



ANNUAL REPORT 2025



Institute for Security & Development Policy

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

2025 has been a year defined by accelerating geopolitical competition, deteriorating security environments, and increasing uncertainty across multiple regions. Many of these developments have continued to shape ISDP's work and remain central to our research and outreach.

Strategic rivalry between the People's Republic of China and the United States has deepened, with economic coercion, technological competition, and military modernization shaping an increasingly fragile global order. Beijing intensified military and political pressure on Taiwan through record-high incursions and coercive signaling. North Korea expanded its nuclear arsenal, deepened military cooperation with Russia, and remained closely aligned with China, raising concerns over regional stability.

In the Middle East, tensions escalated between Iran and the U.S., including missile and drone attacks on Israel following the U.S. strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities, and persistent regional rivalries. Syria pursued engagement with the EU, U.S., and Gulf States. The Brussels IX Conference pledged €5.8 billion for reconstruction and humanitarian support. At the same time, Syria maintained ties with Moscow and Beijing. Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine continued to devastate infrastructure, energy networks, and civilian populations, with hybrid threats spreading across Europe. There were spillover effects, for example Georgia's democratic backsliding, repression of protesting civilians, and distancing from the Euro-Atlantic aspirations. But there were also countervailing developments: Armenia and Azerbaijan moved toward a U.S.-brokered peace agreement, and in Central Asia, regional cooperation intensified, as did the expansion of the Organization of Turkic States into security and defense matters. This highlights the importance of strengthening regional security cooperation, rapid response to emerging threats, and increased NATO activities to bolster stability.

In response to these challenges, ISDP continued, and will continue to provide timely expertise, regional insights, and a platform for dialogue among policymakers, academics, and practitioners.

In 2025, ISDP opened the Stockholm Center for Research and Innovation Security (SCRIS) which focuses on the intersection of emerging technologies and security, including AI, cyber tools, and dual-use innovations. SCRIS helps policymakers anticipate risks, protect intellectual property, and strengthen resilience against hybrid threats, making it a key hub for security strategies in a rapidly evolving technological landscape.

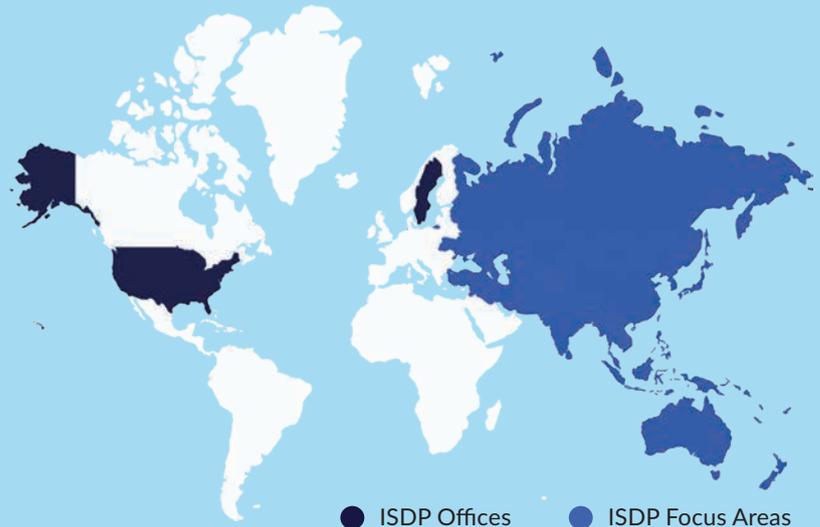
Over the course of the year, ISDP organized 60 events, an increase of 50 % compared to 2024, and reached audiences across the Nordics, Baltics, Central and Southern Europe, as well as Northeast, East, South, and Central Asia, the United States, and Australia. Many of these events were also made available on the Institute's YouTube channel as well, reaching even further. A study by ChinaObservers has ranked us third among the top organizers of China-related events in Europe and we intend to further strengthen this broad range of events in 2026.

With a vibrant community across all major social media platforms, strong growth particularly on LinkedIn, and a redesigned website launched in 2025, we are very much looking forward to engaging with sponsors, partners, stakeholders, and curious readers and viewers alike. We are pleased to continue another year of meaningful engagement, high-quality research, and constructive discussions that advance understanding and support informed decision-making.

Sincerely,

Niklas Swanström
Executive Director

Svante E. Cornell
Vice Executive Director



About ISDP

ISDP is a Stockholm-based non-profit and non-partisan research and policy organization operating through two permanent programs: the Asia Program and the Silk Road Studies Program. Within these two principal programs, work at ISDP is organized into Centers and Projects. Centers have a long-term scope and focus on larger thematic areas whereas Projects are established to deliver specific outputs with a deeper and narrower focus, within a short-term framework.

The Asia Program conducts research into security and development challenges in the Asian region with a focus on the sub-regions of Northeast, Southeast, and South Asia. Currently, the Asia Program consists of the Stockholm China Center, the Stockholm Korea Center, the Stockholm Center for South Asian and Indo-Pacific Affairs, and the Stockholm Taiwan Center. These Centers carry out policy-oriented and practical research, facilitate

confidence-building exercises, and organize conferences and seminars.

The main objectives are not only to be a bridge between academia and policy but also to provide strategic insights and policy recommendations to decision makers in governments, international institutions, and the private sector. The Silk Road Studies Program runs a Joint Transatlantic Research and Policy Center with the American Foreign Policy Council in Washington D.C. The program focuses on the western part of Eurasia, particularly Central Asia, the Caucasus, Turkey, and Eastern Europe. The main activities and research are focused on state-building and political development, security and conflict, as well as the relationships between the regions and the West.

Additionally, ISDP has established the Stockholm Center for Research and Innovation Security (SCRIS) as an independent and sustainable thematic center.



Vision & Mission

ISDP's mission is to promote an understanding of the nexus between conflict, security, and development in our regions of focus; inform and influence decision-makers; provide analytical products and tools; and enable inclusive dialogue and debate. ISDP's vision is to become a leading, inclusive, and independent platform for analysis, dialogue, and policy advice contributing to sustainable peace and development in its focus regions. The Institute strongly believes in ethnic diversity, gender equality, and religious and political freedom and firmly stands by these values in all aspects of its work.



Understanding & Engaging

For almost two decades, ISDP has worked to expand the understanding of international affairs in its focus areas. Concentrating on the inter-relationship between security, conflict, and development, ISDP showcases its research through analyses as well as practical activities aimed at promoting dialogue. Since 2007, the Institute has provided independent analyses to policymakers and other relevant institutions. ISDP functions as a focal point for academic, policy, and public discussion of its focus areas through applied research, publications, research cooperation, public lectures, seminars, and webinars. ISDP strives to work closely with governments and

independent organizations located in its regions of study and to pursue extensive collaborative projects, such as through exchanges of researchers and the organizing of joint conferences. The Institute holds firm to the conviction that an understanding of international affairs requires a deep and comprehensive knowledge of the culture and history of the regions and countries under study, and continuous interaction with a broad cross-section of these societies. Lastly, ISDP has an Internship Program for students and recent graduates to ensure long term engagement and innovative understanding of regional Eurasian affairs.



