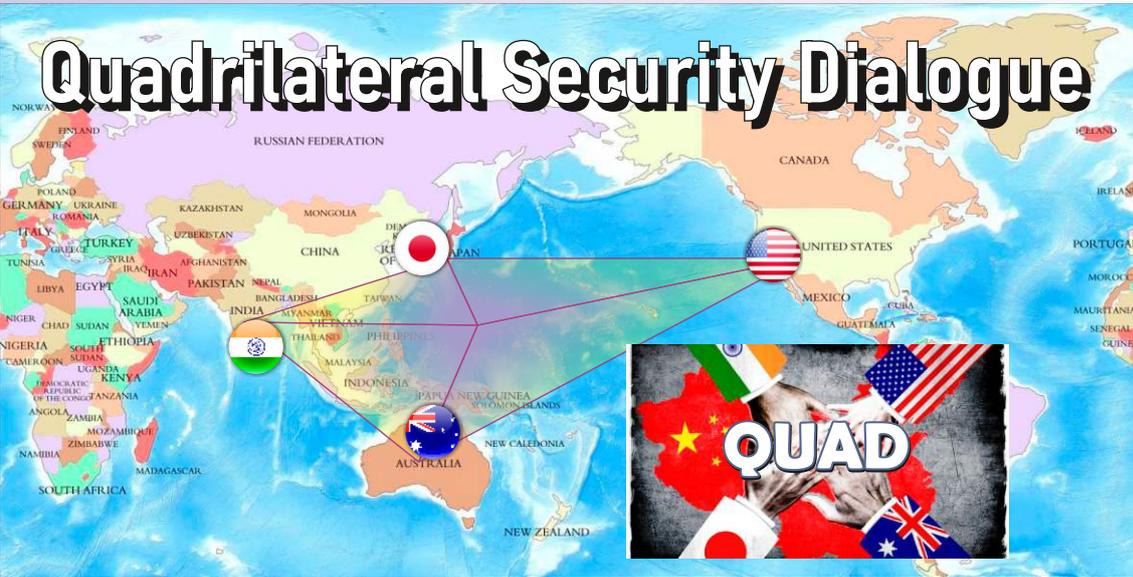


Quadrilateral Security Dialogue



Recently, the high level senior official meeting of Quad nations was concluded in Bangkok (Thailand) on the margins of the East Asia Summit on 4th November.

In the past some time, differences among the Quad countries seem to have narrowed down.

There are also common references to the creation of a free, open and inclusive regional architecture, rules of the road, freedom of navigation and overflight, and, ASEAN centrality.



QUAD GUIDING PRINCIPLES

What is QUAD?

The idea behind the QUAD is to keep the strategic and significant sea routes in the Indo-Pacific free of any influence (read Chinese influence).

It is seen as a strategic grouping to preempt and reduce Chinese influences.

The core objectives of the QUAD is to secure a rules-based global order, liberal trading system and freedom of navigation.

It seeks to contain a 'rising China' and work against its predatory trade and economic policies.

Another purpose of the QUAD is to offer alternative debt financing for nations in the Indo-Pacific region.

- ▶ Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) is the informal strategic dialogue between India, USA, Japan and Australia with a shared objective to ensure and support a "free, open and prosperous" Indo-Pacific region.
- ▶ The idea of Quad was first mooted by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007. However, the idea couldn't move ahead with Australia pulling out of it, apparently due to Chinese pressure.
- ▶ In December 2012, Shinzo Abe again floated the concept of Asia's "Democratic Security Diamond" involving Australia, India, Japan and the US to safeguard the maritime commons from the Indian Ocean to the western Pacific.

QUAD

A non-starter

The American establishment still believed that it could, somehow, persuade China to become a 'responsible stake-holder'

- US also **required Chinese goodwill** in dealing with America's priorities -**the nuclear issue with North Korea and Iran, and the War on Terror** -and did not want to antagonize China with QUAD
- Japan and Australia were **riding the China Boom to prosperity**.
- If India was ambivalent at the time, it was because this mirrored the uncertainties of others.
- As a result, the idea merely remained on the table and there was no clearly enunciated concept or proposed structures.



