



An Analysis of the Kenya-USA Naval Diplomatic Cooperation in Enhancing Maritime Security in the Gulf of Aden

Fredrick Mwangi Kariuki, Elijah Onyango Standslause Odhiambo

Department of Arts, Governance and Communication Studies, Bomet University College, Bomet, Nairobi, Kenya
Email: standslauseodhiambo@yahoo.com

How to cite this paper: Kariuki, F.M. and Odhiambo, E.O.S. (2026) An Analysis of the Kenya-USA Naval Diplomatic Cooperation in Enhancing Maritime Security in the Gulf of Aden. *Open Access Library Journal*, 13: e15356.
<https://doi.org/10.4236/oalib.1115356>

Received: April 16, 2026

Accepted: July 25, 2026

Published: July 28, 2026

Copyright © 2026 by author(s) and Open Access Library Inc.

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Open Access

Abstract

The Gulf of Aden is a critical maritime corridor joining the Arabian Sea to the Red Sea making it one of the busiest and most strategic waterways for international trade. However, the region has faced persistent maritime security challenges including piracy, terrorism, illegal and unregulated fishing, smuggling, drug and human trafficking. These insecurity challenges have not ceased despite international cooperation and naval presence. Therefore, this study aimed to examine the strategies used by both navies in their diplomatic relationship in enhancing maritime security in the Gulf of Aden. The research project was based on liberalism, realism and constructivism theories of international relations. It adopted both descriptive and survey designs while incorporating both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The study was done in Kenya and its participants included Kenya Navy personnel, USA Navy personnel, KCGS personnel, Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs officials and diplomatic officials of Kenya and USA dealing with security matters, and a total sample of 381 respondents was used. The key findings of the study indicated that the most prominent strategies included bilateral training programs (42%), maritime domain awareness (29%), joint patrols/interdictions (23%) and technical/logistical support (11%). Effectiveness ratings of the strategies showed a strong endorsement of 73%. Overall, the study concludes that the Kenya-USA Naval diplomacy in enhancing maritime security in the Gulf of Aden have recently intensified to stabilize the region and have also impacted positively by creating transformative and emerging opportunities. The study recommended that the partnership should sustain long-term training programs. Short-term training is valuable, but transformative capacity comes from sustained programs. Kenya should expand scholarship schemes, officer exchange initiatives, and participation in U.S-led exercises. Such programs cultivate a new generation of officers with advanced technical expertise, cross-cultural understanding, and a

global outlook, ensuring continuity of professionalism. Long-term training improves capacity and the application of maritime security strategies is efficient.

Subject Areas

International Relations, Maritime Security Studies

Keywords

Kenya Navy, USA Navy, Naval Diplomacy, Maritime Security, Gulf of Aden

1. Introduction

In the 21st century, the maritime domain has gained unprecedented significance due to its role in facilitating global trade, connectivity and the projection of power. However, the maritime environment is increasingly vulnerable to a range of non-traditional security threats including piracy, maritime terrorism, smuggling, illegal fishing and transnational organized crimes. Global responses have been characterized by naval diplomacy, where states deploy naval assets not only for security operations but also as instruments of foreign policy and strategic influence. Major powers such as United States, China, Russia and European Union members have used naval diplomacy to protect economic interests, engage in cooperative security and expand their geopolitical presence [1]. After the Cold War, the focus of naval diplomacy shifted from deterrence of rival powers to cooperative security, counter-terrorism, anti-piracy and humanitarian missions. Navies became essential tools for: peacebuilding, regional and international cooperation, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief and capacity building.

The European Union Naval Force (EU NAVFOR) is the operational naval force of the European Union under the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP). It is made up of several forces that contribute naval assets, personnel and resources-according to their diplomatic agreement. It was established in response to the increasing threats of piracy and armed robbery at sea, particularly off the coast of Somalia and in the Gulf of Aden [2]. The EU NAVFOR through Operation Atalanta, launched in 2008 has played a significant role in protecting commercial shipping, deterring piracy and supporting maritime capacity, building efforts in the Horn of Africa [3]. Kenya has been an important regional partner within this framework, particularly through legal cooperation, port access and regional maritime governance initiatives. The presence of EU NAVFOR alongside other international naval actors underscores the multilateral nature of maritime security in the Gulf of Aden and provides a broader operational context within which Kenya-USA naval diplomacy is conducted. EU NAVFOR is embodied on liberal perspective of collective security while realism principles are also evident as the mission ensures maritime security for European economic interests and power projection.

In recent decades, the People's Republic of China (PRC) has transformed into a formidable maritime power through the modernization of People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN). China has adopted an increasingly and assertive form of naval diplomacy to secure maritime routes, establish political influence, shape maritime norms and promote bilateral and multilateral naval cooperations [4]. According to Gao and Allen [5], since 2008, China has conducted several joint anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden with navies of Pakistan, Russia and ASEAN states. The country has established a Military Base in Djibouti for logistical support to Chinese naval assets operating in the Gulf of Aden [6]. China's naval diplomacy has been shown through Port visits and joint exercises. In Africa, China has conducted naval visits to Kenya, Tanzania and South Africa, reinforcing diplomatic ties through military engagements. China's naval diplomacy adopts realists' thoughts since she wants to project power and protect her own interests by setting a base in Djibouti. As China's global trade and energy imports grow, she seeks to secure sea lanes of communication. Within this context, Kenya-USA naval diplomacy has been shaped by the need to enhance maritime capacity and maintain strategic partnerships.

In Africa, the Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC) was adopted in January 2009 under the auspices of the IMO. It was developed in response to the dramatic rise in piracy and armed robbery against ships in the Gulf of Aden and the Western Indian Ocean [7]. The DCoC as an instrument of naval diplomacy has fostered regional naval diplomacy through providing a platform for East African, Gulf and Indian Ocean states to engage in dialogue, coordination and joint operations. It promotes civil-military partnerships through cooperations between naval forces, coast guards and civilian maritime authorities. The DCoC has attracted cooperation and support from external naval powers such as USA, Japan, UK, India and EU. The agreement reflects liberal principles by institutionalizing cooperative mechanisms and rule-based cooperation facilitated by IMO. Constructivism thoughts are evident as the regional states see themselves as victims of maritime insecurity and respond by combating the threats together. This regional framework complements bilateral naval diplomacy and multilateral naval operations, creating an enabling environment within which Kenya-USA naval cooperation contributes to broader maritime security objectives.

The Kenya Navy is tasked to protect state's maritime interests including SLOCs and EEZ and also secure territorial waters against threats through: surveillance, patrolling, search and rescue operations, amphibious operations, anti-piracy operations and joint operations with allied navies [8]. Kenya Navy also plays a key role to enhance regional and international security through maritime diplomacy and participation in multilateral exercises and operations such as: Cutlass Express, Exercise Justified Accord and ATMIS. Kenya due to her proximity to the Gulf of Aden and also hosting the Mombasa Information Sharing Center (under DCoC), plays a critical role in enhancing regional maritime security [8]. The rising maritime insecurity threats in the region resulted to diplomatic ties between Kenya

Navy and USA Navy, which has a significant presence in the Horn of Africa. The Kenya and USA Navies formalized their military collaboration in 1980s but the cooperation on maritime security in the Gulf of Aden intensified in 2000s due to rising piracy and terrorism cases off the Somalia coast.

