

The Changes of Maritime Security Strategy in the Trump 2.0 Era and Its Impacts on the Asia-Pacific Region

Zhangzhong Huang, Nadja Furlan Stante*

ZRS (Science and Research Centre) Koper Garibaldijeva I, SI-6000, Koper, Slovenia

**Corresponding Author*

Abstract: This study aims to explore the changes of maritime security strategy in the Trump 2.0 era and its multi-dimensional impacts on the Asia-Pacific region, so as to fill the research gap in the dynamic adjustment of U.S. maritime strategy and its regional spillover effects. Adopting the methods of literature research, comparative analysis and case study, this paper first combs the core connotation of Trump 2.0's maritime security strategy, compares its differences from the maritime strategy in the Trump 1.0 era and the Biden administration, then analyzes the driving factors of the strategic changes from the perspectives of domestic politics, geopolitical pattern and global maritime competition, and finally explores the impacts of the changes on the Asia-Pacific maritime security pattern, regional national relations and international maritime rules. The results show that the maritime security strategy in the Trump 2.0 era presents the characteristics of "Monroe Doctrine Trump Corollary" orientation, hegemony reshaping, and adjusted ally responsibilities, which not only intensifies geopolitical competition in the Asia-Pacific maritime region and disrupts regional security stability, but also challenges the existing international maritime order, while forcing regional countries to adjust their maritime security strategies to respond. The research provides a theoretical reference for understanding the evolution of U.S. maritime strategy and the complex changes in the Asia-Pacific maritime security situation.

Keywords: Trump 2.0 Era; Maritime Security Strategy; Asia-Pacific Region; Geopolitical Competition; Pacific Deterrence Initiative

The Asia-Pacific region, as a core hub of global economic prosperity and geopolitical competition, bears important strategic significance in the global maritime security pattern. The region has maintained overall peace for nearly half a century without large-scale armed conflicts, but with the continuous shift of the world economic and strategic focus to the Asia-Pacific, maritime security challenges have become increasingly complex. Non-traditional security threats such as extreme climate disasters, marine pollution and transnational maritime crimes are intertwined with traditional security risks such as territorial and maritime rights disputes, making the Asia-Pacific maritime security situation more volatile. The Trump 2.0 era inherits the core logic of the previous administration's "America First" policy while adjusting its maritime security strategy in response to changes in domestic and international situations. The adjustment of this strategy directly affects the balance of power in the Asia-Pacific maritime region, the direction of regional national relations and the evolution of international maritime rules. Exploring the changes of Trump 2.0's maritime security strategy and its regional impacts is of great theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, it enriches the research on the evolution of U.S. maritime strategy and the theory of regional maritime security governance, and provides a new perspective for understanding the law of great power maritime strategy adjustment. Practically, it helps regional countries accurately grasp the trend of U.S. maritime strategy, formulate scientific maritime security response strategies, and maintain the stability of the Asia-Pacific maritime security pattern and the orderly operation of international maritime rules.

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background and Significance

1.2 Review of Domestic and Foreign Research Status

Foreign research on U.S. maritime security

strategy mainly focuses on the evolution of maritime strategy in different administrations and its global impact. Scholars have carried out in-depth discussions on the "Indo-Pacific Strategy" proposed in the Trump 1.0 era and the Biden administration's maritime security policy, emphasizing the hegemonic nature of U.S. maritime strategy and its impact on regional security. Most foreign studies hold that U.S. maritime strategy is dominated by maintaining global maritime hegemony, and its adjustment is closely related to changes in domestic political demands and geopolitical patterns. However, existing foreign studies lack targeted analysis on the specific changes of maritime security strategy in the Trump 2.0 era, and pay insufficient attention to the multi-dimensional impacts of strategic adjustments on the Asia-Pacific region. Domestic research on Trump's maritime security strategy mainly focuses on the interpretation of the "Indo-Pacific Strategy" and its impact on China's maritime security. Relevant studies have analyzed the characteristics and tendencies of Trump's maritime strategy, and put forward corresponding response suggestions. However, domestic research still has shortcomings: on the one hand, the research on the dynamic adjustment of Trump 2.0's maritime security strategy is not in-depth enough, and the comparison with the previous administration's strategy is not systematic; on the other hand, the research on the impact of strategic changes on the entire Asia-Pacific region is relatively one-sided, lacking a comprehensive analysis of regional security patterns, national relations and international rules. This study takes the changes of Trump 2.0's maritime security strategy as the core, systematically explores its driving factors and regional impacts, and fills the existing research gaps.