- The manner of China's dismissal of the Arbitral Award in the dispute with the Philippines on the South China Sea and brazen militarization of islands by China once again brought the four countries onto the same page.
- In 2015 Japan was formally admitted to make Malabar (India-US naval exercise) a trilateral event
- In 2020, India has invited Australia to join the trilateral exercise, thus completing QUAD.

SIGNIFICANCE OF QUAD FOR INDIA

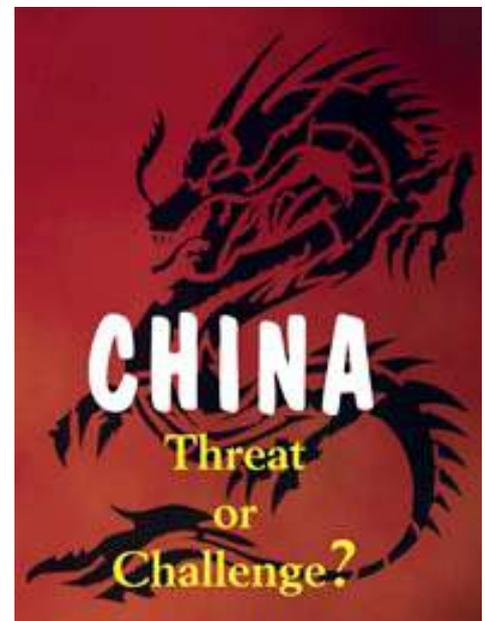
Political : Joining Quad group will strengthen and supplement India's Act East policy. The geostrategic term Indo Pacific as opposed to Asia Pacific has been gaining currency working with US and its allies in the Asia Pacific will provide New Delhi significant leverage in shaping US policies in Afghanistan, Pakistan to the benefit of India.

Economical : Involving the USA and Japan in developing projects in India will yield the necessary finances.

Security: China's spending on defence (\$261 b) is more than the collective spending of India (\$71.1 b), Japan (\$ 47.6 b), Australia (\$25.9 b). In this time of COVID pandemic and fund crunch associated with lockdowns, Entry of US will provide a heavyweight to the alliance. Moreover China's strategic and aggressive maneuvering in the region needs strategizing countering. QUAD like agreement can ensure India can effectively counter China.

Technological: High end defence technological transfer among the countries. India as net security provider in the

Indian Ocean Region: India, as a holds the responsibility to act as the net security provider in the Indian Ocean region. India along with like minded countries needs to counter China's String of Pearls strategy and 'debt-trap' diplomacy.





Act East policy: Joining Quad group will strengthen and supplement India's Act East policy.

India and minilateralism: As per the statement of foreign secretary of India last year, India has moved beyond non-alignment towards an issue-based alliance with no formal agreements. Therefore, joining Quad will be in line with the present foreign policies of the government.

Strategic importance: The move to set up the quadrilateral comes in the backdrop of growing Chinese assertiveness in the South China Sea. It has also raised concerns regarding freedom of trade and navigation through the waters of the South and East China seas. China's aggressive posturing along land borders with countries like India and Bhutan.

CHALLENGES FOR INDIA

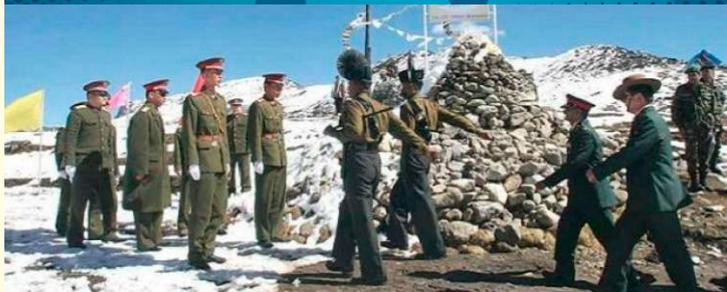
India revising its Non-alignment principles: India is abandoning its "sacred" tradition of non-alignment in favour of a military alliance with the US in order to counter the China threat.