In 2009, Kenya and USA Navies began working together under the Combined Task Force 151 (CTF-151) of CMF to combat Somali piracy. In 2010, Kenya started taking part in Exercise Cutlass Express—a USA lead maritime security drill involving East African navies. Lately, in September 2020, there was renewal of Kenya-USA Defense Agreement reinforcing naval collaboration, counter-piracy, counter-terrorism and security in the Gulf of Aden and Western Indian Ocean [8]. The USA engages with Kenya to safeguard strategic maritime routes, protect global commerce and counter non-state actors. Kenya in turn, leverages this partnership to enhance her naval capabilities and assert her influence in regional maritime affairs—a realist perspective.

Within this complex maritime security landscape, bilateral naval diplomacy between Kenya and USA has emerged as a strategic tool for enhancing regional maritime security. Kenya's strategic location, combined with its growing maritime and blue economy interests, makes it a key partner in USA efforts to secure sea lanes and counter transnational maritime threats. Despite this critical role of Kenya-USA naval diplomacy, scholarly research has largely focused on piracy, multinational operations or regional initiatives like EU NAVFOR and DCoC, leaving limited attention to the specific impact and analytical significance of bilateral naval engagement. Understanding this partnership through lenses of liberalism, realism and constructivism provides a comprehensive framework to examine the strategic motivations, cooperative mechanisms and normative dimensions that underpin Kenya-USA naval diplomacy and its contribution to maritime security in the Gulf of Aden.

1.1. Problem Statement

The Gulf of Aden remains one of the world's most strategically significant maritime corridors, that facilitates global trade and is critical for economic and security interests of coastal states in the Horn of Africa. Despite its importance, it faces persistent threats including piracy, arms trafficking, human smuggling, illegal fishing, maritime terrorism and disruptions by non-state actors, such as Houthi rebels and Somali pirates. These challenges not only disrupt international trade but also threaten regional stability and undermine economic and security interests of coastal states such as Kenya, that rely heavily on secure sea routes for trade. In response, a range of international, regional and bilateral initiatives has been implemented including EU NAVFOR's Operation Atalanta, China's PLAN deployments, CMF and the DCoC, but significant security gaps of coordination and capacity building remained. A naval cooperation between Kenya and USA has intensified over the years, involving joint exercises, intelligence sharing, capacity building and coordinated patrols. Despite these collaborative efforts, incidents of

maritime insecurity persist in the Gulf of Aden, raising concerns about the effectiveness, sustainability and strategic outcomes of such diplomatic and military engagements.

Moreover, there is limited empirical research assessing the specific contributions, mechanisms, effectiveness and strategic significance of Kenya-USA naval cooperation in enhancing maritime security in the Gulf of Aden. Existing literature have focused on multilateral frameworks led by global powers such as NATO, CMF and EU, often overlooking the role of bilateral naval engagements comprising of African states like Kenya. There is lack of in-depth analysis on Kenya's naval role in enhancing regional maritime security. This gap in knowledge makes it difficult to assess whether current cooperation mechanisms are sufficient or require restructuring to better address evolving security threats. Therefore, this study seeks to address these gaps by examining the strategies used by both Kenya and USA in their naval diplomatic relationship in enhancing maritime security in the Gulf of Aden.

1.2. The Objective of the Study

The objective of the study was to assess the strategies used by both Kenya Navy and USA Navy in their diplomatic cooperation in enhancing maritime security in the Gulf of Aden.

1.3. Research Question

What strategies are used by both Kenya Navy and USA Navy in their diplomatic cooperation in enhancing maritime security in the Gulf of Aden?

1.4. Justification of the Study

1.4.1. Policy Justification

This study holds strong policy relevance as it addressed critical issues at the intersection of diplomacy, defense and regional security. To Kenya, the study informed national security and foreign policy decision-making especially when leveraging diplomatic and defense partnerships to enhance maritime domain awareness, naval capabilities and defense strategies. The study was helpful to the Kenya's National Maritime Security Strategy (NMSS) body that aims at addressing maritime challenges and aligns with international obligations, such as the Kenya and USA Navies bilateral relationship. The strategy focuses on regional cooperation and has participated in developing a Regional Maritime Security Strategy that addresses regional maritime challenges such as the maritime security problems at the Gulf of Aden [9]. The study findings provided proposals and recommendations on how best to apply the Kenya's vision 2030 through maritime security and effective utilization of marine resources.

For the United States, the study offered an opportunity to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of its naval engagement with African partners. The USA-Africa maritime Security strategy has been in place for long time aimed to strengthen

African Naval capabilities in combating maritime security threats [10]. Therefore, this study helped to refine its security programs and align its foreign relations goals with regional stability and sustainable maritime security.

1.4.2. Academic Justification

This study was academically significant as it contributed to the growing body of literature on maritime security and international relations by focusing on a bilateral partnership that is often overlooked—Kenya and United States. While much of the existing scholarly works largely emphasizes on multilateral maritime efforts, there is limited academic inquiry into how bilateral naval relationships, particularly between African states and major powers, contribute to maritime governance and security. By analyzing the Kenya-USA naval partnership, this research offered a unique case study that bridges diplomatic theory and strategic security practice. It expanded academic understanding of how naval diplomacy can be employed not only as a foreign policy tool but also as a mechanism for capacity building and regional stability.

2. Empirical Literature Review

2.1. The Role of the Kenya Navy in Maritime Security

The Kenyan Navy is essential for keeping the Indian Ocean and the country's coast safe to sail in. The Navy, part of the Kenya Defense Forces (KDF), protects the country's national areas, keeps its marine resources safe, and works to keep the region stable. As long as Kenya is located along the East African coast, maritime security will remain a significant national and regional issue. This is because Kenya is close to many important international trade routes. The Navy does more than protect the country. It also fights illegal trade, stops illegal fishing, stops pirates, and helps with foreign security tasks.

One of the most crucial tasks the Kenyan Navy is in charge of is the battle against piracy, a persistent issue in the Western Indian Ocean. Over the last twenty years, especially off the coast of Somalia, piracy has endangered regional economies and international commerce. The Kenyan Navy has worked with naval forces from other nations to discourage and destroy pirate activities in response to this [11]. Kitimo [12] claims that via more patrols and information sharing, regional navies—including Kenya's—have significantly reduced the frequency of pirate events. Kenya Navy has participated in Exercise Cutlass Express, a USA-led multinational naval exercise focused on improving maritime law enforcement and combating piracy. This has improved commerce and helped to create a safer marine environment. By actively participating in the battle against piracy, the Kenyan Navy helps to safeguard marine commerce routes, which are vital to the nation's economy.

