

# Germany-Japan Security



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## Beyond Indo-Pacific, Toward Great Power Competition: On German Indo-Pacific Engagement Under the New Government

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Germany's new government was formed in December 2021, after sixteen years of Merkel's administration. While continued Indo-Pacific engagement is required, the implementation of the regional strategy may waver under the new administration. Further, the divergence of strategic interest in the Indo-Pacific strategy among countries of the EU undermines its security dimension. This article proposes to differentiate multilateral efforts to shape a 'rules-based international order' in the Indo-Pacific region and military engagement in the 'security realm' toward the US-China great power competition. By doing so, Germany and the EU can progress in their Indo-Pacific policy and cooperation with Japan's free and

open Indo-Pacific vision and ASEAN's Indo-Pacific outlook and make a military contribution to regional security.

## I. Introduction: *'Einmal ist Keinmal'*

The oceanographic term, 'Indo-Pacific', coined by the German geographer Karl Haushofer in the 20th century,<sup>1</sup> has been revived in international politics by Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in the 21st century. The region is now the geopolitical hotspot of the great power competition, where major powers compete, and many nations are essential stakeholders. Over the past few years, European powers such as France, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom have been increasingly involved in defending the rules-based international order in the Indo-Pacific region, the centre of the global economy, and the front line of the US-China strategic contestation.

On 2 September 2020, Germany announced its 'Indo-Pacific Guideline' and dispatched the frigate Bayern to the region on 2 August 2021. This deployment was the first overseas battleship dispatch in about twenty years and also the first time post-war Germany participated in joint naval manoeuvres with Asian forces. Although the dispatch had little significance in contributing to regional security, it was regarded as significant political signalling. However, what is now required is Germany's continued and effective contribution to the region's security.

What strategic role can Germany play in the Indo-Pacific region amidst the escalation of the US-China competition? In this article, we propose to make an element of 'balancing policy against China' independent of the 'Indo-Pacific engagement,' and argue that by supporting an approach presented by former German Inspector of the Navy Kay-Achim Schönbach, Germany should align its Indo-Pacific policy towards the security dynamics posed by the Sino-American rivalry. This defence engagement is consistent with German guidelines and the EU Indo-Pacific strategy is in line with what the US-Japan alliance, the Australia-UK-US trilateral security partnership (AUKUS), and others expect from European actors. However, given the great divergence in the German Indo-Pacific policy objectives, the strategic option might dissipate in the future unless the approach presented by Schönbach is implemented, entailing the possibility of undermining the rules-based international order in the region.

The remainder of this paper is organised into four parts. First, we discuss German and EU strategies for the Indo-Pacific region and the aims of this strategic document, which covers various issues from security to human rights and the environment. Second, we propose differentiating 'Indo-Pacific' and 'great power competition'—that is, military deterrence against China—for strategic consideration. Third, we refer to the German approach towards the region as declared by the former naval chief in December 2021 and suggest focusing on this strategy for engaging in the 'great power competition.' Finally, after analysing the obstacles in implementing the above plan, we make policy recommendations for the German Indo-Pacific policy.

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Haushofer, *Geopolitik des Pazifischen Ozeans: Studien über die Wechselbeziehungen zwischen Geographie und Geschichte: Mit sechzehn Karten und Tafeln* (Berlin, 1924). See also Hansong Li, "The 'Indo-Pacific': Intellectual Origins and International Visions in Global Contexts," *Modern Intellectual History* (2021), 1–27.

## II. Where is security? : German guideline and EU strategy towards the Indo-Pacific

On 2 September 2020, the German government published its ‘Indo-Pacific Guideline,’ and the EU Commission launched the ‘EU Strategy in the Indo-Pacific’ a year later, on 16 September 2021. In their respective Indo-Pacific visions, Germany and the European Union stipulate a plethora of shared interests and principles (**Figure 1**), largely focused on ‘soft issues.’<sup>2</sup> In the strategic papers, Berlin and Brussels propose to address cross-border issues such as environment, human rights, digitalisation, maritime governance in a multilateral setting, and multiplying partnerships to achieve strategic goals. Given the region’s demographic and economic significance, it also emphasises promotion of open and fair regional cooperation for trade, investment, and sea lane connectivity.