Aligning with the USA: US policy of alignment is a challenging proposition. The global geopolitical realities of today mandate close Indo-US relations. However, looking at Pakistan, the obligations of the US place on its partners is challenging. Given the uncertainties towards multilateralism in the Trump era there are clear signs that Republican party is receding towards the sentiment of nationalism. Moreover US military alliances with Japan and the Philippines has not provided any challenge to Chinese aggression in the region.

Confluence of QUAD: The nations in the Quad grouping have different aspirations, aimed at balancing their own interest. Therefore, coherence in the vision of Quad nation as a grouping is absent.

Need to build capacity- India wants to stop Indo-Pacific from turning into a Chinese sphere of influence, but it doesn't have sufficient resources to do so. Neither does India have adequate economic resources to provide credible alternatives to China's Belt and Road Initiative nor does it have sufficient diplomatic capacity to meaningfully engage with all stakeholders at the same time like the US and Russia.

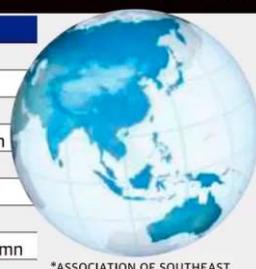
Lack of trade robustness: Lack of trade robustness in the region disallow India to compete in the region.



Trade and the neighbours: 2018-19 (U.S. \$)

Indian and Chinese trade with key Indo-Pacific countries BN: BILLION | MN: MILLION

BILATERAL ANNUAL TRADE		
Main countries	India	China
Australia	30 bn	252 bn
New Zealand	2.64 bn	33.4 bn
United States	87.96 bn	737.1 bn
South Korea	20.7 bn	284.54 bn
ASEAN*	96.80 bn	600 bn
Bangladesh	9.21 bn	18 bn
Japan	17.63 bn	353.7 bn
Sri Lanka	4.19 bn	4,262.52 mn
Maldives	288.99 mn	-



*ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS



Issues surrounding Indo-Pacific: It would be difficult to align the combined vision of the grouping with that of their individual visions regarding Indo-Pacific.

India's lingering economic challenges: If India wants to engage the Quad partners on reforming the China-centred economic globalisation, it also requires to engineer many changes on trade-related aspects, which might prove to be difficult, given India's drive for self-reliance.

WHAT ARE CHINA'S VIEWS ON THE QUAD?

There is a general understanding that the Quad would not take on a military dimension against any country. The strategic community in China, nevertheless, had branded it an emerging "Asian NATO".

Notably, Japanese PM Shinzo Abe's "Confluence of Two Seas" address to the Indian Parliament gave a fresh impetus to the Quad concept. This recognised the economic rise of India.

China's claims: China claims that it has historical ownership over nearly the entire region of South China Sea, which gives it the right to manufacture islands. However, the International Court of Arbitration rejected the claim in 2016.

China's relationship with ASEAN: The ASEAN countries also have a well-knit relationship with China. The Regional Cooperation Economic Partnership (RCEP) is a recent example of China's increasing influence over ASEAN nations.



QUAD against chinese designs: QUAD would interfere with China's Indo-Pacific plans. The presence of the US is a strategic challenge for China.

Economic Power of China: Considering the economic might of China and the dependence of Quad nations like Japan and Australia on China, the Quad nations cannot afford to have strained relations with it. neighbourhood first policy should not take a backseat.



Japan and Quad

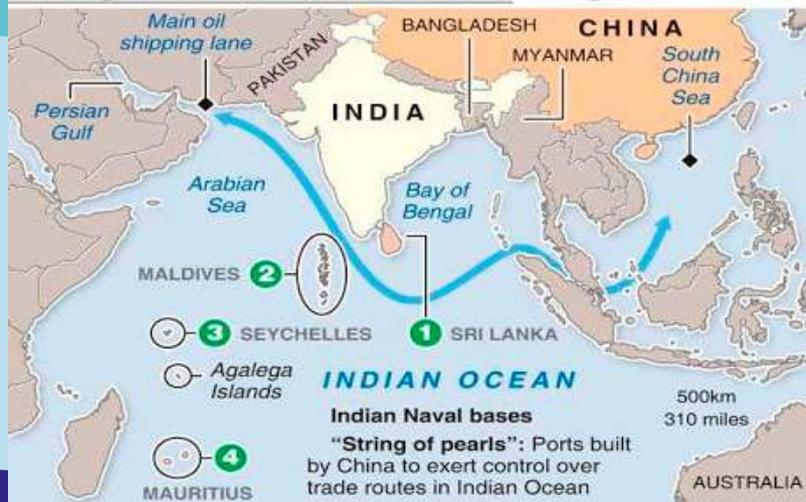
China and Japan – neighboring economic and military powers – view each other with disdain, harbor mostly negative stereotypes of one another, disagree on Japan's World War II legacy and worry about future confrontations.