The Navy's job is to stop illegal fishing in Kenya's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Illegal, unreported, and uncontrolled (IUU) fishing threatens the jobs of people who live near the coast and uses up marine resources. Studies show that

illegal fishing costs Kenya millions of dollars annually in missed income and environmental damage [13]. To deal with this issue, the Navy scans the area daily and works with the Kenya Coast Guard Service to catch foreign boats fishing without permission. These steps will help protect Kenya's blue economy and sea ecosystem for future generations.

Kenya's Navy is also crucial in preventing transnational crimes like drug and human trafficking and marine smuggling. Criminals use unregulated shipping routes to transport illicit goods, as the country's maritime borders are weak. According to a Renovic and Hamilton [14] article, the largest port of Kenya, Mombasa, has acted as a transit hub for illegal drug cargoes bound for outside markets. The Navy reacts to enhance national and regional security by carrying out thorough, coordinated operations and monitoring with other security forces to prevent these illegal trafficking actions.

Kenya Navy has played a vital role in counterterrorism. The Navy works with other national security agencies to safeguard Kenya's maritime domain against the infiltration and movement of terrorist groups such as Al-Shabaab, which has historically posed threats along Kenya's coastline and maritime borders. The Manda Bay Naval Base in Lamu County, which hosts Kenyan and USA forces, serves as a strategic outpost for monitoring extremist activity, conducting air and sea patrols and launching coordinated counterterrorism operations in the region.

The Kenya Navy plays a vital role in maritime search and rescue (SAR) operations, often collaborating with international partners to enhance regional maritime safety and security. In October 2024, the Kenya Navy and KCGS participated in joint SAR exercises with the EU Naval Force as part of Operation Atalanta. These exercises included simultaneous rescue missions and maritime interdiction operations, enhancing interoperability and response capabilities between the forces. Notably, the EU flagship ESPS SANTA MARIA and Kenya Navy's KNS SHUJAA conducted combined maneuvers, including boarding party operations [8].

Kenya Navy and United Kingdom's Royal Navy have maintained a robust and evolving partnership aimed at enhancing maritime security, countering regional threats and building long-term naval capacity. The formation of the Kenyan Marine Commando Unit (KMCU) in 2023 was modeled after the UK's Royal Marines. The Royal Marines has continued to facilitate training to KMCU to become a self-sustaining elite force within the Kenya Navy. UK Navy's ship HMS Lancaster paid a Port visit to Kenya in July 2024 and during their stay, they conducted joint naval exercises with the Kenya Navy within Kenyan territorial waters. These drills enhanced tactical skills and strengthened the collaborative framework between the two navies. Continued cooperation between Kenya Navy and Royal Navy has majorly impacted on capacity building of Kenya Navy thus facilitating her readiness and capability in combating maritime threats [8].

In addition to its work in Kenya, the Navy is also involved in military and security tasks worldwide. It backs global and regional projects like the African Un-

ion Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF). AMISOM was a regional peacekeeping operation established by AU to support the Somali government in fight against terrorism. The Kenya Navy maintained a significant naval presence off the Somali coast, enforcing a blockade that restricted smuggling, piracy and terrorism activities of Al-Shabaab. According to the Ministry of Defense (Kenya), these relationships help keep the region safe and make Kenya stronger in international security issues [8].

Combined Maritime Force is a voluntary and non-binding multinational naval partnership established in 2001 with its headquarters in Bahrain. It is aimed at promoting security, stability and prosperity in maritime regions of Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Arabian sea Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean. Kenya is a member of CMF and has participated in joint operations, information sharing and capacity building initiatives launched by CMF, to improve maritime domain awareness and interoperability. Kenya Navy has conducted counter-terrorism and counter-piracy operations to deter the threats in the region, particularly off Somali coast. By working with CMF, Kenya Navy has fostered efforts towards maritime security in the Western Indian Ocean which would eventually result to regional stability. CMF also provides Kenya Navy with access to resources and expertise, strengthening her operational readiness.

Kenya Navy's role in the maritime security plays a critical role in influencing naval diplomacy. The security operations create opportunities for cooperation and diplomatic engagement. By conducting patrols, counter-piracy missions and maritime surveillance, the Kenya Navy interacts regularly with foreign navies operating in the Western Indian Ocean, which encourages information sharing, coordination and mutual trust. These practical security engagements evolve into naval diplomacy through joint exercise, coordinated patrols and port visits that strengthen military-to-military relations and support Kenya's broader foreign policy objectives. In this way, effective maritime security enhances Kenya's credibility as a responsible regional actor, while naval diplomacy amplifies security efforts by fostering partnerships that collectively address shared maritime threats.

2.2. The Role of the USA Navy in the Gulf of Aden

The Gulf of Aden is a significant place for the USA Navy. It is a strategically important route that connects the Arabian Sea to the Red Sea. This area is an important overseas trade route, especially for oil supplies through the Suez Canal. Because it is so important for trade and politics, the Gulf of Aden has been the site of pirates, regional wars, and global tensions. Due to concerns about terrorists, protecting foreign trade lines, and maintaining marine security, the USA Navy is in the area.

One of the main goals of the USA Navy in the Gulf of Aden is to fight piracy. In the early 2000s, Somali piracy was a significant threat to commercial ships, so international military groups like the Combined Task Force 151 (CTF-151) were formed to protect them. The USA Navy, a big part of this task force, has done

several counter-piracy actions to stop and prevent pirate activities. Ahorsu *et al.* [15] note that the presence of military troops in the area has made pirate attacks much less common. Attacks have gone from being very common in 2011 to rarely happening in recent years. The USA Navy has been essential in keeping business ships safe in these seas by patrolling, monitoring, and getting involved directly.

Apart from counter-piracy efforts, the USA Navy conducts more thorough maritime security operations in the Gulf of Aden. Many security threats in the region include extremist groups like Al-Shabaab and Houthi rebels that have targeted naval and marine vessels. The navy conducts cooperative drills and intelligence-sharing initiatives with allied forces to offset these dangers [16]. These projects help maintain regional peace and protect international economic interests by preventing unlawful activities like terrorism and arms trafficking.

The USA Navy helps with crisis aid and other charity work in the Gulf of Aden. The Gulf of Aden is close to war zones like Somalia and Yemen and therefore, navy troops have been significant in helping affected places by getting supplies and medical care to them. Even though security is terrible, the USA Navy has ensured that relief aid packages can safely pass through during the current civil war in Yemen, ensuring that people who need it get it [17]. These acts show how committed the Navy is to helping people in need and how it helps keep things stable when there are no wars.

The USA Navy has a range of duties in the Gulf of Aden, managing everything from regional conflicts and humanitarian crises to terrorism and piracy. Its initiatives have strengthened marine security, reduced pirate sightings, and facilitated the safe movement of commercial and humanitarian goods. The USA Navy has to remain present in the area to maintain stability and safeguard the strategic interests of the USA and her allies. The USA Navy keeps the Gulf of Aden a safe and navigable waterway for international commerce and security by working with allies worldwide and reacting to new threats.

