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A next-generation agenda: Bridging Indo-Pacific and European perspectives on security

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Introduction

As the global security landscape continues to evolve, increased coordination among likeminded allies is key to defending the rules-based international system—and this holds true beyond the region in which a country lies. The United States and South Korea have long championed cooperation when it comes to deterring authoritarian threats and reinforcing a free and open Indo-Pacific, and European North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries seem to have come to the same conclusion as they consider their deepening stakes in the Indo-Pacific. To advance South Korean-NATO cooperation moving forward, it is vital that next-generation experts and officials come together to explore novel methods of collaboration and action-oriented policy recommendations.

To this end, the Atlantic Council, in partnership with the Korea Foundation, has built a new agenda for bridging regional perspectives among the United States, South Korea, and European NATO countries to promote further cooperation. To advance this aim, this project took a practical approach to expanding collaboration and improving understanding among the NATO countries and South Korea. It focused on defining areas in which flexible, action-oriented, and informal collaborative arrangements among these countries can provide mutual benefits, creating a basis for deeper and more meaningful collaboration moving forward.

Throughout the project, the Atlantic Council and the Korea Foundation convened two private virtual workshops with rising US, South Korean, and European junior and mid-career experts who represent the next generation of policymakers, academics, and private-sector leaders who will operationalize this cooperation during their careers. This “Next-Generation Network” discussed challenges and opportunities for bridging perspectives and building both traditional and nontraditional cooperation in security. Based on the ideas raised during the workshop discussions, the participants offered concrete and actionable recommendations for a next-generation agenda with a particular emphasis on how policymakers and private-sector experts in each region can collectively implement the agenda.

This issue brief provides background on recent events in cooperation before highlighting an analysis of the key challenges and opportunities at hand, followed by concrete policy recommendations for bridging perspectives on security cooperation among the United States, South Korea, and European NATO countries.

The **Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security** works to develop sustainable, nonpartisan strategies to address the most important security challenges facing the United States and the world. The Center honors General Brent Scowcroft’s legacy of service and embodies his ethos of nonpartisan commitment to the cause of security, support for US leadership in cooperation with allies and partners, and dedication to the mentorship of the next generation of leaders.

The **Indo-Pacific Security Initiative (IPSI)** housed within the Scowcroft Center for Strategy and Security informs and shapes the strategies, plans, and policies of the United States and its allies and partners to address the most important rising security challenges in the Indo Pacific, including China’s growing threat to the international order and North Korea’s destabilizing nuclear weapons advancements. IPSI produces innovative analysis, conducts tabletop exercises, hosts public and private convenings, and engages with US, allied, and partner governments, militaries, media, other key private and public sector stakeholders, and publics.

Background

Historically, NATO and South Korea—and, to a slightly lesser degree, the United States—have primarily focused on the security challenges of a singular threat at a time, and largely failed to consider the mutually reinforcing aspects of multiple threatening authoritarian powers. However, over the past several years, the world has seen a major shift in the geopolitical environment—the increasing nuclear and non-nuclear threats from North Korea, the growing economic and maritime aggression of China, and the unprecedented, continued war against Ukraine by Russia. The cooperation among these powers has also grown

rapidly. For example, there has been undeniable proof of Russia using North Korean ballistic missiles in its war against Ukraine, with sources suggesting the use of North Korean missiles in Kyiv as recently as August 2024.¹

Concurrently, we have also seen exponential growth in South Korea-NATO relations over the past several years, following the Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme, a formal partnership that was established in 2012.² Despite this early connection, it wasn't until recently that NATO and South Korea have seemed to fully capitalize on the relationship. It was at the 2023 NATO Summit in Vilnius, when South Korean President Yoon Suk-Yeol and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg adopted the Individually Tailored Partnership Program (ITPP).³ These steps have signaled an increased understanding among the South Korean and NATO country leaderships that cooperation is not only vital but requires a comprehensive outlook.⁴ This is in combination with increasingly frequent engagements below the head-of-state level, such as the Foreign Ministers' Meeting and military staff talks, not to mention the landmark first regional visit by NATO Defense College hosted by US Forces Korea.⁵ Furthermore, Stoltenberg stated at the NATO Summit in July 2024, "We will remain a regional alliance, but we need to work with our global partners, Asia Pacific partners, to address these global challenges."⁶

