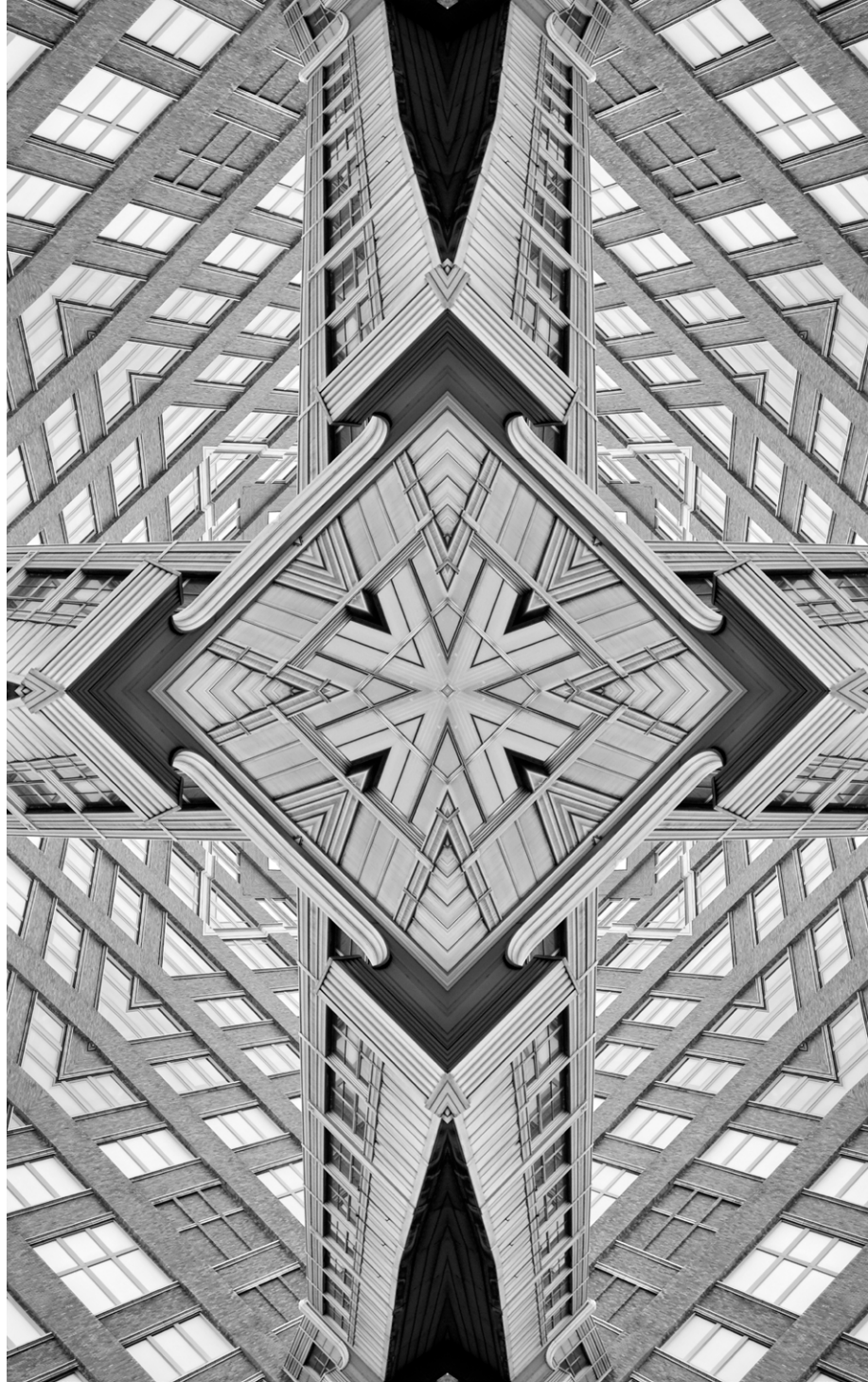


Issue

Brief

ISSUE NO. 720
JULY 2024



South Korea's Evolving Indian Ocean Region Policy

Abhishek Sharma

Abstract

South Korea's Indo-Pacific strategy, released in December 2022, highlights the country's willingness to engage with the Indo-Pacific concept, shedding the ambiguity of the earlier stance under President Yoon Suk Yeol's predecessor. This policy step up recognises emerging geopolitical trends that require South Korea to engage with new territories previously overlooked in its strategic radar, such as the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). This brief assesses the evolution of South Korea's policy on the IOR, from the Moon Jae-in administration to the incumbent, and the prospects that can be explored.