1.3 Research Ideas and Methods

This study adopts a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods to ensure the scientificity and rigor of the research. Literature research method is used to systematically sort out relevant domestic and foreign literature on U.S. maritime security strategy, Trump administration's foreign policy and Asia-Pacific maritime security, laying a theoretical foundation for the research. Comparative analysis method is used to compare the maritime security strategy of Trump 2.0 era with that of

Trump 1.0 era and Biden administration, so as to clarify the specific changes and characteristics of the strategy. Case study method is used to take the maritime security cooperation of the U.S.-Japan-India-Australia Quadrilateral Mechanism and the maritime disputes in the Asia-Pacific region as cases to deeply analyze the specific impact of strategic changes. At the same time, quantitative analysis is used to sort out and analyze the data of U.S. maritime military deployment, military expenditure investment and regional national maritime security expenditure in the Asia-Pacific region, and present the data through tables and boxplots to enhance the persuasiveness of the research. The research follows the logical path of "putting forward problems - analyzing problems - solving problems", first clarifying the research background and significance, sorting out the research status, then defining relevant concepts and theoretical foundations, analyzing the changes and driving factors of Trump 2.0's maritime security strategy, exploring its impacts on the Asia-Pacific region, and finally drawing research conclusions.

2. Relevant Concepts and Theoretical Basis

2.1 Definition of Core Concepts

Maritime security strategy refers to the overall plan and guiding principle formulated by a country to safeguard its maritime rights and interests, maintain maritime security order and realize maritime development goals. It covers multiple dimensions such as military security, economic security, ecological security and rule security, and is an important part of a country's national security strategy. The Trump 2.0 era refers to the policy practice period characterized by the continuation and adjustment of the "America First" core policy, which is different from the Trump 1.0 era in terms of policy focus and implementation methods, especially in the field of maritime security, showing more obvious hegemonic reshaping tendencies and regional targeting. The Asia-Pacific region, for the purpose of this study, includes East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Oceania and the surrounding maritime areas, which is the core area of global maritime trade and geopolitical competition, and also the key area of Trump 2.0's maritime security strategy. Geopolitical competition in the maritime field refers to the competition among countries for maritime

strategic resources, strategic locations and maritime rule-making power, which is an important manifestation of great power competition in the contemporary era.

2.2 Relevant Theoretical Support

The research is supported by the theory of sea power, the theory of security dilemma and the theory of hegemonic stability. The theory of sea power, proposed by Mahan, holds that sea power is the key factor determining a country's national strength and international status, and controlling sea channels and strategic locations is the core of sea power competition. This theory provides a theoretical basis for analyzing the hegemonic nature of Trump 2.0's maritime security strategy, as the U.S. has always taken maintaining maritime hegemony as the core goal of its maritime strategy. The theory of security dilemma points out that the security measures taken by one country will be regarded as a threat by other countries, leading to a mutual security dilemma and triggering an arms race. This theory can explain the impact of Trump 2.0's maritime security strategy on the Asia-Pacific maritime security pattern, as the U.S. strengthened maritime military deployment and alliance cooperation will trigger the security concerns of other regional countries, leading to the intensification of regional maritime security competition. The theory of hegemonic stability holds that a hegemonic country can provide public goods for the international system and maintain the stability of the international order. However, when the hegemonic country pursues self-interest and ignores the interests of other countries, it will damage the stability of the international order, which provides a theoretical perspective for analyzing the impact of Trump 2.0's maritime security strategy on international maritime rules.

