

# INSTITUTIONALISING THE QUAD: CAN IT SEIZE THE MOMENTUM FOR THE FUTURE?



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The Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) is dedicated to research on contemporary South Asia.

It was established in July 2004 as an autonomous research institute at the National University of Singapore. The establishment of ISAS reflects the increasing economic and political importance of South Asia, and the strong historical links between South Asia and Southeast Asia.

The Institute seeks to promote understanding of this vital region of the world, and to communicate knowledge and insights about it to policymakers, the business community, academia and civil society, in Singapore and beyond.

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The department also aims to further mutual understanding and cooperation between Japan and other countries for peace and stability in Asia and in resolving global concerns.

ISAS-SPF Panel Discussion

Institutionalising the Quad: Can it Seize the Momentum for the Future?

20 January 2021

Authored by Yogesh Joshi, Ippeita Nishida and Nishant Rajeev

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# Institutionalising the Quad: Can it Seize the Momentum for the Future?

Institute of South Asian Studies  
Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Japan

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## Executive Summary

Notwithstanding then Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's passionate appeal for a coalition of democratic countries in the Indo-Pacific during his speech in the Indian Parliament in 2007, the Quadrilateral Security Initiative (the Quad), comprising the United States (US), Japan, Australia and India, remained marginal to Asia's evolving geopolitics. Tokyo has laboured with the rest of the Quad members, especially India and Australia, to forge a more robust network of security partnerships in the region as a possible hedge against China's meteoric rise. Individual Quad members had developed extensive military and diplomatic relations both bilaterally and in trilateral forums. Yet, it took almost a decade for them to embrace the concept openly.

*Since 2017, the process of the Quad's resuscitation has witnessed great strides.*

China's growing assertiveness, however, helped renew the momentum for this coalition. Since 2017, the process of the Quad's resuscitation has witnessed great strides. For example, the four-way Quad talks among the foreign ministers have now become an annual event. The invitation of Australia to the 2020 Malabar series of exercises appears to signal the crossing of a critical threshold in the coalition's security policy. The Quad members are also engaging with like-minded countries in the region and beyond, slowly building a shared understanding of the need for a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific with partners across the globe. The Quad's expanding functional agenda, along with its increased frequency of diplomatic and military contacts, has rendered this strategic forum central to the Indo-Pacific's future balance of power.

However, the future of the Quad is still far from certain. Is the recent momentum a mere transitory phenomenon or an indication of a departure towards steadier cooperation from a hitherto loose coalition of the willing? Forming an alternative regional security architecture may inevitably complicate each member's relationship with Beijing and necessitate the member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to be more hesitant in taking a

firmer stand on China. The future of the Quad will ultimately depend on institutionalisation and expansion among like-minded states. This leads to another crucial question: How willing are the Quad members to coordinate their security policies and agree on explicit military and diplomatic commitments? To address these questions, the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) at the National University of Singapore and the Sasakawa Peace Foundation (SPF) in Japan hosted a panel discussion on 20 January 2021, which brought together scholars on Japanese, Indian and Australian foreign policy.

This Special Report has been prepared based on the discussions during the panel discussion. While there is an overall alignment among the Quad members to address the challenges posed by China's rise and assertiveness, significant differences persist. These differences arise due to traditional fears of abandonment and entrapment, which have existed in previous alliances as well. Given the members' varying approaches and differing state capacities, the Quad's future remains far from certain.

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## Introduction

*The process of the Quad among the Indo-Pacific's democracies was, therefore, stifled by domestic resistance, bureaucratic neglect, foreign policy inertia and external pressure by China in equal measures.*

