



THE INDO-PACIFIC BELT QUADRILATERAL CRUSADE

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ABSTRACT

The term "Indo-Pacific" refers to a hypothetically crucial and continuous tactical area including the Western Pacific and Eastern Indian oceans. The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), which includes Australia, India, Japan, and the US, has defined a harmonious and unifying idea that recognises each country's uniqueness and singularities in their stance toward the Indo-Pacific framework on the realms of conflux. It goes hand in hand with the concept of the genesis. Naval security continues to serve as an anchor for this outlook, but there is a movement toward constructing the Quad's vision in a way that is more generic and relevant to the expanding global geopolitical crises. By achieving this goal, the Quad will be able to present an unambiguous plan and a game plan with appropriate variety at future summits.

HISTORY OF QUAD

The "Tsunami Core Group," which was reportedly an ad-hoc body created in response to the destructive "Boxing Day Tsunami" in 2004, was the focal focus of the QUAD's founding. The four nations are well equipped to coordinate tsunami relief quickly. As a result, they grew larger to meet obstacles.

As Tar, the foreign minister of Japan, proposed the idea of a broad "arc of freedom and prosperity" in November 2006, encompassing the Caucasus, central Asia, north-east Asia, Turkey, central and eastern Europe, and the Baltic states, and enclosing the leaders of those nations with the values of liberty, democracy, a market economy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights. The Prime Minister of Japan, Abe Shinzo, referenced the conjunction of the two seas theory during a speech he gave in front of the Indian parliament in August 2007. This theory is essential for a downright evolution of Asia into a clear network extending across the entire Pacific Ocean, including the US and Australia, and enabling people, goods, capital, and knowledge to flow effortlessly. Then-Indian Prime Minister Shri Manmohan Singh recognised during his visit to Tokyo that both his country and Japan were eagerly awaiting the start of a mutual discussion with a number of "like-minded countries in the Asia-Pacific area" to address the fundamentals of "common interest". Following the assent of the Australian Prime Minister and US Vice President, the dialogue was then given a boost by India's Foreign Minister, Shri Pranab Mukherji. As the ASEAN Regional Forum, only Manila hosted the inaugural QUAD conference in 2007. (ARF). The first QUAD military exercise, which was an expanded version of the US-India MALABAR series, took place later that year in the month of September. The same year also saw the second MALABAR exercise, which involved the Singaporean Navy and took place in the Bay of Bengal. The connection between exercise participants and drill teams during multi-carrier operations and sea control is what stands out. Despite all, QUAD encountered

several unavoidable difficulties in its early stages. Australia chose to withdraw from the QUAD Security Dialogue in 2008 as a result. However, one of the main factors contributing to the collapse of the security conversation was China.

This organisation, however, was disbanded following the task of redemption, restoration, and strengthening; still, the QUAD is intended to deal with the many regional issues.

QUAD 2.0

Recent Chinese behaviour and operations have induced a sense of urgency and opened the way for Quad 2.0's foundational stage. Between QUAD 1.0 and 2.0, a decade passed, providing more than enough time to strengthen ties with the four nations and further time for Asia's tactical stability to increase. The spread of intra-QUAD discussions to the political sphere and the development of conservative joint exercises into tiny joint venture agreements supported the QUAD Nations' advancing paradigm between QUAD 1.0 and 2.0.

The US-Japan-India-Australia meeting in March represents one of the most significant changes to the Indo-Pacific security posture in recent years. It also reveals a clear sprint for the "Quad."

First leader-level meetings of the Quad, the first unified statement from the group, and the first actually large-scale initiative were all firsts at the summit. After QUAD's resurgence in 2017, it started meeting more frequently, including at the level of the foreign minister, but it worked hard to develop a comprehensive story in order to move beyond the ideologically wrapped rhetoric of the Trump administration toward China and to advance Indo-Pacific strategies. The meeting has now reenergized and strengthened the Quad in addition to a comprehensive programme - an innovative vaccines partnership to help Indo-Pacific countries combat a climate change programme, the COVID-19 pandemic, along with the assisting critical and emerging technology, while taking into account the