Outreach

300

Media Mentions

- ✓ *Independent thinking*
- ✓ *Strategic solutions*

110+

Publications



@ISDP_Sweden

@ISDP_SCSAIPA

Center for South Asian and Indo-Pacific Affairs

60

Events



Institute for Security and Development Policy

40+

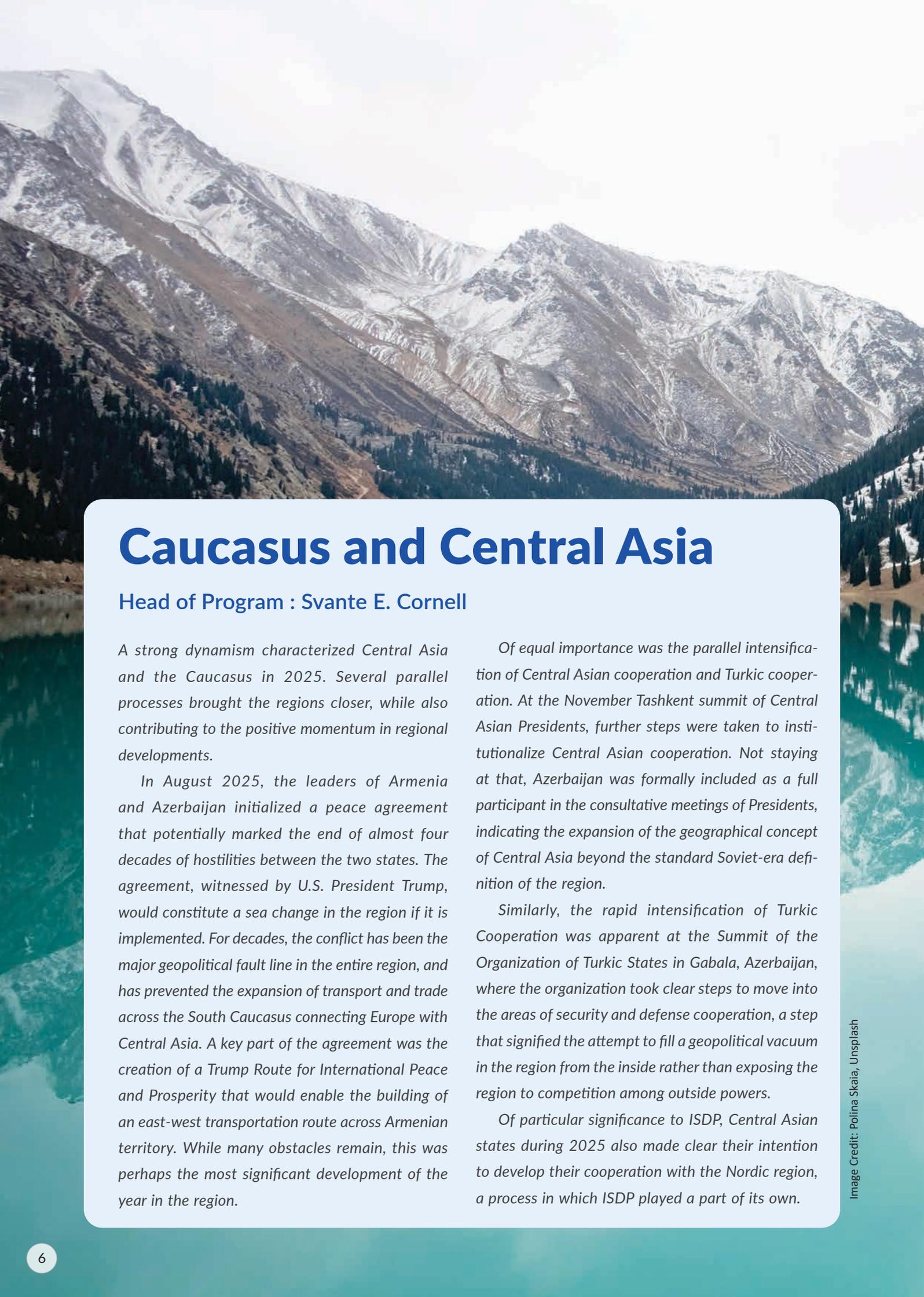
Blog Posts



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Caucasus and Central Asia

Head of Program : Svante E. Cornell

A strong dynamism characterized Central Asia and the Caucasus in 2025. Several parallel processes brought the regions closer, while also contributing to the positive momentum in regional developments.

In August 2025, the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan initialized a peace agreement that potentially marked the end of almost four decades of hostilities between the two states. The agreement, witnessed by U.S. President Trump, would constitute a sea change in the region if it is implemented. For decades, the conflict has been the major geopolitical fault line in the entire region, and has prevented the expansion of transport and trade across the South Caucasus connecting Europe with Central Asia. A key part of the agreement was the creation of a Trump Route for International Peace and Prosperity that would enable the building of an east-west transportation route across Armenian territory. While many obstacles remain, this was perhaps the most significant development of the year in the region.

Of equal importance was the parallel intensification of Central Asian cooperation and Turkic cooperation. At the November Tashkent summit of Central Asian Presidents, further steps were taken to institutionalize Central Asian cooperation. Not staying at that, Azerbaijan was formally included as a full participant in the consultative meetings of Presidents, indicating the expansion of the geographical concept of Central Asia beyond the standard Soviet-era definition of the region.

Similarly, the rapid intensification of Turkic Cooperation was apparent at the Summit of the Organization of Turkic States in Gabala, Azerbaijan, where the organization took clear steps to move into the areas of security and defense cooperation, a step that signified the attempt to fill a geopolitical vacuum in the region from the inside rather than exposing the region to competition among outside powers.

Of particular significance to ISDP, Central Asian states during 2025 also made clear their intention to develop their cooperation with the Nordic region, a process in which ISDP played a part of its own.

During 2025, ISDP's analytical activities on Central Asia and the Caucasus covered a wide array of topics. ISDP continued its coverage of domestic politics of Armenia and Georgia, two states that have moved in opposite directions to each other—Armenia toward the West, and Georgia away from the West. Silk Road Papers published on developments in each country have contributed to understanding of the domestic and regional processes affecting each country.

ISDP also published one of the first books taking stock of the Caucasus following the second Karabakh war. "After Karabakh" is a collection of contributions by well-known experts in the field taking stock of the newly emerging realities in the region.

Following on its 2024 study of youth views and values across Central Asia and the Caucasus, ISDP this time published the first lengthy study of the impact of technological change on the societies of Central Asia, authored by a leading regional expert. This study illustrates the rapid change of these societies, and the gradual process through which the young generation across Central Asia is connecting with the world.

ISDP's focus on Central Asian affairs continued, including studies of both Central Asian cooperation's history, as well as its present development. In addition, ISDP focused considerable efforts on examining the expansion of Turkic cooperation and its role in filling a geopolitical vacuum.

ISDP in 2025 also published a book studying the changing geopolitics of the Greater Middle East, with a focus on how the region has changed following Turkey's involvement in it. Arabs, Turks and Persians provides a window into how geopolitics and ideology have intersected to set up both cooperation and rivalry between the major powers of the Greater

Events to strengthen Central Asian and Nordic relations



ISDP has sought to contribute to the close relations developing between the Nordic region and Central Asia. In spring 2025, ISDP hosted a think tank conference uniting experts from Nordic states as well as representatives of Central Asian think tanks. This was followed in November 2025 by the first formal Central Asia-Nordic Think Tank Forum in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, which ISDP was honored to co-host with the International Institute for Central Asia in Tashkent. These events contributed to the first meeting of Central Asian and Nordic foreign ministers in Vienna in December 2025.



