN." *International Journal of Asia-Pacific Studies* 15, no. 2 (2019): 117-142.

- Huynh, Tam-Sang. "Bolstering middle power standing: South Korea's response to U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy from Trump to Biden." *Pacific Review* (2021): 1–30. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2021.1928737>.
- Job, B.L. "Between a Rock and a Hard Place: The Dilemmas of Middle Powers." *Issues and Studies* 56, no. 2 (2020): 1–24.
- Jordaan, E. "The concept of a middle power in international relations: distinguishing between emerging and traditional middle powers." *Politikon* 30, no.1 (2003): 165-181.
- Kang, Seonjou. "Korea's New Southern Policy: Diversifying Economic and Strategic Portfolios." *Asia Pacific Bulletin*, no. 515 (16 July 2020).
- Karim, M.F. "Middle power, status-seeking and role conceptions: the cases of Indonesia and South Korea." *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 72, no. 4 (2018): 343–363. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10357718.2018.1443428>.
- Ki, Hyun-Bae. "Divergent Ideas, Distant Friendship: Assessing Korea's 30 Years of Political-Security Diplomacy with ASEAN." *Korea Observer* 51, no. 4 (2020): 523-550.
- Koga, Kei. "Japan's 'Indo-Pacific' question: countering China or shaping a new regional order?" *International Affairs* 96, no. 1 (2020) : 49–73. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiz241>.
- Kwon, Heonik. "Anatomy of US and South Korean Massacres in the Vietnamese Year of the Monkey, 1968." *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 5, no. 6(2007): 1–30.
- Lee, Jaehyon. "New Emphasis Needed: South Korea's New Southern Policy and ASEAN." *ISEAS Perspective*, no. 110 (2020): 1-9.
- Luo, Shuxian. "China-South Korea Disputes in the Yellow Sea: Why a More Conciliatory Chinese Posture." *Journal of Contemporary China* 31, no. 138(2022):913-930.

- Lee, Yaechan. "Riding the tide: assessing South Korea's hedging strategy through regional security initiatives." *Pacific Review*, (2021): 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09512748.2021.1977685>.
- Martinus, Melinda. "The Intricacies of 5G Development in Southeast Asia." *ISEAS Perspective*, no.130 (2020): 1-9. [https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/ISEAS\\_Perspective\\_2020\\_130.pdf](https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/ISEAS_Perspective_2020_130.pdf).
- Mitzen, J., & K. Larson. "Ontological security and foreign policy." *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics* (2017).
- Mo, Jongryn. "South Korea's middle power diplomacy: A case of growing compatibility between regional and global roles." *International Journal* 71, no.4 (2016): 587-607. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020702016686380>.
- Nagy, Stephen R. "Middle Power Alignment in the Indo-Pacific: Securing Agency Through Neo-Middle Power Diplomacy." *Asia Policy* 29, no.3 (2022): 161-179.
- Pinheiro, L., and M. R. S. de Lima. "Between autonomy and dependency: the place of agency in Brazilian foreign policy." *Brazilian Political Science Review* 12, no. 3 (2018).
- Ravenhill, J. "Cycles of middle power activism: Constraint and choice in Australian and Canadian foreign policies." *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 52, no. 3 (1998): 309-327.
- Rodrik, Dani, and Stephen M. Walt. "How to Build a Better Order: Limiting Great Power Rivalry in an Anarchic World." *Foreign Affairs* 101, no. 5 (September/October 2022).
- Sulaiman, Yohanes. "What Threat? Leadership, Strategic Culture, and Indonesian Foreign Policy in the South China Sea." *Asian Politics & Policy* Volume 11, no.4 (2019): 606–622.
- Teo, Sarah, Bhubinar Singh, See Sng Tan. "Southeast Asian Perspectives on South Korea's Middle Power Engagement Initiative." *Asian Survey* 56, no.3 (2016): 555-580.

Vejjajiva, Witchu. "Kwam sampan thai-satharanarat gaolee: Jaak adeet lae patjuban suu anakhot [Thailand-Republic of Korea Relations: From the Past and the Present to the Future]." *Thai Journal of East Asian Studies* 11, no. 1 (January-June 2000): 13. <https://so02.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/easttu/article/view/51319>.

### Online Articles

"2022 New Year's Address by President Moon Jae-in." *Permanent Mission of the Republic of Korea to the United Nations*, last modified January 3, 2022, [https://overseas.mofa.go.kr/un-en/brd/m\\_4986/view.do?seq=760749](https://overseas.mofa.go.kr/un-en/brd/m_4986/view.do?seq=760749).

"2022 South Korea Military Strength." *Global Fire Power*, 4 September 2022. [https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.php?country\\_id=south-korea](https://www.globalfirepower.com/country-military-strength-detail.php?country_id=south-korea).

Abu Bakar, Hj. Rasidah. "Temburong mega bridge completion on track for November 2019 deadline." *The Scoop*, February 15, 2019. <https://thescoop.co/2019/02/15/temburong-mega-bridge-completion-on-track-for-november-2019-deadline/>

Abu Bakar, Hj. Rasidah and Bandial, Ain. "Brunei, Korea sign three agreements vowing deeper cooperation." *The Scoop*, March 12, 2019. <https://thescoop.co/2019/03/12/brunei-korea-sign-three-agreements-vowing-deeper-cooperation/>

Adji, Raka, and Ade Irma. "Indonesia, South Korea Intensify Cooperation in Maritime Sector." *ANTARA*, June 6, 2022. <https://en.antaranews.com/news/194229/indonesia-south-korea-intensify-cooperation-in-maritime-sector>.

Amador III, Julio. "US-South Korea and the Philippines: Towards a Trilateral Security Initiative." *Asia-Pacific Bulletin*, January 27, 2022. [https://www.eastwestcenter.org/system/tdf/private/us-south\\_korea\\_and\\_the\\_philippines-](https://www.eastwestcenter.org/system/tdf/private/us-south_korea_and_the_philippines-)

towards\_a\_trilateral\_security\_initiative.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=41851.

“Ambassador of the Republic of Korea (ROK) to Thailand paid a courtesy call on Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand on the occasion of the Ambassador’s assumption of duty.” *Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Thailand (MFA)*, last modified April 12, 2022, <https://www.mfa.go.th/en/content/ambrokcallonvfm11042565-2?cate=5d5bcb4e15e39c306000683e>.

Arifa Eka, and Adj Raka. “BSSN, South Korean agency ink pact to boost cyberspace security.” *ANTARA*, July 21, 2022. <https://en.antaranews.com/news/240601/bssn-south-korean-agency-ink-pact-to-boost-cyberspace-security>.

“ARMAC Welcomed Visit of the Ambassador of the Mission of the Republic of Korea to ASEAN.” *ASEAN Regional Mine Action Center [ARMAC]*. Accessed July 12, 2022. <https://aseanmineaction.org/armac-welcomed-visit-of-the-ambassador-of-the-mission-of-the-republic-of-korea-to-asean/>.

“Army, air force, navy and soon, digital and intelligence: SAF to launch 4th service to deal with new threats.” *CNA*, March 2, 2022. <https://www.channelnewsasia.com/singapore/saf-digital-intelligence-fourth-service-ng-eng-hen-2532456>.

“As Biden Visits Asia, China Launches South China Sea Drills.” *Military.com*, May 20, 2022. <https://www.military.com/daily-news/2022/05/20/biden-visits-asia-china-launches-south-china-sea-drills.html>

“ASEAN, Republic of Korea renew commitment to strengthen partnership.” *ASEAN*, last modified July 5, 2022. <https://asean.org/asean-republic-of-korea-renew-commitment-to-strengthen-partnership-2/>.

- "ASEAN-Republic of Korea Plan of Action to implement the Joint Vision Statement for Peace, Prosperity and Partnership (2021-2025)." *ASEAN Secretariat*. <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/ASEAN-ROK-POA-2021-2025-Final.pdf>.
- "ASEAN Collects COVID-19 Aid Worth over 1.2 Billion USD from Dialogue Partners." *Vietnam News Agency*, 9 August 2021. <https://ncov.vnnet.vn/en/news/asean-collects-covid-19-aid-worth-over-1-2-billion-usd-from-dialogue-partners/f2b0de10-8556-4536-941d-32c66ca23aef>.
- "ASEAN Enhances Its Role on the Situation in Rakhine State." *ASEAN-Thailand Secretariat*, last modified March 14, 2019. <https://asean2019.go.th/en/news/asean-enhances-its-role-on-the-situation-in-rakhine-state/>.
- "ASEAN Investment Report 2020–2021 Investing in Industry 4.0." *ASEAN Secretariat*, September 2021, <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/AIR-2020-2021.pdf>.
- "ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific." *ASEAN-Thailand Secretariat*, last modified June 23, 2019. <https://asean2019.go.th/en/news/asean-outlook-on-the-indo-pacific/>.
- "ASEAN Should Claim Leadership In Indo-Pacific, Says Saifuddin." *Malay Mail*, 2022. <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2022/06/20/asean-should-claim-leadership-in-indo-pacific-says-saifuddin/13300>.
- "ASEAN strengthens partnerships at the 7th Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction." *Thailand Business News*, last modified June 6, 2022. <https://www.thailand-business-news.com/asean/90522-asean-strengthens-partnerships-at-the-7th-global-platform-for-disaster-risk-reduction>.
- "ASEAN Trade in Goods (IMTS) Dashboard." *ASEAN Stats Data Portal*, 2022. <https://data.aseanstats.org/dashboard/imts.hs2>.

- Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction.  
"Asia-Pacific is key to disaster risk reduction targets." *World Meteorological Organization*, 23 September 2022.  
<https://public.wmo.int/en/media/news/asia-pacific-key-disaster-risk-reduction-targets>.
- "Bakamla Dan Korea Coast Guard Gelar 1st Bilateral Meeting." *RadarJakarta.com*, March 14, 2019.  
<http://radarjakarta.com/berita-9852-bakamla-dan-korea-coast-guard-gelar-1st-bilateral-meeting.html>.
- Bandial, Ain. "UK on fast track to become ASEAN dialogue partner." *The Scoop*, May 6, 2021.  
<https://thescoop.co/2021/05/06/uk-on-fast-track-to-become-asean-dialogue-partner/>
- Batongbacal, Jay. "The Philippines' Conceptualization of National Security." *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*, November 4, 2021. <https://amti.csis.org/philippine-conceptualization-of-maritime-security/>.
- "Belt and Road Initiative." *Belt and Road Initiative*.  
<https://www.beltroad-initiative.com/belt-and-road/>.
- Benita, Teo. "ADMM-Plus Navies Kick Off Major Sea Security Exercise." *PIONEER*, April 30, 2019.  
[https://www.mindef.gov.sg/web/portal/pioneer/article/regular-article-detail/ops-and-training/2019-Q2/30apr19\\_news1](https://www.mindef.gov.sg/web/portal/pioneer/article/regular-article-detail/ops-and-training/2019-Q2/30apr19_news1).
- Botto, Kathryn. "South Korea Beyond Northeast Asia: How Seoul Is Deepening Ties with India and ASEAN." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, October 19, 2021.  
<https://carnegieendowment.org/2021/10/19/south-korea-beyond-northeast-asia-how-seoul-is-deepening-ties-with-india-and-asean-pub-85572>.
- "Brunei Darussalam Energy White Paper." *Prime Minister's Office Brunei Darussalam*, 2013.  
<https://policy.asiapacificenergy.org/sites/default/files/Energy%20White%20Paper%202014%281%29.pdf>

- "Brunei's landmark bridge opens, heralds new era of development." *The Scoop*, October 14, 2017. <https://thescoop.co/2017/10/14/bruneis-landmark-bridge-opens-heralds-new-era-development/>
- "Brunei names mega cross-sea bridge partly built by Chinese contractor." *Xinhua*, July 14, 2020. [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-07/14/c\\_139212574.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-07/14/c_139212574.htm)
- Buddhavarapu, Ravi. "South China Sea faces higher risk of conflict as arms race builds up, says weapons expert." *CNBC*, 28 April 2022. <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/04/27/south-china-sea-region-at-a-higher-risk-for-conflict-weapons-expert.html>.
- Bulkin, Bernie. "South Koreans are leading the way in their vision for 'smart grid'". *The Guardian*, May 2, 2014. <https://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/smart-grid-south-korea-rethinking-electricity>
- Chang, Felix K. "Southeast Asian Naval Modernization and Hedging Strategies." *The ASAN Forum*, December 29, 2021. <https://theasanforum.org/southeast-asian-naval-modernization-and-hedging-strategies/>.
- Channer, Hayley. "South Korea Fails to Recognise Its Capacity to Shape the Indo-Pacific." *The Diplomat*, June 30, 2021. <https://thediplomat.com/2021/06/south-korea-fails-to-recognize-its-capacity-to-shape-the-indo-pacific/>.
- Chin, Darren. "South Korean navy ship to dock in Brunei." *The BT Archive*, April 28, 2016. <https://btarchive.org/news/national/2016/04/28/south-korean-navy-ship-dock-brunei>
- "China, ASEAN to Hold SCS Code of Conduct Talks This Month." *Radio Free Asia*, May 16, 2022. <https://www.rfa.org/english/news/china/asean-southchinasea-05162022091755.html>.

- "China's Remarks on S. Korea-U.S. Military Exercise at ARF 'Unusual': Official." *Yonhap News Agency*, August 9, 2022. <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20210809006900325.v>.
- "Chinese fishing boat seized for alleged illegal fishing in Korean waters." *The Korea Times*, June 12, 2022. [https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2022/06/120\\_330875.html](https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2022/06/120_330875.html)
- Chinh, Giang. South Korea gifts Vietnam university \$8-million ship. October 23, 2020. <https://e.vnexpress.net/news/news/south-korea-gifts-vietnam-university-8-million-ship-4181225.html>.
- Cho, Wondeuk. "ASEAN's Expectations and Concerns about the New ROK Government." *Korea on Point*, May 27, 2022. [https://koreaponpoint.org/view.php?topic\\_idx=29&idx=87](https://koreaponpoint.org/view.php?topic_idx=29&idx=87)
- "Cobra Gold 21 Showcases Strength of our Security and Health Partnerships." *U.S. Embassy and Consulate in Thailand*, last modified August 23, 2021. <https://th.usembassy.gov/cobra-gold-21-showcases-strength-of-our-security-and-health-partnerships/>.
- "CTF 151: Counter-piracy." *Combined Maritime Forces (CMF)*. <https://combinedmaritimeforces.com/ctf-151-counter-piracy/>
- "Daelim Industrial secures contract for construction of Sungai Brunei Bridge." *Southeast Asia Infrastructure*, June 27, 2013. <https://southeastasiainfra.com/daelim-industrial-secures-contract-for-construction-of-sungai-brunei-bridge/>
- "Daelim Industrial wins \$439 mln Brunei bridge project." *The Korea Herald*, February 5, 2015. <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20150205000540>.
- "Declaration On the Conduct of Parties In The SCS," *ASEAN Secretariat*, May 15, 2012. <https://asean.org/declaration-on-the-conduct-of-parties-in-the-south-china-sea-2/>.

- "Defence diplomacy as a tool to cope with the climate crisis." *East Asia Forum*, March 31, 2022. <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2022/03/31/defence-diplomacy-as-a-tool-to-cope-with-the-climate-crisis/>.
- "Defending the Nation's Sovereignty: A Secure and Resilient Future. Defence White Paper 2021." *Ministry of Defence of Brunei Darussalam*, 2021. <https://www.mindef.gov.bn/Defence%20White%20Paper/DWP%202021.pdf>
- "Defense Chiefs of S. Korea, Malaysia Hold Virtual Talks on Defense Cooperation." *Yonhap News Agency*, April 27, 2022. <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20220427009500325>.
- "Defense chiefs of S. Korea, Singapore discuss security cooperation/" *The Korea Herald*, December 23, 2021. <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20211223000891>.
- "Defense officials of S. Korea, Singapore agree on cooperation in cybersecurity, counterterrorism." *Yonhap News Agency*, January 26, 2022. <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20220126012800325>.
- Difa, Yashinta, and Suharto. "Foreign Minister Asks South Korea to Protect Indonesian Sailors." *ANTARA*, June 6, 2022. <https://en.antaranews.com/news/177510/foreign-minister-asks-south-korea-to-protect-indonesian-sailors>.
- "Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN: DELSA." *ASEAN-Thailand Secretariat*. Accessed July 11, 2022. <https://asean2019.go.th/en/infographic/disaster-emergency-logistics-system-for-asean-delsa/>.
- Dr. Edwards, Scot. "Maritime Security Efforts Grow in the Philippines." *Indo-Pacific Defense Forum*, September 14, 2021. <https://ipdefenseforum.com/2021/09/maritime-security-efforts-grow-in-the-philippines/>.

- Draudt, Darcie. "The Politics of Implementing the Korean Comprehensive Military Agreement in the Maritime Domain." *Maritime Awareness Project Analysis*, 2021. <https://www.nbr.org/publication/the-politics-of-implementing-the-korean-comprehensive-military-agreement-in-the-maritime-domain/>.
- Durakovic, Adnan. "Korea's Largest Offshore Wind Turbine Stands Complete." *Offshorewind.biz*, January 27, 2022. <https://www.offshorewind.biz/2022/01/27/koreas-largest-offshore-wind-turbine-stands-complete/>.
- "ETDA chapmue KISA gaoleetai ruam yok radap kwamsamard kanchadkan paikukkam online [ETDA and KISA signed MOU on cybersecurity to mutually enhance their capabilities in handling with online threats]." *Tech Talk Thai*, last modified April 4, 2016. <https://www.techtalkthai.com/etda-kisa-cybersecurity/>.
- Evans, Damon. "Brunei hopes to boost oil and gas production after new discovery." *Energy Voice*, March 14, 2022. <https://www.energyvoice.com/oilandgas/asia/394964/brunei-hopes-to-boost-oil-and-gas-production-after-new-discovery/>
- "Fact Sheet: Restructuring the RSN's Capabilities to Strengthen Singapore's Maritime Security Capabilities." *MINDEF Singapore*, June 29, 2020. [https://www.mindef.gov.sg/web/portal/mindef/news-and-events/latest-releases/article-detail/2020/June/29jun20\\_fs3](https://www.mindef.gov.sg/web/portal/mindef/news-and-events/latest-releases/article-detail/2020/June/29jun20_fs3).
- Ferrier, Kyle. "South Korea President Stresses Peace, Inclusiveness, and Multilateralism at UN." *The Diplomat*, 23 September 2020. <https://thediplomat.com/2020/09/south-korea-president-stresses-peace-inclusiveness-and-multilateralism-at-un/>.
- "Foreign Policy." *Ministry of Foreign Affairs Brunei Darussalam*. <https://www.mfa.gov.bn/Pages/Foreign%20Policy.aspx>

Fox, James. "Moving away from oil: How can Brunei diversify its economy." *ASEAN Briefing*, May 23, 2022. <https://www.aseanbriefing.com/news/moving-away-from-oil-how-can-brunei-diversify-its-economy/#:~:text=Brunei's%20government%20has%20in%20recent,communication%20technology%20and%20halal%20manufacturing.>

"'Frigate phikhat' sanchad 'gaoleetai' chomnamai 'navy thai' tuareuabap 'stealth' longhon lod kanchapkum [Cabinet approved the Royal Thai Navy's plan to procure South Korean-built frigate with stealth technology]." *Thai Publica*, last modified August 14, 2013. <https://thaipublica.org/2013/08/frigate/>.

