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Security & Defence Strategic documents issued by regional & international actors in 2024

LTC Georgios KOUKAKIS

Research Paper no. 116

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LTC (Ret) Georgios KOUKAKIS

March 2025

Disclosure Statement

The opinion expressed in this paper represents the author's personal views and in no way reflects the official position of the Center for International Strategic Analyses (KEDISA) or any other Institute or Organization he is affiliated with.

Heraklion (Crete), 09 March 2025

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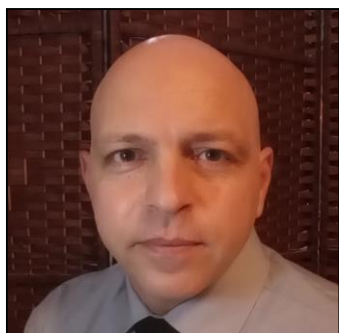
Lieutenant Colonel (Ret) Georgios KOUKAKIS has graduated from the *Hellenic Military Academy* (2002), the *Hellenic Army War College* (2020) and the *Hellenic Supreme Joint War College* (2023). He retired in 2024 on his own initiative, after serving for 22 years as a Leader and Staff officer in several Special Forces and Infantry Units, and as an Instructor in the Hellenic Airborne School and the Hellenic Infantry School.

He holds a Master of Arts in '*Governance, Development and Security in the Mediterranean*' from the Department of Mediterranean Studies of the University of the Aegean (Rhodes, Greece) –having graduated 1st among his Class with his dissertation focusing on the prospects of establishing a *National Security Council* (NSC) in the Hellenic Republic (Greece)– and an Adult Instructor of the Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning Center (CE-LLC) of the University of the Aegean (Rhodes, Greece).

He is also a Senior Analyst in the *Center for International Strategic Analyses* (KEDISA), a Research Associate of *HERMES Institute of International Affairs, Security & Geoeconomy* (I.I.A.S.GE.) and a member of the *Hellenic Institute of Strategic Studies* (HEL.I.S.S.), *ALLILONnet* the Global Network of Greeks and Friends of Greece for Solidarity in the Professional Field and the *Mercury Negotiation Academy* (MNA). He has participated as a speaker in several seminars and conferences regarding international relations in the fields of foreign policy, security and defense.

Many of his articles and research papers have been published in the '*Global Security and Intelligence Notes*' (GSIN) and the 'South and South East Asia Security Research Centre' (SSEASRC) Research Notes of the Buckingham Centre of Security & Intelligence Studies (BUCSIS), the '*HAPSc Policy Briefs*' Journal of the Hellenic Association of Political Scientists, the '*NRDC-GR Herald*' Journal of NRDC-GR, the '*Military Review*' Journal of the Hellenic Army General Staff (HAGS), the '*Cultural Diplomacy Journal*' of the Hellenic Institute of Cultural Diplomacy (HICD).

He currently serves as the Academic Head of the educational programmes (in Greek) '**Security Studies in the Mediterranean (BASIC)**' and '**Getting to know Security Studies through the work of Thucydides**' of the Continuing Education and Lifelong Learning Center of the University of the Aegean.

In addition to his involvement in academic research regarding international relations, Georgios is a columnist in a number of foreign affairs, geopolitics and international affairs websites such as '*Foreign Affairs - The Hellenic Edition*', '*Policy Journal*', '*Geopolitics & Daily News*', '*HuffPost Greece*', '*Liberal', 'Infognomon Politics', 'LEP'* and *'Active News'*.

He is the co-author of the book (In Greek) '**National Security: Myths and Reality**' that was published in April 2023, the author of the book '**Armed Conflict & National Security in the 21st century**' that was published in January 2025,

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Abstract

The research paper reviews several security & defence documents of strategic nature that were published in 2024 by state and non-state actors such as the USA, the EU, Spain, Australia, Sweden and FRONTEX. Its purpose is to provide a brief overview of the content of these documents in order to highlight the actors' goals and intentions, and identify the emerging trends of the contemporary security environment. Moreover, it aims to underline the essential role of strategy in addressing security issues, thus contributing to the establishment of a security culture among the academic community. The information provided about each document includes the institutional framework in which it was published, in addition to its structure and main key points, while the paper in concluded by the author's remarks regarding the conditions of the contemporary security environment and some future considerations.

Key words: USA, EU, Spain, Australia, Sweden, FRONTEX, Strategy, National Security, Maritime Security, Arctic, Indo-Pacific

Abbreviations

ASCA   Advanced Strategic Capabilities Accelerator

AUKUS   Australia, United Kingdom, United States

ADF   Australian Defence Forces

CIRAM   Common Integrated Risk Analysis Model

DIRP   Defence Industrial Readiness Board

DSR   Defence Strategic Review

DOD   Department of Defence

EDTs   Emerging and Disruptive Technologies

FRONTEX   European Border and Coast Guard Agency (The name comes from the French term '*frontières extérieures*' which means '*external borders*')

HR/VP   European Commission and the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission

EDIS   European Defence Industrial Strategy

EDIP   European Defence Industry Programme

EDPCI   European Defence Projects of Common Interest

EDTIB   European Defence Technological and Industrial Base

EMSM   European Military Sales Mechanism

EU   European Union

FAST   Fund to Accelerate Defence Supply Chain Transformation

ISR   Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance

MCD   Minister for Civil Defence

MoFA   Ministry for Foreign Affairs

MoD   Ministry of Defence

NDS   National Defense Strategy

NIC   National Intelligence Centre

NMSC   National Maritime Security Council

NSA   National Security Adviser

NSC   National Security Council

NSD   National Security Department

NSS   National Security Strategy

NSAR   National Strategy for the Arctic Region

NATO   North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NSR   Northern Sea Route

PRC   People's Republic of China

S&D   Security & Defence

SRA   Strategic Risk Analysis

SEAP   Structure for European Armament Programme

USSR   Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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1.   Introduction

Monitoring the publication of new official strategic documents of several regional and international actors (states, organizations, alliances, etc.) and understanding their content is of vital importance for every International Relations (IR) analyst, researcher and/or scholar, as it provides an insight to the actors' strategic planning. Thus, it allows a more accurate evaluation of the actors' foreign and domestic policy and the assessment of future implications as far as several policy fields (foreign policy, security & defence, economy, energy, etc.), regions (such as the Arctic, the Indo-Pacific, etc.) and domains (land, sea, air, space, cyberspace, etc.) are concerned.

2.   Basic Terminology

Before proceeding to the presentation of the official strategic documents, it is necessary to clarify some related terms in order to facilitate a deeper understanding of their content and the context in which they are published.

The first term that needs to be clarified is the term **security**, which is related countering *threats/risks* by applying effective –preventive, administrative and recovery– *measures* depending on the nature of the threat/risk. Although security is an extremely broad term, it can be defined as:

> "*[…] the state of being protected or safe from harm, […] the state of being closely watched or guarded, […] the state of being free from anxiety or worry : the state of being or feeling secure".*[1]

It must also be stressed that the difference between threats and risks in international relations is that the term **threat** usually refers to a certain actor that has the *capabilities* and *intention* to harm the security of another actor by exploiting possible vulnerabilities (weaknesses and/or flaws), while the term **risk** usually refers to an *unintentional* condition

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[1]   The Britannica Dictionary. (n.d.). security. https://www.britannica.com/dictionary/security