standards, modulation of equipment and facility suppliers and supply chains. The interim national security strategic guidelines issued by the Biden Administration followed closely on the heels of the Quad Congress. The updated guidance shows a clear desire to compete against China. One of the three main goals is to encourage "a favourable allocation of power" in "important locations". Second, Beijing fears a China-centric regional order, but its assertive foreign policy is boosting the opposition. The irony of this is undoubtedly lost on China's officials, but the recent brutal border conflicts between India and China seem to have particularly overridden India's natural reluctance to push the Quad too far too quickly. Therefore, one obvious—if subliminal—message from the summit is that the Quad members are more determined than ever to counterbalance China's influence in the Indo-Pacific. The Quad will continue to have limitations. It is not an alliance, it is not expected to get institutionalised much, and it is not likely to gain any more members soon (more likely are ad hoc, issue-based coalitions with the Quad at their core). Each member must manage a multifaceted, intricate relationship with China that includes important economic interests. India will probably still want to control how quickly the Quad develops, despite the fact that Modi's approval of the summit sends a positive message to his customarily risk-averse foreign ministry. India will become more at ease with a stronger and more focused Quad that has goals beyond only opposing China as the focus is on regional issues like the pandemic and climate change. Despite these reservations, the Quad meeting shows more clearly than any other recent event how swiftly the Indo-Pacific area is evolving, how regional alliances are changing, and how much competition with China will influence the future.

OBJECTIVES

The Quad was created with the intention of preventing any military or political influence on the important maritime lanes in the Indo-Pacific. Essentially, it is viewed as a strategic alliance to lessen Chinese dominance. Securing a worldwide order based on laws, freedom of navigation, and a free-market trading system is the main goal of the Quad. The group also wants to provide governments in the Indo-Pacific region with alternative debt funding.

THE INDIAN OCEAN

An growing geostrategic and geoeconomic notion that has grown in importance in the international sphere is the Indo-Pacific region.

In our perspective of the world, the Asia-Pacific region has almost entirely replaced other regions. In order to better manage these dynamics, new alliances and gatherings, such as APEC and the East Asia summit, were created. The Indo-Pacific Concept is not meant to replace the Asia-Pacific; rather, it is meant to highlight the fact that, at least for certain purposes, we need to be thinking about a wider geographic realm and broader range of interconnections (Brewster 2016). Additionally, the expansion of ports due to the world economy's strong growth

has increased the strategic importance of the Indo-Pacific region and opened the door for more intense strategic competition amongst the major players. Thus, the American preference for the term "IndoPacific" over "Asia-Pacific" is a highly intriguing development. Perhaps the word "Indo" is making a comeback, and in this formulation, India is considered as being significant for the new century. This is similar to the notion of "Heartland" and "Rimland" as defined by the geographers.

The Indo-Pacific is defined variously by the four capitals of the Quad. The western Indian Ocean is neatly divided off by the Indo-Pacific area, which, according to the US National Security Strategy, "stretches from the west coast of India to the western coastlines of the United States."

The area shown on the regional map on the 2017 Australian Foreign Policy White Paper's front cover only barely encompasses the farthest western tip of India before arcing southward to largely omit the western Indian Ocean.

CHINA EFFECT

In 2010, China became Asia's largest economy. Bilateral tensions between China and the Quad nations have risen since 2013, when Xi Jinping became China's president.

China's economic, political, and military rise is one of the 21st century's defining characteristics, along with the rise of US-China strategic competition or rebalancing strategy. The new capabilities that state and non-state actors acquired, unchecked by institutions or habits of cooperative behaviour, have all contributed to the pervasive sense of uneasiness (Menon 2017). Furthermore, it is made quite evident that China's ascent is rapidly changing the geostrategic dynamics in the area. China aspires regional hegemony in the Indo-Pacific in the short term and eventually global preeminence in the long term as long as it maintains its economic and military dominance (DOS, USA 2019).

Based on recent events, it is clear that the USA and China do not hold the majority of power in the Asia-Pacific region today, nor are they able to work together to impose security order or resolve disputes. There is talk of the Thucydides trap for China and the USA, where the fear of rising powers leads to conflict with established hegemony. Cases of this kind have occurred frequently over the past 500 years (Allison 2015). But if there is security to unlock the Thucydides trap for China and the USA, it lies in Asia and its security architecture, and India-China relations are casually centred to Asia-Pacific Security (Menon 2017).