"GDP (Current US\$) - Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Korea, Rep." *World Bank*. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD?end=2021&locations=BN-ID-MY-PH-SG-KR&start=2017>.

"GDP per capita (current US\$) - Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Phillipines, Singapore, Korea, Rep." *World Bank*. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.PCAP.CD?end=2021&locations=BN-ID-MY-PH-SG-KR&start=2017&view=chart>.

"Global Soft Power Index 2021: South Korea Ranks 11<sup>th</sup>." *Brand Finance*, 25 February 2021. <https://brandfinance.com/press-releases/global-soft-power-index-south-korea-ranks-11th>.

Gong, Lina, and S. Nanthini. "Collective Response to Disasters in the Indo-Pacific: Opportunities and Challenges." *RSIS*, 20 July 2022. <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/collective-response-disasters-indo-pacific-opportunities-and-challenges>.

"Gubernur Lemhannas RI: Kerawanan Utama Ibu Kota Baru adalah Ruang Udara." Lembaga Ketahanan Nasional Republik Indonesia (Lemhannas). <https://www.lemhannas.go.id/index.php/berita/berita->

utama/1432-gubernur-lemhannas-ri-kerawanan-utama-ibu-kota-baru-adalah-ruang-udara.

Guild, James. "Is There an Arms Race Underway in Southeast Asia?" *The Diplomat*, 8 February 2022. <https://thediplomat.com/2022/02/is-there-an-arms-race-underway-in-southeast-asia/>.

Ha, Hoang Thi. "Biden's Foreign Policy to Southeast Asia: More Pragmatism than Ideology." *Fulcrum*, August 17, 2021. <https://fulcrum.sg/bidens-foreign-policy-to-southeast-asia-more-pragmatism-than-ideology/>.

Ha, Hoang Thi. "Shangri-La Dialogue 2022: The Paradox of Peace and Power." *Fulcrum*, June 13, 2022. <https://fulcrum.sg/shangri-la-dialogue-2022-the-paradox-of-peace-and-power/>.

Han, Shareen. "RBAF to use drones for maritime security surveillance." *The Scoop*, May 31, 2021. <https://thescoop.co/2021/05/31/rbaf-to-use-drones-for-maritime-security-surveillance/>.

Haris, Nabilah and Bandial, Ain. "MinDef tables \$597 million budget to support national security." *The Scoop*, February 28, 2022. <https://thescoop.co/2022/02/28/mindef-tables-597-million-budget-to-support-national-security/>.

Harsono, Norman. "South Korean Power Company Eyes \$650m Renewable Energy Project in Indonesia." *The Jakarta Post*, 20 January 2020. <https://www.thejakartapost.com/news/2020/01/20/south-korean-power-company-eyes-650m-renewable-energy-project-in-indonesia.html>.

Heydarian, Richard Javad. "World's largest joint naval exercise a message to China." *Asia Times*, June 6, 2022. <https://asiatimes.com/2022/06/worlds-largest-joint-naval-exercise-a-message-to-china/>.

"Hishammuddin: Malaysia, S. Korea Sign MoU to Strengthen Defence Cooperation." *Malay Mail*, April 27, 2022. <https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2022/04/27/hishammuddin-malaysia-s.-korea-sign-mou-to-strengthen-defence-cooperation/2055993>.

Hoo, Chiew-Ping. "What's in the New Southern Policy Plus? An ASEAN Perspective on Building Niche-based Pragmatic Cooperation with South Korea," *World Economic Brief*, March 31, 2021. [https://www.kiep.go.kr/gallery.es?mid=a20301000000&bid=0007&list\\_no=9394&act=view](https://www.kiep.go.kr/gallery.es?mid=a20301000000&bid=0007&list_no=9394&act=view).

"How Much Trade Transits the South China Sea?" *Center for Strategic and International Studies*. Accessed on July 26, 2022. <https://chinapower.csis.org/much-trade-transits-south-china-sea/>.

Huong, Lan. "33 triệu USD xử lý bom mìn tại 3 tỉnh [Thirty three million USD to clear land mines in three provinces]." *Daidoanket*, August 31, 2021. <http://daidoanket.vn/33-trieu-usd-xu-ly-bom-min-tai-3-tinh-5664091.html#source>.

"Importer/Exporter TIV Tables." *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute*. Accessed on July 22, 2022. <https://armstrade.sipri.org/armstrade/page/values.php>.

"Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States." *The White House*, February 2022. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/U.S.-Indo-Pacific-Strategy.pdf>.

"Indonesia: ASEAN-South Korea to Increase Economic Cooperation." *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of The Republic of Indonesia*, 4 August 2022. <https://kemlu.go.id/portal/en/read/3876/berita/indonesia-asean-south-korea-to-increase-economic-cooperation>.

"Indonesia Targets Trade Worth \$20 Billion with South Korea." *ANTARA*, February 23, 2022.

<https://www.medcom.id/english/business/3NOz9PWK-indonesia-targets-trade-worth-20-billion-with-south-korea>.

Jamrisko, Michelle, Wei Lu, and Alexandra Tanzi. "South Korea Leads World in Innovation as U.S. Exits Top Ten." *Bloomberg*, February 3, 2021. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-02-03/south-korea-leads-world-in-innovation-u-s-drops-out-of-top-10>.

"Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Cooperation Partnership between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and the Republic of Korea." *ASEAN Secretariat*. Accessed on August 2, 2022. <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Joint-Declaration-on-Comprehensive-Cooperation-Partnership-between-the-Association-of-Southeast-Asian-Nations-and-the-Republic-of-Korea.pdf>.

"Joint Ministerial Statement of the 15th East Asia Summit Energy Ministers Meeting." *ASEAN Secretariat*, September 16, 2021. <https://asean.org/joint-ministerial-statement-of-the-15th-east-asia-summit-energy-ministers-meeting/>

Josem, Michael, and Shreya Hiwale. "Global Soft Power Index: South Korea Ranks 11<sup>th</sup>." *Brand Finance*, last modified February 25, 2021, <https://brandfinance.com/press-releases/global-soft-power-index-south-korea-ranks-11th>.

Jung, Min-ho. "South Korea emerges as fastest-growing arms exporter." *The Korea Times*, July 24, 2022. [https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2022/07/205\\_333257.html](https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2022/07/205_333257.html)

Kaewka, Thanapich. "Thai-gaoleetai yuenyan krachap khamruammue dansettakij lae satharanasuk doychapraw kanfuenfoo lang covid-19 [Thailand and Republic of Korea agreed to strengthen economic and health cooperation, especially in post-pandemic recovery]." *National News Bureau of Thailand*, last modified August 27, 2021.

[https://thainews.prd.go.th/th/news/print\\_news/TCATG210827182746101](https://thainews.prd.go.th/th/news/print_news/TCATG210827182746101).

Kan, Hyeong-woo. "Korea Eyes World No. 3 Spot in Digital Competitiveness by 2027." *The Korea Herald*, 28 September 2022.

<https://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20220928000706>

Kang, Seung-woo. "Why Doesn't US Want to Add South Korea to Quad?" *The Korea Times*, 2022. [https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2022/05/120\\_329904.html](https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2022/05/120_329904.html).

Kausikan, Bilahari. "Lecture III: ASEAN & US-China Competition in Southeast Asia." *IPS-Nathan Lectures*, March 30, 2016. [https://lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/docs/default-source/ips/mr-bilahari-kausikan-speech7d7b0a7b46bc6210a3aaff0100138661.pdf?sfvrsn=cec7680a\\_0](https://lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/docs/default-source/ips/mr-bilahari-kausikan-speech7d7b0a7b46bc6210a3aaff0100138661.pdf?sfvrsn=cec7680a_0).

Kembara, Gilang. "Indonesia's Conceptualizations of Maritime Security." *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*, November 23, 2021. <https://amti.csis.org/indonesias-conceptualizations-of-maritime-security/>.

Khoury, Zaki, and Yulia Lesnichaya. "Applying Korea's experience to accelerate digital transformation." *World Bank Blogs*, 27 October 2021. <https://blogs.worldbank.org/digital-development/applying-koreas-experience-accelerate-digital-transformation>

Kim and Chang. "RCEP – Certain Key Provisions". *Kim & Chang*, April 13, 2022. [https://www.kimchang.com/en/insights/detail.kc?sch\\_section=4&idx=24747](https://www.kimchang.com/en/insights/detail.kc?sch_section=4&idx=24747).

Kim, Bo-eun. "South Korea looks to break China import dependence and establish 'supply chain alliances.'" *South China Morning Post*, May 20, 2022. <https://www.scmp.com/economy/global->

economy/article/3178370/south-korea-looks-break-china-import-dependence-and.