or *phenomenon* (e.g. climate change, earthquake, economic crisis, etc.) that may harm the security of an actor.[2]
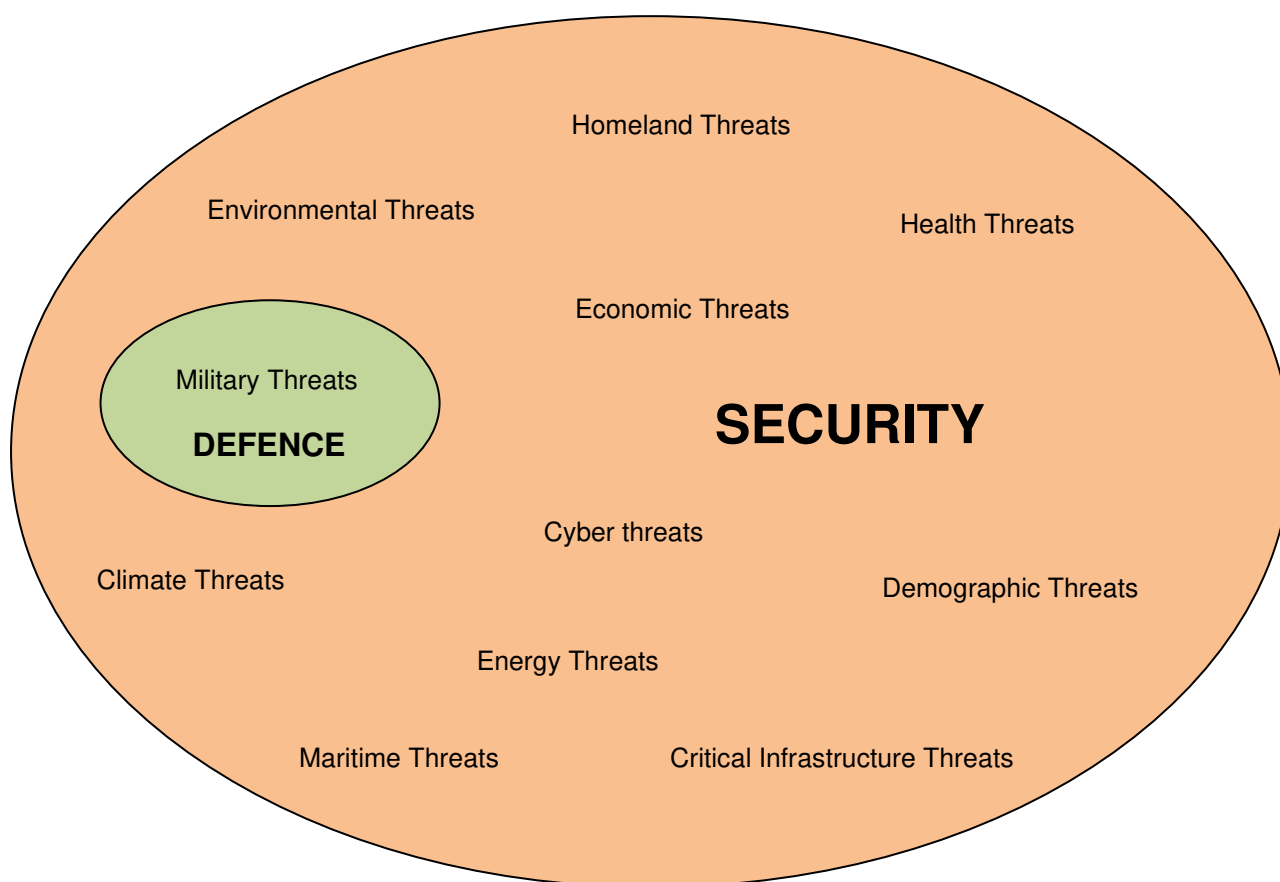
Picture 1: The interconnection of security and defence
Source: Office of the Director of National Intelligence

Taking into consideration the formentioned definitions, it must be noted that **national security** refers to the protection of a state against all threats/risks that may harm its proper functioning, territorial integrity, national infrastructure, political independence or the well-being of its citizens,[3] while **maritime security** refers to the protection of an actor against all threats/risks that origin from the maritime domain and/or may harm its maritime means,

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[2]   Wallander, C. & Keohane R. (2022). Risk, threat, and security institutions. in Keohane O. Robert (Ed.), *Power   and   Governance   in   a   Partially   Globalized   World*,   91. https://dl1.cuni.cz/pluginfile.php/486331/mod_resource/content/0/Robert%20Keohane%20Power%20and%20Governance%20in%20a%20Partially%20Globalized%20World.pdf

[3]   **National security** is comprised of national defence, economic security, internal security (social cohesion, public order, etc.), energy security, health security (public health), food security, cyber security, climate security, environmental security, cultural security, information security, protection of national critical infrastructure, etc. For further information visit: Pikramenos, K. & Koukakis, G. (2023). *National Security: Myths and Reality* [In Greek], 32.

systems and/or infrastructures. Moreover, it needs to be stressed that the term **defence** is a more exclusive term than the term security, as it refers to the protection of an actor against external threats that are usually deliberately directed against the actor by another actor.

Another term that needs to be clarified is the term **foreign policy**, which is defined as the general objectives of a state –influenced by several considerations such as domestic interests, the state's participation in regional or international organizations, the strategies implemented by other actors, etc.– that guide its activities and relationship with other states.[4] The aforementioned general objectives are broken down to several long term goals (political, economic, military, etc.) that are achieved through a specific plan or method entitled **strategy**,[5] which define the necessary *ends* (what is to be achieved?), *means* (what kind of capabilities must be uses in order for the ends to be achieved?), and *ways* (how must the means be used in order for the ends to be achieved?).

In addition to the ends, means and ways, most strategies usually include a **threat/risk analysis**,[6] which is the second component of risk management,[7] having as a purpose to:

> "[…] *identify: (i) threats to organizations (i.e., operations, assets, or individuals) or threats directed through organizations against other organizations or the Nation; (ii) vulnerabilities internal and external to organizations;14 (iii) the harm (i.e., consequences/impact) to organizations that may occur given the potential for threats exploiting vulnerabilities; and (iv) the likelihood that harm will occur*".[8]

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[4] The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica (2025, January 29). *foreign policy*. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. https://www.britannica.com/topic/foreign-policy

[5] The Britannica Dictionary. (n.d.). strategy. https://www.britannica.com/dictionary/strategy

[6] National Institute of Standards and Technology, (2020). Control Baselines for Information Systems and Organizations, 63. https://nvlpubs.nist.gov/nistpubs/SpecialPublications/NIST.SP.800-53B.pdf

[7] Risk management is defined as "*[…] a comprehensive process that requires organizations to: (i) frame risk (i.e., establish the context for risk-based decisions); (ii) assess risk; (iii) respond to risk once determined; and (iv) monitor risk on an ongoing basis using effective organizational communications and a feedback loop for continuous improvement in the risk-related activities of organizations*". National Institute of Standards and Technology. (2011). Managing Information Security Risk: Organization, Mission, and Information System View, 6. https://nvlpubs.nist.gov/nistpubs/Legacy/SP/nistspecialpublication800-39.pdf

[8] Ibid, p. 7.

Finally, **foresight** is defined as the approach that aims at investigating the mid-term and long-term future through a systematic, participatory and interdisciplinary way, by the use of methods that usually involve the processing of alternative future scenarios. It aims at the proper preparation to help the actor address challenges, risks or even opportunities, and in governmental level contributes to the enhancement of a country's resilience through the definition of respective policies that emphasize on adaptability and sustainable development.[9]

As far as **strategic foresight** is concerned, the EU stresses that it is not a method of predicting the future but exploring different aspects of it– through several techniques such as horizon scanning, megatrends analysis, scenario planning and visioning– in order to spot opportunities and challenges, and help decision makers take all the necessary measures, as it:

> "*Anticipates trends, risks, emerging issues, and their potential implications and opportunities in order to draw useful insights for strategic planning, policy-making and preparedness. Informs the design of new Commission initiatives and the review of existing policies in line with the revamped Commission Better Regulation toolbox*".[10]

3.   The Arctic Strategy of the US Department of Defence

The *Arctic Strategy* is a strategic document that was published by the *Department of Defence* (DOD) of the United States on **22 July 2024**.[11] Its institutional framework, content, some key points that need to be stressed as far as its assessed impact on the conditions of the strategic environment and several future considerations regarding the reaction of other actors, are mentioned in the following paragraphs.

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[9]   Special Secretariat of Foresight. (n.d.). Foresight. https://foresight.gov.gr/en/special-secretariat/#foresight
[10]   European Commission. (n.d.). Strategic foresight. https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/strategic-planning/strategic-foresight_en
[11]   U.S. Department of Defence. (2024, July 22). DoD Announces Publication of 2024 Arctic Strategy [Press Release]. https://www.defense.gov/News/Releases/Release/Article/3846206/dod-announces-publication-of-2024-arctic-strategy/#:~:text=The%202024%20DOD%20Arctic%20Strategy,vital%20national%20interests%20are%20safeguarded.

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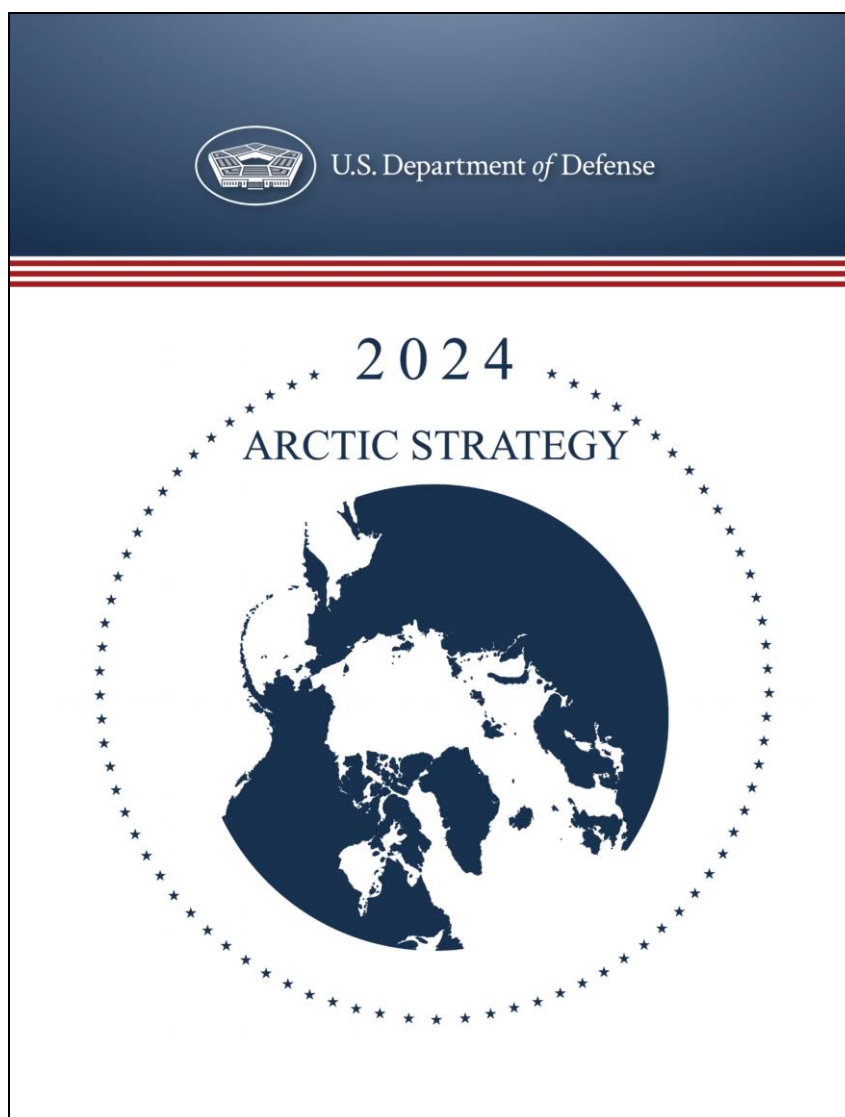
Picture 2: The 2024 Arctic Strategy of the US DOD