The USA security operations are closely connected to naval diplomacy, as the USA Navy works alongside allied and partner navies through joint exercises, coordinated missions and capacity-building initiatives. Such cooperation strengthens alliances, builds trust and reinforces international norms of maritime conduct, allowing the USA to advance its diplomatic objectives while promoting regional stability and collective security in the Gulf of Aden.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1. Liberalism Theory

Liberalism was coined by thinkers such as John Locke, Immanuel Kant, Woodrow Wilson and Adam Smith. Liberal thoughts emphasizes on the importance of international cooperation, institutions, democracy and interdependence to achieve foreign policy goals such as economic prosperity, world peace, security and stability [18]. Liberalism theory provides a valuable lens for analyzing the bilateral naval diplomacy between Kenya and USA. This theory is applicable to the naval

collaboration between Kenya and USA in the Gulf of Aden as both countries engage in joint maritime exercises, anti-piracy operations and intelligence sharing to safeguard the area. This partnership is not based on coercion but on interdependence and mutual benefit.

Liberalism in this naval diplomacy promotes the use of international and regional institutions such as AU, IGAD, UN and IMO to facilitate joint operations, information sharing and adherence to international maritime law, all aimed at enhancing maritime security and safety in the Gulf of Aden. Kenya's participation in this partnership enhances her regional influence while USA benefits from regional stability and power projection.

Furthermore, the partnership illustrates that the liberal idea that long-term stability is best achieved not through unilateral power, but through sustained dialogue, trust-building and shared commitment to international stability. By working together through mutual interests and shared objectives, Kenya and USA exemplify how liberalism facilitate the achievement of stability and security and shaping of modern naval diplomacy.

3.2. Constructivism Theory

Constructivism theory of international relations as pointed out by Wendt in 1999 and argues that international interactions are influenced by social constructs such as ideas, identities, norms and shared understandings rather than just military power and economic prosperity. This emphasizes on the role of states' identity, perceptions and diplomatic interactions in shaping foreign policy [19]. In the framework of this study, the theory allows for a rich understanding of how shared values, identities and perceptions shape diplomatic practices and cooperation strategies.

Constructivism emphasizes that the nature of naval diplomacy between Kenya and USA is not fixed but evolves through social interactions, shared norms and mutual understanding. The naval diplomacy is a product of shared security concerns between Kenya and USA. Each country is interested in stability and order. Strategies used in the diplomacy such as Joint naval exercises, patrols, port calls, training programs and intelligence sharing can be understood as strategic moves that strengthens norms of cooperation, legitimacy and commitment between the two navies, fostering a sense of belonging within a security community.

The theory allows for interpretation of how divergent norms, identities or perceptions can create friction in diplomatic relations. Misalignments in threat perception may hinder the effectiveness of the naval diplomacy, hence maritime threats persist. Constructivism identifies how shifts in norms and identity construction can open up new possibilities for cooperation. Increased convergence on maritime issues between Kenya and USA creates a platform for socializing new security norms. Such norms include MOUs, agreements and partnerships—all aimed at strengthening a collective identity for securing the region and maritime area around the Gulf of Aden.

3.3. Realism Theory

Realism theory in international relations can be traced back to classical thinkers like Thucydides, Niccolo Machiavelli and Thomas Hobbes who emphasized on power, self-interest, survival and the anarchic nature of international politics and relations [20]. This theory provides a pragmatic lens through which Kenya-USA naval diplomacy can be analyzed. The diplomacy reflects a strategic partnership in which both states seek to enhance their security and influence. Kenya aims at securing the Gulf of Aden as a regional key player in maritime security. USA as a global naval power engages in diplomacy with Kenya to protect her maritime interest and maintain influence in East Africa. The nature of this diplomacy is state-centric and transactional, emphasizing mutual benefits over shared values.

Strategies such as joint naval exercises and training, patrols and information sharing align with realist principles of hard power projection and self-help. Such initiatives serve the dual purpose of deterring regional threat like piracy and terrorism while reinforcing each state's position in the regional power structure. The challenges in this relationship are validated by realist assumptions, whereby national interests and priorities may divert over time leading to friction within the partnership. Despite challenges, realism also accounts for opportunities presented by such diplomacy. Kenya gains access to naval resources, training and international recognition, enhancing her ability to contribute to regional security. The USA secures a foothold in a strategic maritime corridor, enhancing her global reach and power projection.

3.4. Conceptual Framework

The study's independent variable is naval diplomatic cooperation between Kenya Navy and USA Navy. Its attribute variables include nature of the naval diplomatic relationship and maritime security threats that necessitates the move, strategies used in the naval diplomatic relationship, opportunities and challenges arising from the Kenya-USA naval diplomacy. The dependent variable is enhanced maritime security in Gulf of Aden characterized by reduced piracy, reduced maritime terrorism, reduced trafficking, reduced smuggling and reduced illegal fishing. Intervening variables in this study include operational readiness and capacity of the Kenya Navy, institutional and legal framework for maritime security.

The naval diplomacy between Kenya and USA is a formal bilateral security partnership put in place as a result of increased maritime threats including piracy, terrorism, smuggling, trafficking and illegal fishing in the Gulf of Aden—aiming at reducing them. Therefore, the connection between bilateral naval diplomacy and maritime security in the Gulf of Aden is based on the premise that increased and well-structured diplomatic engagement between navies leads to improved security outcomes at sea. Bilateral naval diplomacy involves joint naval exercise, intelligence sharing, technical support and training programs between Kenya Navy and USA Navy. These cooperative activities aim to enhance mutual understanding, build trust and improve operational readiness of both navies.

Opportunities such as increased international funding, access to modern naval equipment, training and technical expertise arise from the partnership. However, the partnership experiences challenges such as resource limitations, coordination and communication challenges, political and diplomatic constraints, legal and jurisdictional gaps between Kenya and USA. **Figure 1** shows the conceptual framework model.