- Kim, Byung Wook. "KAI sells two T-50 trainer jets worth \$78m to Thailand." *The Korea Herald*, last modified August 2, 2021. <https://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20210802000772>.
- Kim, Min Joo. "Interview with South Korea's next president, Yoon Suk-yeol." *The Washington Post*, April 14, 2022. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/04/14/south-korea-president-yoon-transcript/>.
- Kim, Sea Young "How South Korea Can Upgrade its Strategic Partnership with Vietnam." *Korea Economic Institute of America*, June 7, 2021. <https://keia.org/the-peninsula/how-south-korea-can-upgrade-its-strategic-partnership-with-vietnam/>.
- Kim, Won-soo. "Why Korea Should Make the Most of Multilateralism." *The Korea Times*, 18 July 2022. [https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/opinion/2022/07/788\\_332887.html](https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/opinion/2022/07/788_332887.html).
- Ko, Jun-tae. "Yoon Suk-yeol says '100% renewable energy not possible.'" *The Korea Herald*, February 3, 2022. <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20220203000944>
- "Korea, Rep. Exports by country and region 2016." *WITS World Bank*. Accessed on July 26, 2022. [https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/KOR/Year/2016/TradeFlow/Export/Show/NMBR-XPRT-HS6-PRDCT;XPRT-TRD-VL;XPRT-PRTNR-SHR;/Sort/Export%20\(US\\$%20Thousand\)](https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/KOR/Year/2016/TradeFlow/Export/Show/NMBR-XPRT-HS6-PRDCT;XPRT-TRD-VL;XPRT-PRTNR-SHR;/Sort/Export%20(US$%20Thousand)).
- "Korea Customs Service." *Korea Customs*. Accessed on August 1, 2022. [https://unipass.customs.go.kr/ets/index\\_eng.do](https://unipass.customs.go.kr/ets/index_eng.do).
- "Korea Defense Products Guide." *Korea Defense Industry Association*, accessed on July 25, 2022. <https://www.kdia.or.kr/resource/mozilla/web/viewer.html?file=english.pdf>.

- "Korean, Malaysian and Italian Peacekeepers Offer Unique Training Programme to LAF." *UNIFIL*, March 4, 2020. <https://unifil.unmissions.org/korean-malaysian-and-italian-peacekeepers-offer-unique-training-programme-laf>.
- Kuik, Cheng-Chwee. "A View from Southeast Asia." *The ASAN Forum*, 7 January 2020. <https://theasanforum.org/a-view-from-malaysia-2/>
- "KVMAP - Korea-Viet Nam Mine Action Project." *UNDP Vietnam*, 30 June 2020. <https://www.undp.org/vietnam/news/kvmap-korea-viet-nam-mine-action-project>.
- Kwak, Sungil. *Korea's New Southern Policy: Vision and Challenges*. Korea Institute for International Economic Policy, November 12, 2018. <https://kiep.go.kr>.
- Lakshmana, Evan A. "China Making Inroads with Grey Zone Tactics against Indonesia." *The Straits Times*, July 14, 2022. <https://www.straitstimes.com/opinion/china-making-inroads-with-grey-zone-tactics-against-indonesia>.
- Lee, Daehan. "South Korea Reveals Plans to Deter China Via A2/AD." *Naval News*, January 12, 2022. <https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2022/01/south-korea-reveals-plans-to-deter-china-via-a2-ad/>.
- Lee, Daehan. "Thailand Mulls Second Frigate Order from South Korea's DSME." *Naval News*, last modified January 18, 2022. <https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2022/01/thailand-mulls-second-frigate-order-from-south-koreas-dsme/>.
- Lee, Eunwoo. "President Moon's Legacy: Boosted Arms Exports for South Korea." *The Diplomat*, March 23, 2022. <https://thediplomat.com/2022/03/president-moons-legacy-boosted-arms-exports-for-south-korea/>.
- Lee, Haye-ah. "S. Korea to establish mission to NATO in Brussels." *Yonhap News Agency*, June 22, 2022. <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20220622007451315>.

- Lee, Jaehyon. "A Need to Rethink Peace Cooperation in Korea's New Southern Policy." *Asia Pacific Bulletin*, No. 514, 2020. <https://www.eastwestcenter.org/publications/need-rethink-peace-cooperation-in-koreas-new-southern-policy>.
- Lee, Jessica J. "The Truth About South Korea's TPP Shift." *The Diplomat*, October 23, 2022. <https://thediplomat.com/2015/10/the-truth-about-south-koreas-tpp-shift>.
- Lee, Seokwoo and Schofield, Clive. "The Law of the Sea and South Korea: The Challenges of Maritime Boundary Delimitation in the Yellow Sea." *The National Bureau of Asian Research*, April 23, 2020. <https://www.nbr.org/publication/the-law-of-the-sea-and-south-korea-the-challenges-of-maritime-boundary-delimitation-in-the-yellow-sea/>.
- Lemahieu, Herve. "Middle Powers will Determine the Future of the Asian Order." *Lowy Institute Commentary*, February 29, 2020, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/middle-powers-will-determine-future-asian-order>.
- Leong, Adam K.W. "Is Malaysia Really a 'Maritime' Nation?" *The Diplomat*, 2022. <https://thediplomat.com/2021/05/is-malaysia-really-a-maritime-nation/>.
- Lim, Sung-Mi. "South Korea's Middle-Power Diplomacy: Changes and Challenges." *Chatham House Research Paper*, June 2016, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/publications/research/2016-06-22-south-korea-middle-power-kim.pdf>.
- Lin, Joanne. "ASEAN's Relevance for the New South Korean Administration." *Fulcrum*, May 20, 2022. <https://fulcrum.sg/aseans-relevance-for-the-new-south-korean-administration/>.
- "Malaysia Trade Balance, Exports, Imports by Country 2019." *WITS World Bank*, 2022.

<https://wits.worldbank.org/CountryProfile/en/Country/MYS/Year/2019/TradeFlow/EXPIMP/Partner/by-country>.

“Malaysia's National Defence Policy.” *Malaysia's National Defence Policy (Prime Minister's Office of Malaysia)*, July 22, 2019. <https://www.pmo.gov.my/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/National-Defence-Policy.pdf>.

Manning, Robert A., Cronin, Patrick M. “Under Cover of Pandemic, China Steps Up Brinkmanship in South China Sea.” *Foreign Policy*, May 14, 2020. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/05/14/south-china-sea-dispute-accelerated-by-coronavirus/>.

Mantong, Andrew W. "A South Korean' Indo-Pacific Strategy: Views from ASEAN." *Korea on Point, The Sejong Institute*, 23 September 2022. <https://koreaonpoint.org/view.php?tag=%7CSecurity%7C&id x=135>.

“Military Capability: Asia Power Index 2021 Edition.” *Lowy Institute*. <https://power.lowyinstitute.org/data/military-capability/>

“Military expenditure.” *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute*. Accessed on July 3, 2022. <https://www.sipri.org/research/armament-and-disarmament/arms-and-military-expenditure/military-expenditure>.

“Military expenditure (current USD),” *World Bank*. Accessed on July 5, 2022. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/MS.MIL.XPND.CD>.

“Myanmar Signs MoU with South Korea for a 500 MW Power Plant.” *Power Insider*, 6 September 2013. <https://www.pimagazine-asia.com/myanmar-signs-mou-south-korea-500-mw-power-plant/>

- Nepomuceno, Priam. "Ph, S. Korea to deepen maritime security ties." *Philippine News Agency*, March 25, 2021. <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1134805>.
- Noor, Adib. "Coastal surveillance system to thwart maritime security threats." *Borneo Bulletin*, May 29, 2022. <https://borneobulletin.com.bn/coastal-surveillance-system-to-thwart-maritime-security-threats-2/>.
- "Official Visit by PM Lee Hsien Loong to the Republic of Korea, 22 to 27 November 2019." *MFA Singapore*, November 23, 2019. [https://www.mfa.gov.sg/Newsroom/Press-Statements-Transcripts-and-Photos/2019/11/2311\\_ASEAN-ROK](https://www.mfa.gov.sg/Newsroom/Press-Statements-Transcripts-and-Photos/2019/11/2311_ASEAN-ROK).
- Paculba, Xylee. "Oceans of Opportunity: Southeast Asia's Shared Maritime Challenges." *CSIS*, June 7, 2021. <https://www.csis.org/events/oceans-opportunity-southeast-asias-shared-maritime-challenges-session-one>.
- Pandey, Seema. "Revised Maritime Traffic Safety Law of the People's Republic of China – what does it all mean and miller's new coverage solution." *Miller*, October 27, 2021. <https://www.miller-insurance.com/News-and-insights/Latest-insights/Revised-MTSL-and-Millers-new-coverage-solution>.
- Parameswaran, Prashanth. "Advancing ASEAN-South Korea Cooperation Under the Yoon Administration." *Korea On Point*, June 6, 2022. [https://koreaponpoint.org/view.php?topic\\_idx=29&idx=91](https://koreaponpoint.org/view.php?topic_idx=29&idx=91).
- Parameswaran, Prashanth. "Managing the Rise of Southeast Asia's Coast Guards." *Wilson Center*, February 2019. [https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/publication/2019-02\\_managing\\_the\\_rise\\_of\\_southeast\\_asias\\_coast\\_guards.pdf](https://www.wilsoncenter.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/publication/2019-02_managing_the_rise_of_southeast_asias_coast_guards.pdf)
- Parameswaran, Prashanth. "Singapore, Brunei to Host Multilateral Military Exercise in May." *The Diplomat*, April 20, 2016. <https://thediplomat.com/2016/04/singapore-brunei-to-host-multilateral-military-exercise-in-may/>.