Source: https://media.defense.gov/2024/Jul/22/2003507411/-1/-1/0/DOD-ARCTIC-STRATEGY-2024.PDF

3.1   Institutional framework

The *2024 Arctic Strategy* is an unclassified document of the U.S. Department of Defence (DOD) that is based upon the *2022 National Security Strategy* (NSS),[12] the *2022 National Defense Strategy* (NDS),[13] and the *2022 National Strategy for the Arctic Region*

[12] Koukakis, G. (2022). The National Security Strategy of the USA: Background, Recent Developments and Future Considerations Regarding the International Security Environment. *HAPSc Policy Briefs Series*, 3(2), 122–132. https://doi.org/10.12681/hapscpbs.33792

[13] Κουκάκης, Γ. (2022, Δεκέμβριος 01). Η νέα Στρατηγική Εθνικής Άμυνας των ΗΠΑ. *Foreign Affairs-The Hellenic   Edition*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/373167298_E_nea_Strategike_Ethnikes_Amynas_ton_EPA_Ti_pr oblepei_gia_ten_chrese_pyrenikon_oplon_kai_pyraulikon_systematon

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(NSAR) of the United States,[14] having as a goal to ensure the security and stability of the Arctic region. It must also be stressed that the first Arctic Strategy was published by the DOD in *2019*, while the importance of the Arctic is highlighted in the following statement of the Deputy Secretary of Defense:

> "*The Arctic region is undergoing rapid change, both strategically and physically. The People's Republic of China (PRC), which remains DOD's pacing challenge, seeks increasing access and influence in the Arctic, while Russia remains an acute threat in the region despite its losses in Ukraine. Increasingly, these two competitors are collaborating in the Arctic with implications for the security of the United States and our Allies and partners. At the same time, Finland and Sweden's historic decision to join NATO brings all like-minded Arctic states into the NATO Alliance and presents new opportunities for collaboration and cooperation. All of this is underscored by the impact of climate change on the Arctic, which is warming at least three times faster than the rest of the world and increasingly opening to more human activity*".[15]

3.2 Content of the document

The *2024 Arctic Strategy* is an **18 pages** long document, comprising the following parts:

i.   *Executive Summary* (page 1).

ii.   *U.S. Defence Interests in the Arctic* (page 2).

iii. *Strategic Environment* (pages 3-6).

iv.   *Defence Approach to Managing New Challenges* (pages 7-17).

v.   *Conclusion* (page 18).

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[14] U.S. Department of State. (2022). National Strategy for the Arctic Region (NSAR). https://2021-2025.state.gov/national-strategy-for-the-arctic-region-nsar/
[15] U.S. Department of Defence. (2024, July 22). Ibid.

June 2024 | Approved for public release NDRO-2024-004

Picture 3: Graphic of the Arctic region

Source: https://media.defense.gov/2024/Jul/22/2003507411/-1/-1/0/DOD-ARCTIC-STRATEGY-2024.PDF

3.3 Key points of the document

Some of the keys points of the strategic document regarding its content are the following:

i.   The <u>strategic importance</u> of the Arctic stems from the fact that *Alaska* hosts many U.S. defense infrastructure and is the 'first line' of the US defence, the Northern part of the Arctic is used by the US to project military force to the Indo-Pacific, the Arctic is home of several NATO allies such as Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden thus contributing to the collective defence of Alliance, and that many maritime choke points are located in the Arctic.

ii.   As far as the <u>strategic environment</u> is concerned, the document notes that *China* is increasing its activities in the Arctic in an effort to shift its governance in its favour, while *Russia* has characterised the Arctic as the second most important region after its near abroad (former USSR states) collaborating with China in several areas.

iii.   <u>Climate change</u> is having a great impact on the Arctic, affecting its defence infrastructure and gradually creating new maritime routes, thus changing the balance of power.

iv.   The 3 <u>lines of effort</u> that the DOD will implement in order to improve its monitoring and response to Arctic threats, are the following:

    1.   <u>Enhance the Joint Force's Arctic capabilities</u>, focusing on:

      ✓   All-Domain Awareness and Missile Warning.
      ✓   Communications and Data Architecture.
      ✓   Arctic Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) Capabilities.
      ✓   Sensing, Modeling, and Forecasting.
      ✓   Infrastructure.
      ✓   Cold Weather Equipment and Mobility.

    2.   <u>Engage with our Allies and partners</u>, focusing on:

    ✓   NATO.

    ✓   Arctic Fora and Institutions.

    ✓   Special Operations Forces.

    ✓   Total Force (Reserve components & National Guard).

    ✓   Indigenous and Alaska Native Tribes and Communities.

    ✓   Federal Interagency Partnerships.

    ✓   Arctic Literacy.

    ✓   Arctic Research.

3.   <u>Exercise presence in the Arctic</u>, focusing on:

    ✓   Service-specific, Joint, Interagency, and Combined Exercises.

    ✓   Arctic Operations.

    ✓   Training.

    ✓   Defending the Stable and Open International System.

4.   The European Defence Industrial Strategy of the EU

The *European Defence Industrial Strategy (EDIS)* of the EU is a strategic document that was published jointly by the European Commission and the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission (HR/VP) on **5 March 2024**.[16] Its institutional framework, content, some key points that need to be stressed as far as its assessed impact on the conditions of the strategic environment and several future considerations regarding the reaction of other actors, are mentioned in the following paragraphs.

4.1 Institutional framework

The 2024 EDIS is the first strategic document of the EU that is related to the Defence Industry, and it was issued in the context of the EU's *Strategic Compass* –the

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[16] European Commission. (2024, March 05). EDIS Joint Communication. https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/edis-joint-communication_en

third Security Strategy of the EU–[17] in an effort to enhance its defence capabilities. It must also be stressed that in addition to EDIS, the EU issued the *European Defence Industry Programme* (EDIP), a regulation that aims to facilitate the implementation of EDIS (**Picture 5**).[18]
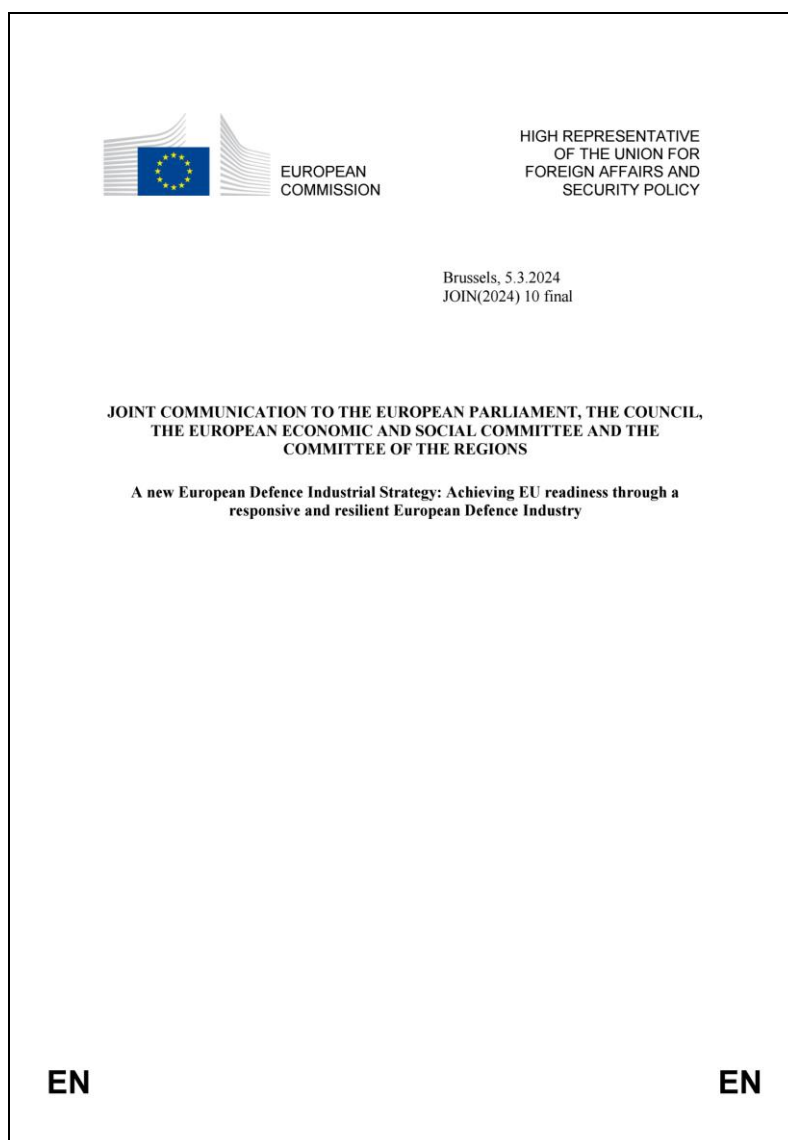
Picture 4: The European Defence Industrial Strategy