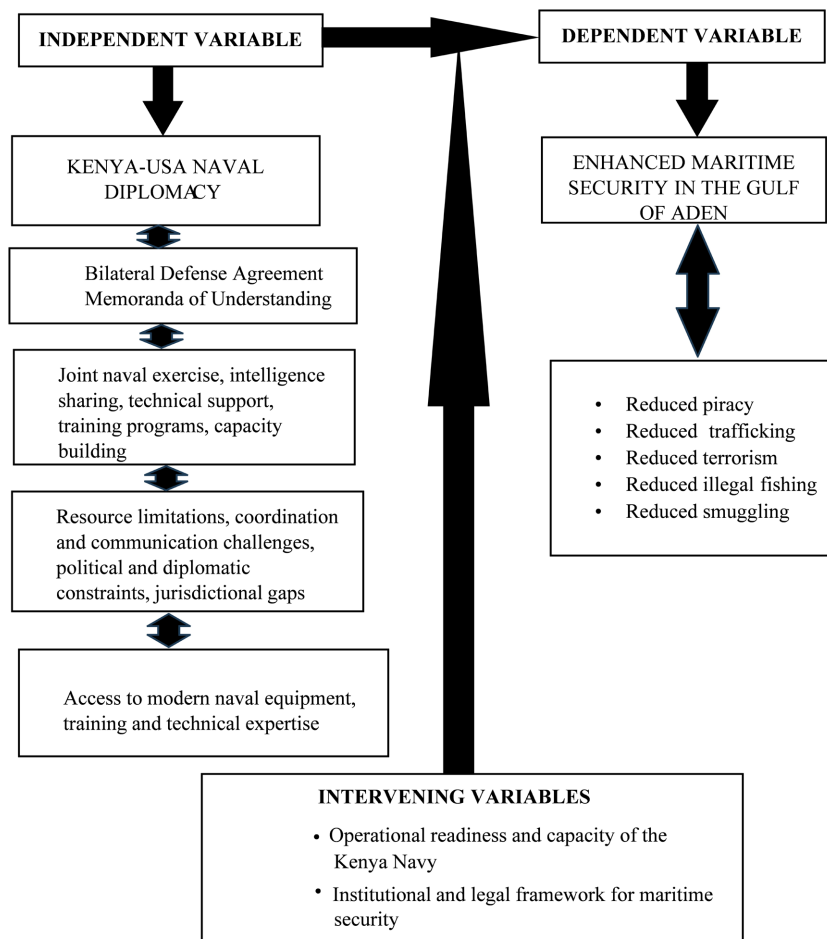


Figure 1. Conceptual framework model. **Source:** Researcher, 2025.

4. Research Methodology

4.1. Research Design

The study integrated both descriptive and survey designs to facilitate the researcher to be able to achieve a comprehensive understanding of Kenya-USA Naval diplomacy in enhancing maritime security in the Gulf of Aden. Descriptive design explores information that describes perceptions of events in a phenomenon which has already occurred [21]. This study adopts a descriptive research design to analyze, because the study seeks to systematically document and explain the nature of diplomatic engagements, strategies used in the naval cooperation, challenges faced and contributions of the diplomacy to maritime security without

altering the existing conditions.

The survey design was employed to support descriptive design. It gathered first-hand information from key stake holders involved in the naval diplomacy and maritime security initiatives in the Gulf of Aden. By designing questionnaires and interviews, the study collected perceptions, experiences and assessments from naval officers, diplomats, security experts and maritime officials. The survey approach allowed the researcher to systematically capture diverse viewpoints regarding the effectiveness of bilateral naval cooperation, challenges faced and opportunities for strengthening maritime security. The survey used both close-ended and open-ended questions to ensure a balance between quantifiable data and qualitative insights while face-to-face interviews with key informants will allow in-depth responses. Telephone surveys were also applied where physical access was difficult, thus saving time and cost.

Convenience and purposive sampling techniques were used for the study. Purposive sampling was used to select samples according to their experience and expertise in order to collect focused information. Purposive sampling was most effective to Kenya Navy personnel (operational level), KCGS personnel (operational level) and USA Navy personnel (operational level) since they are maritime security experts. Members from Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs, USA Embassy, USA Military and Defense Attachés were sampled through purposive sampling because they are experts in their professions. Convenience sampling technique selected samples that are easy to access and in this case the researcher targeted the naval personnel from local bases in Mombasa and Lamu Counties. Diplomats stationed in Kenya, officials from Ministries of Defense and Foreign Affairs were also accessible for this study. Convenience sampling is appropriate since it collects data at the moment you meet the respondents with limited procedures. To avoid possibility of convenience sampling bias, efforts were made to recruit participants across multiple settings and times.

Simultaneous triangulation design is a mixed-methods research strategy where both quantitative and qualitative data are collected concurrently but analyzed separately and the results are compared, contrasted or combined during interpretation. The results are merged during interpretation to see whether the findings confirm each other (convergence), expand on each other (complementarity) or diverge (discrepancy), providing a comprehensive view of the phenomenon under study. The purpose of this design is to cross-validate and corroborate findings from both types of data to achieve a deeper and more credible understanding of research problem. In simultaneous triangulation, both quantitative and qualitative methods are given equal importance [22].

In this study, the simultaneous triangulation design was applied whereby both qualitative and quantitative data were collected concurrently. Structured questionnaires were issued to naval officers and maritime security agencies to provide quantitative data. Semi-structured interviews and documents analysis gave qualitative data. Quantitative data was evaluated, statistically analyzed and represented

via graphs and charts, whilst qualitative data was subjected to sentiment analysis, coding, and thematic analysis to identify major themes and patterns.

Mixed method of data analysis for integration and interpretation of qualitative and quantitative findings was used by merging the two types of results for comparison, explanation and creating connections. The researcher was able to interpret them together to draw a strong and complete conclusion about the study. This method is preferred because it allows the gathering and presentation of both quantitative and qualitative data in one analysis and saves on time since the data are collected simultaneously. It also increases validity by using multiple sources to confirm findings. The researcher was able to obtain a comprehensive, cross validated and balanced understanding of diplomacy and security.

4.2. Location of the Study

This study was conducted in Kenya targeting Kenyan Maritime area in the Gulf of Aden. The Gulf of Aden is a strategic waterway connecting the Arabian sea to the Red sea through the Suez Canal. The study was based in Kenya because Kenya Navy serves as a primary national actor in the bilateral naval cooperation with the USA. Kenya hosts major diplomatic and security coordination platforms, including the AFRICOM liaison at Lamu County, which facilitates maritime cooperation. Conducting the study in Kenya also provided access to naval officers, maritime security experts, policy documents and operational reports—that contributes to data collection. Kenya offers first-hand perspectives from practitioners directly involved in missions that affect Gulf of Aden security.

The study was carried out in Nairobi County because the city is both a diplomatic and military center. Nairobi hosts key government institutions such as the Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the United States Embassy, which are directly involved in Kenya-USA naval diplomacy. Nairobi provides access to key informants such as defense policy makers, naval officials, diplomats and security experts who have firsthand knowledge and experience in Kenya - USA maritime cooperation. Nairobi city is relevant as a centralized data and documents center. Important reports, policy documents, agreements and security assessments related to maritime security and naval diplomacy are available through government offices, research institutes and libraries based in the city.

Nairobi is a strategic decision-making center where many decisions regarding Kenya's participation in naval operations and international security partnerships are made in Nairobi, making it a suitable location to study the naval diplomacy and maritime security. The city also hosts the International Peace Support Training Center (IPSTC) which provides training on maintenance of regional peace and stability. Students from IPSTC were used as key respondents of the study due to their expertise in regional security. In the city the researcher put special focus to IPSTC scholars, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defense, USA Military and Defense Attachés and USA Embassy diplomats and were characterized by high profile engagements.