China outpaces each member of the Quad but is militarily inferior to them all combined. By systematically diminishing the ability of ASEAN to stand as one against China in the territorial conflict, China has already enacted a "divide and rule" approach in the South China Sea. Instead, it is working separately with ASEAN members. In a similar vein, China is adamantly opposed to the management of Indo-Pacific security issues by a coalition of other regional powerhouses, particularly India and Japan. In the absence of an alliance with the US, China anticipates being able to resolve its boundary conflicts with



Japan and India on its own terms. A military Quad is the last regional instrument to thwart China's regional and international ambitions because if and when China becomes a revisionist state, the neighbouring nations will inevitably create a military alliance against it.

PROJECT ONE BELT ONE ROAD

China's ambitious One Belt One Road initiative aims to connect and foster cooperation with numerous nations that are mostly scattered over the three continents of Asia, Europe, and Africa. It includes over 80 nations.

It entails developing systems of highways, railroads, ports, power grids, oil and gas pipelines, and other associated infrastructure projects. China has taken the initiative to resurrect the old Silk Road, which helped the member nations of this association thrive socially and economically. There are numerous sub-plans that make up One Belt One Road, including CPEC (China Pakistan Economic Corridor), Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar, the 21st Century Maritime Silk Route, etc.

The "Quad," or the four nations, have joined forces to try to come up with a shared strategy for dealing with China. These four nations struggle to formulate a cogent and consistent strategy toward China because of their domestic interests. For all of these economies, a stable relationship with China is essential. As a result of their unease with China's resurgence, various conservative groups within the "Quad" frequently wage political or intellectual campaigns against the reemerging nation because it does not entirely share their beliefs.

INDIA

An growing geostrategic and geoeconomic notion that has grown in importance in the international sphere is the Indo-Pacific region. The way India responds to this new geostrategic environment will determine how important it is to the Indo-Pacific region and how important it is to India in the QUAD alliance. Physical boundaries have been established and the significance of ensuring safe seas for trade and the unimpeded movement of trade energy has increased due to globalisation, trade dependence, seamless connectivity of the maritime domain, and the changing nature of the maritime threat becoming more global. These events also happened at the same time as China's spectacular ascent. Its aggressive strategic and economic initiatives, such as the Belt and Road Initiative, have challenged the conventionally international rules-based system that respected the oceans as the common heritage of humanity. These initiatives include its territorial claims in the South China Sea and the East China Sea as well as its quick advance into the Indian Ocean. The maritime sector has always played a significant role in building new and emerging powers and determining regional dynamics. Today's fierce power struggle is no different. As recently acknowledged by India and Australia, "many of the future difficulties are expected to originate in and emanate from, the maritime domain," underscoring the maritime space's resurgence as the arena for geopolitical competition. In 2019, Prime Minister Modi expanded on SAGAR by

announcing the "Indo-Pacific Oceans' Initiative" during the East Asia Summit in Bangkok. India intends to use this Initiative to support the development of a rules-based regional architecture supported by seven pillars: disaster risk reduction and management; capacity building and resource sharing; science, technology, and academic cooperation; trade connectivity; and supply chain management. India has taken action in accordance with these principles through regional and thematic initiatives. India is dedicated to enhancing security and freedom of navigation in the Indo-Pacific by acting as a net security provider, such as in Gulf of Aden anti-piracy operations or peacekeeping initiatives. We have developed partnerships with partner nations across the region by sharing what we can in terms of tools, instruction, and training. In addition to the QUAD, we participate in networks like the trilateral agreements between Australia, Japan, and India, as well as France, France, and Australia.

Indian policy in the Indo-Pacific area reflects its stakes in the current balance-of-power situation, where it is necessary to take into account essential powers, particularly global powers, in order to advance national objectives. The conflicts over regional/subregional stability and security go much beyond the idea of balance of power, thus it would be incorrect, in my opinion, to consider the Indian worldview solely in terms of balance-of-power interactions. Given the propensity of one ocean's (the Pacific) developments to influence another's (the Indian), there is a need to create an adequate formal setup that does not currently exist or is insufficient to effectively handle these concerns. Lack of strategic trust, institutional weaknesses, and the sheer volume of system-weakening threats—such as those caused by climate change, state instability, the revolution in military affairs, and technological change—make it difficult to mobilise an effective response. India must traverse these obstacles by carefully partnering with other powers and utilising its resources and goodwill across a significant portion of this enormous region.

