



Contribution ID: 277

Type: **Paper Abstract (Closed Panels)**

Advancing authoritarian alignment? A systematic mapping of defense diplomacy between China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran

Friday 27 June 2025 11:00 (20 minutes)

In late 2024, the heated debate about an emerging alliance between China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran, which had started among U.S. think tankers, reached European policymakers and the public. At first sight, cooperation between these countries appears predominately bilateral and largely focused on support for Russia's war in Ukraine. However, systematic empirical research about emerging security ties between these four authoritarian powers is lacking. This paper maps defense cooperation among the four states to start filling this gap. It examines the extent to which these states engage in defense diplomacy activities, including official contacts between senior military and civilian defense officials, appointment of defense attaches, bilateral defense cooperation agreements, training of foreign military and civilian defense personnel, provision of expertise and advice, contacts and exchanges between military personnel and ship visits, placement of military/civilian personnel in partner countries' defense ministries and armed forces, deployment of training teams, provision of military equipment and other material aid as well as bilateral and multilateral training exercises. Robust links in defense diplomacy between the four countries would indicate growing security ties that might develop into a full-fledged alliance. If that was the case, severe consequences for escalating conflicts around Taiwan, on the Korean peninsula, or in the Middle East are to be expected.

What discipline or branch of humanities or social sciences do you identify yourself with?

Political Science

If you are submitting an Open Panel proposal, have you included all four abstracts in attachment?

No, I am submitting a Closed Panel abstract

Are you a PhD student or early-career researcher?

Yes

Author: MOKRY, Sabine (IFSH)

Presenter: MOKRY, Sabine (IFSH)

Session Classification: Defence Cooperation and Military Assistance

Track Classification: Closed Panels: Defence Cooperation and Military Assistance