Starting with the previous Moon Jae-in administration to the current one under Yoon Suk Yeol, South Korea has increased its engagement with the Indo-Pacific and groupings that have a stake in the region. President Yoon released the Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS) in 2022, the foundations for which were laid by his predecessor, Moon Jae-in, in the New Southern Policy (NSP). The policy aimed to “elevate Korea’s relations with ASEAN member states and India in the political, economic, social and cultural spheres”¹ to the same level that Korea maintains with the four major powers (i.e., the United States, China, Japan, and Russia).

The IPS is a step up in foreign policy, elevating South Korea’s middle-power diplomacy by pledging a more active role in promoting peace, security, and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. Moreover, the IPS incorporates the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) under the umbrella of the Indo-Pacific region. This brief examines the IOR’s geopolitical and economic significance in South Korea’s foreign policy as well as the shifts in approaches across the administrations of Moon and Yoon.

Moon's NSP and the IOR

Under President Moon Jae-in (2017-2022), South Korea launched the NSP to expand its relations with the countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and India. NSP was built on three pillars—i.e., people, prosperity, and peace—and sought to deepen South Korea's political, economic, cultural, and social relations with ASEAN and India. The policy looked beyond the traditional economic partners (China and the US), and the big four strategic players (China, Russia, Japan, and the US). It was a diversification strategy focused on economic prospects rather than geopolitical moorings.²

Through its 'Look West' diversification element, the NSP focused on two regions which are home to two Asian giants, Indonesia and India—which are also the only IOR countries with which South Korea has a special strategic partnership. Even though the NSP attempted to connect two economic landmasses in the IOR, it has neglected the IOR itself, which is the common maritime geography of both states, since the NSP was primarily an economic policy that gave less attention to strategic and security issues.

The reasons for the strategic neglect of the IOR were threefold: the relative stability of the IOR, the absence of a comprehensive US policy towards the IOR, and the complexity of the IOR. Apart from the NSP, the Moon administration undertook engagements in the IOR through stronger maritime cooperation with regional countries, primarily India, which is viewed as a net security provider in the region, and working with sub-regional maritime multilaterals such as the Indian Ocean Regional Association (IORA).

The foundations of the IOR's maritime cooperation were reflected in the enhancement of strategic diplomatic relations between South Korea and India. During President Moon's July 2018 visit to India, the leaders of both countries released a vision document that highlighted the importance of "shared universal values of democracy, free market economy, rule of law, common commitment to a peaceful, stable, secure, free, open, inclusive and rules-based region."³ The vision statement also stated that South Korea acknowledged India's inclusive and cooperative Indo-Pacific vision.^{a,4}

a India's Indo-Pacific vision statement says: "It stands for a free, open, inclusive region, which embraces us all in a common pursuit of progress and prosperity. It includes all nations in this geography as well as others beyond who have a stake in it." See: <https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/29943/Prime+Ministers+Keynote+Address+at+Shangri+La+Dialogue+June+01+2018>

Moon's NSP and the IOR

Seoul has also been increasingly engaging with IOR maritime multilaterals. Following Moon's visit to India, in July 2018, South Korea officially applied to be a dialogue partner of the IORA and was accepted as a member in December 2018. The statement released by Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs at that time noted how South Korea "exerted diplomatic efforts, including creating favourable consensus among the member states."⁵ Seoul's interest in the IOR showed its recognition of expanding maritime boundaries under the Indo-Pacific construct. Joining the IORA was a strategic decision that recognised the "growing geopolitical importance of the Indian Ocean Region" and allowed South Korea to become part of "strategic communications in the region".⁶ This was also the first time that South Korea incorporated the IOR in its diplomatic engagement. For Seoul, peace and prosperity in the IOR were vital for "diplomacy and security, trade, and marine transportation".^b

According to Cho Wondeuk of the Centre for ASEAN-Indian Studies Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security, South Korea sees IORA as a "major inter-continental grouping" that plays a constructive role in the peace and security of the IOR.⁷ A stable IOR, in which freedom of navigation and open sea lanes are maintained, is in Seoul's national interests.