US

The battle between the US and China on a worldwide scale in areas including ideology, commerce, technology, cyberspace, economics, and security has been of particular concern to the US. Because of this, it has given the Indo-Pacific area top priority and included it in its National Security Strategy for 2017. 10 The release of the Indo-Pacific Strategy Report in 2019 came after that, and it indicated an ongoing commitment to a FOIP. 11 The 2019 report highlighted Beijing's efforts to undermine the global rules-based system and labelled China as a revisionist force with predatory economic and coercive tactics. Additionally, it described Russia as a revived bad actor that was also weakening the global system of rules. The South China Sea, the East China Sea, and East Asia have received most of the US's attention in the Indo-Pacific region. In addition to its economic rivalry with China, the US also faces political and diplomatic difficulties, such as China's influence in multilateral organisations, the growing popularity of state-led authoritarian



capitalism, acrimonious power struggles, manipulative narratives, and aiding the decline of democracy. 12 The US is also aware of the changing Indo-Pacific power dynamics and China's expanding military capabilities. 13 In order to support Taiwan and get ready for any military escalation in the Taiwan Strait and Luzon Strait, it has increased its activities in these areas. As a proven tactic for China's gradual annexation and harassment of the South China Sea, grey-zone actions by the People's Armed Forces Militia have been highlighted. 14 The US also wants to improve ties with partners and allies who share its values on an economic, military, and governmental level. Washington, a fervent supporter of the Quad, is eager to increase the military component of the alliance. 15 However, it acknowledges the limitations that now exist—and the necessity to broaden the popularity of the Quad—in order to benignly promote stability. As a result, it has strengthened bilateral ties with the other Quad members, revitalising military alliance arrangements with Australia and Japan in particular. Both nations are conducting a bilateral force posture assessment, and it has begun to deploy and position military equipment in northern Australia. 16 The US is also striving to dispel the notion that it wants to utilise the Quad to maintain its control and extend its power.

AUSTRALIA

Geographically speaking, Australia has a secure environment, but worries about the rise in diplomatic, trade, and security tensions with China have become more prominent recently. It was one of the first nations to assert the legal force of the Permanent Court of Arbitration's 2016 ruling, which rejected China's earlier claims to the South China Sea. It was also the first nation to prohibit Huawei from using the 5G network due to national security issues. 23 Since Canberra implemented the legislation against foreign meddling and Beijing replied by "weaponizing commerce," Australia's relations with China have deteriorated rapidly. The situation has worsened in response to requests for an impartial investigation into the COVID-19 pandemic's causes. Australia has expressed alarm over allegations of Chinese projects in the South Pacific, such as plans to reopen an airstrip from the Second World War in Kiribati's Kanton atoll and efforts to set up facilities on Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands. 24 A Darwin facility's lease to a Chinese corporation is also being examined. 25 The strategic economic talks between China and Australia was put on indefinite hold in May 2021, and for the first time in decades, talk of a potential war between the two nations entered the public sphere.

JAPAN

The Indo-Pacific architecture and the FOIP, which former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe formally unveiled in August 2016, are strongly supported by Japan.

17 Additionally, changes in the region have directly led to a revision of Article 9 of Japan's constitution, which forbids war, and efforts to depart from the unwritten convention that

limits defence spending to 1 percent of GDP. Since about 2010, Japan has perceived China as a greater threat due to historical animosity and rising Chinese assertiveness. As a result of the dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands' sovereignty, Japan successfully persuaded the US to acknowledge that the US-Japan Mutual Defense Treaty's Article 5 covers the islands' defence. 18 It is also extremely concerned about how the military actions in the East and South China Seas and near Taiwan are developing. Japan is eager to include deterrence and response plans against grey-zone operations in the alliance coordination mechanism with the US. 19 Because of China's efforts to change the regional status quo, the Japanese Defense White Paper 2020 implied that its military forces will play a greater role. 20 Japan has increased its commercial ties with the region's nations and organisations, especially with Australia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