Middle East, and how this is also expanding into Central Asia and the Caucasus.

The Central Asia-Caucasus Institute & Silk Road Studies Program publishes the biweekly Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst and the Silk Road Papers series as well as monographs. Its Turkey Initiative publishes the biweekly Turkey Analyst.



China

Acting Head of Center : Fatoumata Diallo

In 2025, China continued to consolidate its economic, technological, and security resilience, with developments that have become increasingly consequential for Europe's strategic environment.

There was renewed escalation in U.S.-China trade tensions following the return of the second Donald Trump administration. Beijing responded with calibrated countermeasures while relying on longer-term structural adjustments including export diversification, regulatory measures, and efforts to reduce exposure to external leverage. These developments had direct spillover effects on global markets and supply chains. For Europe, they reinforced pressures on exporters and manufacturers and fed into ongoing debates on economic security and de-risking. At the same time, China's trade relationship with Europe remained marked by persistent frictions. Alongside trade and economic adjustments, Beijing made visible progress in advanced technologies, particularly artificial intelligence, data-driven applications, and high-performance computing.

China's consolidation of security resilience in 2025 was also reflected in continued military modernization and a growing emphasis on

operational capabilities. The large-scale military parade held in September showcased its capabilities and signaled China's intent to position itself as a leading military power.

China's policy direction in 2025 was also reflected in its external alignments and governance approach beyond the transatlantic space. Beijing continued to deepen its economic and diplomatic partnership with Russia, with a more pronounced security dimension. This relationship remains a key factor shaping Europe's security environment and broader geopolitical considerations. Beyond this, China expanded its engagement across the Global South through diplomatic outreach, development finance, and technology cooperation, with an increasing focus on governance and institutional cooperation. At the same time, China remained active in international organizations and technical standard-setting bodies, where it contributed to discussions on the evolution of rules, norms, and practices and supported reforms to the global governance architecture. For Europe, these developments are relevant as they shape norm-setting processes, regulatory influence, and political alignment in regions central to European economic, political, and security interests.

The Stockholm China Center (SCC) has strengthened its position as a leading European platform for understanding China's global ambitions and their implications for European security, trade, and governance. Over the past year, the Center has played a key role in bridging research and policy by delivering actionable insights to European decision-makers on issues including authoritarian influence, technological competition, civil-military fusion, maritime security, and climate cooperation.

Through EU initiatives such as the EuroHub4Sino project, China Horizon (DWARC), and the Next-Gen platform, the SCC has deepened engagement across Europe, convening experts, policymakers, and civil society in London, Prague, and Brussels. These efforts culminated in a closed-door policy forum in Brussels, reinforcing the Center's commitment to informing European debates on China amid intensifying U.S.-China strategic competition. In December, the Center conducted a high-level engagement tour across Brussels, Paris, and Berlin (7–12 December), meeting with scholars and government actors to discuss regional security in the Asia-Pacific and the implications of a new world security order under a prospective Trump 2.0 administration. The SCC has also expanded its analytical output with publications covering the PLA's activities in the Arctic and space domains, as well as cross-strait military dynamics.

At the same time, the SCC has broadened engagement with Chinese academic and policy institutions to enhance mutual understanding and capacity-building on China and security affairs. In collaboration with ISDP's other centers, it contributed to the Research and Education Security initiative, providing analytical support and training on cybersecurity and knowledge security for European universities and research organizations. The Center further developed channels for

September 2025

Closed-door roundtable discussion with a delegation from the Huayang Center for Maritime Cooperation and Ocean Governance with Huayang Center (Sweden)



December 2025

“Blue Partnerships for Sustainable Maritime Futures” – 6th SGMCOG, Sanya (China)



dialogue with Chinese stakeholders through closed-door roundtables and conferences hosted by institutions such as the Chinese People's Association for Peace and Disarmament and the Institute for China-European Studies. Notably, the SCC established new cooperation with the Huayang Center for Maritime Cooperation and Ocean Governance and was invited to the 2025 Symposium on Global Maritime Cooperation and Ocean Governance in Sanya, China. By combining research with hands-on policy engagement, the SCC has reinforced its role as a strategic actor in Europe's China-focused ecosystem, expanding its reach across European capitals and within China. Its participation in EU-funded projects, new partnerships, and continued policy-oriented outputs have enhanced its capacity to deliver timely and relevant expertise on China's evolving global posture.

Korea

Head of Center : Lars Vargö

The year 2025 was a year of both significant change and increased tension on the Korean Peninsula. In South Korea, the year was represented by political upheaval, economic challenges, and severe natural disasters, while North Korea continued to strengthen its military focus and assert its isolated but confident position on the world stage.

After months of controversy and growing distrust, President Yoon Suk-yeol was ousted, leading to a snap presidential election on June 3. The election ended with a victory for opposition leader Lee Jae-myung, representing the liberal Democratic Party. The new government, which took office in early June, quickly presented an ambitious reform program, emphasizing investments in artificial intelligence and future industries as key to strengthening the country's competitiveness.

Economically, South Korea continued to struggle with low growth and global uncertainty, prompting parliament to pass a 31.8 trillion won emergency budget package to support the economy.

In North Korea, the year was marked by continued military buildup and symbolically charged events. In October, the regime under Kim Jong-un celebrated the 80th anniversary of the Workers' Party with a grand military parade in Pyongyang, putting a new intercontinental ballistic missile system on display. Shortly thereafter, several short-range missile tests were conducted, further increasing tensions with South Korea and its neighbors. The Kim regime continued to place great importance on national defense, confirmed not least during this year's parliamentary session, which resulted in an increase of the defense budget.

Overall, 2025 was a year that clearly demonstrated the divergent paths of the two Korean states. South Korea sought renewal through democratic processes, economic reforms, and technological innovation, while North Korea consolidated its military and nationalist course. Relations between them remained frosty, marked by distrust and recurring provocations.

Image Credit: Seoulinspired, Pixabay

In 2025, Ambassador Lars Vargö, PhD, was appointed Head of the Korea Center. The Center aims at serving as a natural hub for policy-oriented Korean studies in the Nordic region. In 2025, the Center successfully executed its 'Next Generation Policy Experts Network Training Program', aimed at enhancing among young professionals the knowledge of contemporary South Korean affairs and broader Korean Peninsula developments. The special series 'Strategic Talks', an online forum focusing on developments on the Korean peninsula and its regional security environment, was successfully implemented during 2025. The number of subscribers to the weekly and monthly newsletters has continued to increase, significantly so during the year.

Over the years, the Korea Center has provided opportunities for South Korean officials and scholars to come to the Center as visiting fellows, something which has been deeply appreciated and resulted in a vibrant cooperation with South Korean institutions. The Korea Center also cooperates with organizations and institutions like the Korean Women's Development Institute (KWDI), the Korea Young Leaders Forum, the Sejong Institute and Sogang University.