At the security and defence level, although Germany and the EU highlight defending ‘rules-based international order,’ both emphasise ‘inclusivity’ throughout, without explicitly naming China which influenced the shaping of their Indo-Pacific strategy. The German guideline explains that each country’s Indo-Pacific strategy “differs, however, in terms of objectives, emphasis on different policy fields, the importance ascribed to multilateral approaches and, above all, concerning China’s involvement as a regional and emerging world power that, to some extent, calls the

<sup>2</sup> Eva Pejsova, “The EU’s Indo-Pacific Strategy in 10 Points,” *The Diplomat*, 20 April 2021.

rules of the international order into question.”<sup>3</sup> Berlin does not consider ‘containment and decoupling strategies’ against China;<sup>4</sup> consequently, ‘inclusivity’ is its guiding principle. This approach aligns with the Japanese Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) vision.

### III. Divergence and convergence: differentiate ‘Indo-Pacific’ and ‘great power competition’

The ‘Indo-Pacific’ region is not geographically well defined, and the strategic goals and priorities differ for each state and regional organisation such as the EU and ASEAN. Against the backdrop of China’s unilateral attempts to change the status quo and the challenge to international order, the countries include their security strategy against China in the vague geographical space of the ‘Indo-Pacific’ that includes the Indian ocean and the African continent, instead of the ‘Asia-Pacific.’ One of the reasons for Indo-Pacific drawing attention rather than Asia-Pacific, as the geopolitical hotspot of the great power competition, is because “India becomes a very important player in the Indo-Pacific mix, and this has a balancing effect in the wider region, particularly vis-à-vis China.”<sup>5</sup>

However, without clearly demarcating the geographic limit of the Indo-Pacific, and by including all types of domains such as environment, human rights, and digital in this geopolitical sphere, the German and European Indo-Pacific strategies undermine the defence and security aspects countering China’s challenge to the rules-based international order. The problem here is the severe divergence of strategic interests in the region.

According to the European Council for Foreign Relations (ECFR)’s survey,<sup>6</sup> to strengthen maritime security in the Indo-Pacific:

- Twelve EU member states are willing to contribute to freedom of navigation operation.
- Four countries are motivated to send warships to the region, including Germany.
- Only Germany and Spain intend to establish or increase their military presence in the region.

While Washington has positioned Beijing as a ‘strategic rival’ in its Indo-Pacific strategy, Brussels has emphasized ‘inclusiveness’ in its regional strategy. However, there are two different approaches to the strategy of ‘inclusiveness’ among EU member states. The first approach reflects a desire to avoid the China question by insisting on cooperation with all and glossing over the potentially problematic aspects of the relationship. The second approach acknowledges conflicts of interest

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<sup>3</sup> The Federal Government, Germany, “Policy guidelines for the Indo-Pacific,” <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/blob/2380514/f9784f7e3b3fa1bd7c5446d274a4169e/200901-indo-pazifik-leitlinien--1--data.pdf>, 8.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>5</sup> “Uncorrected oral evidence: The UK’s security and trade relationship with China”, *Lords International Relations and Defence Committee*, 14 April 2021, Q49, <https://committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/2028/html/>.

<sup>6</sup> Frédéric Grare and Manisha Reuter, “Moving closer: European views of the Indo-Pacific,” *European Council on Foreign Relations*, 13 September 2021, <https://ecfr.eu/wp-content/uploads/Moving-closer-European-views-of-the-Indo-Pacific.pdf>.

and differences in values with Beijing but calls for continued cooperation with China as a way to push Beijing to adhere to internationally accepted standards and forms of behaviour.<sup>7</sup> In summary, only two to four EU countries are willing to make a security contribution to the Indo-Pacific region. Hence, there is a division in its 'inclusivity' approach. Strategic interests and focus areas of member countries of the EU diverge regarding the Indo-Pacific strategy.

The French and British strategic papers differ in their content. While the French Indo-Pacific strategy highlights the need to prevent the emergence of a new hegemony, the British 'Integrated Review' and the 'Defence Command Paper' shows concrete action plans to counter China's threat.<sup>8</sup> The two countries pursue a traditional security policy towards Sino-American contestation within the Indo-Pacific framework. This is consistent with the American Indo-Pacific approach. Consequently, the inclusive German and EU strategies as well as Japan's FOIP and ASEAN's Indo-Pacific outlook (AOIP); and the American, British, and French approaches—containing the great power competition element, together make the notion complicated and ambivalent.