Source: https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/document/download/643c4a00-0da9-4768-83cd-a5628f5c3063_en?filename=EDIS%20Joint%20Communication.pdf

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[17] Koukakis, G. (2024). The evolution of the European Union Security Strategy: Towards the establishment of a European Army? [Research Paper No.105]. *Center for International Strategic Analyses*. https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.34521.12648
[18] European Commission. (n.d.). The European Defence Industry Programme at a glance. https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/eu-defence-industry/edip-future-defence_en

Picture 5: Factsheet of the EU regarding the EDIP

Source: https://defence-industry-space.ec.europa.eu/document/download/638c4482-0715-4aef-ac86-6529ce2dfd4b_en?filename=DEFIS_EDIP_factsheet.pdf

4.2 Content of the document

The 2024 EDIS is a **31 pages** long document, comprising the following parts:

i. *Introduction* (pages 1-2).

ii. *Achieving Defence Readiness through a more responsive and resilient European Defence Industry* (pages 2-7).

iii. *Leveraging Readiness through investment: More, Better, Together, European* (pages 7-16).

iv. *Securing Availability: A responsive EDTIB under circumstances and time horizon* (pages 16-23).

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v.   *Financing the Union's ambition for Defence Industrial Readiness* (pages 23-24).

vi.   *Mainstreaming a Defence Readiness culture, including across EU policies* (pages 24-28).

vii.   *Achieving Readiness and Resilience through Partnerships* (pages 28- 31).

viii.   *Conclusion* (page 31).

4.3   Key points of the document

Some of the keys points of the strategic document regarding its content are the following:

i.   As far as the <u>main goals</u> of EDIS are concerned, they comprise the following:

✓   Help the EU member-states invest more, better, together and European.

✓   Create a more efficient and responsive European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB).

✓   Develop the necessary financial means

✓   Establish a defence readiness culture.

✓   Leverage partnerships.

ii.   The 2024 EDIS also stresses that despite the fact that *defence readiness* is an imperative capacity that requires a strong, responsive and innovative EDTIB, it is underdeveloped due to the lack of cooperative investment.

iii.   The EU must enhance its support to Ukraine, in order to facilitate its fight against Russia.

iv.   The EU must change its mindset from '*emergency response*' to '*readiness*'.

v.   The EU will establish several instruments, tools and institutions in order to achieve the goals of EDIS, such as the:

- ✓   European Defence Industry Programme (EDIP).
- ✓   Defence Industrial Readiness Board (DIRP).
- ✓   European Defence Projects of Common Interest (EDPCI).
- ✓   Structure for European Armament Programme (SEAP).
- ✓   Fund to Accelerate Defence Supply Chain Transformation (FAST).
- ✓   European Military Sales Mechanism (EMSM).

vi.   The EU has also defined in EDIS specific deadlines for the following objectives:

- ✓   The value of *intra-EU defence trade* should represent at least *35%* of the value of the EU defence market by *2030*.
- ✓   Member States should procure at least *40%* of *defence equipment* in a collaborative manner by *2030*.
- ✓   Member-states should devote at least *50%* of their *defence procurement* budget to procurement from the EDTIB by *2030*.
- ✓   Member-states should devote at least *60%* of their *defence procurement* budget to procurement from the EDTIB by *2035*.

5.   The National Strategy for Maritime Security of Spain

The *National Strategy for Maritime Security (NSMS)* of Spain is a strategic document that was published by the Ministry of the Presidency on **March 2024**.[19] Its institutional framework, content, some key points that need to be stressed as far as its assessed impact on the conditions of the strategic environment and several future considerations regarding the reaction of other actors, are mentioned in the following paragraphs.

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[19] Ministry of the Presidency/ Justice and Relations with the Courts. (2024). National Strategy for Maritime Security [Official Document]. https://cpage.mpr.gob.es/producto/national-strategy-for-maritime-security/

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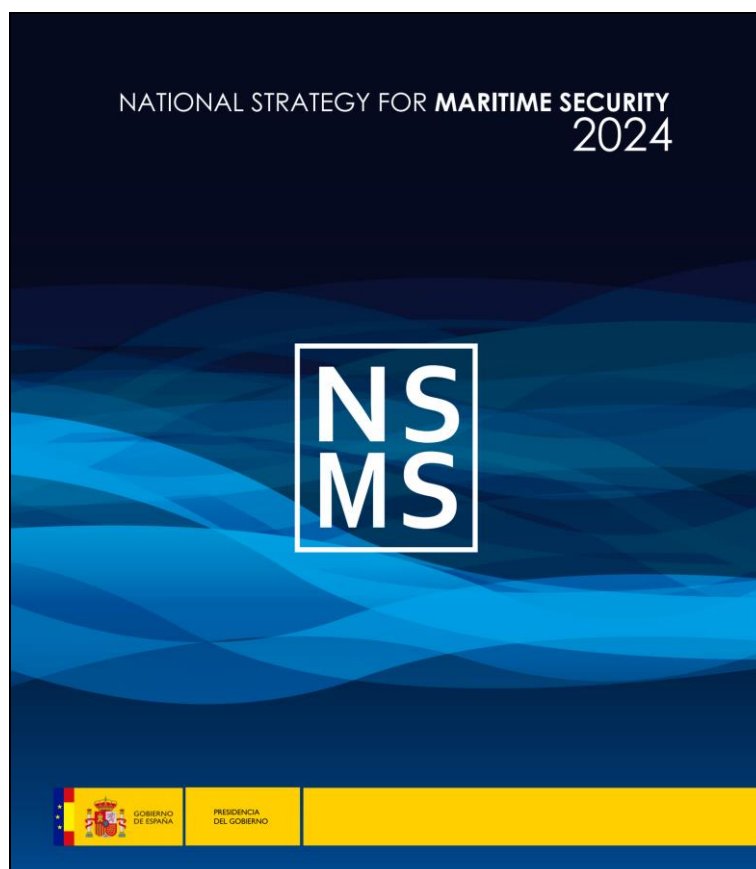
Picture 6: The 2024 National Strategy for Maritime Security of Spain

Source: https://www.dsn.gob.es/sites/default/files/2025-01/Accesible%20ENSM2024%20EN_0.pdf

5.1 Institutional framework

The 2024 MSMS is an unclassified document that was developed by the *National Maritime Security Council* (NMSC) –which is a subordinate body of the Spanish National Security Council (NSC)– and coordinated by *Department of National Security* (DNS) of the Office of the Presidency of the Government of Spain, in collaboration with a number of related Ministries, the *National Intelligence Centre* (NIC), the Spanish Autonomous Communities and Autonomous Cities, and several maritime experts. As far as the significance of the 2024 NSMS is concerned, the President of the Government of Spain notes in the foreword that:

"*We are living in difficult times. This Strategy is being adopted at a moment when crises have become the new normal. In addition to piracy, illicit trafficking, and the loss of marine biodiversity, we are*

also still dealing with the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic and with a global supply chain that has been placed under considerable strain by the Russian Federation's illegal invasion of Ukraine. In this hugely complex context, the effects of heightened geostrategic competition are finding their way into the maritime environment and to the seabed. The current state of affairs demands a policy to protect trade routes, coastal and seabed infrastructure, ocean resources, and the marine environment and marine biodiversity. To this end, the 2024 National Strategy for Maritime Security offers a framework for collective improvement in which there is room for both the public authorities and for the private sector to advance full steam ahead in protecting Spain's maritime interests, to improve Spain's maritime capabilities and, in this way, to enhance the safety of the seas".

5.2   Content of the document

The 2024 NSMS is a **102 pages** long document, comprising the following parts:

i.   *Letter from the President of the Government* (page 7).

ii.   *Executive Summary* (pages 12-13).

iii.   *Introduction* (pages 16-17).

iv.   *Chapter 1 – Maritime Security: a strategic challenge for Spain* (pages 20-35).

v.   *Chapter 2 – Risks and Threats to maritime security* (pages 38-47).

vi.   *Chapter 3 - Goals* (pages 50-61).

vii.   *Chapter 4 – Maritime security in the context of National Security* (pages 64-65).

viii.   *Appendix* -   List of measures for the achievement of the three strategic goals (pages 68-102).