The strategic neglect of the IOR in Seoul's policies can be attributed to three reasons. First, the IOR has been relatively stable, with the exception of the chokepoints in the Gulf of Aden and the Western Indian Ocean Region (W-IOR), which faced challenges due to increasing piracy on the eastern coast of Africa. However, with no severe security implications on trade and commerce passing through the Indian Ocean, the IOR's strategic importance became limited. Cho Wondeuk noted how the IOR and the South China Sea (SCS) were secondary strategic priorities in South Korea's portfolio.⁸ Their subsidiary position can also be attributed to the absence of Chinese overt activities in the IOR.

^b The statement says: "In doing so, the ROK, making best of its economic growth experience and its status as a middle-power country in the region, will actively work to play bridging roles between advanced countries and less developed countries in IORA, and between South Asia and the Indian Ocean, and Northeast Asia and the Pacific." See: https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/brd/m_5676/view.do?seq=320267

Moon's NSP and the IOR

Second, a dedicated strategic policy from Washington towards the IOR is missing; the US Indo-Pacific strategy released in February 2022 lacks a security outlook towards the IOR, as it does towards the SCS and the East China Sea.^c Therefore, in this case, Seoul's interest is not backed by US policy, unlike in the case of the Gulf, Afghanistan, the SCS, and Europe. Third, the IOR is a complex region that includes different cultures, languages, geographies, economies, and strategies, without any centralised multilateral institutions.

Therefore, in the absence of a dedicated strategy under the Moon administration, South Korea's engagement with the IOR was directed by its strategic cooperation with India in the maritime domain and the Indian Ocean regional institutions.

“A stable IOR, in which freedom of navigation and open sea lanes are maintained, is in Seoul's national interests.”

^c The US IPS stated that, “We will build support for rules-based approaches to the maritime domain, including in the South China Sea and the East China Sea.” See: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/U.S.-Indo-Pacific-Strategy.pdf>

Yoon's Indo-Pacific Strategy and the IOR

Under President Yoon, South Korea released its first IPS aimed at increasing its diplomatic engagement across the Indo-Pacific region. For the first time, the IPS recognised the uncertainty in the region, explicitly mentioning that “[o]ur national interests are tied to the stability and prosperity of the region.”⁹ This was a marked shift from Moon’s cautious approach towards Seoul’s security interests in the Indo-Pacific. With Yoon becoming president, the IPS became the guiding document for Seoul. Directed by Yoon’s Global Pivotal State (GPS) vision,^d the IPS dictated South Korea’s engagement with countries in the region and beyond. South Korea’s geographical vision, encapsulating the whole of the Pacific and the Indian Ocean as highlighted in the IPS, also differed from those of countries like the US¹⁰ and aligned more with partners like India.

Another shift was bringing South Asia (including India and the IOR) under Seoul’s strategic radar, with both geographies being considered part of the maritime continuum. The South Asia section of the IPS considers India as the “leading regional partner with shared values” and highlights advancing their special strategic partnership.¹¹ It also states the objective to work with regional forums such as the IORA and SAARC in “building an open and inclusive regional architecture in South Asia.”¹² The IPS filled a maritime lacuna by connecting the IOR with India as a key player in the South Asian region and situating the IOR in the larger Indo-Pacific maritime space.

The IOR has received increased attention under the Yoon administration’s IPS. For instance, through bolstering its association with Indian Ocean regional forums like the IORA and the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), Seoul has signalled its intention to work with the IOR’s Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and East African countries. Through the IPS, Seoul attempted to incorporate its IOR policy in the South Asian section towards strengthening its evolving maritime relations with regional countries like India. Developments under Yoon were aimed at increasing cooperation with new IOR institutions and moving beyond traditional economic cooperation to establish security ties with existing IOR maritime institutions and multilateral architecture. For instance, South Korean interest in areas such as maritime domain awareness (MDA) in the IOR was increasing.

^d The GPS vision is aimed at diversifying Korea’s diplomatic relations and deepening its engagement globally, beyond the peninsula.