For the above reasons, we propose making the 'great power competition' aspect independent of the 'Indo-Pacific' strategy—that is, a segmentation between 'efforts to create an international order' and 'efforts to protect national and regional security' amidst the US-China competition.<sup>9</sup> This can solve ambiguous security issues in the Indo-Pacific strategy, and by introducing segmentation, it facilitates the entry of reluctant European actors into the region, accelerating the realisation of the free and open Indo-Pacific vision.

ASEAN has been concerned about China's reaction to formally endorsing the foreign Indo-Pacific strategies.<sup>10</sup> For ASEAN member states, even institutionally accepting Japan's FOIP would mean taking a stance against China; therefore, they would avoid supporting Japan's vision.<sup>11</sup> This is also evident in its Indo-Pacific vision (AOIP), ASEAN highlighted 'dialogue and cooperation instead of rivalry.'<sup>12</sup>

Furthermore, excluding the counter-China policy aspect from the German and EU Indo-Pacific strategies can ensure the convergence of strategic interests between

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>8</sup> Ministère des Armées, "France's Defence Strategy in the Indo-Pacific," February 2020, [https://apcss.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/France-Defence\\_Strategy\\_in\\_the\\_Indo-Pacific\\_2019.pdf](https://apcss.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/France-Defence_Strategy_in_the_Indo-Pacific_2019.pdf); idem., "France's Indo-Pacific Strategy," July 2021, [https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/en\\_a4\\_indopacifique\\_v2\\_rvb\\_cle432726.pdf](https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/en_a4_indopacifique_v2_rvb_cle432726.pdf); HM Government, "Global Britain in a competitive age The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy," March 2021, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/975077/Global\\_Britain\\_in\\_a\\_Competitive\\_Age- the\\_Integrated\\_Review\\_of\\_Security\\_Defence\\_Development\\_and\\_Foreign\\_Policy.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/975077/Global_Britain_in_a_Competitive_Age- the_Integrated_Review_of_Security_Defence_Development_and_Foreign_Policy.pdf); Ministry of Defence, "Defence in a competitive age," March 2021, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/974661/CP411\\_-\\_Defence\\_Command\\_Plan.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/974661/CP411_-_Defence_Command_Plan.pdf). See also Louisa Brooke-Holland, "Integrated Review 2021: The defence tilt to the Indo-Pacific October," House of Commons Library, 11 October 2021, 2.

<sup>9</sup> Koki Shigenoi, "Strategic Outlook in Southeast Asia: Japan-EU Cooperation as an Enabler for Successful Hedging and Balancing in Southeast Asia," in Koki Shigenoi (ed.), *Japan's Role for ASEAN Amidst Great Power Competition: And its Implications to the EU*, Hanoi: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, forthcoming.

<sup>10</sup> See Koki Shigenoi (ed.), *Japan's Role for ASEAN Amidst Great Power Competition: And its Implications to the EU*, Hanoi: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, forthcoming.

<sup>11</sup> Kei Koga, "Alternative Strategic Partner in Southeast Asia?: The Role of Japan in the US-China Rivalry," in Koki Shigenoi (ed.), *Japan's Role for Southeast Asia Amidst the Great Power Competition: and its Implication to the EU-Japan Partnership*, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, forthcoming.

<sup>12</sup> ASEAN Secretariat, "ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific," June 23, 2019, [https://asean.org/asean2020/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/ASEAN-Outlook-on-the-Indo-Pacific\\_FINAL\\_22062019.pdf](https://asean.org/asean2020/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/ASEAN-Outlook-on-the-Indo-Pacific_FINAL_22062019.pdf).

the two and FOIP/AOIP as well. The Indo-Pacific vision should focus on non-military, inclusive, and multilateral domains.<sup>13</sup> This can help consolidate FOIP, AOIP, and German and EU strategies into a single framework in the future.<sup>14</sup>

**Figure 2. 'International order' and 'security' in the Indo-Pacific**

	Rules-based order	Indo-Pacific security
<b>Vision</b>	German guideline, EU strategy, EU global gateway, FOIP, AOIP	Defense strategy of each country
<b>Theory</b>	Inclusivity, Hedging	Deterrence, Balancing
<b>Framework</b>	Multilateral, Regional organizations	Bilateral, Mini-lateral