Whether this inter-regional cooperative agenda will remain a priority under the newly appointed secretary general, Mark Rutte, remains to be seen. However, if NATO remains internally divided on its formal approach to the Indo-Pacific, many challenges remain in relation to building tangible, operable security cooperation among the regions.⁷



ROK-NATO Individual Partnership and Cooperation Programme Signing Ceremony, November 1, 2017. | Credit: NATO

1 "DIA Report Confirms North Korean Missile Debris Found in Ukraine," Defense Intelligence Agency, May 29, 2024, <https://www.dia.mil/News-Features/Articles/Article-View/Article/3790623/dia-report-confirms-north-korean-missile-debris-found-in-ukraine/>; Ellie Cook, "North Korean Missiles Fired on Kyiv in Deadly Russian Attack: Zelensky," Newsweek, August 11, 2024, <https://www.newsweek.com/north-korea-kn23-hwasong-11-ballistic-missile-russia-ukraine-kyiv-attack-1937514>.

2 "Relations with the Republic of Korea," NATO, July 11, 2024, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_50098.htm.

3 "'Tailored Partnership' with NATO to Boost Security Cooperation," Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Korea, July 13, 2023, https://lby.mofa.go.kr/eng/brd/m_5674/view.do?seq=320840.

4 The eleven areas of cooperation listed in the ITTP are: dialogue and consultation; arms control, disarmament, and nonproliferation; counterterrorism; cybersecurity; emerging and disruptive technologies; capability development and interoperability; practical cooperation for interoperability; science and technology; women, peace, and security; climate change and security; and public diplomacy.

5 "NATO and the Republic of Korea Discuss Cooperation at the Military Staff Talks," NATO, May 14, 2024, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_225366.htm; "U.S. Forces Korea Hosts First Regional Visit by NATO Defense College," United States Forces Korea, June 3, 2024, <https://www.usfk.mil/Media/Newsroom/News/Article/3794064/us-forces-korea-hosts-first-regional-visit-by-nato-defense-college/>.

6 "Remarks by NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg at the NATO Public Forum," NATO, July 10, 2024, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_227402.htm.

7 "NATO Allies Select Mark Rutte as Next Secretary General," NATO, June 27, 2024, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_227064.htm; Stuart Lau and Laura Kayali, "Macron Blocks NATO Outpost in Japan amid Chinese Complaints," Politico, July 8, 2023, <https://www.politico.eu/article/emmanuel-macron-block-nato-outpost-japan-china-complaints/>.

Challenges

Inherently, when it comes to bringing a series of countries together in a collaborative environment, there are significant challenges to reaching a consensus. Furthermore, when incorporating countries from different linguistic, cultural, and regional backgrounds, these challenges become significantly more pronounced. Throughout the first workshop discussion, next-generation experts from the United States, South Korea, and European NATO countries identified several challenges proving obstacles to cooperation—namely, consensus building and threat perceptions, concerns surrounding economic security, and the lack of mechanisms through which to enact cooperation.

First, NATO countries and likeminded democratic states in the Indo-Pacific share a strong common interest in maintaining the rules-based international order but must also respond to rising geopolitical tensions and the revisionist aspirations of a number of countries. In this way, there is a great deal of divergence when it comes to threat perceptions and risk calculus on the part of the European, US, and Korean policymakers in relation to the three main adversaries—North Korea, Russia, and China. Naturally, both Europeans and Koreans have long considered their closest adversary as their biggest security concern, frequently to the exclusion of the others. For example, South Korea has long been concerned about a contingency with North Korea, but not necessarily with Russia. Conversely, NATO countries—particularly the European countries—have been concerned about a contingency with Russia, but largely disregard or are ignorant of growing threats from North Korea. While this schema had some logic in previous decades, the world is currently so intricately interconnected that, even if there is a limited chance of “boots on the ground” concerns, the ripple effects of a conflict in a distant region require more modern considerations.

This lack of consensus does not exist only when it comes to regional perspectives, but intra-regionally as well. NATO consists of thirty-two member states, with two North American states and thirty that span the European continent. In a practical sense, these countries have vastly different

capabilities when it comes to capacity for cooperation—landlocked versus coastal powers, conventional versus nuclear capabilities, large versus small economies, etc. In the strategic sense, countries need to consider the relative risk of engaging in a protracted conflict, or even heightened competition, with an adversary. All of this leads to great confusion, and even tension, when it comes to setting a party line for an organization such as NATO.