- Parameswaran, Prashanth. "What's in the New Brunei-South Korea Defense Pact?" *The Diplomat*, September 18, 2018. <https://thediplomat.com/2018/09/whats-in-the-new-brunei-south-korea-defense-pact/>.
- Paris, Roland. "Can Middle Powers Save the Liberal World Order?." *Chatham House Briefing*, June 18, 2019. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2019/06/can-middle-powers-save-liberal-world-order-0/summary>.
- Park, Chan-kyong. "Moon Jae-in says South Korea will not take sides in US-China rivalry, focuses on Xi Jinping's visit." *South China Morning Post*, January 18, 2021. <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3118152/moon-jae-says-south-korea-will-not-take-sides-us-china-rivalry>.
- Park, Gil-ja and Hana Lee. "Korea, Brunei to boost cooperation in energy, infrastructure." *Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Korea*, March 11, 2019. [https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/brd/m\\_5674/view.do?seq=319837&srchFr=&srchTo=&srchWord=&srchTp=&mp;multi\\_itm\\_seq=0&itm\\_seq\\_1=0&itm\\_seq\\_2=0&company\\_cd=&company\\_nm=](https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/brd/m_5674/view.do?seq=319837&srchFr=&srchTo=&srchWord=&srchTp=&mp;multi_itm_seq=0&itm_seq_1=0&itm_seq_2=0&company_cd=&company_nm=).
- Park, Grace. "Korea and Singapore Cooperate on Smart City." *Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency*. [https://www.investkorea.org/upload/kotraexpress/2018/11/images/EVENT\\_OVERVIEW.pdf](https://www.investkorea.org/upload/kotraexpress/2018/11/images/EVENT_OVERVIEW.pdf).
- Parsons, Dan, and Tyler Rogoway. "China's Man-Made South China Sea Islands Like You've Never Seen Them Before." *The Drive*, 27 October 2022. <https://www.thedrive.com/the-war-zone/chinas-manmade-island-fortresses-like-youve-never-seen-them-before>.
- Pascual, Jekki. "EU wants to beef up maritime cooperation with the Philippines." *ABS-CBN News*, February 28, 2022.

<https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/02/28/22/eu-wants-to-beef-up-maritime-cooperation-with-ph>.

“PCG and Maritime Security Agency of Indonesia forge MOU to strengthen Maritime Security Cooperation.” *Philippine Coast Guard*. <https://coastguard.gov.ph/index.php/related-links/145-news/news-2019/3408-pcg-and-maritime-security-agency-of-indonesia-forge-mou-to-strengthen-maritime-security-cooperation>.

“PCG bolsters interoperability with Indonesia, Japan counterparts.” *Philippine Coast Guard*, May 26, 2022. <https://coastguard.gov.ph/index.php/transparency/2015-score-card/4655-pcg-bolsters-interoperability-with-indonesia-japan-counterparts>.

“PCG, ICG conduct joint maritime drill in Cavite.” *Philippine Coast Guard*. <https://coastguard.gov.ph/index.php/related-links/11-news/1433-pcg-icg-conduct-joint-maritime-drill-in-cavite>.

“Philippines fast becoming key market for Korean military hardware.” *Asia News Agency*, May 14, 2022. <https://greatawakeningmusic.com/world/philippines-fast-becoming-key-market-for-korean-military-hardware/>.

“Powers, Norms, and Institutions: The Future of the Indo-Pacific from a Southeast Asia Perspective-Results of a CSIS Survey of Strategic Elites.” *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, June 2020. [https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/20624\\_Green\\_PowersNormsandInstitution\\_s\\_WEB%20FINAL%20UPDATED.pdf](https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/20624_Green_PowersNormsandInstitution_s_WEB%20FINAL%20UPDATED.pdf).

“R&D Spending (% of GDP): Asia Power Index 2021 Edition.” *Lowy Institute*. <https://power.lowyinstitute.org/data/economic-capability/technology/rnd-spending-of-gdp/>.

“Remarks by President Moon Jae-in at ASEAN-Republic of Korea Commemorative Summit.” *Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic*

of Korea, November 27, 2019.  
[https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/brd/m\\_5674/view.do?seq=319995](https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/brd/m_5674/view.do?seq=319995)

“Republic of Korea's Minister of National Defense Makes Introductory Visit to Singapore.” *MINDEF Singapore*, December 23, 2021.  
[https://www.mindef.gov.sg/web/portal/mindef/news-and-events/latest-releases/article-detail/2021/December/23dec21\\_nr](https://www.mindef.gov.sg/web/portal/mindef/news-and-events/latest-releases/article-detail/2021/December/23dec21_nr).

Roehrig, Terence. “South Korea: The Challenges of a Maritime Nation.” *The National Bureau of Asian Research*, December 23, 2019.  
<https://www.nbr.org/publication/south-korea-the-challenges-of-a-maritime-nation/>.

Roehrig, Terence. “South Korea, the Quad, and Maritime Security.” *The National Bureau of Asian Research*, 26 March 2022.  
<https://www.nbr.org/publication/south-korea-the-quad-and-maritime-security/>.

“ROK-ASEAN Relations.” *Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Korea*. Accessed July 11, 2022. [https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/wpge/m\\_5466/contents.do](https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/wpge/m_5466/contents.do).

“RoK considers Vietnam key partner in New Southern Policy: President.” *VietnamPlus*. February 9, 2022.  
<https://en.vietnamplus.vn/rok-considers-vietnam-key-partner-in-new-southern-policy-president/221816.vnp>.

“ROK contributes US\$500,000 to support ASEAN efforts in Rakhine State.” *ReliefWeb*, last modified January 28, 2020,  
<https://reliefweb.int/report/myanmar/rok-contributes-us500000-support-asean-efforts-rakhine-state>.

“RoK Firm Commences Construction of First Aero Engines Plant in Vietnam.” *Nhan Dan*, 21 September 2021.

<https://en.nhandan.vn/rok-firm-commences-construction-of-first-aero-engines-plant-in-vietnam-post54257.html>.

“RoK firm invests in coal-fired power project in Vietnam.” *VNA*, 7 October 2020, <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/rok-firm-invests-in-coalfired-power-project-in-vietnam/188202.vnp>.

“RoK firm invests in building thermal power plant in Indonesia.” *Vietnam Investment Review*, 1 September 2020. <https://vir.com.vn/rok-firm-invests-in-building-thermal-power-plant-in-indonesia-78969.html>.

“RoK to strengthen cooperation with Vietnam in sailor training.” *Vietnam Government News*, March 8, 2022. <https://en.vietnamplus.vn/rok-to-strengthen-cooperation-with-vietnam-in-sailor-training/223138.vnp>.

Rozhan, Abu Dardak. “Addressing Food Security in Challenging Times.” *FFTC-AP*. Accessed on June 3, 2022. [https://ap.ffmpeg.org.tw/article/2634#:~:text=In Malaysia%2C the food production,\(PPP\)%3D2004-2006](https://ap.ffmpeg.org.tw/article/2634#:~:text=In%20Malaysia%2C%20the%20food%20production,(PPP)%3D2004-2006).

“S. Korea’s military strength 6th in world, N. Korea at 28th: report.” *Yonhap News*, January 16, 2021. <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20210116001500325>.

“S. Korea, Vietnam Hold Defense Strategy Talks.” *KBS News*, September 17, 2021. [https://world.kbs.co.kr/service/news\\_view.htm?lang=e&Seq\\_Code=164327](https://world.kbs.co.kr/service/news_view.htm?lang=e&Seq_Code=164327).

“S. Korea-ASEAN Security Dialogue.” *KBS World*, 13 October 2013. [world.kbs.co.kr/service/contents\\_view.htm?lang=e&menu\\_cate=issues&id=&board\\_seq=51481&page=160&board\\_code=news\\_hotissue](http://world.kbs.co.kr/service/contents_view.htm?lang=e&menu_cate=issues&id=&board_seq=51481&page=160&board_code=news_hotissue).

“S. Korea estimated to have ranked 10th in 2020 global GDP rankings.” *Yonhap News*, July 13, 2021. <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20210315001000320>.

- Saballa, Joe. "S. Korea to Invest \$479M in Indigenous Surveillance Drones." *The Defense Post*, December 28, 2021. <https://www.thedefensepost.com/2021/12/28/south-korea-surveillance-drones/>.
- Salmon, Andrew and Pao, Jeff. "China flexes sea power with new foreign ship law." *Asia Times*, September 1, 2021. <https://asiatimes.com/2021/09/china-flexes-sea-power-with-new-foreign-ship-law/>.
- Salisbury, Daniel and Endi Mato. "How North Korea Evades Sanctions in Southeast Asia: The Malaysia Case." *The Diplomat*, July 20, 2017. <https://thediplomat.com/2017/07/how-north-korea-evades-sanctions-in-southeast-asia-the-malaysia-case/>.
- Sasaki, Rena. "Old Wounds Water Down Japan–ROK–US Cooperation." *East Asia Forum*, 16 August 2022. <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2022/08/16/old-wounds-water-down-japan-rok-us-cooperation/>.
- Satjipanon, Chaiyong. "Heroism of the Little Tigers." *The Korea Herald*, last modified June 22, 2010. <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20100622000561>.
- "Setahun Tragedi Kri-Nanggala (402) Dan Pentingnya Modernisasi Armada Kapal Selam Indonesia." Lembaga Kajian Pertahanan Strategis "KERIS", June 15, 2022. <https://lembagakeris.net/setahun-tragedi-kri-nanggala-402-dan-pentingnya-modernisasi-armada-kapal-selam-indonesia/>.
- "SFA Locsin Highlights PH Focus on Maritime Security Cooperation in ASEAN at FM Retreat." *Department of Foreign Affairs Philippines*. <https://dfa.gov.ph/dfa-news/dfa-releasesupdate/30144-sfa-locsin-highlights-ph-focus-on-maritime-security-cooperation-in-asean-at-fm-retreat>.
- Shin, Hyonhee. "Analysis: Moon's push for South Korean military independence may echo far beyond his presidency." *REUTERS*, October 25, 2021.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/moons-push-military-independence-may-echo-far-beyond-his-presidency-2021-10-22/>.