In 2007, when Abe called for the four major democracies of the Indo-Pacific to rally around the Quad, a collective security hedge against China's rise in the region, many found the idea both premature and needlessly provocative. Though the Quad members met alongside the East Asia Summit in Manila in 2007 and arranged for a joint naval exercise in the Bay of Bengal in the fall of 2007, the forum dissipated soon after. Several factors conspired against Abe's vision for a secure and stable Indo-Pacific. Irrespective of China's substantial economic and military rise, the US remained the unchallenged hegemon in the region. China too portrayed itself as a rising power, in search of accommodation rather than the revision of the US-led liberal order. The power transition between the hegemon and the rising challenger was yet to unravel. Bonds of economic integration were substantive and strong, deterring a violence-based strategy as being too costly as well as providing alternative avenues for dispute resolution. Institutional forces like ASEAN remained central to the interests of all the major players and promoted the rule of law in inter-state relations over the seduction of unilateral measures in pursuit of state interests. Lastly, irrespective of the presence of long-term conflicts, the four democracies of the Indo-Pacific conducted their foreign policy in the belief that an accommodation with China would eventually be reached. Neither the structural logic nor their foreign policy priorities aligned with the fundamental thrust of the Quad: to pursue a balance of power game against China's future hegemony in Asia. The process of the Quad among the Indo-Pacific's democracies was, therefore, stifled by domestic resistance, bureaucratic neglect, foreign policy inertia and external pressure by China in equal measures.

However, within a decade, all these assumptions proved misguided. China's economic and military rise and the concomitant decline of American hegemony have galvanised a dramatic transition of power in the region. Yesteryear slogans of China's peaceful rise have been transformed into territorial aggression. From the East China Sea to the South China Sea and the Himalayas, Beijing has introduced active

hostility into otherwise dormant conflicts. Chinese President Xi Jinping's resource and territorial nationalism have also stoked similar passions in other countries. Today, the Indo-Pacific bears witness to resurgent nationalisms incubated by strong leaders. China's use of economic interdependence as a state instrument of coercion has also undermined the long-held liberal assumption that robust trade ties would constrain China's aggressive tendencies. It has also revealed the inherent vulnerability of the region's over-dependence on Chinese supply chains, as was evident during the COVID-19 pandemic. Regional institutions like ASEAN have faltered before Beijing's strongman tactics. ASEAN remains divided and ineffective in constraining China's territorial, military and diplomatic assertiveness, most visibly seen in its feeble response to the South China Sea dispute. The rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific is now under serious strain. Lastly, countries in the region have realised the futility of reaching a separate peace with Beijing. Appeasement, as countries in the region have painstakingly realised, only whets China's appetite for more concessions. Only a collective response can help stem the negative externalities of Indo-Pacific's shifting balance of power.

The current transition of power in the Indo-Pacific, coupled with China's aggressive rise, has helped renew the momentum for the Quad. Reactivated in 2017 with the first meeting of foreign ministers of India, Japan, Australia and the US in a decade, the Quad has now become the fulcrum of the region's resistance against China's economic, military and diplomatic assertiveness. The Quad members have shed their domestic inhibitions and began to see the grouping as a key forum to coordinate their military, economic and diplomatic strategies to arrest the transition of power in the region. The Quad members are also engaging with like-minded countries regionally and supra-regionally, slowly ensuring a shared understanding of the need for a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific with partners across the globe. Beyond politico-military alignment, the necessity to cooperate on connectivity and development projects as well as a supply chain initiative is now seen as increasingly important, as these efforts would uphold the region's resilience to shocks and provide alternatives to

*The current transition of power in the Indo-Pacific, coupled with China's aggressive rise, has helped renew the momentum for the Quad.*

China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The Quad's expanding functional agenda, along with its increased frequency of diplomatic and military contacts, has rendered this strategic forum central to the Indo-Pacific's future balance of power.

*However, the future of the Quad is still far from certain and will depend on the responses of its four members to several crucial challenges and questions.*

However, the future of the Quad is still far from certain and will depend on the responses of its four members to several crucial challenges and questions. How will the Quad influence the future of alliances and strategic partnerships in the region? How willing are the Quad members in coordinating their security policies and agree on explicit military and diplomatic commitments? How can the Quad engage with regional and extra-regional powers to ensure a rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific? Can the Quad create an alternative liberal economic order for the Indo-Pacific? To explore these questions, ISAS and SPF jointly organised a panel discussion on the Quad with leading experts in the Indo-Pacific region.