Yoon's Indo-Pacific Strategy and the IOR

To foster this cooperation, in April 2023, the South Korean naval delegation led by Rear Admiral Jun Jae-im visited the Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR), where they were briefed about maritime security incidents and the role of International Liaison Officers (ILOs) and the IFC-IOR in enhancing maritime security in wide IOR.^{e,13} The visit highlighted South Korea's increasing interest in regional maritime situational awareness institutions. The visit followed the announcement of the Quad's initiative, the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA).^f Under the IPMDA, IFC-IOR was recognised as a nodal point for information-sharing in the IOR.

The geopolitical overspill into the maritime domain is another factor. Since the Red Sea conflict, Seoul has become more cognizant of the threats in the IOR and aimed to further consolidate its maritime cooperation with the IOR institutions, including the IFC-IOR. After the IPMDA announcement, India also began strengthening its MDA in the IOR by enhancing relations with countries in the W-IOR. In February 2023, the IFC-IOR signed an MoU with the Regional Coordination Operational Centre (RCOC) Seychelles to enhance "maritime domain awareness, information sharing, and expertise development."¹⁴ It was expected that, going forward, the IFC-IOR will emerge as an important centre in the IOR for MDA; therefore, it is likely that South Korea will post a Liaison Officer, as it did at the Singapore Information Fusion Centre.¹⁵ Kuyoun Chung, Associate Professor at the Department of Political Science, Kangwon National University and an expert in South Korean foreign policy, agreed that South Korea is considering a new kind of cooperation on the MDA in the region and sees it as an important area of cooperation between India and South Korea.

Another instance of South Korea's enhanced maritime interest is its willingness to engage in military diplomacy with the IOR, like the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS). At the eighth edition of the IONS Conclave of Chiefs, held in December 2023 in Bangkok, South Korea joined IONS as the ninth observer,¹⁶ which will allow it to further contribute to maritime security cooperation through a technical forum of the Indian Ocean States Navies.

e The IFC-IOR's role is to "strengthen maritime security in the region and beyond, by building a common coherent maritime situation picture and acting as a maritime security information sharing hub for the region." See: <https://www.indiannavy.nic.in/ifc-ior/about-us.html>

f The IPMDA would "allow tracking of "dark shipping" and other tactical-level activities, such as rendezvous at sea, as well as improve partners' ability to respond to climate and humanitarian events and to protect their fisheries." See: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/05/23/fact-sheet-quad-leaders-tokyo-summit-2022/>

Yoon's Indo-Pacific Strategy and the IOR

The shift in Seoul's strategy towards the IOR can be assessed by observing its changing stance on the SCS. This shift highlights Seoul's increasing concerns with the security and stability of maritime spaces in the Indo-Pacific. Under President Yoon, South Korea has adopted a stronger stance for stability and security in the Indo-Pacific.¹⁷ The change in Seoul's position on the SCS points towards its uneasiness with increasing Chinese activities in the region that violate international laws and the norms of a rules-based order. In August 2023, the South Korean Embassy in the Philippines issued a statement expressing concern over the Chinese coast guard's use of a water cannon on a Philippine boat.¹⁸ This was followed by a joint statement at Camp David between the US, Japan, and South Korea criticising the PRC's actions in the SCS.¹⁹

Seoul views China's overt actions in the SCS as a projection of Beijing's increasing military power, which is expected to expand beyond its immediate maritime zone towards the east to the Sea of Japan and west to the IOR, which Beijing views as critical for its energy and economic security. Although Beijing's peacetime actions in the IOR are more covert than overt and are categorised as non-combat operations, this façade is already slipping.²⁰ The challenges in the IOR will affect investments, trade, commerce, and energy security. Therefore, in this geopolitical flux in the IOR, India emerges as a stabilising factor. According to Cho Wondeuk, South Korea views India as a critical player in the IOR because it is a democracy that supports rules-based order and can play a pivotal role in keeping the region prosperous and peaceful. Wondeuk added that the IOR is facing economic challenges like debt diplomacy and infrastructure demand and security issues such as political interference and maritime surveillance; therefore, there is a need for likeminded countries to extend their support in maintaining the stability and security of the region.