In his foreword, former German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas had said, “Germany must address even more strongly the existential security concerns of its long-standing partners, be involved in coming up with responses, and make a tangible contribution.”<sup>15</sup> Specifically, he mentions, “by sharing experience and expertise, with responsible arms export controls that also take into account the strategic quality of relations with the countries of the region, with initiatives in the field of arms control, and also by taking part in exercises and in collective security measures to protect the rules-based order when implementing UN resolutions.”<sup>16</sup> To address the ‘existential security concerns’ in the international security realm, Germany should go beyond ‘the Indo-Pacific’ and address the ‘great power competition.’

Based on the above considerations, Germany and the EU should formulate a wide range of policies suitable for fields such as human rights, environment, and digital for promoting ‘rules-based international order’ and exclude military elements — balancing against China’s independence, from that strategy. To maintain international order, many regional actors need to be involved; however, the military element of counter-China engagement could limit the implementation of the German and European Indo-Pacific engagement strategies. Simultaneously, Germany should reframe new individual defence and security policies to address security concerns in the region. If it tries to address security affairs multilaterally, it is likely to fail because of conflicting national interests among the players. Traditional se-

<sup>13</sup> It includes the EU’s “Global Gateway.” See Jagannath Panda, “Japan is Vital to Europe’s Global Gateway,” *The National Interest*, 20 January 2022, <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/japan-vital-europe%E2%80%99s-global-gateway-199551>.

<sup>14</sup> In its Indo-Pacific strategy published on 11 February 2022, although the United States showed their concern about China’s ambition for hegemony, they emphasise on achieving a balance between ‘cooperation and competition.’ By separating an element of the US-China competition, it can incorporate the new U.S. Indo-Pacific cooperative approach to this integrated Indo-Pacific strategy. See The White House, “Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States,” February 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/U.S.-Indo-Pacific-Strategy.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> See note 3 above, 2.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

curity issues must be addressed bilaterally or minilaterally. More importantly, further German engagement in the security realm of the Indo-Pacific region is expected.

### **The drawbacks of the current EU Indo-Pacific strategy**

- The divergent interests and principles undermine the security aspect.
- Only 2 - 4 countries have the intent of military engagement.
- Despite its 'inclusivity,' it includes a counter-China element on which ASEAN cannot agree.

### **The Gain of security aspect after the distinction**

- The strategy and implementation will have a more precise definition by separating the 'great power competition' element that addresses regional security from the 'Indo-Pacific strategy' which maintains international order.
- The Indo-Pacific strategy can instead focus more on 'soft issues,' e.g., human rights, environment, and digital, and promote multilateral cooperation with regional organisations such as ASEAN. It also maximises synergy between the German/EU strategy and FOIP/AOIP.
- Security and defence cooperation is effective only in bilateral or minilateral settings in Southeast Asia, therefore, Germany/EU can promote bilateral cooperation in this regard by adopting a separate security policy.

## **IV. New German Indo-Pacific approach: from vision to action**

The German Indo-Pacific engagement plan delivered by Vice Admiral Schönbach at the IISS Fullerton lecture in December 2021 promised a step forward. In his speech, there were three significant points. First, the Federal Defence Force (Bundeswehr) plans to send a warship to the Indo-Pacific region every two years and send two ships—one frigate and one replenishment tanker—in 2023. With an eye on dispatching a new frigate—the F125 Baden-Württemberg class frigate—the German Navy plans to remain operational in the area for up to two years by on spot crew exchange. Second, a non-permanent logistics support hub was established to facilitate deployment. The former naval chief revealed that talks are ongoing with Singapore, as well as Japan and South Korea. Third, the Bundeswehr will arrange to detach air and cyber forces to the Indo-Pacific region in 2022. Moreover, when asked about the possibility of participating in a carrier strike group in the region, the former Inspector of Navy responded assertively: "the idea to put a frigate like the Dutch did or others into let them integrate into maybe the US or British, or French carrier strike group for practical reasons would make sense. (...) It would make it easier to have a tanker with us and large auxiliaries."<sup>17</sup>

The plan outlined by Schönbach marks the transition from the first phase of 'political signalling', the deployment of the frigate Bayern, to the second phase of concrete military contributions to the region. Furthermore, this tangible security contribution is in line with the expectations of the regional countries and minilateral

<sup>17</sup> Kay-Achim Schönbach, "The Future of Indo-Pacific Maritime Security," 42nd IISS Fullerton Lecture, Fullerton Hotel, Singapore, 21 December 2021, <https://www.iiss.org/events/2021/12/42nd-iiss-fullerton-lecture>.

coalitions, such as the Japan-US alliance, AUKUS, and Quad, which face China's emerging military threat.