5.3   Key points of the document

Some of the keys points of the strategic document regarding its content are the following:

i.   The 2024 NSMS is based on the directions defined in the 2021 National Security Strategy (NSS) of Spain, emphasizing on:

- ✓   More *advance planning*,
- ✓   More *integration*, and
- ✓   More *resilience*.

ii.   Spain defines itself as a European, Mediterranean, and Atlantic maritime country with a global outlook, considering its sea ports and terminals as its main national assets.

iii.   Maritime security is also interconnected to energy security and economic security, as many submarine cables and oil pipelines pass through maritime spaces in addition to the fact that maritime routes, marine resources and coastal tourism are vital factors for the economy.

iv.   Spain's maritime interests –which according to the document extend beyond its jurisdictional waters to all the seas and oceans– comprise the following:

- ✓   Respect for and stability of our maritime territorial integrity.
- ✓   Compliance with national legislation and international law in the maritime spaces under our sovereignty, sovereign rights and jurisdiction.
- ✓   Human life at sea.
- ✓   Freedom and safety of navigation.
- ✓   The blue economy.
- ✓   Maritime trade and transport.
- ✓   The shipping industry and other maritime industries.

✓ Vessels of national interest and their crews (merchant, fishing and pleasure fleets).

✓ Ports and maritime infrastructure, including off-shore installations, oil pipelines, and submarine pipelines and cables, as well as critical infrastructure and infrastructure of relevance to maritime security located on the coast or on the seabed.

✓ The national tax and customs system.

✓ Living and non-living marine resources.

✓ The marine and coastal environment.

✓ Underwater cultural heritage.

✓ Maritime culture.

v. Maritime security is affected by the following <u>factors</u>:

✓ Geopolitics.

✓ Global economy.

✓ Technological advancement.

✓ The environmental conditions.

vi. The 2024 NSMS provides the following <u>definition</u> of maritime security:

"*Maritime security can be defined as the combination of preventive and response measures aimed both at protecting the maritime environment from threats and intentional illegal acts, and at limiting the impact of natural hazards, accidents, and of harm to the environment, economic activities and people*".

vii. The Spanish maritime spaces are <u>prioritized</u> as follows:

✓ Maritime spaces of *preferential interest*:

- Jurisdictional

- Continental shelf and extended continental shelf;

- Sea lines of communication connecting the Spanish peninsula to Spain's islands, archipelagos and other territories.

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✓   Maritime spaces of *interest*:

-     Mediterranean Sea.
-     Atlantic Margin, West Africa and the Gulf of Guinea
-     The Indo-Pacific.
-     International fishing grounds in which Spanish fishing vessels operate.

✓   *Other* maritime spaces of interest:

-     The Pacific.
-     Antarctica.
-     The Arctic.

viii.   The <u>risks and threats</u> identified in the 2024 NSMS include the following:

✓   Hybrid strategies.

✓   Threats against national interests in the maritime sphere.

✓   Illicit maritime trafficking and cross-border (or transnational) crime.

✓   Risks to the good environmental status of the marine environment, including its living resources, as well as the coastal impacts of climate change.

ix.   The three <u>strategic goals</u> defined in the 2024 NSMS are the following

✓   Strategic Goal 1: To protect Spain's maritime *interests* at sea and from the sea.

✓   Strategic Goal 2: To improve Spain's maritime *capabilities*.

✓   Strategic Goal 3: To enhance the *safety* of the seas.

x.   The <u>measures</u> for the achievement of the 3 strategic goals comprise:

✓   7 actions (No. 1-7) for the 1st Strategic Goal.

✓   8 actions (No. 8-15) for the 2nd Strategic Goal.

✓   7 actions (No. 16-22) for the 3rd Strategic Goal.

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xi.   The <u>National Security System</u> that is responsible for the maritime security of Spain comprises the following bodies:

    ✓   National Security Council (NSC).

    ✓   The Situation Committee.

    ✓   The National Maritime Security Council (NMSC).

    ✓   The Unit for Information and Analysis of Risks and Threats to Maritime Security of the NMSC.

    ✓   National Security Department (NSD) of the Office of the Presidency of the Government.

6.   The National Defence Strategy of Australia

The *National Defence Strategy (NDS)* of Australia is a strategic document that was published by the Albanese Government on **17 April 2024**.[20] Its institutional framework, content, some key points that need to be stressed as far as its assessed impact on the conditions of the strategic environment and several future considerations regarding the reaction of other actors, are mentioned in the following paragraphs. As far as the importance of the 2024 NDS is concerned, the Deputy Prime Minister of Australia stated that:

> "*Australia faces the most complex and challenging strategic environment since the Second World War. It demands a coordinated, whole-of-government and whole-of-nation approach to Australia's defence. This new approach is founded on National Defence – a concept that harnesses all arms of Australia's national power to achieve an integrated approach to our security. The National Defence Strategy sees a Strategy of Denial become the cornerstone of Defence planning. This approach guides Defence's contribution to*

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[20] Australian Government. (2024, April 17). 2024 National Defence Strategy [Press Release]. https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/media-releases/2024-04-17/2024-national-defence-strategy

National Defence and spans all domains – maritime, land, air, space and cyber".[21]

6.1 Institutional framework

The 2024 NDS is an unclassified document that was developed by the *Department of Defence* –mostly known as 'Defence'– and issued in the context of the *Defence Strategic Review* (DSR) of Australia that was released on **24 April 2023**.[22] It must also be stressed that in addition to EDIS, the Albanese Government also issued the 2024 *Integrated Investment Program* (IIP), in order to facilitate the implementation of NDS (**Picture 7**).

Picture 7: The 2024 National Defence Strategy & Integrated Investment Program of Australia
Source: https://www.defence.gov.au/about/strategic-planning/2024-national-defence-strategy-2024-integrated-investment-program

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[21] Australian Government. (2024, April 17). 2024 National Defence Strategy. https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/media-releases/2024-04-17/2024-national-defence-strategy
[22] Australian Government. (2023, April 23). Release of the Defence Strategic Review. https://www.minister.defence.gov.au/media-releases/2023-04-24/release-defence-strategic-review

6.2 Content of the document

The 2024 NDS of Australia is an **73 pages** long document, comprising the following parts:

i. *Foreword* (page 5).

ii. *Chapter 1: Strategic Environment* (page 11-16).

iii. *Chapter 2: National Defence* (page 17-20).

iv. *Chapter 3: Defence Strategy* (page 21-26).

v. *Chapter 4: Defence Force Structure, Posture and Bases* (page 27-32).

vi. *Chapter 5: People* (page 33-36).

vii. *Chapter 6: Capability Investment Priorities* (page 37-44).

viii. *Chapter 7: International Partnerships* (page 45-54).

ix. *Chapter 8: Defence Industry and Acquisition Reform* (page 55-62).

x. *Chapter 9: Defence Innovation, Science and Technology* (page 63-66).

xi. *Chapter 10: Resourcing* (page 67-70).

xii. *Chapter 11: Reform Agenda* (page 71-73).

6.3 Key points of the document

Some of the keys points of the strategic document regarding its content are the following:

i. The <u>aim</u> of the 2024 NDS and the 2024 IIP is to make sure that the Australian Defence Forces (ADF) are able to:

✓ *Defend* Australia and its immediate region,

✓ *Deter* through denial any potential adversary's attempt to project power against Australia through its northern approaches,

✓ Protect Australia's *economic connection* to its region and the world,

✓ Contribute with Australia's partners to the *collective security* of the Indo-Pacific.

✓ Contribute with Austrlia's partners to the maintenance of the *global rules-based order*.

ii. The main characteristics of the contemporary <u>strategic environment</u> are the following:

✓ Strategic competition in the *Indo-Pacific*, especially between USA and China..

✓ The deepening of the engagement of the *USA* in the Indo-Pacific.

✓ The presence of many *compounding security risks*, such as climate change.

✓ The rapid *technological advancement* and *disruption*.

iii. Australia new approach is based on the concept of <u>National Defence</u>, having as a goal to achieve:

✓ Integrated statecraft.

✓ National resilience.

✓ Industry resilience.

✓ Supply chain resilience.

✓ Innovation, science and technology.

✓ A workforce and skills base.

✓ A robust National Intelligence Community.

iv. Australia's <u>Strategy of Denial</u> is based on the following 3 objectives:

✓ *Shape* Australia's strategic environment.

✓ *Deter* actions against Australia's interests.

✓ *Respond* with credible military force, when required.