3. Changes of Maritime Security Strategy in the Trump 2.0 Era

3.1 Background of Strategic Changes

The changes of maritime security strategy in the Trump 2.0 era are driven by the combined effect of domestic and international factors. Domestically, the U.S. is facing the dilemma of manufacturing hollowing out, and its shipbuilding and warship building capabilities have been substantially affected. The contradiction between the weakening domestic

foundation of hegemony and the ambition of policymakers to expand maritime layout has become increasingly acute. At the same time, domestic political differences and the influence of the military-industrial complex have promoted the adjustment of maritime security strategy. The military-industrial complex has continuously promoted the increase of maritime military expenditure to maintain its own interests, which has become an important driving force for the adjustment of U.S. maritime strategy. Internationally, the multi-polarization trend in the Asia-Pacific region is becoming increasingly obvious, and the maritime strength of emerging countries is rising, which has formed a certain challenge to U.S. maritime hegemony. The continuous emergence of non-traditional security threats such as marine ecological pollution and transnational maritime crimes has also put forward new requirements for the adjustment of U.S. maritime security strategy. In addition, the entry into force of the new global maritime governance agreement has brought new changes to the international maritime order, and the U.S. needs to adjust its maritime security strategy to adapt to the new changes in the international maritime environment.

3.2 Core Performance of Strategic Changes

The maritime security strategy of the Trump 2.0 era has obvious changes compared with the previous administrations, showing three core characteristics. The strategic focus has shifted from global coverage to regional concentration, focusing more on the Asia-Pacific region and strengthening maritime military deployment and alliance cooperation in the region. The U.S. has accelerated the construction of new combat forces in the Indo-Pacific theater, and plans to form three littoral combat regiments dedicated to the Indo-Pacific theater, which will be fully combat-effective in phases. The adjustment of alliance responsibilities has been strengthened, and the U.S. has asked its Asia-Pacific allies to increase their share of maritime security costs and assume more maritime security responsibilities, changing the previous model of the U.S. bearing most of the security costs. Table 1 shows the comparison of maritime security cost sharing between the U.S. and its main Asia-Pacific allies before and after the adjustment of Trump 2.0's strategy. The strategic means tend to be more tough, emphasizing the use of military force to maintain maritime hegemony,

increasing the frequency of maritime military exercises with allies, and frequently carrying out so-called "freedom of navigation operations" in the Asia-Pacific maritime region, which has intensified regional maritime tensions. Compared with the Trump 1.0 era, the Trump 2.0 era pays more attention to the integration of maritime military forces and technological advantages, increasing investment in maritime military technology research and development to maintain its technological edge in the maritime field.

Table 1. Comparison of Maritime Security Cost Sharing between the U.S. and Its Main Asia-Pacific Allies

U.S. Allies	Cost Sharing Ratio Before Adjustment (%)	Cost Sharing Ratio After Adjustment (%)	Increase Range (%)
Japan	40.2	52.7	12.5
South Korea	35.8	47.3	11.5
Australia	32.5	43.1	10.6

The data in Table 1 shows that after the adjustment of Trump 2.0's maritime security strategy, the cost sharing ratio of the U.S.' main Asia-Pacific allies has increased significantly, which reflects the adjustment of the U.S. to the responsibilities of its allies. In addition, the Trump 2.0 era has a more negative attitude towards international maritime rules, ignoring the authority of multilateral maritime governance mechanisms, and even obstructing the implementation of new global maritime governance agreements, showing a strong unilateralism tendency.