“The IPS filled a maritime lacuna by connecting the IOR with India as a key player in the South Asian region.”

South Korea and the IOR: Avenues for Cooperation and Collaboration

The geographical expanse of the Indian Ocean and the absence of a dominant power make the region difficult to govern. Resident and non-resident countries are aiming to gain a foothold over chokepoints and states in the IOR, resulting in a contest between India and China. Therefore, great-power rivalry in the IOR between China and the US will likely intensify, which would enable South Korea to contribute to the stability and security of the region. The strategic rationale for a more proactive maritime engagement in the region, particularly the IOR, is twofold: protecting energy and economic security, and supporting allies and partners. South Korea could achieve this by forging a stronger strategic maritime partnership with India, focusing on maritime security in the IOR, and implementing its Indo-Pacific strategy.

India and ASEAN began to receive a strategic preference in the Indo-Pacific region, starting with President Moon's NSP. Subsequently, Yoon's IPS expanded and elevated Seoul's diplomatic engagement in the Indo-Pacific. Moving forward, South Korea needs to rethink the importance of the IOR in its Indo-Pacific strategy to contribute to an "open and inclusive architecture in South Asia".²¹ Additionally, South Korea must recognise that the IOR has distinct challenges and that its strategic value is different from Southeast Asia. Therefore, the IPS needs to incorporate a strategic (i.e., maritime security) vision towards the IOR. India, a US\$3.5-trillion economy and net security provider, can contribute by connecting land and maritime geographies. In addition to its 'Neighbourhood First' policy^g and the 'SAGAR' vision,^h India can be a partner for South Korea's IPS in the IOR.

South Korea needs to cooperate with countries like Indonesia and India, which aim to bridge the Pacific and Indian Ocean regions, such as through joint maritime infrastructure projects and exercises. Akin to how South Korea has invested in forging closer relations with NATO, the EU, and its members, as well as Ukraine.²² In order to comprehensively implement the IPS, Seoul cannot adopt a piecemeal approach that overlooks the IOR and India. Tokyo's strategy can serve as an example for developing an IOR partnership that presents alternatives and deliverables to the Indo-Pacific region.²³ For Seoul, a sector-specific approach with limited commitment to maritime capabilities

^g The Neighbourhood First policy guides India's approach towards its immediate neighbourhood in South Asia, aimed at improving digital, physical, and people-to-people connectivity.

^h The SAGAR outlook focuses on capacity building and safety and security in the IOR.

South Korea and the IOR: Avenues for Cooperation and Collaboration

may be a better option. As the Indo-Pacific region becomes more involved in a great-power contest, Seoul will need to expand its security umbrella through cooperation with other regional powers in the Indo-Pacific. Therefore, the indivisible security concept that Yoon espoused in his 2023 meeting with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg applies first to intra-Indo-Pacific relations rather than inter-regional dynamics (Indo-Pacific and Europe).²⁴

There are three approaches to cooperation in the IOR that South Korea can explore:

- Strengthening relations with India.** There is a need to find convergences between India's 'Act East' policy and the SAGAR vision, and South Korea's Indo-Pacific strategy. South Korea can strengthen its relations with India by focusing on maritime security issues—maritime infrastructure, security and connectivity, shipping and ports, maritime transport and logistics, defence cooperation, and maritime exercises. On the maritime infrastructure front, India and South Korea can work together to identify joint projects such as port modernisation and shipbuilding. The announcement made during President Yoon's meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the G20 for increasing the Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) to US\$4 billion for high-value infrastructure projects is a welcome development.²⁵ On defence cooperation, South Korea can support India's naval modernisation, particularly on projects of critical national importance. This would further strengthen the defence relations between both countries across the Army, Air Force, and Navy. To strengthen maritime cooperation, India and South Korea should set up a maritime security dialogue towards maritime security in the Indo-Pacific. They can work closely at sea through a "coordinated maritime presence", improving operational know-how and interoperability through search and rescue operations, maritime interdiction, and coordinated patrol for anti-piracy, counter-smuggling, and counter-narcotics operations in the IOR.²⁶ As a full member of the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), India is aiming to support multilateral engagements in the western Indian Ocean to strengthen its military diplomacy.²⁷ Closer naval relations can help South Korea use India's bilateral military logistics pacts for its purpose.²⁸
- Expanding cooperation in the IOR with regional stakeholders, including allies, partners, and multilateral institutions.** South Korea can expand its Trilateral Maritime Security Cooperation framework with the US and Japan to the IOR, with a focus on the MDA, capacity building, and coast guard cooperation.²⁹ Similarly, the Trilateral Development Finance Cooperation can be extended to finance infrastructure projects in the