On 23 January 2022, the former German Navy chief retracted the controversial comments he made regarding Russia and China. Germany's Indo-Pacific security policy implementation may lose its thrust due to the retirement of former Defence Minister Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, who led the Indo-Pacific policy under the previous administration, and Kay-Achim Schönbach. Notably, Schönbach actively promoted the dispatch of frigate Bayern as Deputy Head of the Department for Strategy and Operations (Abteilung der Strategie und Einsatz) before becoming the Navy chief. The worst-case scenario is that Germany's security engagement—the security contribution to the systemic rivalry—will be interpreted as driven by Schönbach's personal anti-Chinese sentiments, leading to policy reform that undermines Germany's security contribution. Germany's attempt to make a security contribution to the great power competition beyond the Indo-Pacific should not be assimilated into the discourse that German Indo-Pacific implementation was driven by Schönbach's personal pro-Russian and anti-Chinese prejudices.

## V. Challenges of German Indo-Pacific engagement under the new government

Moreover, to implement Schönbach's plan, the new German government must overcome some obstacles, particularly the harmonisation of differing interests among the new traffic coalition administration. Traditionally, the post-war German government has been led by two major political parties—the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), and the Christian Social Union in Bavaria (CSU) or the Social Democratic Party (SPD)—to form a coalition with either the Free Democratic Party (FDP) or the Greens as junior partners or to form a grand coalition between the two major parties. During the sixteen years of Merkel's government, given the increasing authority and scale of the federal chancellery (Bundeskanzleramt) and decision-making accompanying a top-down style, conflicts in policymaking processes rarely occurred. However, as the coalition negotiation process has shown, the new government, consisting of SPD, Greens, and FDP, needs to deal with the difficult policy coordination among the three parties. Moreover, the confrontation between the two main factions within Social Democrats and Greens makes it difficult to maintain a unified front.<sup>18</sup>

The main actors in German foreign and security policy are the defence ministry/Bundeswehr, the foreign office, Bundeskanzleramt, and each factions (Fraktion) at the Bundestag. Among these, the Green Party's Annalena Baerbock held foreign ministrieships. Although FM Baerbock displayed a hardliner stance vis-à-vis China,

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<sup>18</sup> Germany made a historic shift in its foreign and security policy after the Russian invasion started. However, there is a variation in the support to the Chancellor's announcement among SPD and Greens, and it is difficult to say that the government has full support within the ruling parties. "Bundeskanzler Olaf Scholz: Wir erleben eine Zeitenwende," *Deutscher Bundestag*, 27 Februar 2022, <https://www.bundestag.de/dokumente/textarchiv/2022/kw08-sondersitzung-882198>; "Politiker fordern allgemeine Dienstpflicht," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 2 März 2022, 1.



focusing on human rights issues,<sup>19</sup> it is unclear whether she would take a similar stance in the security policy.<sup>20</sup> Recently, security policy of the Green Party has been shifting to realist approach despite its pacifist tradition<sup>21</sup> For these reasons, Ms. Bearbock is likely to focus on environmental and human rights issues—in line with party objectives—rather than security policy in the Indo-Pacific engagement. Although many of Green's federal ministers are realists (Realo), there is reportedly growing dissatisfaction among the party's fundamentalist (Fundis) groups who did not secure ministerial posts. Thus, it is necessary to pay attention to future developments regarding the extent to which the realist security policy as a ruling party will be accepted within the party.