In order to broaden the scope of the Center's publications an initiative to translate a number of them into Korean was implemented in 2025, effectively making them bilingual. Positive reactions were immediate and resulted in a 60 percent increase in the number of Korean readers. The Center's publications saw strong online engagement overall. Especially popular were papers focusing on Nordic-Korean cooperation, green energy transition and gender related issues. The Issue Brief "Digital Sex Crimes on the Rise in South Korea" was the most viewed publication on the ISDP website during the year.

May 2025

Webinar: The Underrepresentation of Women in South Korean Politics

The webinar was moderated by Program Manager Josephine Ørgaard Rasmussen. Speakers were Ms. Yena Lee from the Korea Young Leaders Forum and Dr. Hannah June Kim, Associated Professor at Sogang University.



June and November 2025

Korea Strategic Talks

The first Strategic Talk session was on the "Presidential Election in South Korea – What Next?". Speakers were Professor Eunjung Lim, Kongju University and Professor Jae Sung Lee, Ilmin International Relations Institute. In November, the Strategic Talks continued on the topic of "Re-Engagement with the DPRK & A New Playing Field" featuring Antoine Bondaz, Foundation for Strategic Research, and Andrew Yeo, Brookings Institution, as well as Professor Park Won-Gon, Department of North Korean Studies at Ewha Womans University, and Professor Nobukatsu Kanehara, Sasakawa Peace Foundation and Reitaku University.

September 2025

Nordic-Korea Next Generation Training Program

The Center organized a three-day training agenda within the Nordic-Korea Next Generation Training Program for young scholars.



South Asia/Indo-Pacific

Head of Center : Jagannath Panda

The Indo-Pacific in 2025 witnessed a sharper recalibration of strategic balance, shaped not only by shifting power hierarchies but also by escalating regional crises and renewed contestation over strategic geography. A defining development was the United States' reduced appetite for multilateralism under President Donald Trump, whose tariff-centered diplomacy and transactional security outlook created fresh doubts about Washington's long-term regional commitments. This uncertainty intensified debates across Asia and Europe on whether the Indo-Pacific remains a coherent strategic framework or is fragmenting into competing spheres of influence. In response, minilateral coalitions emerged as the most functional strategic instrument. Flexible trilaterals, quadrilateral arrangements, and issue-based security partnerships proved more adaptive than formal multilateral institutions. The debates surrounding the United Nations' 80th anniversary and renewed calls for UNSC reform further exposed the deep structural crisis of global governance, reinforcing the turn toward pragmatic and interest-driven coalitions.

China's expanding strategic footprint remained the most consequential driver of regional alignment.

Beijing's assertiveness—combined with deepening Sino-Russian strategic coordination—accelerated hedging behavior across the Indo-Pacific. For many, China increasingly represents both economic interdependence and strategic vulnerability, particularly in maritime security, supply-chain resilience, digital governance, and infrastructure financing. ASEAN's internal divergences continued, yet the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) remained a central normative anchor emphasizing inclusivity and ASEAN centrality amid intensifying major-power rivalry.

South Asia experienced particularly acute turbulence. China's activism through the Belt and Road Initiative deepened political contestation in Nepal, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, where debt pressures, economic slowdowns, and domestic unrest underscored governance fragilities. Simultaneously, renewed India-Pakistan tensions—triggered by the Pahalgam terror attack and subsequent military escalation—reintroduced crisis instability into the regional equation. India emerged as the strategic fulcrum of South Asia, balancing counterterrorism imperatives, Himalayan security concerns, and its expanding Indo-Pacific partnerships.

The Stockholm Center for South Asian and Indo-Pacific Affairs (SCSA-IPA) concentrated on examining ongoing conflicts in the evolving geopolitical situation while identifying emerging trends and political dynamics likely to shape 2025 and the years ahead.

On one front, the Center has assessed how major Indo-Pacific powers—such as Japan, India, and the United States—view and respond to the Russia-Ukraine war. Post-Trump, its research has explored ways to bridge existing gaps between Europe and the Indo-Pacific. Recent policy papers outline how the EU can pursue more deliberate and meaningful engagement with India, Japan, ASEAN, the United States, and the broader Indo-Pacific region.

Amid these developments, the SCSA-IPA deepened its intellectual footprint. Collaborative research with the Kajima Institute of International Peace (KIIP) in Japan and the Prospect Foundation (PF) in Taiwan produced significant studies on “Defending the Liberal International Order” and the evolving economic-security landscape of the Indo-Pacific. A major study on NATO’s emerging Indo-Pacific engagement, supported by FNF Germany, offered one of the few systematic assessments of trans-Atlantic strategic ambitions in the region. Center head Jagannath Panda participated in several forums and seminars. Through these research initiatives and sustained outreach, the SCSA-IPA strengthened its position as a leading analytical center, providing timely insights into a region experiencing both fragmentation and new forms of cooperation.

February 2025

NATO-IP4 Strategic Dialogue in Seoul

Co-organized by Yonsei University and Adapt Institute of Slovakia



April 2025

Back to the Future: Reinventing Europe-Asia Cooperation in a Shifting Global Order

Organized by the Central European Institute of Asian Studies and the Slovak Foreign Policy Association, held in Bratislava. This two-day conference, focusing on Asia, held eight panels and brought several international experts and scholars from Asia and Europe to delve into topics critical for global security and stability in the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific regions.



July 2025

Budapest Global Dialogue

Organized by Hungarian Institute of International Affairs (HIIA) and Observer Research Foundation, it brought together representatives of dozens of Western and Global South countries to build a new framework for understanding the interplay of institutions, values and economic flows in the emerging multipolar world.



October 2025

2nd ASEAN Think-Tank Forum

Co-organized by the Singapore Institute of International Affairs, the ASEAN Secretariat, and the EU Fora Asia, the event was held in Jakarta, Indonesia. Dr. Panda spoke on a panel titled “Ocean Governance and Maritime Security.”





South Asia/India

South Asia in 2025 was defined by intensifying geopolitical volatility, climate-induced insecurity, and sharpened India–Pakistan confrontation. The Himalayan region and the Tibetan Plateau became focal points of strategic concern, as environmental fragility intersected with large-scale Chinese hydropower and dual-use infrastructure expansion. These developments heightened anxieties in New Delhi regarding long-term water security, military mobility, and ecological destabilization across the subcontinent.

India remained South Asia's most resilient actor, sustaining economic growth and accelerating strategic infrastructure development. However, the security environment deteriorated sharply following the Pahalgam terror attack, which reignited cross-border tensions and prompted India's calibrated but firm military response under Operation Sindoor. The episode underscored the persistent fragility of deterrence stability between India and Pakistan and narrowed the already limit-

ed space for diplomatic engagement. Islamabad's confrontational rhetoric and continued tolerance of extremist networks further complicated crisis management mechanisms in the region.

Despite friction in U.S.–India trade relations—particularly over Washington's heavy tariff measures—India's broader Indo-Pacific engagement remained steady. Strategic cooperation with Japan advanced despite leadership transitions in Tokyo, reinforcing the importance of India–Japan alignment in maritime security, technology, and resilient supply chains.

Amid these pressures, India's diplomatic outreach gained momentum. India–EU relations strengthened considerably, with the FTA negotiations gaining political urgency in light of global supply-chain reconfiguration and the search for trusted economic partnerships. Sweden continued to play a constructive role within this evolving India–Europe strategic landscape, particularly in innovation, sustainability, and defense-industrial cooperation.