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v. The new <u>structure of ADF</u> is integrated in the following <u>domains</u>:

- ✓ Land.
- ✓ Air.
- ✓ Maritime.
- ✓ Cyberspace.
- ✓ Space.

vi. The ADF's <u>reform</u> comprises they following <u>3 phases</u>:

- ✓ **Present-2025**: *Enhanced Force-in-Being* focusing on immediate enhancements that can be made to the current force.
- ✓ **2026-2030**: *Objective Integrated Force* focusing on the accelerated acquisition of critical capabilities.
- ✓ **2031-beyond**: *Future Integrated Force* focusing on the delivery of an ADF that is fit for purpose across all domains and enablers.

vii. The aforementioned reform aims at the delivery of the following 6 <u>capability effects</u>:

- ✓ Project force.
- ✓ Hold a potential adversary's forces at risk.
- ✓ Protect ADF forces and supporting critical infrastructure in Australia.
- ✓ Sustain protracted combat operations.
- ✓ Maintain persistent situational awareness in Australia's primary area of military interest.
- ✓ Achieve decision advantage.

viii. Taking into consideration that <u>people</u> are ADF's most valuable asset, the 2024 NDS emphasizes on:

- ✓ Recruitment and retention.
- ✓ Future workforce requirements.
- ✓ Enhancing a respective culture.

ix.   The 2024 NDS also stresses the significance of the <u>AUKUS</u> (Australia, United Kingdom, United States) partnership in the context of which will acquire 3+2 conventionally-armed, <u>nuclear-powered submarines</u> by **2030** and build its own by **2040**.

xi.   As far as <u>international partnerships</u> are concerned, the 2024 NDS emphasizes on the *Five Eyes* intelligence partnership, the *AUKUS* nuclear partnership, while in regard to Australia's <u>partners</u> the document refers to the USA, New Zealand, ASEAN, Indonesia, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, France, Japan, India, and Canada.

xii.   As far as the <u>Defence Industry</u> is concerned, the 7 <u>priorities</u> defined in the 2024 NDS comprise the following:

- ✓ Maintenance, repair, overhaul and upgrade of ADF *aircraft*.
- ✓ Continuous *naval* shipbuilding and sustainment.
- ✓ Sustainment and enhancement of the *combined-arms* land system.
- ✓ Domestic manufacture of *guided weapons*, *explosive ordnance* and *munitions*.
- ✓ Development and integration of *autonomous systems*.
- ✓ Integration and enhancement of *battlespace awareness* and *management systems*.
- ✓ Test and evaluation, certification and systems *assurance*.

xiii.   In regard to <u>Innovation, science and technology</u>, Australia has established the *Advanced Strategic Capabilities Accelerator* (ASCA) which inter alia focuses on Emerging and Disruptive Technologies (EDTs) and in the context of AUKUS has identified the following <u>key areas</u> to enhance innovation:

- ✓ Technology transfer.
- ✓ Alignment.
- ✓ Engagement.

xiv.   As far as <u>resourcing</u> is concerned, Australia has decide to increase its defence spending to *$100.4 billion* by **2033-2034**, and reform its <u>funding model</u> by:

✓ Creating an *Independent Performance and Project Management Office*.

✓ Establishing a new biannual *Health of the Project Delivery System* report to the Government.

✓ Utilising, once established, a new *Joint Statutory Committee on Defence* to provide greater parliamentary oversight and scrutiny of major projects.

✓ Enforcing the need for *regular independent reviews* of projects.

xv. The overall <u>Defence Reform Agenda</u> of Australia is based on the principles of *simplification*, *workforce optimization* and *digitization*, moves to a biennial NDS cycle, and comprises the following:

✓ Strategic reform.
✓ Enterprise reform.
✓ Budget Process Operational Rules reform.
✓ Information and Communications Technology (ICT) systems reform.
✓ Legislative reform.

7. The National Security Strategy of Sweden

The *National Security Strategy* (NSS) of Sweden is a strategic document that was published by the Prime Minister's Office on **8 July 2024**.[23] Its institutional framework, content, some key points that need to be stressed as far as its assessed impact on the conditions of the strategic environment and several future considerations regarding the reaction of other actors, are mentioned in the following paragraphs.

7.1 Institutional framework

The 2024 NSS is an unclassified document that lies in the responsibilities of Sweden's *National Security Council* (NSC) and *National Security Adviser* (NSA) that were established in 2022, in the context of its national security reform along with the establishment of a *Minister for Civil Defence* (MCD) and the reorganization of the Swedish

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[23] Government Offices of Sweden/Prime Minister's Office. (2024, July 08). National security strategy. https://www.government.se/information-material/2024/07/national-security-strategy/

Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and *Ministry of Defence* (MoD), while the previous NSS was published in 2017. As far as the significance of the 2024 NSS is concerned, the Prime Minister of Sweden notes in his foreword that:

> "*When the Government took office almost two years ago, it was with a clear mandate to tackle Sweden's internal and external security. When our freedom and openness are threatened by hostile powers – within and beyond our national borders – no task is more important. […] There are two obvious threats that affect our choices for Swedish security and freedom. The first is the war. The second is crime.[…] In reality, not being able to address both means having no redress at all. Without a concerted response, Sweden will remain vulnerable […]*".

Picture 8: The 2024 National Security Strategy of Sweden

Source: https://www.government.se/contentassets/dee95d002683482eba019df49db2801f/national-security-strategy_.pdf

7.2 Content of the document

The 2024 NSS of Sweden is a **48 pages** long document,[24] comprising the following parts:

i.   *Foreword by the Prime Minister* (pages 3-5).

ii.   *Summary* (pages 6-7).

iii.   *Central government's most important task is to protect Sweden's freedom, peace and security* (pages 9-10).

iv.   *Our national security interests* (pages 11-12).

v.   *Our strengths and assets* (pages 13-14).

vi.   *Our security situation* (page 15).

vii.   *Global developments and trends* (pages 16-18).

viii. *Actor-driven threats* (pages 19-20).

ix.   *Non-actor-driven threats* (pages 21-22).

x.   *Priorities and guiding principles* (pages 23-24).

xi.   *Focus areas* (pages 25-44).

xii.   *Implementation and follow-up* (page 45).

7.3 Key points of the document

Some of the keys points of the strategic document regarding its content are the following:

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[24] Government Offices of Sweden/Prime Minister's Office. (2024, July 08). National security strategy [Official Document]. https://www.government.se/contentassets/dee95d002683482eba019df49db2801f/national-security-strategy_.pdf

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i.   The <u>vital national security interests</u> of Sweden that are defined in the 2024 NSS comprise the following:

    ✓   Safeguarding Sweden's security, democratic form of governance, freedom, independence, sovereignty and freedom of action.

    ✓   Protecting the lives and health of the Swedish population.

    ✓   Defending Sweden and its Allies against armed attacks

    ✓   Upholding Sweden's territorial integrity.

    ✓   Maintaining critical supplies and the functioning of the Swedish society.

    ✓   Upholding Sweden's fundamental values such as democracy, the rule of law, and human rights and freedoms.

ii.   The <u>strategic security interests</u> of Sweden are gouped in the 2024 NSS on the following 3 focus areas:

    ✓   **Focus Area 1:** A safe and secure Sweden.
    ✓   **Focus Area 2:** A safe, open and cohesive Sweden.
    ✓   **Focus Area 3:** A resilient and competitive Sweden.

iii.   The 2024 NSS stresses that Sweden's two most important memberships are the ones in the <u>EU</u> and <u>NATO</u>. Moreover it refers that Sweden will:

    ✓   Contribute to the defence of <u>Ukraine</u> for as long as it takes.

    ✓   Counteract <u>Russia's</u> aggression & power expansion.

    ✓   Safeguard and develop its <u>bilateral relations</u> with key allies and partners.

    ✓   Ensure the integrity of <u>public institutions</u> and trust in them.

    ✓   Reduce and combat <u>organised crime</u>.

    ✓   Prevent and combat <u>violent extremism</u> & <u>terrorism</u>.

    ✓   Counteract the emergence of <u>parallel social structures</u>.

    ✓   Strengthen the <u>cohesion</u> of Swedish society, the <u>national leadership capability</u> in crisis situations, and the protection of <u>essential public services</u>.

    ✓   Ensure the supply of <u>essential goods</u> and <u>services</u>.

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✓ Strengthen Sweden's <u>economic security</u> and <u>competitiveness</u>.

iv. The document also notes the <u>complexity of the contemporary security environment</u> which makes the distinction between internal and external threats extremely difficult, emphasising on the rise of authoritarian regimes, democratic backsliding, instability in several regions, the rapid technological advancement, and internationalisation, also identifying *actor-driven* (Russia, China, Iran, etc.) and *non-actor-driven* (climate change, pandemics, etc.) threats.

v. The <u>guiding principles</u> defined in the 2024 NSS as far as security is concerned, are the following:

✓ Urgency and pragmatism.
✓ Capacity to act and make decisions under uncertainty.
✓ Robustness and adaptability.
✓ Involvement of the whole of society.
✓ International cooperation.

8. The Strategic Risk Analysis of the FRONTEX

The *Strategic Risk Analysis (SRA)* is a strategic document was published by *FRONTEX* –the European Border and Coast Guard Agency– on **30 September 2024**.[25] Its institutional framework, content, some key points that need to be stressed as far as its assessed impact on the conditions of the strategic environment and several future considerations regarding the reaction of other actors, are mentioned in the following paragraphs.