Additionally, the political stance of the SPD, the leading party, is significant. In contrast to FM Bearbock, Chancellor Olaf Scholz did not clearly express his views on China. It is believed that he considered the party's left faction, which opposed the deployment of a frigate toward the Indo-Pacific region.<sup>22</sup> Whereas the SPD managed to curtail internal unrest in factions by promoting Mr. Scholz in the general election. There are two major forces within the Social Democratic Party: Seeheimer Kreis, the conservative wing of the party and the Parliamentary Left (Parlamentarische Linke). The latter has opposed the federal government's security and defence policy, influencing decision-making at the Bundestag.<sup>23</sup> Given that SPD's Parliamentary Left holds nearly fifty per cent of their seats at Bundestag, it is expected that the left faction maintains its influence in Bundestag and the party. Thus, whether SPD led by Chancellor Scholz can form a unified policy regarding domestic and foreign and security policy is a challenge for future German Indo-Pacific engagement.

At the foreign and security policymaking level, in addition to the possibility of inter-party conflict within the administration and internal division among SPD and Greens, two other variables in the Bundestag, the Foreign Affairs Committee (chaired by the SPD) and the Defence Committee (chaired by the FDP), should be considered.

<sup>19</sup> See for example "Die Dramatik ist allen sehr bewusst," *Der Spiegel* 48, 27 November 2021, 20-22, <https://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/annalena-baerbock-die-designierte-aussenministerin-im-spiegel-gespraech-a-dec2f65c-b473-42bf-8f40-91b686a2b85e>; On Beijing Olympics see "Regierungspressekonferenz vom 29 Dezember 2021," <https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de/aktuelles/pressekonferenzen/regierungspressekonferenz-vom-29-dezember-2021-1994208>. FDP shares the same attitude toward China. See Wahlprogramm der Freien Demokraten, "Nie gab es mehr zu tun," 53-54, [https://www.fdp.de/sites/default/files/2021-06/FDP\\_Programm\\_Bundestagswahl2021\\_1.pdf](https://www.fdp.de/sites/default/files/2021-06/FDP_Programm_Bundestagswahl2021_1.pdf); Ariane Reimers, "Veränderung in der deutschen China-Politik? Ein Blick in die Wahlprogramme," 24 Juni 2021, <https://merics.org/de/merics-briefs/veraenderung-der-deutschen-china-politik-ein-blick-die-wahlprogramme>.

<sup>20</sup> In her interview, Bearbock stated that China is "a partner on global issues, an economic competitor, and as a systemic rival with respect to our values," however, she only mentioned China in terms of human rights issues and economic affairs. "Werte und Interessen sind kein Gegensatz," *Zeit*, 22 December 2021, <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/newsroom/-/2502928>.

<sup>21</sup> „Kurz und bündig: Die GRÜNEN," *bpb*, 1 September 2020, <https://www.bpb.de/politik/grundfragen/parteien-in-deutschland/gruene/42149/kurz-und-buendig>.

<sup>22</sup> „Helmut Schmidt dreht sich im Grabe um," *Tagesspiegel*, 9 October 2021, <https://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/spd-aussen-und-sicherheitspolitik-helmut-schmidt-dreht-sich-im-grabe-um/26701638.html>.

<sup>23</sup> See Seeheimer group's website: <https://www.seeheimer-kreis.de/>; and the left's website: <https://www.parlamentarische-linke.de/>. For the view of the left, for example, their opposing positions regarding drone and nuclear sharing, see, "SPD blockiert Bewaffnung neuer Drohnen," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 15 December 2020, <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/bundeswehr-drohnen-heron-tp-fritz-felgentreu-1.5149194>; Rolf Mützenich, "Nukleare Teilhabe—ein überholtes Konzept," *Welt Trends* 162, April 2020, 68-70, [https://shop.welt-trends.de/sites/default/files/public\\_downloads/WeltTrends-167-M%C3%BCtzenich.pdf](https://shop.welt-trends.de/sites/default/files/public_downloads/WeltTrends-167-M%C3%BCtzenich.pdf).

It is important for the new government that to ensure smooth and proper policy coordination between the administration and parties, and advance its Indo-Pacific policy in the first four years.<sup>24</sup> To overcome the challenge, the establishment of a bipartisan policy coordination entity to install a function consolidating decision-making on security policy could be a solution in the long term.<sup>25</sup> For instance, the American and Japanese National Security Council (NSC) would be an effective model for this entity.