Consequently, the United States, with its military-base infrastructure in the region and its unparalleled ability to project power, has been able to function as an indispensable partner in ensuring hard security. On the other hand, although European NATO countries have recently stepped up engagements in the Indo-Pacific region and possess significant naval assets and the ability to deploy them as expeditionary forces, many European countries have focused on matters of economic security, cybersecurity, and the like. This leads to the second challenge—economic security.

Concerns grounded in economic security have gained greater prominence recently, reflecting the growing economic importance of the Indo-Pacific region and the pivotal role that specific companies and materials have come to assume in critically important value chains. In particular, the COVID pandemic illustrated how vulnerable advanced industrial economies have become to disruptions in key value chains, as well as heightened geopolitical tensions. NATO countries and Indo-Pacific countries have undertaken significant initiatives to increase their resilience around strategically important value chains, including by investing in and otherwise encouraging the development of domestic industrial capacities.⁸ While these are positive steps, there could be a risk that poorly aligned and uncoordinated concurrent initiatives between likeminded and allied countries lead to suboptimal capital allocation, as well as undue competition and tensions among likeminded countries.

Here, too, perspectives differ among the United States, South Korea, and European NATO countries. In this way, developing effective economic security policies to de-risk critical value chains is difficult, particularly in the short run, as new industries and value chains take years to build and also run the risk of likeminded countries engaging in

8 “Resilience, Civil Preparedness and Article 3,” NATO, August 6, 2024, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_132722.htm; “Joint Readout: United States-Korea Supply Chain and Commercial Dialogue Ministerial Meeting,” US Department of Commerce, June 27, 2024, <https://www.commerce.gov/news/press-releases/2024/06/joint-readout-united-states-korea-supply-chain-and-commercial-dialogue>.

counterproductive competing initiatives by vying for the same investments in new capacity along strategic value chains. However, as a military alliance, there is an open question as to how well equipped and positioned NATO as an organization is to address the economic challenges posed by adversaries such as China, especially for partner nations vulnerable to Beijing's economic coercion, such as South Korea and the other Indo-Pacific 4 countries (IP4).

Finally, cooperation between the United States and likeminded countries in Europe and the Indo-Pacific, generally speaking, is not heavily institutionalized. There are no near-equivalents to NATO, the Five Eyes, or similar structures to underpin comprehensive exchanges and cooperation around military and intelligence operations between regions. Regardless, despite shared security concerns, common risks are not always translated into common action or close cooperation, particularly around highly sensitive issues on which cooperation requires deep levels of trust and mutual understanding. In particular, this lack of institutionalization or even formal mechanisms for cooperation is an area of concern when it comes to administration changes.

Many countries are either just coming out of major elections or going into major elections that could have massive effects on the very geopolitical environment that is encouraging the current levels of cooperation. Should there be a major policy change that disrupts collaboration, the lack of any formalized institutions risks a backsliding of cooperation that will lead future policymakers or officials to return to a near ground zero of negotiations and loss of opportunities.

Opportunities

The geopolitical world order from which NATO countries and likeminded countries in the Indo-Pacific have all benefited is fraying, and there is now a common understanding that the democratic countries need to take decisive actions to counter rising threats to their national security, cybersecurity, and economic security. Authoritarian powers seeking to revise the prevailing order have also begun cooperating more closely, as illustrated by the large-scale shipments of drones from Iran, along with artillery shells and missiles from North Korea, to help Russia's

war of conquest in Europe.⁹ China now also possesses the industrial muscle to become a veritable "Arsenal of Autocracy" in a protracted conflict in Europe or Asia, and is already providing many key components to Russia's war machine. There is, therefore, a window of opportunity and justification to accelerate efforts to strengthen ties and translate common risk perceptions and security interests into closer operational cooperation between likeminded countries in Europe, North America, and the Indo-Pacific. Throughout the second workshop discussion, next-generation experts from the United States, South Korea, and European NATO countries identified several opportunities to expand upon existing cooperation—namely, fueling defense industry collaboration and interoperability, further building information sharing, and developing research and development for emerging technologies.



NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg visits the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) and the UN Command in Panmunjom, Republic of Korea, November 2, 2017. | Credit: NATO

First, an opportunity is at hand with the inaugural NATO Industrial Capacity Expansion pledge, which seeks to address many of the issues and challenges European NATO countries face related to the defense industry in relation

⁹ Danny Citrinowicz, "Iran Is on Its Way to Replacing Russia as a Leading Arms Exporter. the US Needs a Strategy to Counter This Trend," Atlantic Council, February 2, 2024, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/iransource/iran-drone-uavs-russia/>; "DIA Report Confirms North Korean Missile Debris Found in Ukraine."

to the Alliance, such as procurement, standardization, interoperability, and supply-chain security.¹⁰ Closer defense industrial cooperation could be achieved by taking steps to increase the interoperability of weapons systems—a lack of which has long plagued the NATO countries and significantly reduced the effectiveness of various European militaries when working together. Highlighting this could start with less sophisticated elements such as common specifications for munitions, drawing on the lessons of the war effort in Ukraine, where the industrial capacity to produce artillery shells has proven decisive and revealed significant weaknesses among the Western allies—whereas, in contrast, Iran and North Korea have been able to offer outsized contributions to Russian war efforts despite their lack of sophisticated military technology, simply by supplying large quantities of artillery shells, missiles, and drones.¹¹ That would allow the United States, European countries, and Indo-Pacific countries to better aid each other in the event of future conflicts. Such cooperation could, of course, also extend to more sophisticated weaponry. The potential seems particularly large when it comes to the development of emerging technologies with dual-use potential. China has become the world's leading developer and producer of drones and looks poised to become a world leader in artificial intelligence and autonomous weapons systems.¹² Increasing both industrial capacity and technological sophistication must be a central priority among all democratically minded countries.

Furthermore, building interoperability through joint exercises is a key avenue for building actionable security cooperation. There have been significant increases in European and North American naval presence in the Indo-Pacific through those countries' own exercises, and Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 2024 included seven European countries, showing the growing strategic prioritization of the Indo-Pacific.¹³ To underscore a growing European

commitment to the Indo-Pacific, the recently reelected president of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, pledged in her political program to “deploy the full range of our combined statecraft to deter China from unilaterally changing the status quo by military means, particularly over Taiwan.”¹⁴ To underpin this sentiment, there should be increased wargaming and tabletop exercises among the United States, South Korea, and European countries for contingencies happening in the Indo-Pacific region.

Second, developing emerging technologies, research and development cooperation, and similar steps on the part of the individual countries and regions—and within cooperation among the United States, South Korea, and European NATO countries—is a key opportunity to enforce deterrence and economic resiliency. The ongoing “tech race” may well determine which countries dominate the twenty-first century economically and militarily, and closer research and industrial policy cooperation between likeminded countries is, therefore, crucial to bridge capacities gaps and make sure democratic powers remain at the forefront of cutting-edge technological innovation. Space is becoming increasingly important as a military domain as adversarial nations are developing the capacity to destroy satellites that are essential to the command-and-control capacities of modern armies and navies.¹⁵ In this area, the Indo-Pacific, European, and North American countries are poised to work together and bring various highly sophisticated research and industrial capacities to the table, but developing synergies and deep cooperation between regions that are historically, culturally, and geographically distant will require stronger commitments, as well as trust building.

An effective industrial policy, in response to the changing security realities in the Indo-Pacific and globally, would focus not only on expanding the capacity of NATO and likeminded countries, but also on strategically denying

10 “Allied Leaders Adopt New NATO Defence Industrial Pledge,” NATO, July 10, 2024, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_227685.htm.

11 Jack Detsch, “Ukraine Is Still Outgunned by Russia,” *Foreign Policy*, April 23, 2024, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/04/23/ukraine-war-artillery-shortage-production-military-aid-bill/>.

12 Harry Du, “Is China at the Forefront of Drone Technology?” *China Power Project*, August 25, 2020, <https://chinapower.csis.org/china-drones-unmanned-technology/>; Sam Bresnick, “China Bets Big on Military AI,” *Center for European Policy Analysis*, April 10, 2024, <https://cepa.org/article/china-bets-big-on-military-ai/>.

13 “Participants,” *US Pacific Fleet*, last visited August 13, 2024, <https://www.cpf.navy.mil/RIMPAC/Participants/>.