8.1 Institutional framework

The 2024 SRA is an unclassified <u>strategic foresight</u> document developed using intelligence from national and EU authorities as well as EU partners, international organizations and open sources, in the context of the *Common Integrated Risk Analysis*

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[25] FRONTEX. (2024, September 30). Frontex Releases Strategic Risk Analysis 2024 [Press Release]. https://www.frontex.europa.eu/media-centre/news/news-release/frontex-releases-strategic-risk-analysis-2024-Zjqtoj

Model (CIRAM) and the *Frontex Risk Analysis Network* (FRAN).[26] It must also be stressed that he first SRA was published in **2020**,[27] and the second one in **2022**.[28] As far as the aim of the document is concerned, the SRA according to FRONTEX:

> "[…] *provides a detailed analysis of the multifaceted risks that will shape the future of our borders, including migration, cross-border crime, terrorism, and hybrid threats. It emphasises the need for a proactive and adaptive approach to border management that is based on intelligence-led policing, international cooperation, and technological innovation*".[29]
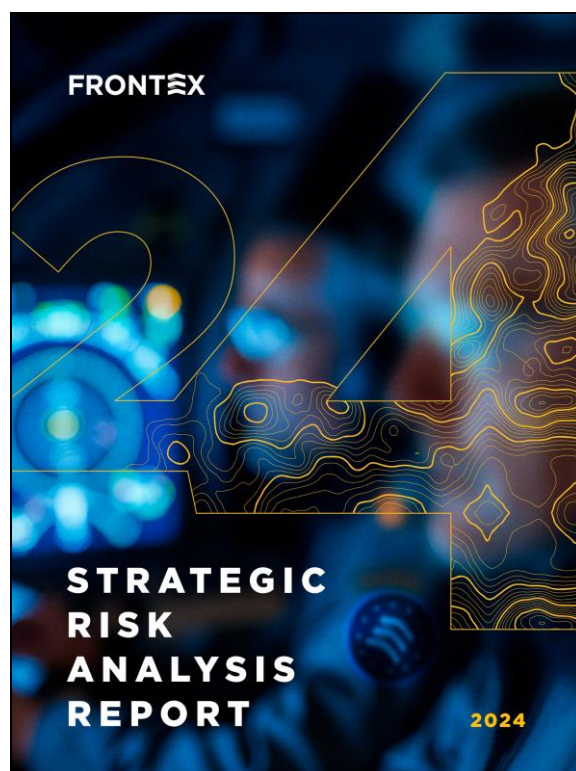
Picture 9: The 2024 Strategic Risk Analysis Report of FRONTEX

Source:https://www.frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/Risk_Analysis/Strategic_Risk_Analysis_2024_Report.pdf

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[26] FRONTEX. (n.d.). Strategic risk analysis. https://www.frontex.europa.eu/what-we-do/monitoring-and-risk-analysis/risk-analysis/strategic-risk-analysis/
[27] FRONTEX. (2022, April 27). Strategic Risk Analysis 2020 [Official Document]. https://www.frontex.europa.eu/publications/strategic-risk-analysis-2020-7hMUZy
[28] FRONTEX. (2022, July 25). Strategic Risk Analysis 2022 [Official Document]. https://www.frontex.europa.eu/publications/strategic-risk-analysis-2022-Kj2kic
[29] FRONTEX. (2024, September 30). Ibid.

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8.2   Content of the document

The 2024 SRA is an **86 pages** long document,[30] comprising the following parts:

i.   *Foreword by the Executive Director* (page 5).

ii.   *Executive Summary* (page 6).

iii.   *Introduction* (pages 9-12).

iv.   *Megatrends implications assessment* (pages 13-30).

v.   *Migration and returns* (pages 31-42).

vi.   *Cross-border crime* (pages 43-55).

vii.   *Terrorism* (pages 56-59).

viii.   *Hybrid Threats* (pages 60-63).

ix.   *Future Scenarios* (pages 64-78).

x.   *Conclusion* (pages 79-81).

xi.   *Endnotes* (pages 82-86).

8.3   Key points of the document

Some of the keys points of the strategic document regarding its content are the following:

i.   As far as the <u>megatrends</u> that will have the most important impact on regional & international security, the 2024 identifies the following:

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[30] Koukakis, G. (2023, March 14). Η Ετήσια Εκτίμηση Απειλής κατά των ΗΠΑ για το 2023. *Foreign Affairs The   Hellenic   Edition*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/373167308_E_Etesia_Ektimese_Apeiles_kata_ton_EPA_gia_to_2 023_O_odegos_tes_exoterikes_politikes_tes_Amerikes_enanti_ton_antipalon_tes

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✓ *Geopolitics & Security*, stressing that human conflict will be the number one threat for humanity and the planet and that everything might be weaponised.

✓ *Growing inequalities*, stressing that they will be the prime cause of societal unrest, stemming from both authoritarian regimes and liberal market economies.

✓ *International governance systems*, stressing that their role will be hindered ongoing geopolitical conflict.

✓ *Expanding influence of the global East & South*, stressing that the world's center of gravity will shift to the East and specifically to the Indo-Pacific.

✓ *Climate change*, stressing that the environmental conditions will most probably continue to worsen as the green transition is an uncertain procedure.

✓ *Environmental degradation & resource scarcity*, stressing that it will become another cause of conflict between actors.

✓ *Economy & Energy*, stressing that an international debt crisis is on the horizon.

✓ *Technological advances*, stressing the huge impact that Artificial Intelligence (AI) will have in many policy fields.

ii. As far as <u>migration</u> is concerned, the 2024 SRA underlines the following:

✓ Reactive policies and domain-specific operational responses will have limited effects on EU-bound migratory & refugee flows in the future, stressing the need for effective *cross-policy domain coordination* and cooperation with *internal & external stakeholders*.

✓ Migratory pressures will most likely increase during the next decade due to the ongoing wars and instability having a long-term impact on several countries, also stressing that the *top 20 source countries* (**Picture 10**) for irregular migration & **migratory routes** to the EU will likely remain the same in the next decade.

✓ Migration will continue to be instrumentalized by <u>Russia</u> and <u>Belarus</u> against the EU.

iii. As far as <u>cross-border crime</u> is concerned, the 2024 SRA emphasises on the following categories:

✓ Migrant smuggling.

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- ✓ Smuggling of illicit & excise goods.
- ✓ Firearms smuggling.
- ✓ Human trafficking.
- ✓ Drug smuggling.
- ✓ Property crime.
- ✓ Document & identity fraud.

1 ›	SYRIA
2 ›	GUINEA
3 ›	UNSPECIFIED SUB-SAHARAN NATIONALS
4 ›	CÔTE D'IVOIRE
5 ›	TUNISIA
6 ›	AFGHANISTAN
7 ›	MOROCCO
8 ›	BANGLADESH
9 ›	EGYPT
10 ›	TÜRKIYE
11 ›	PAKISTAN
12 ›	SENEGAL
13 ›	BURKINA FASO
14 ›	MALI
15 ›	SUDAN
16 ›	ALGERIA
17 ›	CAMEROON
18 ›	PALESTINE^
19 ›	GAMBIA
20 ›	ERITREA

^ This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

Picture 10: The top 20 source countries for irregular migration to the EU

Source:https://www.frontex.europa.eu/assets/Publications/Risk_Analysis/Risk_Analysis/Strategic_Risk_Analysis_2024_Report.pdf

iv.   As far as <u>terrorism</u> is concerned, the 2024 SRA stresses that it will continue to be a major threat for the EU and be used as a tactic to channel a variety of messages or simply as a mean of dismantling the current political or socioeconomic order, identifying *Sahel* as the locus of terrorist violence.

v.   As far as <u>hybrid threats</u> are concerned, the 2024 SRA notes that they remain a recurring challenge, forcing the EU to develop its preparedness and awareness as hybrid interference is not limited to the EU borders but has a global reach and severe implications.

vi.   Finally, the 2024 SRA presents the following 4 <u>future scenarios</u>:

✓   **Best-case scenario**, which is characterised by a major peaceful shift from hostile to peaceful multipolarity and an enhanced level of trust and cooperation between actors.

✓   **Worst-case scenario**, which is characterised by a turbulent geopolitical & security environment that generates new challenges, and lack of cooperation between actors that deteriorates international relations.

✓   **Baseline scenario**, which is characterised by an evolution in the security challenges, a change in the security paradigm and world multipolarity, an increase in the presence of non-state actors, rapid technological changes, increased digitalisation, and a decline in cooperation between actors.

✓   **Hybrid-threat scenario**, which is characterised by an increase in the volume and direction of hybrid threats by hostile strategic actors that instrumentalise migration to exploit democratic vulnerabilities.

9.   Concluding remarks

The first conclusion to be drawn from the context of the strategic documents examined in the present research paper, is the fact that the contemporary security environment is an environment of **polycrises** and **permacrises**,[31] meaning the

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[31]   Koukakis, G. (2024). The Institutional Reform of the Greek National Intelligence Service (NIS) and its First Historical 2023 Annual Report: Threats, Challenges and Future Considerations Regarding the National

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simultaneously existence of a large number of crises of different mature (military, economic, health, food, energy, etc.) that last for a long period of time. Thus, building **resilience** is a vital factor for every state and/or non-state actor, especially as far as supply chain, (national) critical infrastructure and cyberspace is concerned, since they are related to the proper functioning of a state and organization, and the well-being of citizens.

Moreover, the world order is gradually transforming **from a unipolar to a multipolar model**, experiencing increased competition between major actors that aspire to gain more power and expand their sphere of influence, a trend that can be also viewed as a rivalry between **Democracies** and **Autocracies**. Nevertheless, despite the fact that Russia had been imposed several sanctions by the 'West' due to its invasion of Ukraine –a policy that facilitated the deepening of its cooperation **China**–[32] the US foreign policy towards Russia seems to have changed after Donald Trump's re-election as the US President, probably in an effort to counter the expansion of the Chinese influence. In this context, it must also be stressed that the domains of space and cyberspace are expected to be two of the most actively engaged domains by various actors in order to conduct hybrid warfare.