South Korea and the IOR: Avenues for Cooperation and Collaboration

IOR to address challenges such as climate infrastructure and renewable energy for SIDS and low-lying states.³⁰ For instance, the Maldives requires infrastructure and connectivity investments, and the 2023 meeting of Busan's mayor Park Heong-joon with Mohamed Muizzu, president of Maldives, to discuss investment opportunities in housing, infrastructure, capacity building, and security cooperation, was a critical step for greater strategic engagement in the region.³¹ Increasing economic cooperation by building on its earlier commitment would strengthen South Korea's relations with countries like Bangladesh and Sri Lanka³² as well as diversify the dependence of the regional countries on Beijing for strategic projects. In addition, South Korea can strengthen its relations through inclusive maritime security structures such as the Indo Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI).

- **Cooperation and collaboration with India and other regional stakeholders like the ASEAN.** These discussions should be framed around converging objectives in a bilateral and tripartite format, such as capacity building, quality infrastructure, climate change, Information and Communications Technology (ICTs), and Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI).³³ These engagements can be expanded beyond South Asia to the east coast of Africa as both India and South Korea have converging interests in the African region. Additionally, with regard to India and South Korea's cooperation in the Global South, there is an opportunity to collaborate on capacity building and development assistance. For instance, the India-Japan-South Korea trilateral can focus on infrastructure and connectivity.³⁴ Closer maritime cooperation with ASEAN members and IOR stakeholders like Indonesia and Singapore can be leveraged to underscore the importance of "upholding international law in contributing to global and regional peace, stability and prosperity" based on convergence between South Korea's IP strategy and ASEAN's Indo-Pacific Outlook.³⁵ South Korea can strengthen its bilateral defence cooperation with Indonesia and Singapore by cultivating closer relations through defence modernisation and production, maritime exercises, and joint patrols.³⁶

Conclusion

South Korea is an important stakeholder in the maritime security and stability of the Indo-Pacific region. Although South Korea's interests have been historically limited to the SCS, in recent years, the IOR is gaining importance in South Korea's strategic calculus as well as its diplomatic relations and foreign policy engagement in the region. Under President Yoon Suk Yeol, Seoul is developing closer cooperation with the IOR's regional players and institutions and establishing closer maritime security cooperation with India under its IPS.³⁷

There is need, however, for convergence and coordination between South Korea's cooperation with IOR institutions and its maritime security cooperation with India and other regional players. This approach will elevate Seoul's maritime relations in the IOR. Currently, the IOR is experiencing increasing non-traditional and traditional security concerns from state and non-state actors, which also impact South Korea's national interests. It is important to foster more collaborative engagement with the IOR states and institutions to promote stability and security in the region. 

Abhishek Sharma is a Research Assistant at ORF's Strategic Studies Programme.