## VI. Concluding observation

As described above, the German and European Indo-Pacific strategies are highly diverged, consequently undermining the planning and contribution to the security domain. Therefore, the current Indo-Pacific strategy should focus on maintaining rules-based international order by deepening partnerships with Japan's FOIP and ASEAN's AOIP. Under escalating Sino-American competition, Japan, the United States, and other regional countries expect German and European military engagement in this region in an increasingly serious security situation.

Germany and the EU should develop 'defence strategies and policies in the Indo-Pacific', which split off the current Indo-Pacific strategies and are expected to promote military engagement through bilateral and minilateral cooperation with like-minded partners such as the Quad, AUKUS, and regional powers. In this regard, the Indo-Pacific plan outlined by Schönbach serves as a force multiplier of the 'German and European security cooperation in the Indo-Pacific'; thus, Berlin and Brussels should pursue this approach along with Paris and London.

In conclusion, the next steps proposed would help German and European policy-makers devise strategies. The following key ideas emerged from this study.

1. **Strategy planning and setting up a task force.** Germany and the EU should devise a detailed blueprint for defence strategies in the Indo-Pacific region focused on bolstering bilateral and minilateral defence and security cooperation with Southeast Asia. The German government has announced the launch of a comprehensive security strategy in 2022. The government should undertake the above process simultaneously. First, Germany should set up a task force and pursue dialogue with like-minded partners willing to increase military engagement in the region, namely France, the United Kingdom, AUKUS, and the Quad.
2. **To continue the plan Schönbach delivered.** By continuing the plan, Germany











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<sup>24</sup> The traffic coalition agreement states that they will announce the comprehensive security strategy in the first year, but a concrete plan and theme are not revealed yet. Koalitionsvertrag 2021, "Mehr Fortschritt wagen: Bündnis für Freiheit, Gerechtigkeit und Nachhaltigkeit," 144, <https://www.bundesregierung.de/resource/blob/974430/1990812/04221173eef9a6720059cc353d759a2b/2021-12-10-koav2021-data.pdf?download=1>.

<sup>25</sup> The Bundes Security Council (Bundessicherheitsrat) in Germany mainly play a role in approving arms export. Bundesministerium der Verteidigung, "Bundessicherheitsrat (BSR)", 21 January 2019. <https://www.bmvg.de/de/bundessicherheitsrat-bsr--14556>; „FDP-Obmann erwägt Waffenlieferung an Ukraine“, n-tv, 20 January 2022, <https://www.n-tv.de/politik/FDP-Obmann-erwaegt-Waffenlieferung-an-Ukraine-article23071197.html>.

should develop its engagement further. It should strengthen the defence co-operation with regional partners by setting up new defence attaché and advisory positions. With respect to logistics support, Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) can be signed to allow the exchange of supplies and services during the bilateral exercises and training (See **Figure 3**). It will provide strong cooperation in defence and security between the two countries.

**Table 3. Japan's defence cooperation**

		 US	 AU	 UK	 FR	 IN	 DE	 ID	 CA	 KR	 VN
2 plus 2	Hold a ministerial-level security dialogue	Signed	Signed	Signed	Signed	Signed	Developed in 2021-02	Signed	Nothing	Nothing	Nothing
Defense Equipment & Technology Cooperation	Arms exports pact	Signed	Signed	Signed	Signed	Signed	Signed	Developed in 2021-02	Nothing	Nothing	Developed in 2021-02
Security of Information	Intelligence sharing pact	Signed	Signed	Signed	Signed	Signed	Developed in 2021-02	Nothing	Nothing	Signed	Nothing
Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA)	Exchanging food, fuel, transportation, etc.	Signed	Signed	Signed	Signed	Developed in 2021-02	Nothing	Nothing	Signed	Nothing	Nothing
Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA)	Provide for shared military training and operations	Signed	Developed in 2021-02	Negotiation ongoing	Negotiation ongoing	Nothing	Nothing	Nothing	Nothing	Nothing	Nothing
Weapon and Other Protection	Protect a partner's fleet or fighter	Signed	Developed in 2021-02	Nothing	Nothing	Nothing	Nothing	Nothing	Nothing	Nothing	Nothing
Security Treaty	Military alliance	Signed	Nothing	Nothing	Nothing	Nothing	Nothing	Nothing	Nothing	Nothing	Nothing

Source: Nikkei, 23 Nov. 2021, <https://www.nikkei.com/article/DGXZQOJA15CJ10V11C21A1000000/>

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