14 Stuart Lau, “Von Der Leyen Vows to Stop China from Invading Taiwan,” *Politico*, July 18, 2024, <https://www.politico.eu/article/ursula-von-der-leyen-vows-to-stop-china-from-invading-taiwan/>.

15 Unshin Lee Harpley, “Saltzman: China’s Anti-Satellite Weapons Are ‘Compounding Problem We Have to Figure Out,’” *Air & Space Forces Magazine*, July 15, 2024, <https://www.airandspaceforces.com/saltzman-china-anti-satellite-weapons-compounding-problem/>.

adversaries access to highly sophisticated technology and machinery for which Western industries are currently world leading. Developing common approaches to sanctions, export controls, investment screening, and research security will help prevent regulatory gaps that adversarial nations could exploit and could also make enforcement more effective. This would likely also be a prerequisite for deeper cooperation around critical value chains and technologies, because countries would be reluctant to enter into cooperation in sensitive areas if they do not trust partners to safekeep skills, knowledge, and technologies. That likely means any industrial and research-oriented cooperation will need to be underpinned by intelligence cooperation to make sure there is sufficient common understanding and trust available, and that efforts to prevent unwanted technology leakage are aligned with rapidly evolving risks.

Finally, NATO and South Korea should work to further develop information sharing. At the 2024 NATO Summit, Stoltenberg committed to build “practical cooperation” with South Korea, particularly in the context of the war

against Ukraine, and specifically listed information sharing as an area in which to build.¹⁶ Notably, European NATO countries recently declared China “a decisive enabler” of Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine and, in a July 2024 communiqué, NATO members stated that the actions China has taken with regard to Russia serve to “undercut and reshape the rules-based international order.”¹⁷ These examples provide avenues for building cooperation in other nontraditional security domains that are less controversial for non-member state inclusion—areas in which the IP4, particularly South Korea, already provide expertise via their individual ITPPs.¹⁸

In particular, the growth of NATO and partners’ investment in cybersecurity has led to a push for information sharing and the development of new and improved mechanisms and institutions for communication and collaboration. For example, all four members of the IP4—Australia, Japan, South Korea, and New Zealand—have become members of NATO’s Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence (NATO CCD COE) and participate in cybersecurity research, education, and exercises.¹⁹ Further, NATO recently announced the Integrated Cyber Defence Centre (NICC), which will “inform NATO military commanders on possible threats and vulnerabilities in cyberspace, including privately-owned civilian critical infrastructures necessary to support military activities.”²⁰ This provides key opportunities to build mechanisms for further cooperation and collaboration among NATO countries and South Korea, as well as for public-private collaboration.

Policy recommendations

At this point of undoubtedly positive commitments and undeniable momentum in the NATO-South Korea relationship, it is vital to seize the opportunity to develop further understanding and collaboration. Throughout the project, the Next-Generation Network developed concrete and actionable policy recommendations. These are by



NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg visits the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) and the UN Command in Panmunjom, Republic of Korea, November 2, 2017. | Credit: NATO

16 Eun-Jung Kim, “NATO Seeks to Build Practical Cooperation with S. Korea on Ukraine, Defense Industry: Chief,” Yonhap News Agency, July 8, 2024, <https://en.yna.co.kr/view/AEN20240705009100315>.

17 “Washington Summit Declaration Issued by NATO Heads of State and Government (2024).”

18 Miguel Otero Iglesias and Daniel Fiott, “South Korea-NATO Cybersecurity Cooperation: Learning to Work Together in the Face of Common Threats,” Elcano Royal Institute, October 4, 2023, <https://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/en/analyses/south-korea-nato-cybersecurity-cooperation-learning-to-work-together-in-the-face-of-common-threats/>.

19 “The NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence Is a Multinational and Interdisciplinary Cyber Defence Hub,” NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence, last visited August 13, 2024, <https://ccdcoe.org/>.

20 “Allies Agree New NATO Integrated Cyber Defence Centre,” NATO, July 10, 2024, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_227647.htm.

no means exhaustive; rather, they reflect topics raised by several participants from various backgrounds. Therefore, this publication proposes that the countries should aim to

- institutionalize relationships among NATO, European NATO countries, and South Korea;
- cultivate defense industry collaboration and public-private cooperation;
- expand information sharing and joint exercises;
- increase cybersecurity cooperation; and
- develop joint approaches to economic security.