Part of the study was done in Mombasa County since it is an operational base hosting Kenya Navy Headquarters in Mtongwe and other key maritime security installations, hence making it central to naval operations. Mombasa's proximity to the coastline makes it an appropriate study area because it is directly affected by maritime security threats like piracy, terrorism, smuggling and illegal fishing. Mombasa also provides access to naval personnel, KCGS personnel, security experts, maritime law enforcement officials and port authorities who are involved in daily maritime security operations. The area made it possible for the researcher to practically observe naval exercises and maritime patrols more easily in Mombasa than in Nairobi. Mombasa is also relevant due to her economic importance. The Port of Mombasa is vital for national and regional trade and is vulnerable to maritime threats. Mombasa is where naval diplomacy translates into actual operations, hence a suitable area of conducting the study.

The other part of study was done in Lamu County. Lamu is located along Kenya's northern coast and the region is close to areas with high piracy activity such as Somalia's coastline. The region has historically been vulnerable to attacks and Lamu's position offers a vantage point for studying counter-piracy and counter-terrorism operations. Lamu hosts Kenya Naval Base Manda Bay and USA Military Base, Camp Simba. The two bases enabled the researcher to reach both Kenya and USA navies personnel. Camp Simba serves as a base for the USA AFRICOM surveillance and intelligence and the USA Navy provides crucial support to Kenya in monitoring and responding to threats in the regional waters. The area is crucial for regional stability because Kenya and USA Navies personnel at Lamu area able to launch joint operations aimed at countering threats from Al-Shabaab and other extremist groups operating along the Horn of Africa's coastline. Lamu's strategic location and role in regional security makes it crucial for studying the Kenya-USA naval cooperation on maritime security.

Therefore, conducting the study in Kenya was practical because Nairobi is a strategic decision-making center whereas Mombasa and Lamu are areas for maritime operations. Respondents from Kenya were in a better position to provide reliable and informed data regarding naval operations, maritime threats, bilateral cooperation and regional security challenges. Their proximity to the study area and involvement in maritime governance and security issues made them appropriate for the study.

4.3. Target Population

Ahmad *et al.* [23] defines population as the whole group of individuals, events or objects that a study aims to investigate. The target population is made up of groups of individuals to whom the findings and results of the study are relevant. It is mandatory for the study population to comprise the individuals, events or objects that align with the parameters set for investigation thus, the researcher should be keen on determining his research population. This study targeted 300 security personnel deployed to KCGS (operational level), 500 personnel of Kenya Navy (operational level), 50 senior Kenya Navy officers (strategic level), 50 officers from

International Peace Support Training Centre (IPSTC), 50 officials from Ministry of Defense and 50 officials from Ministry of Foreign Affairs. From the USA side, the research targeted 200 personnel of USA Navy (operational level), 20 officers from USA Military Attaché, 10 officers from USA Defense Attaché and 40 officials from the USA Embassy in Kenya.

The Navy personnel from Kenya, USA and KCGSs are considered for their direct involvement in conducting maritime security operations and joint training hence can elaborate very well on the nature of maritime threats experienced and challenges they encounter. The personnel were grouped into operational and strategic levels because such classification helps to capture different perspectives, roles and responsibilities that affect how individuals interact with and perceive policies, operations and international cooperation. Strategic level consists of senior officers and commanders who are responsible for long-term planning, formulating policies and making decisions on naval operations and partnerships. Thus, these personnel have a direct experience with the naval cooperation and her role in maritime security in the Gulf of Aden. Operational level consists of mid-level personnel focused on tactical execution of strategies and policies. These personnel have a firsthand experience with the aspects of patrols, surveillance, exercises and all maritime security efforts in the Gulf of Aden.

Officials from the Ministry of Defense and Foreign Affairs, including the Permanent Secretaries are key decision and policy makers on matters leading to security bilateral relations, thus playing a significant role in this study. The USA Military and Defense Attachés and USA Embassy to Kenya are instrumental in executing USA Naval diplomacy with Kenya Navy. Officials from the IPSTC are senior officers representing security agencies and militaries across the region in the college situated in Kenya and they have a broader understanding and experience of international peace support operations and they gave relevant information about the maritime diplomacy between Kenya and USA in enhancing maritime security in the Gulf of Aden.

4.4. Sampling Frame

The sampling frame for this study consisted of individuals and documents involved in the Kenya-USA naval diplomacy and maritime security in the Gulf of Aden. Participants included personnel from Kenya Navy, USA Navy, officials from Kenya Ministry of Defense and diplomats from USA Embassy in Nairobi and Kenya's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. These individuals were selected based on their knowledge, roles or professional experience related to bilateral maritime cooperation. The documents' sampling frame includes official agreements, policy documents, naval operations reports, media reports, publications, journal articles or theses reports. Convenience sampling was then conducted to participants based on their accessibility, availability and willingness to take part. Both participants and documents were selected using purposive and convenience sampling techniques to ensure relevance, accessibility and diversity of perspectives. A 30 % formula sampling approach was applied to each category to ensure manageable and

representative subset for analysis.

The researcher applied the 30% formula to calculate the sample size for each category by multiplying the total number of respondents by 30%. This study had a population of 1270 respondents and after calculations, the sample comprised 381 respondents. It included 90 respondents from security personnel and agencies deployed to Kenya Coast Guard Service (operational level), 150 samples of Kenya Navy (operational level), 15 samples comprising of senior Kenya Navy officers (strategic level), 15 officers from International Peace Support Training Centre (IPSTC), 15 officials from Ministry of Defense and 15 officials from Ministry of Foreign Affairs. From the USA side, the research targeted 60 samples of USA Navy (operational level), 06 officers from USA Military Attaché, 03 officers from USA Defense Attaché and 12 officials from the USA Embassy in Kenya. The formula is simple and easy to apply, reduces bias and works well in dealing with small populations hence suitable for the study. The study sampling frame is outlined in **Table 1** below.

Table 1. Sampling frame.

Description	Number (N)	n (30% of N)	Sampling method
Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials	50	15	Purposive & convenience
Ministry of Defense officials	50	15	Purposive & convenience
Security agencies and KCGS	300	90	Purposive & convenience
Kenya Navy (operational level)	500	150	Purposive & convenience
Kenya Navy officers (strategic level)	50	15	Purposive & convenience
Officers from IPSTC	50	15	Purposive & convenience
USA Navy Personnel (operational level)	200	60	Purposive & convenience
USA Military Attaché	20	06	Purposive & convenience
USA Defense Attaché	10	03	Purposive & convenience
USA Embassy officials	40	12	Purposive & convenience
Total	1270	381	

Source: Researcher, 2025.

