



TABLE 1 South Korea's self-identified role and foreign policy

President	Roh Moo-hyun (2003–2008)	Lee Myung-bak (2008–2013)	Park Geun-hye (2013–2017)	Moon Jae-in (2017–2022)	Yoon Suk-yeol (2022–Present)
Ideological leaning	Progressive	Conservative	Conservative	Progressive	Conservative
Role	Balancer between Japan and China; Northeast Asia's hub facilitating regional cooperation	Global Korea as a middle power	Facilitator that provides a forum to accumulate trust among regional actors	Balancer between the US and China; driver between the US and North Korea; middle power	Global pivotal state
Behavior	Reduce dependency on ROK–US alliance	US-centered approach	Reluctant to promote middle power agenda; equidistance or balanced diplomacy between the US and China	Hedging between the US and China	Align with the US-led regional architecture
Examples	Northeast Asia Initiative	ROK–US–Japan trilateral cooperation	Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative (NAPCI)	Northeast Asia Plus Community of Responsibility (New Southern & New Northern Policy)	Indo-Pacific Strategy

Source: S.-M. Kim (2016), Shin (2005), J. Kim and Kang (2020).