Sim, Dewy. "South China Sea aerial arms race catches Southeast Asia off guard." *South China Morning Post*, 25 September 2021. <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3149749/south-china-sea-aerial-arms-race-catches-southeast-asia-guard>.

"Singapore Affirms Commitment to Multilateral Cooperation and an Open and Inclusive Regional Security Environment." *MINDEF Singapore*, November 10, 2021, [https://www.mindef.gov.sg/web/portal/mindef/news-and-events/latest-releases/article-detail/2021/november/10nov21\\_nr!/ut/p/z0/fY29DsIwEIOfhSFjdNeIwIwgAMTfUFDIggIcJdBeoI0Kj09AQmJisy3bHxjQYNi2r rDBebZl9FvT2\\_WXo-EYu2qxTPMEs02ez9LBYrLu92AK5n8hPqh6PpwXYG42nKXjk wetUCWg2bdU7akGnWDUKtlx\\_R64y\\_1uMjAHz4GeAXTI-Egn-fEcBJ59RQKZHo20fJTUxrQRWNpATZA1IWQbisEbI\\_CLEfiDuV3NdjXLOi8Giopw/](https://www.mindef.gov.sg/web/portal/mindef/news-and-events/latest-releases/article-detail/2021/november/10nov21_nr!/ut/p/z0/fY29DsIwEIOfhSFjdNeIwIwgAMTfUFDIggIcJdBeoI0Kj09AQmJisy3bHxjQYNi2r rDBebZl9FvT2_WXo-EYu2qxTPMEs02ez9LBYrLu92AK5n8hPqh6PpwXYG42nKXjk wetUCWg2bdU7akGnWDUKtlx_R64y_1uMjAHz4GeAXTI-Egn-fEcBJ59RQKZHo20fJTUxrQRWNpATZA1IWQbisEbI_CLEfiDuV3NdjXLOi8Giopw/).

"Singapore and Republic of Korea Navies Co-Host Maritime Security Exercise to Strengthen ADMM-Plus Cooperation." *MINDEF Singapore*, April 28, 2019. [https://www.mindef.gov.sg/web/portal/mindef/news-and-events/latest-releases/article-detail/2019/april/28apr19\\_nr](https://www.mindef.gov.sg/web/portal/mindef/news-and-events/latest-releases/article-detail/2019/april/28apr19_nr).

"Singapore and the Republic of Korea Reaffirm Warm and Friendly Bilateral Defence Relations." *MINDEF Singapore*, January 29, 2018. [https://www.mindef.gov.sg/web/portal/mindef/news-and-events/latest-releases/article-detail/2018/january/29jan18\\_nr!/ut/p/z1/rVLLTsMwEPwWDjm63rzqlFt4qIAayqPQxpFKTZ0HJHZxTEP\\_nm2phJAoCAmfP](https://www.mindef.gov.sg/web/portal/mindef/news-and-events/latest-releases/article-detail/2018/january/29jan18_nr!/ut/p/z1/rVLLTsMwEPwWDjm63rzqlFt4qIAayqPQxpFKTZ0HJHZxTEP_nm2phJAoCAmfP)

OPZ9ezY1NMZ5Uqsq0LYSitRI055f87GZ6cXEhJx43DiQvw4m  
YzCk-vLB9anj5RTvsqqJU2jpVzIDBhhrshIgiCAeE-  
T5EEROCudIWnSm7siVNm0otZU4yraxU1oFSN9IBJbuWCLU  
kco1s60AtrGwtMbKWopVieOBGDjwJ9SrMBuEAt240V4ZO3  
PL8RgOrBiwnu8k49tg6AbgjbJXYgdBoNoAjceDNle8EOPFD2  
www4Yna4r2dEHpU2DAd\_\_Mb8LoFc7Cz9MiY9WPb288Biz3  
ob7Zuns\_8PGWzyTnCYF-  
he2JJXKNZ1t9XS21yP81KPtotalj08Vq4UfYaWRuTTS9F4N0q  
W1q\_bYAQe6rusVWhe17GW6ceC7kIK3ONdXJV01TeRvyHO  
enPsBX2y6PLFhGh-  
9A9FXG2E!//dz/d5/L2dBISevZ0FBIS9nQSEh/?urile=wcm%3A  
path%3A%2Fmindef-content%2Fhome%2Fnews-and-  
events%2Flatest-releases%2F2018%2Fjanuary%2F29jan18\_nr.

“Singapore and the Republic of Korea Sign Memorandum of  
Understanding on Defence Cooperation.” *MINDEF Singapore*,  
December 2, 2009.  
[“Singapore signs MOU with the Republic of Korea to enhance  
cybersecurity cooperation.” \*Cyber Security Agency of Singapore\*,](https://www.mindef.gov.sg/web/portal/mindef/news-and-events/latest-releases/article-detail/2009/december/2009dec02-news-releases-00542!/ut/p/z1/vVLLbsIwEPwWDhyt3YQkTo6BVjzEq7zxpTKOA26JA4kFbb--BsqpAtRLfbA0650djz3AYAFM84Nac6NyzbcWL1nwSgdPjRZ6bn_gTxyMZ5NJ16_321MawAwYMKHNzmxgmsmdyJSIXBu pTRU3eSarqOWxJFwnRB5stazilhtZGILireSltaUXMapiIoXMVrK4YIvQJWfutZEg-p57EtwJlcBSRCtKUxmQwMeIeBgi4YndRCJE4mPqpNyB-SMHzB7jjRXjd3_w4jUdD93uoDfyLT-KwggkOXWzSM__O-Av_jsBDPju33LvBIw_srsil_pKYNaItGLaDTjR28LkGS-uC3r4mhflBySNMdV5kNjbjP35SC6Hz6CFsFNXbfs9im7dTwD4MLP4ncFbZLXqN3tp64mZDIE5zWJw4sLjOuODbM3ZZFtY-ISLvo9ZXvU-a87CM40rlG7QpVH0!/.”</a></p></div><div data-bbox=)

November 23, 2019. <https://www.csa.gov.sg/news/press-releases/singapore-signs-mou-with-the-republic-of-korea>.

“Singapore to Host the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery Against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP) Information Sharing Centre (Isc) for Further Five Years.” *Ministry of Transport Singapore*, March 30, 2022. [https://www.mot.gov.sg/news/details/singapore-to-host-the-regional-cooperation-agreement-on-combating-piracy-and-armed-robbery-against-ships-in-asia-\(recaap\)-information-sharing-centre-\(isc\)-for-further-five-years](https://www.mot.gov.sg/news/details/singapore-to-host-the-regional-cooperation-agreement-on-combating-piracy-and-armed-robbery-against-ships-in-asia-(recaap)-information-sharing-centre-(isc)-for-further-five-years).

Singh, Kavaljit. “The what, where, how, and why of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework.” *Bilaterals.org*, May 27, 2022. <https://www.bilaterals.org/?the-what-where-how-and-why-of-the>

Singh, Lakhvinder and Dalbir Ahlawat. “India in Indo-Pacific: a way forward.” *Asia Times*, June 13, 2022. <https://asiatimes.com/2022/06/india-in-indo-pacific-a-way-forward/>.

“Soft Power 30: South Korea.” *Portland Communication*. <https://softpower30.com/country/south-korea/>.

“Solar Power to Retain Lead in South Korea’s Green Plans.” *BloombergNEF*, April 15, 2021. <https://about.bnef.com/blog/solar-power-to-retain-lead-in-south-koreas-green-plans/>.

“South Korea - Country Commercial Guide: Information and Communication Technology.” *International Trade Administration, U.S. Government*, 2 August 2022. <https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides/south-korea-information-and-communication-technology>.

“South Korea’s New Southern Policy: Will Its ‘Legacy’ Continue Under the Next Administration?” *Korea Economic Institute: The Peninsula*, 2 March 2022. <https://keia.org/the-peninsula/south->

koreas-new-southern-policy-will-its-legacy-continue-under-the-next-administration/.

“Statement of the Royal Thai Government on Nuclear Test by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea on 3 September 2017.” *Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Thailand (MFA)*, last modified September 6, 2017. <https://www.mfa.go.th/th/content/5d5bd0cf15e39c306002175f?cate=5d55bc4e15e39c306000683d>.

“Statement on Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity.” *The White House*, May 23, 2022. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/05/23/statement-on-indo-pacific-economic-framework-for-prosperity/>.

“Status of the ASEAN-Republic of Korea Cooperation Fund.” *ASEAN-Korea Cooperation Fund*. <https://www.aseanrokfund.com/our-works-data-detail>.

Strangio, Sebastian. “What Does the New AUKUS Alliance Mean for Southeast Asia?” *The Diplomat*, September 17 2021. <https://thediplomat.com/2021/09/what-does-the-new-aukus-alliance-mean-for-southeast-asia/>.

Strating, Rebecca. “Maritime and Sovereignty Disputes in the East China Sea.” *The National Bureau of Asian Research*, February 29, 2021, accessed on July 22, 2022, <https://www.nbr.org/publication/maritime-and-sovereignty-disputes-in-the-east-china-sea/>.

“Tahan sam aunchart ruam kortang akarn prom pheuk buntao sataranapai nai ‘Cobra Gold 2022’ [Soldiers of three nationalities collaborated in constructing building, ready for disaster relief training in ‘Cobra Gold 2022’].” *Thai Post*, last modified February 19, 2022. <https://www.thaipost.net/general-news/89067/>.

Teo, Victor. “South Korea’s Southeast Asian Potential.” *ISEAS Commentaries*, October 30, 2020.

<https://www.iseas.edu.sg/media/commentaries/south-koreas-southeast-asian-potential/>.