Japan has a significant opportunity to leverage not only its already close alliance with the United States, but also its deepening security ties with Australia and India—to ultimately play a larger role in the region.

China's assertion of its sovereignty claims in the East and South China Seas becomes increasingly aggressive, the strategic importance of Japan's relationship with India and Australia has grown considerably. India has become a particularly important partner, given its land-border issues with China and increasing wariness of China's reach into the Indian Ocean.

Under the principle of "Proactive Contribution to International Peace" outlined in its 2013 National Security Strategy, Japan has moved to enhance its security relationships—both bilateral and collective—with the three countries in the "Security Diamond."

Geo-politics of Indo-Pacific region





Australia and Quad

Australia is more secure in its immediate environment than either Japan or India, as it has no direct territorial disputes with China or with any of its neighbours. Its alliance with the United States adds another layer of relative comfort. However, China's rapid rise is changing the calculus for Canberra. Australia has relied on the United States to play the role of external balancer in the region, a role which is coming under strain as Chinese national power and assertiveness continues to grow. Further, as Australia's 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper alludes to, Canberra regards China as actively undermining the post-war US-led liberal rules-based order.

It is this order which has allowed middle powers and small states to trade freely and maintain foreign policy autonomy relatively unfettered by outside coercion.

Canberra has long regarded Australia's immediate neighbourhood, the South Pacific, as a relatively benign region in which Australia has played a leading role. Prime Minister Scott Morrison described it in late 2018 as "our patch ... our part of the world ... where we have special responsibilities". Recent Chinese moves, however, have raised fears of its increasing influence and the prospect China might attempt to gain a military foothold in the South Pacific.

In an effort to confront China's 'One Belt One Road,' Australia introduced measures to prevent China from gaining additional influence in the Indo-Pacific. While these measures may help Australia to set boundaries, the Quad – a security partnership of Australia, the US, India and Japan – have so far been unable to implement a regional strategy.



USA and Quad

The US national interest in advancing a military dimension to the Quad is straightforward. The United States views itself as being in direct competition with China which it describes as a "revisionist" authoritarian state that seeks to erode and re-write the rules of the US-led post-war order.

Washington has been the strongest advocate for deeper military cooperation between the Quad countries as a means of strengthening combined defence of the rules-based order, and of spreading the burden given its global responsibilities and interests. At the strategic level, the US 'free and open' Indo-Pacific strategy involves economics, governance and security, but in practice the security pillar is the most developed thus far.

As the most militarily and economically capable of the four countries, the United States has the greatest capacity to withstand Chinese retaliation should the Quad become more robust in all senses.

Possibilities of future prospects

The World Bank and Asian Development Bank must focus on infrastructure funding in the region that would promote economic growth. This can counter China's large scale infrastructure building in countries of Southeast Asia to Africa under the Belt and Road Initiative. India and Japan are already in discussions for the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor which is the step in the right direction. Owing to India's presence and impact in South Asia the neighbourhood first policy should not take a backseat.



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|-----------------------------|-------------------------|
| counter disinformation | non-proliferation |
| free & open indo-pacific | maritime security |
| quality infrastructure | norms & institutions |
| prosperous | counterterrorism |
| recovery & resilience | inclusive |
| rules-based order | regional security |
| secure digital connectivity | deter & shape |
| | disaster relief |
| | humanitarian assistance |
| | asean centrality |

QUAD READOUTS