It joined the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership through delicately balanced near-parallel discussions. The US, Japan, and Australia also agreed to exchange military data in October 2016. 21 In the past ten years, there has also been a notable improvement in relations between Japan and India. Japan has worked to appropriately align the group's goals because it believes the Quad can be a key pillar for advancing the FOIP concept. It also supports a shift to a proactive security posture in the area under a multilateral framework. 22 Japan and India have the same opinion of the Indo-boundaries, Pacific's which are defined as extending from the west coast of the Americas to the east coast of Africa and the Persian Gulf, but Japan's strategy has been more in line with the urgent needs in East Asia.

FUTURE POSSIBILITIES

What are the chances for the Quad? A goal-related challenge currently faces us. The Quad is frequently criticised for lacking a clear mission or substantial objective. 32 Furthermore, none of the goals offered as justifications for uniting the four states belong exclusively to the Quad. For these goals, the region already has additional actors and organisations (e.g. ASEAN-based bodies). The Quad partners need to be able to more clearly explain why they are working together. 33 However, the four states have so far produced a situation in which the Quad's potential advantages are hazy but its disadvantages are plain to see. Attempting to limit Chinese influence, according to Benjamin Zala, "is a very serious negative." 34 In fact, the lingering sense of strategic containment could easily thwart low-key initiatives. For instance, better disaster policy coordination could be thwarted by disputes related to Sino-American rivalry. 35 However, it may now be impossible to sidestep the strategic perceptions surrounding the Quad's ostensible balancing function. This casts doubt on the advantages of encouraging Chinese participation in the Quad. 36 Furthermore, it implies that the Quad's

The logic—or lack thereof—of an emerging Indo-Pacific strategic geography will have the biggest impact on prospects. The idea that a more integrated maritime geopolitical complex is



evolving, one that connects the US, China, and India across the Indian and Pacific Oceans, is where the Indo-Pacific concept can be found, assuming it has any strategic worth at all. 37 The Quad might perhaps assist in their institutionalisation if these connections turn out to be significant. Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia, is the pivotal geopolitical intersection between the Indo and Pacific subregions. Both the most complicated maritime territorial dispute in the area and its main trade lanes border Indonesia. Additionally, it is democratic, a rising power, and its relations with China are hazy. The updated dialogue's effectiveness as a new component of the Indo-Pacific strategic architecture may be increased if it switched from its "quadrilateral" format to a "pentagonal" one. Indonesia, meanwhile, is usually missing from discussions of the Quad. 38 Its own ambivalence toward the alliance, inclination for non-alignment, or desire to keep at least a friendly relationship with China may be to blame for this. 39 Indonesia's current absence highlights the Quad's underdeveloped state as well as the ongoing concerns about whether the Indo-Pacific is, in fact, a single, coherent region. The Quad is still a concept whose time has not yet arrived.

SUMMIT IN 2023

Australia will host the next physical summit of the Quadrilateral, which will take place in 2023.

CONCLUSION

To summarise the discussion: the Pacific Century cannot simply be an Asian one; it must be based on more than just economic growth; it cannot happen without American assistance; it also still faces a number of intra-regional problems that must be resolved; In summary, the original idea of the Pacific Century is both a myth and a reality (Rumley 2003). In order to balance the power politics amongst the actors' shared interests in the region, the Indo-Pacific is regarded as the most important region in the international arena. A non-official organisation known as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue was created as a result of the absence of institutional framework. Maintaining the rule-based order in the regional maritime security architecture is the major goal of this framework. The Indo-Pacific essentially envisions new frameworks with the competing and convergent security objectives that are apparent in light of the transfer of global power to the region. The pivot of the Indo-Pacific area is crucially determined by the maritime powers, including the United States, Australia, China, Japan, and India. In order to further their own national objectives, they simultaneously try to dominate and persuade one another. And over time, as both India and China's wealth, interests, and power grow, the two nations are increasingly interacting with one another in the maritime domain; taking into account all the potential opportunities and challenges, how India and China will get along in the shared Indo-Pacific Space may be one of the key strategic challenges of the 21st century. They may cooperate, coexist, compete, or engage in confrontation.

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