"Thailand and the Republic of Korea held the 1st virtual Cybersecurity Dialogue." *Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Thailand (MFA)*, last modified March 29, 2022. <https://www.mfa.go.th/en/content/throkcyberdialogue29032565-2?cate=5d5bcb4e15e39c306000683e>.

"Thailand announced its success in reducing landmine-contaminated areas in Chiang Mai, Mae Hong Son, Chumphon and Chanthaburi, and emphasized the efforts towards international disarmament." *Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Thailand (MFA)*, last modified December 1, 2020. <https://www.mfa.go.th/th/content/25631201-thailand-success-demining-ottawa-treaty?cate=5d5bcb4e15e39c306000683d>.

"The Regional Forum on 'Mekong-RoK Cooperation Seeking Synergies in the Mekong Sub-region'." *Thailand International Cooperation Agency [TICA]*, last modified June 21, 2022. <https://tica-thaigov.mfa.go.th/en/content/the-regional-forum-on-mekong-rok-cooperation-seeiki?cate=5d7da8d015e39c3fbc007416>.

"The Republic of Korea's Country Partnership Strategy for the Kingdom of Cambodia 2021-2025." *The Government of the Republic of Korea*, March 2020. <http://cdc-crdb.gov.kh/en/donor-ngo/donor/Korea%20CPS%20for%20Cambodia%202021-2025.pdf>.

Thompson, Drew. "Intensifying U.S.-China Competition Creates New Challenges for Southeast Asia." *global-is-asian*, May 29, 2020. <https://lkyspp.nus.edu.sg/gia/article/intensifying-u.s.-china-competition-creates-new-challenges-for-southeast-asia>.

Till, Geoffrey. "Order at Sea: Southeast Asia's Maritime Security," *Lowy Institute*, 31 March 2022.

<https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/order-sea-southeast-asia-s-maritime-security>.

“Toàn văn Tuyên bố chung Việt Nam - Hàn Quốc [Full text of Vietnam-ROK Joint Statement].” *Vietnam News Agency*, November 9, 2021. <https://www.vietnamplus.vn/toan-van-tuyen-bo-chung-viet-nam-han-quoc/115266.vnp>.

“Tuyên bố chung Việt Nam - Hàn Quốc [Vietnam-ROK Joint Statement].” *Nhan Dan News*, October 21, 2009. <https://nhandan.vn/tin-tuc-su-kien/Tuy%C3%AAAn-b%E1%BB%91-chung-Vi%E1%BB%87t-Nam---H%C3%A0n-Qu%E1%BB%91c-553832>.

“United States-Republic of Korea Leaders’ Joint Statement.” *The White House*, May 21, 2022.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/05/21/united-states-republic-of-korea-leaders-joint-statement/>

Valencia, Mark J. “Three Scenarios for the South China Sea: the Good, the Bad and the Ugly.” *South China Morning Post*, 9 May 2022.

<https://www.scmp.com/comment/opinion/article/3176640/three-scenarios-south-china-sea-good-bad-and-ugly>.

“Việt Nam-Hàn Quốc tăng cường hợp tác công nghiệp quốc phòng, an ninh biển,... [Vietnam and the ROK strengthen cooperation in defense industry and maritime security].” *Vietnam Government News*, September 17, 2021. <https://baochinhphu.vn/viet-nam-han-quoc-tang-cuong-hop-tac-cong-nghiep-quoc-phong-an-ninh-bien-102300593.htm>.

Viet, Hoang. “Sẽ nâng kim ngạch thương mại Việt Nam - Hàn Quốc đạt 150 tỷ USD vào năm 2030 [Increase Vietnam-Korea bilateral trade to 150 billion USD in 2030].” *VnEconomy*. March 25, 2022. <https://vneconomy.vn/se-nang-kim-ngach-thuong-mai-viet-nam-han-quoc-dat-150-ty-usd-vao-nam-2030.htm>.

- “Vietnam, RoK eye bringing two-way trade to 100 billion USD.” *Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Socialist of Vietnam*, December 13, 2021. <https://moit.gov.vn/en/news/latest-news/vietnam-rok-eye-bringing-two-way-trade-to-100-billion-usd.html#:~:text=The%20RoK%20is%20Vietnam's%20third,of%20nearly%2019.1%20billion%20USD;%20http://m.hanoitime.s.vn/vietnam-asks-south-korea-to-relax-oda-conditions>.
- “VN, RoK issue joint statement.” *Vietnam Government News*, March 25, 2018. <https://en.baochinhphu.vn/vn-rok-issue-joint-statement-11131902.htm>.
- Vu, Minh. “Vietnam asks South Korea to relax ODA conditions.” December 14, 2021. <https://m.hanoitimes.vn/vietnam-asks-south-korea-to-relax-oda-conditions-319543.html>.
- Vuving, Alex. “Tracking Vietnam's Force Build-up in the South China Sea.” *Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative*, November 3, 2017. <https://amti.csis.org/tracking-vietnams-force-build-south-china-sea/>.
- Walayangkul, Wajana. “Phinoy thai nai gaolee tang rod jaak sangkom rai tang leuak [Being Thai illegal migrant workers in South Korea: An escape plan from choiceless society].” *The101.world*, last modified January 14, 2019. <https://www.the101.world/little-ghost-in-south-korea/>.
- Watcharasakwet, Wilawan. “Scaled-Down Cobra Gold Exercise to Exclude Myanmar, Other Observer Nations.” *Benar News*, last modified February 4, 2022. <https://www.benarnews.org/english/news/thai/cobra-gold-02042022134420.html>.
- “What is Vision 2025?” *Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA)*. <https://bimp-eaga.asia/goals/what-vision-2025>.
- Widjajanto, Andi. “Pertahanan Laut di Era Geopolitik V.” *Lembaga Ketahanan Nasional Republik Indonesia (Lemhannas)*, 27 July

2022,

[https://www.lemhannas.go.id/images/2022/MATERI\\_KUP/27072022\\_Pertahanan\\_Laut\\_di\\_Era\\_Geopolitik\\_V.pdf](https://www.lemhannas.go.id/images/2022/MATERI_KUP/27072022_Pertahanan_Laut_di_Era_Geopolitik_V.pdf).

"Xi signs mobilization order for military training." *Xinhuanet*, January 4, 2022. [http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2022-01/04/content\\_10120563.htm](http://eng.chinamil.com.cn/view/2022-01/04/content_10120563.htm).

Yasuyo, Sakata. "The US-Japan-ROK Trilateral in the Indo-Pacific Era: Strategic Alignment or Still in Flux?" *The ASAN Forum*, 28 June 2021. <https://theasanforum.org/the-us-japan-rok-trilateral-in-the-indo-pacific-era-strategic-alignment-or-still-in-flux/>.

Yeo, Andrew. "South Korea and the Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy." *CSIS*, July 20, 2020. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/south-korea-and-free-and-open-indo-pacific-strategy>.

Yonhap. "South Korean, Filipino Defense chides discuss arms industry cooperation." *The Korea Times*, June 3, 2022. <https://m.koreatimes.co.kr/pages/article.asp?newsIdx=330389>.

Yonhap. "S. Korea's Navy Creates Aviation Unit Tasked with Bolstering Maritime Security." *The Korea Times*, 15 July 2022. [https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2022/07/205\\_332828.html](https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2022/07/205_332828.html).

Yonhap. "Yoon says will 'positively review joining' Quad if invited: report." *The Korea Herald*, April 26, 2022. <http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20220426000151>

Yoon, Bo-ram. "Announcement of 'Economic Security'-Centered Trade Policy and Expansion of the ROK-US alliance and international cooperation." *Yonhap News Agency*, March 10, 2022. <https://www.yna.co.kr/view/AKR20220309065400003?input=1195m>.

“Yoon's China policy 'founded on S. Korea-U.S. alliance': Chinese scholar.” *Yonhap News Agency*, June 24, 2022. <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20220624005700325>.

“Yoon says will 'positively review joining' Quad if invited: report.” *Yonhap News Agency*, April 9, 2022. <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20220426001000315>.

“Yoon Suk Yeol’s Foreign and Security Policy: Confident Diplomacy and Strong National Security.” *NK News*, 2022. <https://www.nknews.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/20220314-YSY-FOPO.docx?t=1655858645883>.

Yoon, Suk-yeol. “South Korea Needs to Step Up: The Country’s Next President on His Foreign Policy Vision.” *Foreign Affairs*, February 8, 2022. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/south-korea/2022-02-08/south-korea-needs-step>.

“Yun Seok-Yeol’s Elected Economic and Security-oriented Trade Policy Announcement... Expansion of the ROK-U.S. alliance and international cooperation.” Archyde, last modified March 9, 2022. <https://www.archyde.com/yun-seok-yeols-elected-economic-and-security-oriented-trade-policy-announcement-expansion-of-the-rok-u-s-alliance-and-international-cooperation/>.

### **Official Document**

“Australia and the Republic of Korea sign new MoU on a Digital Cooperation Initiative in Southeast Asia.” *Australian Government*.

<https://www.internationalcybertech.gov.au/node/155>.

ASEAN-Korea Centre. *2021 ASEAN & Korea in Figures*. Seoul: ASEAN-Korea Centre, 2022.

Majlis Keselamatan Negara [National Security Council]. *National Security Policy* (repr., Kuala Lumpur: Malaysia's National Security Council, 2019).

Ministry of Defence (MINDEF). *Defence White Paper: A Secure, Sovereign and Prosperous Malaysia*. Kuala Lumpur: Ministry of Defence, 2020.