4.5. Data Collection Instruments

This study relied on both primary and secondary data sources during data collection process. Primary sources were used to gather data from the targeted respondents through interviews and questionnaires, whereas secondary data was obtained through document analysis. The data collection instruments were first piloted in Kisumu and Nanyuki before they were applied. Kisumu was selected for piloting

the research instruments because it hosts a significant Kenya Navy and KCGS operational presence who oversee security operations in Lake Victoria. Nanyuki was also selected for the piloting process because it hosts the British Army Training Unit Kenya (BATUK). BATUK is a critical facility for both KDF and British Army with a special focus on operational readiness, strategic military exercises and multinational collaboration. Given that this research focuses on Kenya Navy cooperation with the USA, BATUK offers a parallel context where personnel are trained in interoperability, operational coordination and defense diplomacy. Feedback from BATUK was valuable, as their insights reflected similar dynamics of international defense cooperation. Piloting constituted 10% of the sample size adding up to 39 participants. The participants were subjected to the questionnaires twice at a break of two weeks using the test-retest method. The respondents' feedback informed in clarifying wording of questions that participants misunderstood, removing double-barreled items, adjusting response scales and reordering questions to improve logical flow. Piloting also assisted in assessing clarity, testing validity and reliability. The study used both qualitative and quantitative approaches concurrently as it is advocated by Ahmadin [24] as the most effective method for obtaining adequate results in fundamental research. Summary of research instruments is illustrated in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Summary of research instruments.

Instrument	Data collected	Target respondents target and documents
Questionnaire	Quantitative	Kenya Navy, KCGS and USA Navy personnel (All in operational level). Senior military officers (strategic level), IPSTC, Ministry of Defense officials, Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials, USA diplomatic officials.
In-depth interviews	Qualitative	Kenya Ministry of Defense Reports, USA Department of Defense Reports, Kenya Navy Strategic plans, MOUs
Document analysis	Qualitative	between Kenya and USA Naval cooperation, the International Maritime Security Reports, news articles, media reports of KDF Press Releases, BBC and Al Jazeera, academic journal articles, theses and dissertations on maritime security and naval diplomacy.

Source: Researcher, 2025.

4.6. Data Analysis Techniques

Data collected from respondents was first checked for completeness, coherence and comprehensiveness. The returned and duly filled questionnaires were verified, coded and tallied. The open-ended questions containing qualitative data that were analyzed through thematic analysis by use of NVivo 15 software to highlight the key themes. The analysis followed the six-phase framework beginning with familiarization through repeated reading of transcripts. Initial codes were then generated systematically across the dataset and collated into potential themes. These themes were reviewed and refined to ensure coherence and consistency

with the coded data. Final themes were clearly defined and named to capture core meaning. The analytic process was iterative, allowing themes from the findings to accurately reflect participants' perspectives.

For quantitative data, both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. In the descriptive analysis, data collected was coded and edited as required and thereafter processed by the Statistical Packages for Social scientists (SPSS Version 30) and Excel. Descriptive statistics such as mean, mode, percentages and frequency distributions would summarize the numerical data. These statistics provided an overview of the distribution, central tendency and variability of the data, forming the basis for subsequent inferential and qualitative analyses.

After separately analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data, the results were merged through simultaneous triangulation technique for integration and interpretation of qualitative and quantitative findings to give in-depth insights about the study. This method was preferred because it allowed the collection and presentation of both quantitative and qualitative data in one analysis, giving deeper conclusions of the study.

5. Research Findings and Discussions

This section presents, analyzes, and interprets the findings of the study on Kenya–USA naval diplomatic cooperation in enhancing maritime security in the Gulf of Aden and the wider Western Indian Ocean region. The chapter integrates both quantitative and qualitative evidence to provide a holistic understanding of the subject. The data was primarily drawn from structured questionnaires administered to respondents drawn from naval personnel, policymakers, and maritime security experts and was supplemented by key informant interviews that offered contextual and experiential insights. The analysis is organized in line with the study objective of assessing the strategies employed by both navies in advancing shared maritime security interests.

5.1. Strategies Adopted in the Kenya-USA Naval Diplomacy

The objective of the study was to assess the strategies adopted in the Kenya–USA naval diplomacy in enhancing maritime security in the Gulf of Aden. Respondents highlighted various strategies as summarized in the **Table 3**.

Table 3. Strategies adopted in naval diplomacy.

Strategy Adopted	Frequency (n)	Percentage %
Bilateral Training Programs	137	42
Intelligence sharing (maritime domain awareness)	94	29
Joint Patrols & Interdictions	73	23
Technical & Logistical Support	38	11

Source: Field Data, 2025. **Note:** Respondents could select more than one option. Percentages are based on N = 324 and may sum to more than 100%.

5.2. Interpretation

According to **Table 3**, the dominant strategy identified was bilateral training programs (42%), reaffirming the focus on enhancing Kenya's naval human resource capabilities. Maritime domain awareness and intelligence sharing (29%) ranked second, demonstrating the importance of surveillance and information systems in countering non-traditional maritime threats. Joint patrols (23%) illustrate operational cooperation, while technical and logistical support (11%) highlights material assistance to ensure successful operations. These strategies emphasize the complementary blend of training, intelligence, logistics and operational action, reflecting both Kenya's navy capacity needs and the USA's strategic interests in a stable West Indian Ocean region.

Interviewees highlighted training and information sharing as the backbone of the partnership. "Our skills have improved drastically; joint exercises changed how we operate at sea," remarked a senior Kenyan naval officer. A senior USA counterpart added, "Training is effective, but without equipment modernization, effectiveness remains partial." Others emphasized the value of intelligence coordination: "Real-time data on vessel movements has saved missions," noted a Kenyan intelligence officer, while cautioning that, "trust in sharing sensitive intelligence is still a work in progress."

Policy texts reinforce these field accounts. The Djibouti Code of Conduct and Bilateral Communiqués between Nairobi and Washington all identify capacity-building, maritime domain awareness, and joint patrols as core strategic pillars. USA Indo-Pacific and Horn of Africa strategy documents likewise emphasize on training, intelligence exchange and interoperability with regional partners.

Quantitative results in **Table 3** show that bilateral training programs lead at 42%, followed by intelligence sharing (29%), joint patrols and interdictions (23%) and technical/logistical support (11%). Because respondents could select more than one strategy, percentages exceed 100 percent. Integrating these figures with the qualitative insights and documentary evidence demonstrates that Kenya-USA naval diplomacy is anchored in a hybrid strategy:

- 1) Intensive capacity building through training.
- 2) Cooperative intelligence and surveillance for maritime domain awareness.
- 3) Operational coordination via joint patrols.
- 4) Targeted logistical support.

This blend enhances Kenya's immediate operational readiness while embedding long-term institutional capability, reflecting both liberal institutional cooperation and realist attention to power asymmetries. Liberalism is reflected in the emphasis on cooperation through multilateral frameworks, joint naval exercises, capacity-building initiatives and information sharing mechanisms, which reduce uncertainty and promote collective action against maritime threats. Meanwhile, constructivism highlights how sustained interaction between Kenya Navy and the USA Navy fosters shared norms, professional identities and common understandings of maritime security, such as adherence to international maritime law and the promotion of freedom of navigation. From a realist perspective, the partner-

ship is driven by shared security interests: Kenya seeks to protect its maritime domain and trade routes from piracy and terrorism, while the United States aims to safeguard strategic sea lines of communication and maintain stability in a geopolitically vital region. Together, these approaches explain how material interests, institutional cooperation and shared norms combine to strengthen maritime security in the Gulf of Aden.