In 2025, the emphasis was on widening outreach and awareness of issues related to South Asia and India in particular. India's ties with Europe were in particular focus. The SCSA-IPA co-organized an event on India and on India-Sweden relations, in coordination with the Embassy of India in Stockholm, highlighting cooperation opportunities in innovation, green transition, and security.

The SCSA-IPA undertook a flagship study, "Whither Tibet in the Climate Crisis Agenda?" placing Himalayan climate security at the center of international debate. The study brought together a broad spectrum of experts, senior climatologists, environmental researchers, Tibetan scholars, media practitioners, and emerging researchers, reflecting the project's commitment to inclusivity and interdisciplinary analysis. As part of this initiative, the Center hosted the Second Stockholm Forum on the Himalaya, convening scholars and experts from Europe and Asia. The Stockholm Paper and the Forum's outcomes were disseminated widely, including at Forum 2000 (Prague), COP30 (Belém), the ICfs in London, and in Stockholm. By securing visibility at COP30, the project took a major step toward ensuring that Tibet's ecological challenges are recognized as integral to global climate transition debates.

The Center's bi-monthly newsletter—India-Sweden Strategic Compass—continued to expand its readership, providing analysis on India-EU, India-Nordic, and wider South Asian developments. This sustained outreach strengthened SCSA-IPA's profile as a key institution connecting Scandinavian and South Asian policy debates. Through its research, events, and dissemination activities, the SCSA-IPA has established itself as a leading voice on Himalayan geopolitics, India's strategic partnerships, and the complex political and ecological transformations shaping South Asia.

July 2025

A collaborative event was organized with the Embassy of India in Sweden on "Human Rights, Indian Constitution, and the Emergence of India as a Resilient Power."



October 2025

The Second Stockholm Forum 2025, organized by ISDP, brought together scholars and experts from Europe and Asia.



October 2025

Panel on "Unity in Indo-Pacific: Mounting Climate Crisis in Tibet", at Forum 2000, Prague.



November 2025

Report- Whither Tibet in the Climate Crisis Agenda?- release at CEBRI in Rio, Brazil.



Taiwan

Acting Head of Center : Niklas Swanström

The year 2025 has been a turbulent for the Lai administration in Taiwan. Following the 2024 presidential and legislative elections, Kuomintang (KMT) secured a majority in the Legislative Yuan, creating an opposition-led legislature under a Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) government. This tension peaked during the 2025 mass electoral recall campaign, which gained traction across civil society and tested President Lai's leadership. Thirty-one KMT legislators-at-large and one Taiwan People's Party mayor faced recall votes. Despite strong media momentum and public mobilization, all recall efforts ultimately failed. This result underscores the complexity of Taiwan's domestic political landscape.

Taiwan's semiconductor sector has remained central to its global engagement in 2025. Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC) announced a major expansion of its Arizona operations, adding US\$100 billion in investment and bringing its total commitment to US\$165 billion. TSMC has also spearheaded the European Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (ESMC), a

joint venture in Dresden that is scheduled to begin production in 2027. Together, these developments highlight the urgency of restructuring a more diversified and resilient global technology supply chain.

On the defense side, Taiwan has started emphasizing the protection of critical infrastructure due to the growing concerns of hybrid and grey-zone threats. After a series of undersea cable disruptions in recent years, Taipei has been amending laws to safeguard underwater infrastructures. In the meantime, Beijing has continued to exert pressure on Taiwan by conducting military exercises around the island.

On December 29-30, Beijing carried out the "Justice Mission 2025" drills in waters around Taiwan, marking the closest military exercise near the main island since Nancy Pelosi's visit in 2022. This development underscores the growing importance of sustained research on Taiwan-related issues in the coming years. Continuous monitoring cross-Strait relations remains crucial for regional security and stability.

Image Credit: Timo Volz, Unsplash



The Stockholm Taiwan Center (STC) has continued to serve as a leading hub for Taiwan studies in the Nordic region, while significantly expanding its networks across Taiwan and Europe. Its visibility in Taiwan has also increased. This growth and impact are driven by STC's high-quality in-person and online events, a diverse range of publications, and its annual visit to Taiwan.

The events include the Taiwan-Nordic Forum 2025, several online webinars, and roundtable discussions. The Taiwan Lecture Series remains STC's core online event. In 2025, STC hosted 7 webinars covering a diverse range of topics. From Europe-Taiwan relations and sports diplomacy to Taiwan's exclusion from the UN System, these webinars provided stakeholders with comprehensive perspectives across different fields.

In August, STC hosted Jason Hsu, a Senior Fellow at Hudson Institute, and a former Taiwanese legislator. In October, STC spoke at Chatham House's research event. These events not only enhanced STC's expertise in Taiwan-related issues but also reinforced its outreach efforts across Taiwan and Europe. STC's attendance at the NSP+ Think Tank Summit: "Prospects for a Resilient Indo-Pacific Policy" in Taiwan indicates its exposure to Taiwan is steadily increasing.

STC publications are closely linked to its physical and online events, and address topics such as emerging technologies, supply chain security, the green transition, national security, and cross-Strait relations.

The STC visited Taiwan in May. The visits included 18 meetings across several governmental agencies, think tanks, and research institutes. These visits allow STC to expand its network and partnerships in Taiwan while serving as a connection between Stockholm and Taipei to deepen informal relations.

March 2025

Taiwan's New Southbound Policy+ and EU Ties amid Trump Administration 2.0

The Taiwan Lecture Series is one of the core activities of the STC. In this webinar, Dr. Jing Bo-jiun and Dr. Simona Grano discussed Taiwan's New Southbound Policy+ and Taiwan-EU relations from European and Taiwanese perspectives.

May 2025

Taiwan-Nordic Forum 2025

The Taiwan-Nordic Forum 2025 gathered experts from Sweden and Taiwan. The forum featured three panels covering supply chain security, total defense concept, and democratic resilience.



October 2025

Online Researcher Event with Chatham House

Yi-Chieh Chen spoke at the event titled "From chips to China-US tensions: How can Taiwan and Europe work together to manage shared challenges?". She discussed the challenges faced by Taiwanese semiconductor firms as they expand into Europe and highlighted what Europe can do to attract more meaningful investment.

October 2025

NSP+ Think Tank Summit: "Prospects for a Resilient Indo-Pacific Policy"

Dr. Niklas Swanström, ISDP Executive Director and the Head of Stockholm Taiwan Center, participated in the panel titled "Security Resilience Chain: Advancing Readiness and Resilience in a Complex Geopolitical Landscape," where he discussed the prospects for a resilient Indonesia-Pacific policy.





Turkey

Head of Center : Halil M. Karaveli

The past year in Turkey has been marked by the aftermath of the local elections in March 2024 that redrew the political map of the country as the center-left Republican People's Party (CHP) became the leading party. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan responded by having Ekrem Imamoglu, the mayor of Istanbul and the CHP's presidential candidate, arrested on March 19, 2025. Imamoglu's arrest sparked the biggest demonstrations in Turkey in more than a decade, and a majority, including a significant portion of Erdogan's own base, disapproved of it. A majority viewed the allegations of corruption as politically motivated fabrication.