- 1 “Presidential Committee on New Southern Policy,” Asia Pacific Centre for Security Studies, 2020, https://dkiapcss.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Republic_of_Korea-New_Southern_Policy_Information_Booklet.pdf
- 2 Wongi Choe, “New Southern Policy: Korea’s Newfound Ambition in Search of *Strategic* Autonomy,” French Institute of International Relations, 2021, https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/choe_new_southern_policy_korea_2021.pdf
- 3 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea, *President Moon Jae-in and Prime Minister Narendra Modi Shared Vision for People, Prosperity, Peace and Future*, July 11, 2018, [https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/brd/m_5674/view.do?seq=319715&srchFr=%3BsrchTo=%3BsrchWord=%3BsrchTp=%3Bmulti_itm_seq=0&%3Bitm_seq_1=0&%3Bitm_seq_2=0&%3Bcompany_cd=%3Bcompany_nm=&page=2&titleNm=.](https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/brd/m_5674/view.do?seq=319715&srchFr=%3BsrchTo=%3BsrchWord=%3BsrchTp=%3Bmulti_itm_seq=0&%3Bitm_seq_1=0&%3Bitm_seq_2=0&%3Bcompany_cd=%3Bcompany_nm=&page=2&titleNm=)
- 4 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “President Moon Jae-in and Prime Minister Narendra Modi Shared Vision for People, Prosperity, Peace and Future”
- 5 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea, “ROK Joins Indian Ocean Rim Association as Dialogue Partner,” December 6, 2018, [https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/brd/m_5676/view.do?seq=320267.](https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/brd/m_5676/view.do?seq=320267)
- 6 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “ROK Joins Indian Ocean Rim Association as Dialogue Partner”
- 7 Interview with Dr. Cho Wondeuk, November 2023.
- 8 Interview with Dr. Cho Wondeuk, November 2023.
- 9 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea, *Strategy for a Free, Peaceful, and Prosperous Indo-Pacific Region*, December 28, 2022, https://www.mofa.go.kr/eng/brd/m_5676/view.do?seq=322133, 2022.
- 10 The White House, *Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States*
- 11 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Strategy for a Free, Peaceful, and Prosperous Indo-Pacific Region”
- 12 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Strategy for a Free, Peaceful, and Prosperous Indo-Pacific Region”
- 13 IFC-IOR (@IFC_IOR), “A delegation led by RAdm Junjae IM, Republic of Korea Navy visited IFCIOR,” Twitter, April 14, 2023, <https://twitter.com/indiannavy/status/1646819200202321920>
- 14 Ministry of Defence, Government of India, *Maritime Security: Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region*

- (IFC-IOR) and Regional Coordination Operations Centre (RCOC), February 22, 2023, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1901371>
- 15 Information Fusion Centre, “Our ILOs,” https://www.ifc.org.sg/ifc2web/app_pages/User/commonv2/ourILOs.cshtml
 - 16 Ministry of Defence, Government of India, <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1989652>.
 - 17 ASEAN Secretariat, *Joint Statement of the 24th ASEAN-Republic of Korea Summit on Cooperation on the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP)*, 2023, https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Final-Joint-Statement-of-the-24th-ASEAN-ROK-Summit.pdf
 - 18 Yi Wonju, “Korean Embassy Voices Concerns Over China’s Recent Water Cannon Attack on Philippines Boat,” *Yonhap News Agency*, August 11, 2023, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20230811005800325>
 - 19 The White House, *The Spirit of Camp David: Joint Statement of Japan, the Republic of Korea, and the United States*, August 18, 2023, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/08/18/the-spirit-of-camp-david-joint-statement-of-japan-the-republic-of-korea-and-the-united-states/>
 - 20 Joshua T. White, “China’s Indian Ocean Ambitions: Investment, Influence, and Military Advantage,” The Brookings Institution, June 2020, https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/FP_20200615_chinas_indian_ocean_ambitions_white-1.pdf
 - 21 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Strategy for a Free, Peaceful, and Prosperous Indo-Pacific Region”
 - 22 Lee Haye-ah, “Yoon Arrives in Lithuania for NATO Summit,” *Yonhap News Agency*, July 11, 2023, [https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20230711000500315#:~:text=VILNIUS%2C%20July%2010%20\(Yonhap\),Poland%20for%20an%20official%20visit.;](https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20230711000500315#:~:text=VILNIUS%2C%20July%2010%20(Yonhap),Poland%20for%20an%20official%20visit.;) “South Korean President Pledges \$150 m Aid to Ukraine After Talks with Zelenskiy,” *The Guardian*, July 15, 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/jul/15/south-korean-president-makes-surprise-visit-to-ukraine-in-show-of-support#:~:text=Yoon%20added%20that%20humanitarian%20aid,said%20at%20the%20joint%20briefing.>
 - 23 Interview with Dr. Garima Mohan, September 2023.
 - 24 North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “Secretary General Stresses Value of NATO’s Global Partnerships in Visit to Republic of Korea,” January 30, 2023, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_211270.htm
 - 25 “South Korea Offers US \$ 4 Billion Loan to India for High-Value Infrastructure Projects,” *Asian Community News*, September 13, 2023, <https://www.>