6. Summary and Conclusion

The Kenya-USA naval cooperation is formalized through bilateral agreements, MoUs and joint operational protocols. The cooperation is necessitated by various maritime security threats: piracy, terrorism, trafficking, smuggling, IUU fishing and illegal migration. The most prominent strategies include bilateral training programs (42%), maritime domain awareness (29%), joint patrols/interdictions (23%), and technical/logistical support (12%). Effectiveness ratings showed strong endorsement, with 73% rating strategies effective or very effective.

The study concludes that the Kenya-USA naval diplomacy in enhancing maritime security in the Gulf of Aden is a strategic but imbalanced partnership, where Kenya leverages USA support to secure maritime stability, while the USA consolidates its geopolitical influence in East Africa. The partnership has played a key role in reducing insecurity in the Gulf of Aden by combining military presence with international cooperation and regional capacity building. The sustained presence of Kenya and USA Navies in the region has acted as a powerful deterrent against maritime crimes. Joint operations and intelligence sharing has improved efficiency in responding to maritime crimes. The naval diplomacy has experienced a number of challenges but has been able to reduce the frequency of maritime crimes and has created transformative opportunities.

7. Recommendations

The study findings reveal both the strengths and weaknesses of Kenya-USA naval diplomacy. To maximize its benefits while addressing gaps, the study recommends that the partnership should sustain long-term training programs. Short-term training is valuable, but transformative capacity comes from sustained programs. Kenya should expand scholarship schemes, officer exchange initiatives, and participation in U.S.-led exercises. Such programs cultivate a new generation of officers with advanced technical expertise, cross-cultural understanding, and a global outlook, ensuring continuity of professionalism. Long-term training improves capacity and the application of maritime security strategies is efficient.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

References

- [1] Rowlands, K. (2018) Naval Diplomacy in the 21st Century: A Model for the Post-

- Cold War Global Order. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429460951>
- [2] Larsson, O.L. and Widen, J.J. (2024) The European Union as a Maritime Security Provider—The Naval Diplomacy Perspective. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, **47**, 1724-1746. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1057610x.2022.2058863>
 - [3] Aguilar, S.L.C. (2023) European Union Military Operations and Global Security: Ambitions and Reality. *Revista Brasileira de Estudos de Defesa*, **9**, 167-195. <https://doi.org/10.26792/rbed.v9n2.2022.75266>
 - [4] Li, X. (2023) China's New Navy: The Evolution of PLAN from the People's Revolution to a 21st Century Cold War. Naval Institute Press.
 - [5] Gao, J. and Allen, K.W. (2024) China Maritime Report No. 37: Re-Engaging with the World: China's Military Diplomacy in 2023. <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/cmsi-maritime-reports/37/>
 - [6] Dutton, P.A., Kardon, I.B. and Kennedy, C.M. (2020) China Maritime Report No. 6: Djibouti: China's First Overseas Strategic Strongpoint. <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/cmsi-maritime-reports/6/>
 - [7] Menzel, A. (2018) Institutional Adoption and Maritime Crime Governance: The Djibouti Code of Conduct. *Journal of the Indian Ocean Region*, **14**, 152-169. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19480881.2018.1467360>
 - [8] Ministry of Defense Kenya (2025) Kenya Navy's Role in Gulf of Aden Security Operations. Ministry of Defense.
 - [9] Government of Kenya (2016) National Maritime Security Strategy.
 - [10] US Department of Defense (2015) A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower. <https://www.usni.org/sites/default/files/SeapowerStrategyMar15.pdf>
 - [11] Mbugua, J.K. and Mwachinalo, S. (2017) An Assessment of Maritime Insecurity in the Kenya Maritime Domain. International Peace Support Training Centre (IP-STC).
 - [12] Kitimo, A. (2021) It Is a Big Relief as Kenya's Maritime Waters Are off the Global High-Risk List. Business Daily. <https://www.businessdailyafrica.com/bd/corporate/shipping-logistics/big-relief-as-kenya-maritime-waters-off-global-high-risk-list-3550148>
 - [13] Maina, J. (2025) Illegal Fishing Endangers Kenya's Economy and Environment. D + C Development + Cooperation. <https://www.dandc.eu/en/article/illegal-fishing-putting-kenyas-fishing-industry-risk-threatening-both-livelihoods-and>
 - [14] Renovic, J.-M. and Hamilton, C. (2019) Reporters—Kenya's Second-Largest City Becomes the World's New Drug Trafficking Hub. France 24. <https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20191018-kenyan-port-of-mombasa-becomes-world-s-new-drug-trafficking-hub>
 - [15] Ahorsu, K., Yaro, D.S. and Attachie, D. (2024) Maritime Piracy and Its Implications on Security in the Gulf of Guinea. *Eastern African Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, **3**, 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.58721/eajhss.v3i2.470>
 - [16] Shinn, D. (2020) Competition and Cooperation in the Red Sea Region. *Great Decisions*, 31-40.
 - [17] Aljazeera (2024) Yemen's Houthis Clash with U.S. Navy Ships in the Gulf of Aden. Aljazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/12/11/houthis-clash-with-us-navy-ships-in-the-gulf-of-aden>
 - [18] Kwarteng, K.N. and Frimpong, A.A. (2018) Empirical Illustration of Major Theories

- of Realism and Liberalism in International Relations. *Journal of International Journal Affairs and Global Strategy*, **6**, 49-52.
- [19] Peltonen, H. (2017) A Tale of Two Cognitions: The Evolution of Social Constructivism in International Relations. *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional*, **60**, e014. <https://doi.org/10.1590/0034-7329201700105>
- [20] Rosenberg, J. (2024) *The Empire of Civil Society: A Critique of the Realist Theory of International Relations*. Verso Books.
- [21] Pawar, N. (2020) Type of Research and Type Research Design. *Social Research Methodology*, **8**, 46-57.
- [22] Kelle, U., Kühberger, C. and Bernhard, R. (2019) How to Use Mixed-Methods and Triangulation Designs: An Introduction to History Education Research. *History Education Research Journal*, **16**, 5-23. <https://doi.org/10.18546/herj.16.1.02>
- [23] Ahmad, N., Alias, F.A. and Razak, N.A.A. (2023) Understanding Population and Sample in Research: Key Concepts for Valid Conclusions. *Sigcs: E-Learning*, **6**, 19-24.
- [24] Ahmadin, M. (2022) Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches. *Journal Kajian Sosial Dan Budaya: Tebar Science*, **6**, 104-113.