The Erdogan regime, however, was undeterred. The crackdown on CHP mayors continued, with 17 mayors being removed from their posts and

arrested. Erdogan is now setting Turkey on the path to full-fledged autocracy. Imamoglu's arrest signaled something new: that in elections in Turkey, popular opposition politicians may simply not be allowed to run.

International developments and a peace process with the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) have strengthened Erdogan's hand. Turkey is recognized as a geopolitically important, even indispensable, NATO ally, a dominant military power in post-Assad Syria, a natural host to delegations to negotiate peace in Ukraine and, increasingly, as a potentially valuable military-industrial partner for a European Union that needs to strengthen its defense capabilities. In May, the PKK announced that it is disbanding and will disarm. Abdullah Öcalan, the founding leader



of the PKK who serves a life sentence, has been bestowed legitimacy by Erdogan and his ally, the far right leader Devlet Bahçeli. The peace process with the PKK has led to a rapprochement between the Turkish regime and the Kurdish political movement. With the concurrent criminalization of the CHP, the Turkish state seeks to secure the perpetuation of the Erdogan regime. But the CHP has withstood the oppression and has retained its position as the leading party in the polls.

With the Middle East in an unprecedented state of turmoil, and with Turkey deeply involved in shaping the future of Syria and of the region - and embroiled in a rivalry with Israel over its future - providing analysis of Turkish politics is essential.

Image Credit: Fromsalih, Pixabay

ISDP aspires to help Western policymakers understand Turkish domestic and foreign policies. The Turkey Analyst has, with its wide range of Turkish as well as non-Turkish contributors—academics and journalists—provided context to and analysis of developments in Turkey since it was launched in 2008. The Turkey Center at ISDP highlights deeper currents in Turkish politics that tend to be overlooked in the standard media and academic narrative. The articles that were published in the Turkey Analyst during 2025 focused on the geopolitical upheaval in the Middle East, Israel's supremacy and its reverberations in Turkey, in particular the peace process with the Kurdish PKK, and the interrelated question of Syria's future and stability. Particular attention was also given to developments in the Caucasus, specifically the prospects of normalization between Turkey and Armenia.

The head of the Turkey Center was interviewed on *CNN International* after the arrest of Istanbul's mayor, and on several occasions by *Dagens Nyheter*. He made a presentation about the Ottoman Empire, its history and politics and their implications today at the *Engelsberg seminar 2025*, "Empires of Faith - The History of the Middle East." The presentation was subsequently broadcast by the *Axess* television channel. Articles by the head of the Turkey Center on Erdogan's crackdown on the opposition and the peace process with the PKK were published in *Foreign Policy*, *Foreign Affairs*, *New York Times* and *Financial Times*. In November 2025, he undertook a fact-finding trip to Turkey, meeting and interviewing the leader of the main opposition Republican People's Party. 2025 was even more successful than 2024 in terms of international media impact, with articles published in major English language media outlets. In December 2025, the head of the Turkey center featured in an article in *The Financial Times*.

Stockholm Center for Research and Innovation Security (SCRIS)

Head of Center : Niklas Swanström

In 2024, the Institute for Security and Development Policy (ISDP) launched its Stockholm Center for Research and Innovation Security (SCRIS)—an independent and sustainable thematic center, addressing critical issues surrounding science and innovation security amid rising geopolitical tensions and challenges posed by, among others, the People’s Republic of China (PRC), Iran and Russia.

The Center’s research and activities focus on the securitization of innovation, critical technology, Intellectual Property (IP) protection, technology transfer, research and development (R&D), and manufacturing. As one of ISDP’s newest thematic centers, SCRIS advances understanding and policy engagement at the intersection of science, technology, innovation, and security. It serves as a platform for dialogue, training, and research bridging academia, government, and industry.

Aligned with ISDP’s broader work on science, innovation, and security, the Center explores how emerging technologies, international research cooperation, and innovation ecosystems affect national and international security. Its work examines challenges such as technology transfer, IP protection, dual-use research, and foreign influence on critical sectors. By promoting responsible openness and international collaboration, SCRIS contributes to building resilient innovation environments across Europe and beyond.

Under the leadership of Dr. Niklas Swanström, SCRIS serves as a hub connecting the United States and Europe, particularly the Nordic and Baltic regions. The Center’s mission is to strengthen resilience within research and innovation systems while supporting policymakers, institutions, and businesses balance innovation, openness, and security.

Research and Publications

SCRIS published several timely analyses and policy briefs on emerging security issues in technology and innovation security, including studies on Sino-Russian cooperation in the Arctic, global semiconductor supply-chain resilience, and Europe’s green technology vulnerabilities.

- “China, Russia and Undersea Cable Vulnerability: Shoring Up Protection,” Niklas Swanström (January 2025)
- “Europe’s Green Technology Development: Chinese Challenges to Research and Innovation Security,” Niklas Swanström and Filip Borges Månsson (July 2025)
- “Safeguarding the Global Chip Supply: Lessons from PRC’s Technology Acquisition Tactics in Taiwan,” Niklas Swanström and Viktor Šimov (July 2025)
- “China’s Military-Civil Fusion in Space: Strategic Transformations and Implications for Europe,” Fatoumata Diallo (July 2025)
- “The “New” Frontier: Sino-Russian Cooperation in the Arctic and its Geopolitical Implications,” Niklas Swanström and Filip Borges Månsson (September 2025)
- “Resilient Science: Transatlantic Challenges and Opportunities: Interview with Alicia Hennig and David Biggs,” Melita Phachulia (November 2025 -in progress)

Research and Innovation Series (RIS)

In 2025, SCRIS launched the Research and Innovation Series – a recurring platform fostering dialogue between policymakers, researchers, and industry experts on emerging issues in science and innovation security.

September 2025

Webinar “Swedish Perspectives on Research and Innovation Security”

The inaugural event featured Albin Gaunt, Policy Manager at the Swedish Foundation for International Cooperation in Research and Higher Education (STINT), and Dr. Christina Wainikka, Policy Expert on Intellectual Property at the Confederation of Swedish Enterprise. The discussion explored Swedish approaches to safeguarding research integrity and innovation capacity.

October 2025

Fireside Discussion with Dr. Alicia Hennig

SCRIS hosted a fireside discussion with Dr. Alicia Hennig, Associated Senior Research Fellow at ISDP, examining the ethical dimensions of research and innovation security. The discussion addressed responsibility in international academic collaboration, scientific integrity, and the balance between openness and protection in global partnerships.



October 2025

Roundtable Discussion with David Biggs

A roundtable led by David Biggs, Senior Fellow at ISDP, explore Europe’s evolving role in science, technology, and research security amid shifting geopolitical dynamics. The session emphasized transatlantic approaches to safeguarding research and fostering responsible technological development. Further RIS discussions are planned for early 2026.



Training and Capacity Building

April 2025

RES Cybersecurity Workshop at Jagiellonian University (Krakow, Poland)

SCRIS led a cybersecurity workshop hosted by the Centre for International Security and Development (CISAD) at Jagiellonian University, focusing on strategies to mitigate security risks in academia. The sessions covered cybersecurity threats to research institutions, the role of disinformation in research and higher education, balancing open science with security, and recruitment and intelligence risks, including a scenario-based exercise on academic cybersecurity.