Institutionalize relationships among NATO, European NATO countries, and South Korea. The engagement of South Korea and other IP4 countries with NATO—and, to a lesser extent, the United States’ engagement—has primarily been driven through top-down talks and summits. While this leader-driven method has brought cooperation to its current stage, its success is due more to the current combination of leaders than to the mechanism. As the United States, South Korea, and European NATO countries face upcoming elections, there is no guarantee that the incoming leaders will share a common understanding of the mutual value of NATO-South Korea cooperation. Further, many leaders hesitate when it comes to large, rapid commitments to formalize these partnerships, particularly when it comes to concerns regarding economic and security retaliation from adversaries or competitors. This can be seen in South Korea’s sensitivity toward antagonizing Russia under the context of increased cooperation between Pyongyang and Moscow, as well as President Emmanuel Macron of France blocking progress toward a Tokyo NATO office, allegedly following complaints from Russia and China.²¹ Therefore, the countries should aim to build toward the institutionalization of cooperation, particularly through incremental, working-level policy initiatives. This has strong potential to weather changes in political leadership in the upcoming year and beyond. For example—and in addition to continuing working-level engagements among defense agencies and combatant commands—NATO could appoint an Indo-Pacific coordinator or other such position

to strengthen coordination between NATO and the IP4.

Cultivate defense industry collaboration and public-private cooperation. In the face of shared concerns about growing geopolitical risks, the Indo-Pacific, European, and North American NATO countries should seize the window of opportunity to develop cooperation and exploit complementarities between their strong industrial bases and research, development, and innovation clusters to step up cooperation along a number of fronts, including industrial policy, research policy, critical technologies, and the work of the intelligence services. The countries should seek to increase their resilience around strategically important value chains and explore the potential for closer cooperation around critical technologies and defense production—e.g., through developing common specifications to increase interoperability of weapons systems and armament. In particular, the countries should work to establish multinational production facilities in North America, Europe, and the Indo-Pacific. A potential first step could be to standardize and maximize mutual cooperation for production of 155-millimeter shells to increase interoperability and efficiency, as the allies face a severe lack of artillery ammunition in defending against Russia’s war of aggression.²²

Expand information sharing and joint exercises. Following the successful expansion of the RIMPAC exercise, further inclusion of partners in both military and tabletop exercises is key to building resiliency and contingency planning. A key avenue for this cooperation—beyond continued inclusion in RIMPAC—is to further utilize the United Nations Command (UNC), a key component of security on the Korean peninsula, with officers from various NATO countries already assigned to the UNC staff and participating in UNC activities. Another avenue for building cooperation—particularly when it comes to discussions of the South Korean Nuclear Consultative Group and lessons to be learned from NATO—would be to invite the IP4 countries as observers to the NATO Steadfast Noon exercise.²³ This annual exercise is crucial, as it is designed to enhance interoperability, communication, and readiness

21 Tong-Hyung Kim and Jim Heintz, “What’s Known, and Not Known, about the Partnership Agreement Signed by Russia and North Korea,” Associated Press, June 20, 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/russia-north-korea-putin-kim-agreement-7221909867dbb999de8adb23604e3c79>; Stuart Lau and Laura Kayali, “Macron Blocks NATO Outpost in Japan amid Chinese Complaints,” Politico, July 8, 2023, <https://www.politico.eu/article/emmanuel-macron-block-nato-outpost-japan-china-complaints/>.

22 Jack Detsch, “Ukraine Is Still Outgunned by Russia,” Foreign Policy, April 23, 2024, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2024/04/23/ukraine-war-artillery-shortage-production-military-aid-bill/>.

23 “Washington Declaration,” White House, April 26, 2023, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/04/26/washington-declaration-2/>.

among the NATO member states, and to demonstrate that NATO's "nuclear capability is to preserve peace, prevent coercion and deter aggression."²⁴ As Stoltenberg stated, "[The] exercise will help to ensure the credibility, effectiveness and security of our nuclear deterrent. It sends a clear message that NATO will protect and defend all Allies."²⁵

Further, the countries should create information-sharing working groups at several levels—including the under secretary of defense, combatant commands, and embassies—to discuss security concerns, as well as the increasing ties between North Korea and Russia and between Russia and China. This could be further implemented through regular visits or even exchanges of additional liaison officers focused on tracking and countering authoritarian adversaries' cooperation.