The aforementioned extremely hostile conditions of the contemporary security environment are forcing many state actors that have been keeping a neutral position to 'choose sides' in order to protect their national interests. One of these cases is the simultaneously application of Finland and Sweden to join NATO after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and their final accession –after the initial rejection on behalf of Turkey and Hungary– in **2023** and **2024** respectively.[33]

Another conclusion is the fact that besides the 'traditional' military security threats, the contemporary security environment contains several other internal and external **non-military security threats** such as climate change, economic coercion, cyberattacks, organised crime, terrorism, and the instrumentalisation of migration and energy. This situation has led most state and non-state actors to implement a holistic approach as far

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Security of the Hellenic Republic. *Hermes Institute of International Affairs, Security & Geoeconomy*. https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.35429.58082

[32] CNN World. (2023, March 22). No path to peace: Five key takeaways from Xi and Putin's talks in Moscow. https://edition.cnn.com/2023/03/22/europe/china-xi-russia-putin-talks-five-takeaways-intl-hnk-mic/index.html

[33] Koukakis, G. (2023). Finland's NATO membership and the future of Sweden's candidacy [Research Paper No.92 (In Greek)]. *Center for International Strategic Analyses (KEDISA)*. https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.22751.53920

as (national) security is concerned, focusing their efforts on several non-traditional variants such as social cohesion, cyber security, economic security, environmental security, energy security, maritime security, etc.

As far as 'traditional' security threats are concerned, **Russia** and **China** remain the two most pressing –the first one in terms of its military capability and the second one in terms of the economy– rivals for almost every Western actor. Especially after Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the multiple crises (energy, food, economic, etc.) that followed it, '**hard power**' has again be brought into the spotlight leading most actors to increase their defence spending, enhance their military preparedness, invest more in their industrial base and national logistics, reevaluate their foreign policies and defence strategies emphasizing in strategic autonomy, and promoting maritime security, as it is vital not only for the protection of their territorial integrity but for their economic and commercial development as well.

Moreover, many actors are beginning to invest more in developing new technologies and integrating AI in several policy fields in order to gain an advantage in relation to other actors, allowing them to impose their will and/or influence. Especially as far as AI is concerned, it must be stressed that it is considered to be a crucial factor that will define the future distribution of power, as according to the Russian President **Vladimir Putin**:

> "*Artificial intelligence is the future not only of Russia but of all of mankind […] There are huge opportunities, but also threats that are difficult to foresee today. Whoever becomes the leader in this sphere will become the ruler of the world […]*".[34]

A matter of great concern is also the enhanced presence of several western actors in the **Indo-Pacific region**, an action that may provoke the reaction of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Indo-Pacific is known to be a region of vital importance for China, which has repeatedly stated that other states should respect PRC's sovereignty and territorial

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[34] Gigova, R. (2017, September 02). Who Vladimir Putin thinks will rule the world. *CNN World*. https://edition.cnn.com/2017/09/01/world/putin-artificial-intelligence-will-rule-world/index.html

integrity, refraining from interfering in its internal affairs and proceeding in aggressive actions that might endanger the Chinese national interests.[35]
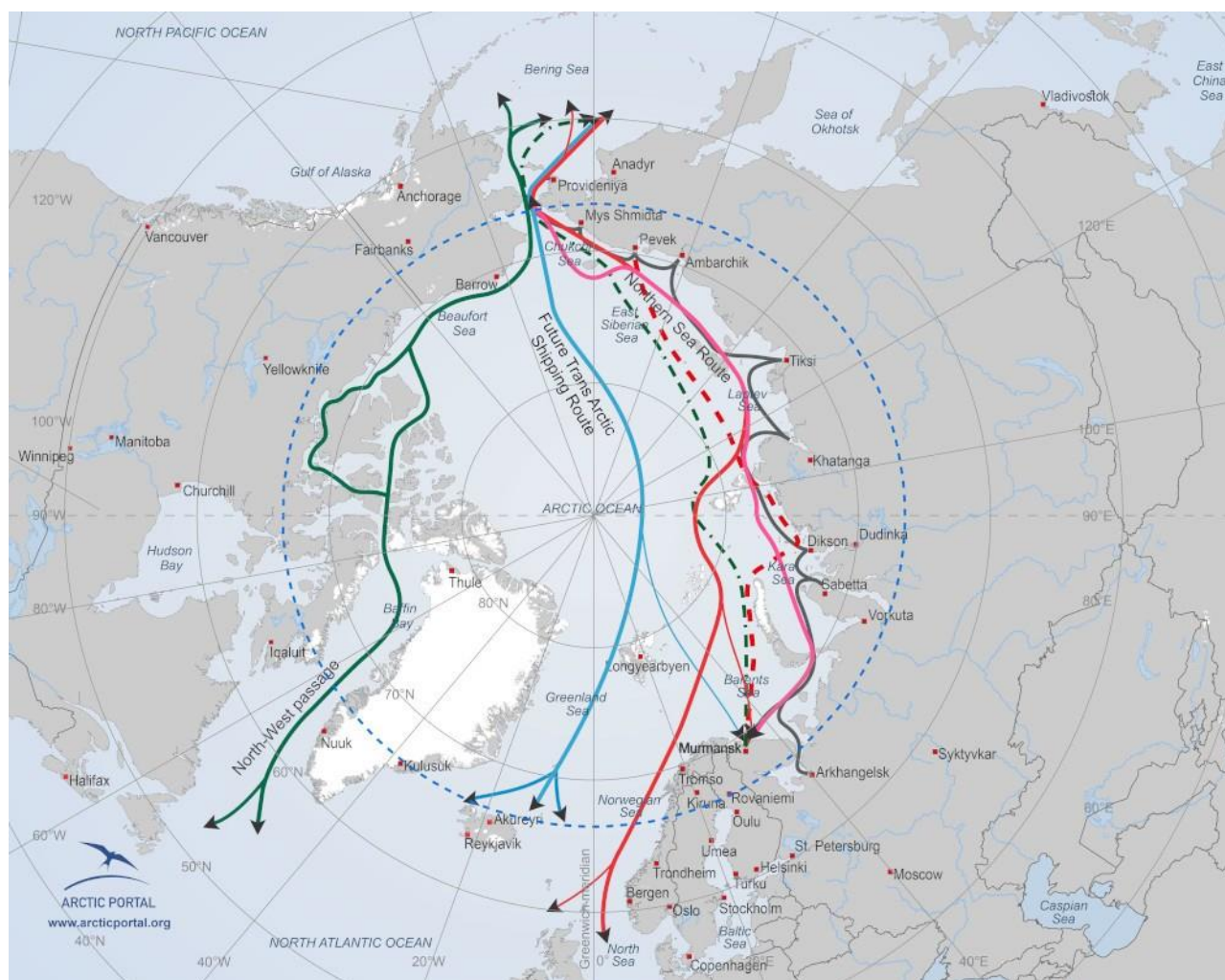

Picture 11: Comparison of the Suez Canal route & the Northern Sea route

Source: https://enterprise.press/stories/2018/09/09/global-warming-opens-up-rival-shipping-route-to-suez-canal/

The same concern applies for the **Arctic**, which is beginning to draw international interest, as many actors seek to broaden their sphere of influence in the region. The formentioned interest is mainly related to *theater logistics* and the *supply chain* (**Picture 11**), as climate change is creating new trade routes (**Picture 12**) in the northern hemisphere that provide alternative ways of transporting goods.

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[35] Šrámek, J. (2022, December 15). South China Sea Dispute. *Center for International Strategic Analyses* (KEDISA). https://kedisa.gr/en/south-china-sea-dispute/

Picture 12: Existing & future Arctic trade routes

Source: https://arcticportal.org/shipping-portlet/shipping-routes/central-arctic-shipping-route

Finally, as far as the future scenarios are concerned, the intransigent foreign policy that the USA is implementing after Donald Trump's re-election,[36] despite the increase of the defence expenditures of most NATO member-states seems to have a negative impact in global cooperation between actors, thus moving the security environment from the 'baseline scenario' to the 'worst-case scenario' and the creation of more turbulence.

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[36] Koukakis, G. (2024) Trump's re-election and its impact on the European Security & Defence: A rational assessment based on strategic documents [Research Paper No.110]. *Center for International Strategic Analyses (KEDISA)*. http://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.10353.70241

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10. Epilogue

In conclusion, it must be stressed that the complexity of the contemporary security environment in addition to the plethora of traditional and non-traditional security threats require a holistic and collaborative approach as far as the security & defence matters are concerned, in order for state and non-state actors to enhance their overall resilience. Nevertheless, <u>the use of military force will always remain the cornerstone of every actor's (national) power, as it facilitates the implementation of its foreign policy and ensures the protection of its (national) interests</u>, a fact that was highlighted by *George F. Kennan* through the following phrase:

> «*You have no idea how much it contributes to the general politeness and pleasantness of diplomacy when you have a little quiet armed force in the background*».[37]

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[37] Kagan, F. W. (2005). Power and Persuasion. *The Wilson Quarterly (1976-)*, *29*(3), 57–65. http://www.jstor.org/stable/40233063

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