October 2025

Workshop on Peace and Security Governance and a Seminar on Research and Education Security at the Centre for International Studies and Development (CISAD), Jagiellonian University (Krakow, Poland)

Niklas Swanström and Yi-Chieh Chen, Project Manager and Junior Research Fellow, participated in sessions on peace and security governance and research security, sharing insights from Taiwan and Europe on balancing scientific openness with national security and strengthening resilience in research institutions.



Visits to ISDP

ISDP hosted a seminar on “Peace by Partnership: Europe and Korea in the New Geopolitics of Northeast Asia”

November 2025: ISDP hosted an in-person seminar bringing together experts from Sweden and Europe, and Korea to discuss evolving geopolitical dynamics and key issues, including regional security, Russia-China-North Korea coordination, Korea-Japan relations, the China-Taiwan issue, inter-Korean relations, prospects for Nordic/EU-Korea cooperation.



ISDP’s Stockholm Taiwan Center Organized a Roundtable Discussion with Jason Hsu



August 2025: Jason Hsu, Senior Fellow at Hudson Institute and a former Taiwanese legislator, visited ISDP. He gave a presentation about a 2025 Taiwan Contingency Tabletop Exercise and its core findings, followed by a roundtable discussion on the topic.

Chih-Mei Luo visited ISDP’s Stockholm Taiwan Center

August 2025: Chih-Mei Luo, EU Jean Monnet Chair and Professor in the Department of Public Administration and Policy at National Taipei University (NTPU), visited ISDP’s Stockholm Taiwan Center. During the visit, she engaged in a fruitful discussion on Sweden’s green transition strategy and experience, as well as the challenges Taiwan faces and the lessons it can draw from Sweden.



**Strengthening strategic partnerships between Korea, the EU, and Nordic countries:
ISDP staff convened for a roundtable discussion with Mr. Jeenou Yi**



June 2025: ISDP staff convened for a roundtable discussion with Mr. Jeenou Yi, the current guest researcher at the Stockholm Korea Center. Mr. Yi's research during his guest researcher residency focuses on strengthening strategic partnerships between Korea, the EU, and Nordic countries in areas such as human rights, international rule-based order, and democratic values.

**The Stockholm Korea Center hosted
a delegation from the National
Assembly Research Service (NARS)**

June 2025: The Stockholm Korea Center had the pleasure of hosting a delegation from the National Assembly Research Service (NARS). During the visit, a roundtable discussion about DPRK-Russia-China cooperation was held. In continuation of this, the consequences for Europe, as well as the importance of the EU and the ROK increasing their cooperation across multiple sectors to counterbalance these changes in the international system, were further explored.



**Taiwan's Bid for WHA participation as
the WHO Faces Uncertainty - ISDP
organized a roundtable discussion**

April 2025: Dr. Klement Ruey-sheng Gu, Representative of Taipei Mission in Sweden, visited ISDP for a roundtable discussion on the topic of Taiwan and the World Health Assembly (WHA). During the discussion, Taiwan's bid for meaningful participation in the WHA was discussed along with the technical obstacles to Taiwan's inclusion, how Taiwan can be supported, and what it means for Taiwan that the U.S. is withdrawing from the WHO.

ISDP had the pleasure of hosting a practicum group from the U.S. National War College



April 2025: ISDP had the pleasure of hosting a practicum group from the U.S. National War College, visiting Stockholm as part of their Group Strategy Research Project focused on developing a U.S. strategy toward Sweden and Finland.

The Influence of Sino-Russian Cooperation on Finland's Energy Policy – Associated Senior Research Fellow Mia Landauer visited ISDP for a seminar

June 2025: The Stockholm Korea Center had the pleasure of hosting a delegation from the National Assembly Research Service (NARS). During the visit, a roundtable discussion about DPRK-Russia-China cooperation was held. In continuation of this, the consequences for Europe, as well as the importance of the EU and the ROK increasing their cooperation across multiple sectors to counterbalance these changes in the international system, were further explored.



Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Uzbekistan: ISDP received a delegation of Uzbek representatives

February 2025: ISDP welcomed a delegation from Uzbekistan for a roundtable discussion on gender issues and women empowerment in the country. The Uzbek delegation consisted of H.E. Mr Rakhmatulla Nurimbetov, Ambassador of Uzbekistan to Sweden, and more representatives of the Uzbek Embassy, as well as Mr. Odiljon Kuysinov, Ms. Rushana Aliakbarova, and Ms. Shakhinabonu Rakhmatullaeva from the Nordic International University in Tashkent.

Organization

ISDP Board

The ISDP Board consists of high-level professionals and convenes five times a year.

Dr. Anna Wieslander

*Chairman of the Board
Director for Northern Europe,
Atlantic Council*

(Amb) Olof Ehrenkrona

CEO at Stockholms Hjärnverk AB

(Amb) Jakob Kiefer

fmr Ambassador

Col. (ret) Jan Mörtberg

*Deputy Chairman of the Board
Member of the Royal Swedish Academy of
War Sciences*

Dr. Per Storm

CEO, Mahvie Minerals AB (publ.)

Jenny Eklund

*Client Executive Asia and
Senior Vice President at SEB*

ISDP Office

Dr. Niklas Swanström is the Executive Director and Dr. Svante Cornell is the Vice Executive Director of the Institute. Maud Kahn is the Finance Manager. ISDP's main office is located at Västra Finnbodavägen 2, Nacka, Stockholm, Sweden. In 2025, ISDP consisted of 16 staff members, 10 men and 6 women.

Recruitment

During 2025, ISDP had the pleasure of recruiting the following new staff member:

Christopher Peterstam

Junior Research Fellow

Internship Program

Each semester ISDP accepts four to eight interns from all over the world to assist in the work of the Institute. The ISDP internship program offers the interns work experience in an international environment, encourages them to write and publish with staff members, and shoulder progressive responsibilities within the organization. During 2025, the 17 individuals from 12 countries enrolled in the internship program were:

Federica Bagna

Stockholm Taiwan Center

Xuan Dong

Stockholm China Center

Tristan Eng

*Stockholm Center for South
Asian and Indo-Pacific Affairs*

Felicia Kämpe

Stockholm China Center

Mariya Krupach

*Stockholm Center for South
Asian and Indo-Pacific Affairs*

Toby James Logan

*Stockholm Center for South
Asian and Indo-Pacific Affairs*

Valerio Nejoui

Stockholm China Center

Synne E. Norseth

Stockholm Korea Center

Christopher Peterstam

Asia Program

Melita Phachulia

*Asia Program/ Stockholm
Center for Research and
Innovation Security*

Katja Pomortseva

Stockholm China Center

Anahita Poursafir

*Stockholm Center for South
Asian and Indo-Pacific Affairs*

Giulia Saccone

*Stockholm Center for South
Asian and Indo-Pacific Affairs*

Loke Sandvall

Stockholm China Center

Pedro Silva

Stockholm Korea Center

Viktor Šimov

Stockholm Taiwan Center

Ines Vassort

*Stockholm Center for South
Asian and Indo-Pacific Affairs*

Visiting Fellows and Guest Researchers

ISDP regularly invites visiting fellows to undertake research at the Institute. The Visiting Fellows Program provides opportunities for professional development to scholars and other specialists and networking opportunities in Sweden. During their stay, fellows conduct research on a topic related to the Institute's core areas. Some scholars visit ISDP as Guest Researchers connected to ISDP's projects. Through 2024 the following individuals joined ISDP as Visiting Fellows and Guest Researchers:

Chia-Chien Chang

National Chengchi University, Taiwan

Go Myong Hyun

*Hybrid Threat Research Center at the institute
for National Security Strategy, South Korea*

Yun Hyunju

Ministry of Unification, South Korea

Minjee Park

Ministry of Health and Welfare, South Korea

Seon Woohyung

Ministry of Unification, South Korea

Jeenou Yi

Korea Young Leaders Forum, South Korea

Financial Review

INCOME

The Institute has successfully maintained a diversified income base, with a total revenue of 16,2 MSEK. Funding from the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs accounted for around 32 percent of the total revenue. During 2025, none of the revenues were linked to the Institute's taxable operations.