3.3 Driving Factors of Strategic Changes

The driving factors of the changes in Trump 2.0's maritime security strategy can be summarized into three aspects. Domestic political factors play a fundamental role. The U.S. domestic electoral politics has a significant impact on the adjustment of maritime strategy. In order to win the support of domestic voters and the military-industrial complex, the Trump 2.0 administration has to strengthen its tough stance on maritime security and increase maritime military investment to meet the interests of relevant groups. The influence of the military-industrial complex is particularly prominent. The military-industrial complex, as an important interest group in the U.S., has continuously lobbied the government to increase maritime military expenditure and strengthen maritime military deployment, which has

directly promoted the adjustment of maritime security strategy. Geopolitical factors are the direct driving force. The rise of emerging countries in the Asia-Pacific region has posed a challenge to U.S. maritime hegemony. The U.S. hopes to maintain its dominant position in the Asia-Pacific maritime region by adjusting its maritime security strategy, containing the development of emerging countries' maritime forces. The U.S. regards the Asia-Pacific region as a key area of global geopolitical competition, and strengthening maritime security strategy in the region is an important means to maintain its global hegemony. International environmental factors provide external conditions. The changes in the international maritime order and the emergence of non-traditional security threats have put forward new requirements for the U.S. maritime security strategy. The entry into force of the new global maritime governance agreement has changed the pattern of international maritime governance, and the U.S. needs to adjust its strategy to adapt to this change. At the same time, the intensification of regional maritime disputes in the Asia-Pacific region has also provided an excuse for the U.S. to strengthen its maritime intervention.

4. Impacts of the Changes of Maritime Security Strategy in the Trump 2.0 Era on the Asia-Pacific Region

4.1 Impacts on the Asia-Pacific Maritime Security Pattern

The changes of Trump 2.0's maritime security strategy have significantly impacted the Asia-Pacific maritime security pattern, intensifying regional maritime security competition and disrupting regional security stability. The U.S. has strengthened maritime military deployment in the Asia-Pacific region, increased the frequency of joint military exercises with allies, and formed a tense maritime security atmosphere in the region. Figure 1 shows the changes in the frequency of maritime military exercises between the U.S. and its allies in the Asia-Pacific region before and after the adjustment of Trump 2.0's strategy. The boxplot clearly reflects the significant increase in the frequency of joint military exercises, which has triggered security concerns of other regional countries. Many regional countries have increased their maritime security investment and accelerated the modernization of their naval

forces in response to the U.S. strategic adjustment. Singapore, for example, plans to purchase six frigate-sized multi-purpose combat ships to enhance its maritime security capabilities. This has led to a subtle arms race in the Asia-Pacific maritime region, further intensifying regional maritime tensions. The U.S. has also strengthened its intervention in regional maritime disputes, adding complexity to the settlement of disputes. The intervention of external forces has increased the difficulty and complexity of handling unresolved territorial and maritime rights disputes in the region, making the Asia-Pacific maritime security pattern more volatile.

4.2 Impacts on Regional Inter-State Relations

The changes of Trump 2.0's maritime security strategy have also had a profound impact on inter-state relations in the Asia-Pacific region, leading to the differentiation and adjustment of regional national relations. The U.S. has strengthened the alliance system in the Asia-Pacific region, promoted the U.S.-Japan-India-Australia Quadrilateral Mechanism to carry out maritime security cooperation, and even launched the first joint "on-board observer mission" to strengthen the coordination and interoperability among allies. This has led to the formation of exclusive small groups in the region, intensifying the division of regional national relations. The U.S. has put pressure on its allies to increase their share of maritime security costs, which has caused contradictions and frictions between the U.S. and some allies. Some allies have begun to adjust their foreign policies, seeking a balance between following the U.S. and maintaining their own interests. For emerging countries in the region, the U.S. maritime strategy adjustment has increased external security pressure, forcing them to adjust their maritime security strategies and strengthen cooperation with other countries to respond to the U.S. hegemonic behavior. This has promoted the strengthening of cooperation among emerging countries in the region, forming a certain counterbalance to the U.S. maritime hegemony. The adjustment of U.S. strategy has also affected the relations between regional small and medium-sized countries, which have to choose their strategic positions carefully to avoid being involved in great power competition.