### **Paper and Report**

Ang, Benjamin. "Technology and Security: Adapting to Changing Cyber Security Threats in South East Asia." IFRI, 26 November 2020,

[https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/session\\_3\\_presentation\\_benjamin\\_ang\\_ifri\\_webinar\\_26\\_november\\_2020.pdf](https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/session_3_presentation_benjamin_ang_ifri_webinar_26_november_2020.pdf).

Choe, Wongi. "New Southern Policy: Korea's Newfound Ambition in Search of Strategic Autonomy." *Notes de l'Ifri: Asie Visions* 118, January 2021.

[https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/choe\\_new\\_southern\\_policy\\_korea\\_2021.pdf](https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/choe_new_southern_policy_korea_2021.pdf).

Despi, Dianne Faye. "Developing a Framework for Philippine Security Cooperation in a Changing Maritime Milieu." APPFI Research Paper MDS 2019-01.

Govella, Kristi, Garima Mohan, and Bonnie Glaser. "Expanding Engagement among South Korea and the Quad Countries in the Indo-Pacific." *GMF Policy Paper*, June 2022.

<https://www.gmfus.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/Expanding%20Engagement%20among%20South%20Korea%20and%20the%20Quad%20Countries%20in%20the%20Indo-Pacific.pdf>.

Graham, Euan. "Transnational crime in the fishing industry: Asia's problem?" *RSIS Commentaries*. No. 62/ 2011. S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies: Singapore

- Lai, Binh Thai. "Developing U.S.-ROK-ASEAN Cooperation." *CFR Discussion Paper*, January 2018, [https://cdn.cfr.org/sites/default/files/report\\_pdf/Discussion\\_Paper\\_Lai\\_Cooperation\\_OR\\_0.pdf?\\_gl=1\\*110gpm4\\*\\_ga\\*ODA3OTAyODE5LjE2Njc0NDA5Mzk.\\*\\_ga\\_24W5E70YKH\\*MTY2ODMzNzI3MC4yLjAuMTY2ODMzNzI3MC4wLjAuMA](https://cdn.cfr.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/Discussion_Paper_Lai_Cooperation_OR_0.pdf?_gl=1*110gpm4*_ga*ODA3OTAyODE5LjE2Njc0NDA5Mzk.*_ga_24W5E70YKH*MTY2ODMzNzI3MC4yLjAuMTY2ODMzNzI3MC4wLjAuMA).
- Lee, Jaehyon. "Korean Perception on ASEAN and New Southern Policy: differences by political orientations and gap between generations." Asan Institute Issue Brief, No. 2020-03 (in Korean).
- Lee, Jaehyon. "U.S.-ASEAN-ROK Cooperation on Nontraditional Security." *CFR Discussion Paper*, December 2017. [https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep05723#metadata\\_info\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep05723#metadata_info_tab_contents).
- Maharani, Curie, et.al. "Pertahanan Ibu Kota Negara: Strategi dan Gelar Militer." *LAB 45 Monograf*. Jakarta: Laboratorium Indonesia 2045. <https://img.lab45.id/images/article/2022/06/21/205/2767pertahan-ibu-kota-negara-strategi-dan-gelar-militer.pdf>.
- Ong, Rommel Jude. "South Korea's New Southern Policy: Opportunities for Defense and Naval Cooperation" (paper presented in a Webinar on Maritime Security and Strengthening Maritime Governance in the Philippines by the ROK Embassy and University of the Philippines Korea Research Center on August 20, 2020).
- "Philippine Maritime Strategy on the Implementation and Enforcement of Relevant Instruments of International Maritime Organization." <https://marina.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Philippine-Maritime-Strategy-on-the-Implementation-and-Enforcement-of-Relevant-IMO-Instruments-2020-2024.pdf>.
- Roehrig, Terence. "South Korea, the Quad, and Maritime Security." KIMS Periscope, April 11, 2022.

- Schott, J. "RCEP is not enough: south korea also need to join the CPTPP." *Peterson Institute for International Economics Policy Brief*, July 2021. <https://www.piie.com/sites/default/files/documents/pb21-17.pdf>
- Seah S., et al. *The State of Southeast Asia: 2022 Survey Report* (Singapore: ISEAS Yusok-Ishak Institute, 2022). <https://www.iseas.edu.sg/articles-commentaries/state-of-southeast-asia-survey/the-state-of-southeast-asia-2022-survey-report/>.
- Tuan, To Anh. "Maritime Security in the Indo-Pacific: Mixed Opportunities and Challenges from Connectivity Strategies." *Responding to the Geopolitics of Connectivity* (2020): 125-137, [https://www.kas.de/documents/288143/10822438/Panorama\\_2019\\_02\\_4c\\_v5d\\_ToAnhTuan.pdf/bb017d3b-c195-681c-c5a3-19054947fec5?t=1606102327617](https://www.kas.de/documents/288143/10822438/Panorama_2019_02_4c_v5d_ToAnhTuan.pdf/bb017d3b-c195-681c-c5a3-19054947fec5?t=1606102327617).

### **Other Sources**

- Hwan, Yu Mung. "The Rippling Effects of the U.S.-China Competition: Where Does South Korea Stand?" *Stanford APARC Webinar Series: Asian Perspectives on the US-China Competition*. 20 October 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYR8i2O7wsE&list=WL&index=6&t=759s>.
- Kim, Young Ho, Scott Snyder, and Jeong-yeop Woo. "The Future of South Korean Foreign Policy Under the Yoon Administration." *GMF's Asia Program event*, May 23, 2022. <https://www.gmfus.org/event/future-south-korean-foreign-policy-under-yoon-administration>.
- Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). "Press Release: Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) Provides \$2 Million to Create a Master Plan of Eastern Mekong Delta-IWRM (Integrated Water Resources Management) in

Cambodia." Open Development Cambodia, 26 March 2021. <https://opendevdevelopmentcambodia.net/announcements/press-release-korea-international-cooperation-agency-koica-provides-2-million-to-create-a-master-plan-of-eastern-mekong-delta-iwrm-integrated-water-resources-management-in-cambodia/>.

Opening Speech by Foreign Minister Park Jin at CSIS Roundtable, CSIS, June 14, 2022, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/opening-speech-foreign-minister-park-jin-csis-roundtable>.

Remarks by Jeong Kyong-Doo, Minister of National Defense, Republic of Korea, at the 18th Shangri-La Dialogue, June 1, 2019, <https://www.iiss.org/-/media/files/shangri-la-dialogue/2019/speeches/plenary-2---minister-of-national-defense-rok-as-delivered.pdf>.

Remarks by Lee Jong-Sup, Minister of National Defense, Republic of Korea, at the 19th Shangri-La Dialogue, June 12, 2019, <https://www.iiss.org/-/media/files/shangri-la-dialogue/2022/transcripts/p6/as-delivered/lee-jongsup-minister-of-national-defense-republic-of-korea-as-delivered.pdf>.

"South Korea's Role in the Indo-Pacific: Opportunities and challenges under the Yoon Administration." *The Brookings Institution Event*, May 18, 2022. [https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/fp\\_20220518\\_rok\\_indopacific\\_transcript.pdf](https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/fp_20220518_rok_indopacific_transcript.pdf).

## *About CSIS*

Centre for Strategic and International Studies is an independent leading research institute in Indonesia and Southeast Asia. Founded in 1971, CSIS has won recognition as an important research and policy institution both within Indonesia and internationally. It has been ranked among the top think tanks in Southeast Asia and globally. Its development over more than five decades is entwined with the history of Indonesia itself. CSIS is a multidisciplinary policy-oriented research institute paying attention on economic affairs, social and political issues, and international relations. It undertakes research in various areas with topics selected on the basis of their relevance to public policy. The research is complemented and strengthened by its relations with an extensive network of research, academic, and other organizations worldwide. This gives CSIS unique position to consider policy issues from various relevant perspectives.

# Navigating Uncharted Waters: Security Cooperation between ROK and ASEAN

In the age of the Indo-Pacific, marked by the coming proliferation of military competition, the notion of relevance and practicality may increasingly be associated with security cooperation. Yet despite the increased regional standing and elevation of ASEAN's status in Korea's foreign policy strategy, as well as the increasing regional demands and challenges that come from security issues, the Republic of Korea (ROK) continues to project a limited security role in Southeast Asia. This book caters to solving this policy gap by promoting a catalyst for furthering and deepening security cooperation between the ROK and ASEAN: boosting security cooperation between ROK and Maritime Southeast Asian countries.

To examine the prospect of a greater ROK role in the region and the prospect of boosting security cooperation between ROK and Maritime Southeast Asian countries, this edited volume hosts several perspectives both from scholars of ROK and Maritime Southeast Asian nations. Each side presents their observations, ranging from national-level observations of security cooperation between the ROK and a Maritime Southeast Asian nation as well as the regional-level observation of the impetus and challenges in proceeding with the idea.

The edited volume finds that, while convergences between security priorities between ROK and Maritime Southeast Asian countries remain limited, the relationship does not lack in common geopolitical outlook and similar ideals. Whilst different priorities reflect the homework left to be done, the ROK holds a big potential for a specific security role for Southeast Asia. Why should ROK start by focusing on Maritime Southeast Asia? What would be such a security role about?

This edited volume will be of interest to policymakers, analysts, and students who seek to understand not only the specific policy issue of whether there is a prospect for a greater ROK role in Southeast Asia, particularly in security cooperation but also in engaging a discussion on the crucial role of middle power collaboration in facing the incoming regional dynamics.



CENTRE FOR  
STRATEGIC AND  
INTERNATIONAL  
STUDIES



Pakarti Centre Building  
Jl. Tanah Abang III No. 23-27  
Jakarta 10160  
csis.or.id