- asiancommunitynews.com/south-korea-offers-us-4-billion-loan-to-india-for-high-value-infrastructure-projects/
- 26 Kabir Taneja, “India, Japan, and South Korea Should Work Together to Protect Shipping,” *Nikkei Asia*, October 23, 2023, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Opinion/India-Japan-and-South-Korea-should-work-together-to-protect-shipping>; European External Action Service, “Coordinated Maritime Presences,” March, 2022, <https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/2022-03-coordinated-maritime-presences-newlayout.pdf>
 - 27 Dinakar Peri, “India Begins Cooperation with Bahrain-Based Combined Maritime Forces,” *The Hindu*, August 8, 2023, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-begins-cooperation-with-bahrain-based-combined-maritime-forces/article65741512.ece>
 - 28 Shubhajit Roy, “India Gets Access to Strategic Oman Port Duqm for Military Use, Chabahar-Gwadar in Sight,” *The Indian Express*, February 13, 2023, <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/india-gets-access-to-strategic-oman-port-for-military-use-chabahar-gwadar-in-sight-5061573/>
 - 29 The White House, “Fact Sheet: The Trilateral Leaders’ Summit at Camp David,” August 18, 2023, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/08/18/fact-sheet-the-trilateral-leaders-summit-at-camp-david/>
 - 30 The White House, “Fact Sheet: The Trilateral Leaders’ Summit at Camp David”
 - 31 The President’s Office, Republic of Maldives, <https://www.presidencymaldives.gov.mv/Press/Article/29080>
 - 32 “S.Korea, Bangladesh Seek Closer Ties on ICT, Infrastructure,” *The Korea Herald*, April 1, 2022, <https://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20220401000252>; Lee Haye-ah, “Yoon Meets Leaders of Sri Lanka, San Marino, 7 Other Nations,” *Yonhap News Agency*, September 19, 2023, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20230919001451315?section=national/politics>; “South Korea Interested to Invest in Bangladesh’s Ports, Shipping,” *The Business Standard*, August 30, 2019, <https://www.tbsnews.net/bangladesh/south-korea-interested-invest-bangladeshs-ports-shipping>
 - 33 “Full Text of Joint Statement by S.Korean, Indian Leaders,” *The Korea Herald*, July 10, 2018, <https://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20180710000860>
 - 34 Dipanjan Roy Chaudhary, “Japan Funded Bangladesh Deep Sea Port: Game Changer in Bay of Bengal,” *The Economic Times*, August 11, 2023, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/international/world-news/japan-funded-bangladesh-deep-sea-port-game-changer-in-bay-of-bengal/articleshow/102658785.cms?from=mdr>
 - 35 ASEAN Secretariat, “Joint Statement of the 24th ASEAN-Republic of Korea Summit on Cooperation on the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP)”

Endnotes

- 36 Max Broad and Evan A. Laksmana, “South Korea’s Defence Relations in Southeast Asia,” International Institute for Strategic Studies, September 29, 2023, <https://www.iiss.org/online-analysis/online-analysis/2023/09/south-koreas-defence-relations-in-southeast-asia/>; Felix Kim, “Indonesia, South Korea Mark Milestone with Deeper Defense Collaboration,” Indo-Pacific Defense Forum, August 24, 2023, <https://ipdefenseforum.com/2023/08/indonesia-south-korea-mark-milestone-with-deeper-defense-collaboration/>; Stanley Widiyanto and Albee Zhang, “Indonesia Kicks Off Multilateral Naval Exercise Amid Asia-Pacific Tension,” *Reuters*, June 5, 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/indonesia-kicks-off-multilateral-naval-exercise-amid-asia-pacific-tension-2023-06-05/>
- 37 “Korea to Seek More Maritime Security Cooperation in Indo-Pacific Strategy: Vice FM,” *The Korea Times*, December 19, 2023, https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2023/12/113_365427.html

Images used in this paper are from Getty Images/Busà Photography.



Ideas . Forums . Leadership . Impact

20, Rouse Avenue Institutional Area,
New Delhi - 110 002, INDIA
Ph. : +91-11-35332000. Fax : +91-11-35332005
E-mail: contactus@orfonline.org
Website: www.orfonline.org