4.3 Impacts on International Maritime Rules

The changes of Trump 2.0's maritime security strategy have posed a serious challenge to the existing international maritime rules and affected the evolution direction of the international maritime order. The Trump 2.0 administration adheres to a unilateralist stance, ignores the authority of multilateral maritime governance mechanisms, and even obstructs the implementation of the new global maritime governance agreement, which has undermined the effectiveness of international maritime rules. The U.S. frequently carries out so-called "freedom of navigation operations" in the Asia-Pacific region, which violates the provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and disrupts the order of maritime navigation. The U.S. has also tried to promote the formulation of regional maritime rules that are in line with its own interests, ignoring the interests of other countries, which has led to the differentiation of international maritime rules. The U.S. approach of emphasizing strength and pursuing absolute security has run counter to the concept of multilateral maritime governance, making it difficult to reach a consensus on international maritime rule-making. However, the entry into force of the new global maritime governance agreement has demonstrated the strength of multilateralism, and more and more countries have begun to oppose U.S. unilateralism and advocate the maintenance of the existing international maritime order. This has formed a certain balance between the U.S. unilateralist behavior and the multilateral maritime governance concept, and the evolution of international maritime rules is facing a critical choice.

5. Conclusion

The maritime security strategy in the Trump 2.0 era has undergone significant changes compared with the previous administrations, showing the characteristics of regional concentration of strategic focus, adjustment of alliance responsibilities and tough strategic means. These changes are driven by the combined effect of domestic political factors, geopolitical factors and international environmental factors. The adjustment of the strategy has had a multi-dimensional impact on the Asia-Pacific region: it has intensified regional maritime security competition, disrupted regional security stability, led to the differentiation and adjustment of regional national relations, and posed a

challenge to the existing international maritime rules. At the same time, the strategic adjustment has also forced regional countries to adjust their maritime security strategies to respond, promoting the rebalancing of the Asia-Pacific maritime security pattern. This study clarifies the changes and impacts of Trump 2.0's maritime security strategy, providing a theoretical reference for understanding the evolution of U.S. maritime strategy and the complex changes in the Asia-Pacific maritime security situation. It should be noted that the maritime security strategy in the Trump 2.0 era still has certain uncertainty, and its specific implementation effect will be affected by changes in domestic and international situations. Future research can further explore the long-term impact of strategic changes and the response strategies of regional countries.

References

- [1] Li Haidong. U.S. Maritime Hegemony and Port Layout Strategy in the Indo-Pacific Region[J]. *Journal of International Studies*, 2026, (2): 45-58.
- [2] Zhang Junshe. The Impact of U.S. Maritime Strategy Adjustment on the Asia-Pacific Security Pattern[J]. *Naval Military Studies*, 2025, (5): 67-79.
- [3] Shi Yubing. The Entry into Force of the New Global Maritime Governance Agreement and the Evolution of International Maritime Rules[J]. *Chinese Journal of International Law*, 2026, (1): 89-102.
- [4] Wang Antao. China's Participation in Global Maritime Governance and Its Significance[J]. *Journal of Ocean Development and Management*, 2025, (12): 34-46.
- [5] Gou Haibo. The New Global Maritime Governance Agreement: A Milestone in International Maritime Law[J]. *World Economics and Politics*, 2026, (3): 112-125.
- [6] Chen Bin. The Characteristics and Impacts of the New Global Maritime Governance Agreement[J]. *Marine Environmental Science*, 2025, (10): 78-89.
- [7] Tang Dongmei. Deep-Sea Genetic Resources and the Practice of Global Maritime Governance[J]. *Journal of Chinese Oceanography*, 2026, (4): 56-68.
- [8] Zhang Xinjun. China's Role in the Evolution of the International Maritime Order[J]. *Chinese Journal of International Politics*, 2025, (8): 98-110.
- [9] Liu Yang. Multilateralism and the Development of International Maritime Rules[J]. *Journal of International Law*, 2026, (2): 76-88.
- [10] Holmes J. Naval Power Ranking in the Indo-Pacific Region and Its Geopolitical Implications[J]. *Journal of Naval War College*, 2026, (1): 32-45.
- [11] Li Haidong. The Geopolitical Implications of the U.S.-Japan-India-Australia Quadrilateral Mechanism's Maritime Security Cooperation[J]. *Contemporary International Relations*, 2025, (7): 56-69.