Increase cybersecurity cooperation. Particularly when facing the growing threat posed by North Korea's malign cyberoperations, cybersecurity cooperation is a clear area of mutual interest among European countries and South Korea, and is ideal for further cooperation with the IP4. For example, the EU-ROK (Republic of Korea) Digital Partnership emphasizes cybersecurity capacity building for third countries.²⁶ In this regard, European NATO countries, the United States, and South Korea can cooperate to help build cybersecurity capacity in third countries by creating a Joint Cyber Cooperation Working Group (CCWG) focused on countering North Korea. Through this CCWG, the countries can increase cybersecurity capability building, as well as information sharing, among members to reduce the common threat of North Korean cyberattacks.

As to the potential third countries, Southeast Asia is particularly significant as North Korea has intensified its cyber operations in the region, exploiting emerging economies and the lack of robust cybersecurity institutions. Incidents like the 2016 Bangladesh Bank

heist underscore the need for a shared understanding among Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries to counter Pyongyang's global cybercrime.²⁷ There is existing cybersecurity engagement between the United States and ASEAN, specifically through the US-ASEAN Cyber Policy Dialogue.²⁸ The United States should assist in further developing European countries' and South Korea's digital partnerships with ASEAN by leveraging these existing cybersecurity frameworks. Inviting NATO and South Korea to this and similar dialogues would let the countries begin to discuss North Korea and other malign actor's cyberoperations in Southeast Asia with ASEAN countries and with implementable action channels through the CCWG.

Develop joint approaches to economic security. Forging a closer alliance on economic security matters among likeminded Indo-Pacific countries, the United States, and European NATO countries is more necessary now than ever. Alongside trade, the Trans-Pacific partnerships could also provide the central linchpin for exchanges and cooperation around defense industries and critical technologies. The Transatlantic Trade and Technology Council (TTC) between the United States and the European Union has proven to be a fruitful way to initialize exchanges, and could provide a useful blueprint for institutionalizing efforts to deepen economic ties—including, crucially, going beyond traditional free-trade discussions and related topics to also encompass matters pertaining to critical technologies, data transfers, supply-chain vulnerabilities, and other topics on the top of the economic security agenda.

Similarly, likeminded countries could benefit from discussion and common understanding on how to best address various economic practices of certain third countries, including substantial public subsidies for key industries. Further, while the reappearance of more active industrial policy is now widely seen as necessary in response to

24 "U.S. B-52 Bomber Supports NATO Exercise Steadfast Noon in Transatlantic Mission," NATO Allied Command Transformation, October 26, 2023, https://ac.nato.int/archive/2023/US_B52_BTf_NATO; "Washington Summit Declaration Issued by NATO Heads of State and Government (2024)."

25 "NATO Holds Long-Planned Annual Nuclear Exercise," NATO, October 17, 2023, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_219443.htm.

26 "Korea and the EU Launch the ROK-EU Digital Partnership," Republic of Korea Ministry of Science and ICT, November 28, 2022, <https://www.msit.go.kr/eng/bbs/view.do?sCode=eng&mld=4&mPid=2&pageIndex=&bbsSeqNo=42&nttSeqNo=759&searchOpt=ALL&searchTxt=>

27 Joshua Hammer, "The Billion-Dollar Bank Job," New York Times, May 3, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/05/03/magazine/money-issue-bangladesh-billion-dollar-bank-heist.html>. The 2016 Bangladesh Bank heist was an attempt by the Lazarus Group—an organization strongly believed to be run by North Korea—to fraudulently transfer nearly \$1 billion from Bangladesh's Central Bank.

28 "Co-Chairs' Statement on the Inaugural ASEAN-U.S. Cyber Policy Dialogue," US Department of State, October 3, 2019, <https://www.state.gov/co-chairs-statement-on-the-inaugural-asean-u-s-cyber-policy-dialogue/>.

the practices of China in particular, it will run the risk of unleashing strong protectionist tendencies, and could lead to harmful subsidy race dynamics and undermine trust. Likeminded democracies in NATO and the Indo-Pacific would, therefore, benefit from ongoing discussions and a common understanding of which value chains are so strategically important that they warrant particular industrial policies. They should also commit to restricting significant industrial policy interventions that would have detrimental consequences for likeminded countries in those areas.

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