COSTS

During 2025, the focus has been on continued cost control. The Institute's greatest asset is its human resources. Personnel costs therefore continue to be a large part of the Institute's overall budget. It is vital that the Institute continues and develops this primary resource to maintain its current position as an attractive think tank for Swedish and international funders.

RESULT

For 2025 the Institute has a result of -171 TSEK.

LOOKING AHEAD

The Institute's long-term budget and prognosis indicates that activities can proceed with continued effective results. ISDP will continue to focus on a diversified funding and create long-term, stable relationships with all stakeholders, as well as consistently aim to achieve high-quality outputs. Funding from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs Sweden, Japan Bank for International Cooperation, Korea Foundation, and the European Commission - Horizon Europe, amongst others, will continue into 2025.

AUDITOR

The auditor of ISDP is Micaela Karlström at MOORE Allegretto

FIVE-YEAR FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

	2025	2024	2023	2022	2021
Income*	16 219 615	16 216 296	14 361 944	16 547 140	14 277 085
Expenses**	16 391 427	16 540 643	14 262 117	16 358 975	14 122 072
Reported Results	-171 812	-324 347	99 827	188 165	155 013

*Incoming Resources including Revenue, Government Grant and Other Grants

**Resources Expended including Result (EBIT), Financial Revenue and costs, Appropriations and Tax

INCOME STATEMENT

	2025	2024
Revenue	241 926	199 107
Government grants	9 228 494	8 330 874
Other grants	6 749 195	7 686 315
<i>Total</i>	16 219 615	16 216 296
Costs		
Personnel costs	-11 367 105	-11 508 372
Other costs	-4 966 849	-5 009 961
Result (EBITDA)	-114 339	-302 037
Depreciation	-57 473	-22 310
Result (EBIT)	-171 812	-324 347
Interest, interest cost etc.		
Tax		
Net Result	-171 812	-324 347

BALANCE SHEET

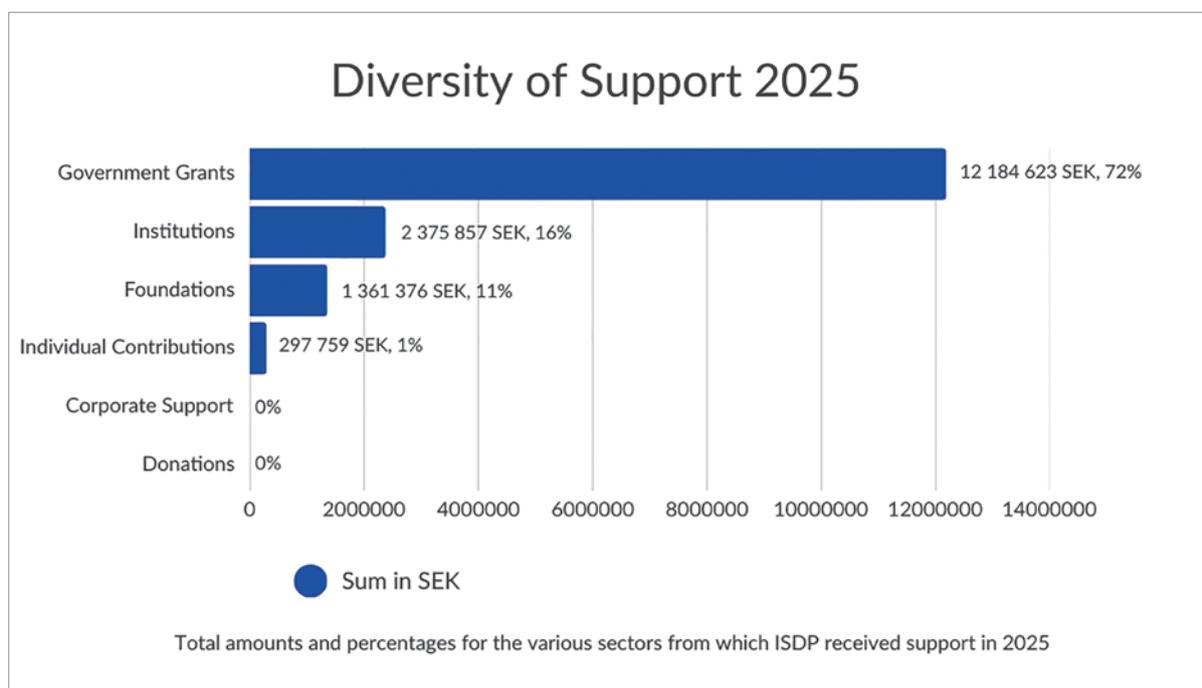
ASSETS	31-12-2025	31-12-2024
<i>Fixed assets</i>		
Inventories	459 865	38 611
Total	459 865	38 611
<i>Current assets</i>		
Account receivables	130 798	12 177
Prepaid expenses and accrued income	1 053 066	1 374 242
Liquid assets	2 952 945	4 083 321
Total	4 136 808	5 469 740
TOTAL ASSETS	4 596 673	5 508 351

LIABILITIES AND EQUITY		
<i>Current Liabilities</i>		
Accounts payable	539 875	472 196
Tax liabilities	-63 151	-70 663
Prepaid income	2 200 805	2 875 919
Other current liabilities	361 078	417 694
Interim liabilities	1 346 433	1 429 760
Total	4 385 040	5 124 906
<i>Equity</i>	211 633	383 445
Total	211 633	383 445
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	4 596 673	5 508 351

FUNDERS IN 2025

ISDP's work is strengthened by engaging with funders, who share the Institute's interests in interpreting and informing the policy debate. The support provided by funders to the Institute is invaluable and allows ISDP to expand and improve its work, and to sustain its independence. ISDP acknowledges and appreciates the funders' support and are humbled by their confidence in the Institute's work. ISDP seeks to cooperate with its funders concerning projects and deliverables. Nonetheless, ISDP does not accept influence or instructions by funders with regard to content or conclusions drawn in its analytical work or concerning the division of responsibilities in ongoing projects.

This list includes core and project funding during the year 2025.



This list includes core and project funding during the year 2025.

The five largest contributors are:

- Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden
- Taipei Mission in Sweden
- Japan Bank for International Cooperation
- Korea Foundation
- European Commission – Horizon Europe

Institute for Security and Development Policy

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