## Regional Perspectives

### Australia

Australia and China have long been trading partners. China has been a destination for Australian exports such as wine, beef and coal, among other products. Sino-Australian trade accounts for approximately 27 per cent of Australia's total trade with the world in 2018-2019.<sup>1</sup> The economic relationship has generally remained steady for the past decade, especially after China surpassed Japan to become Australia's largest export market in 2009.<sup>2</sup> The close economic relationship between China and Australia has severely impacted the cost-benefit analyses of previous Australian governments. The fear of reprisals and the loss of economic opportunities have dissuaded Australia from overtly confronting China. It was the prime motivator for the Kevin Rudd administration to pull out of the first instalment of the Quad in 2008. The desire to shy away from a confrontational approach in 2008 was buttressed by the fact that there still existed hopes that China could be peacefully integrated into the liberal international order. However, these optimistic outlooks have dissipated after China's increasingly militaristic approach to the South and the East China Sea disputes.

Given China's growing belligerence and the US' withdrawal from its traditional role as the primary security guarantor in the Indo-Pacific, the current Australian administration has been more vocal in its desire to support and uphold the international liberal order.<sup>3</sup> To this end, the Australian government has emphatically called out China's economic, territorial and diplomatic assertiveness in the region.<sup>4</sup>

*The fear of reprisals and the loss of economic opportunities have dissuaded Australia from overtly confronting China.*

1 "China country brief", Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australian Government, last modified 26 January 2021. <https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/china/Pages/china-country-brief#:~:text=Papua%20New%20Guinea,Trade%20and%20investment,per%20cent%20year%20on%20year>.

2 "Trade and Investment", Australian Embassy in China, last modified 26 January 2021. <https://china.embassy.gov.au/bjng/relations2.html>.

3 Benjamin Reilly, "The Return of Values in Australian Foreign Policy", *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 74, no. 2 (2020): pp. 116-123.

4 For an account on the recent downturn in relations, see Rory Medcalf, "Australia and China: Understanding the Reality Check", *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 73, no. 2 (2019), pp. 109-118. For a generic history of Sino-Australian relations, see Garry Woodard, "Australia's China Policy of Strategic Ambiguity: Navigating between Big Fish", *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 72, no. 2(2018): pp. 163-178.

*These foreign policy moves have drawn a sharp riposte from Beijing and have resulted in an informal trade war between the two countries.*

Canberra has questioned Beijing's treatment of the Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang, has extended support to pro-democracy protestors in Hong Kong,<sup>5</sup> and has made some efforts to improve relations with Taiwan.<sup>6</sup> Australia has also spearheaded efforts to institutionalise an independent investigation into the origins of the COVID-19 virus<sup>7</sup> and was also one of the first non-littoral states to criticise Chinese actions in the South China Sea.<sup>8</sup> These foreign policy moves have drawn a sharp riposte from Beijing and have resulted in an informal trade war between the two countries. The Chinese government has imposed restrictions on several Australian imports and has targeted nearly 13 sectors of the Australian economy.<sup>9</sup> In what was deemed an undiplomatic and flagrant disregard of Australian sovereignty, the Chinese embassy in Australia released a list of grievances against the Australian government.<sup>10</sup> Through these measures, China is trying to coerce the Australian government to reverse its policy positions. This, however, is viewed by the current Australian administration as an infringement of its sovereignty and an attempt to interfere with the policies of a democratically elected government. Such moves by the Communist Party of China are furthermore seen as revisionist.

It is in this context that the Quad has become essential to Australia's strategy to counter China. The Quad offers Australia several advantages, which are now collectively being seen as a driving force for its government's renewed engagement with India as well as in solidifying its relationship with Japan and the US. From the Australian perspective, the Quad brings together the four major maritime

5 Daniel Hurst, "Australia criticises China over treatment of Uighurs and for eroding freedoms in Hong Kong", *The Guardian*, 15 September 2020. <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2020/sep/15/australia-criticises-china-over-treatment-of-uighurs-and-for-eroding-freedoms-in-hong-kong>.

6 Mark Harrison, "Will Australia and Taiwan grow closer in 2021?", *The Strategist*, 14 December 2020, <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/will-australia-and-taiwan-grow-closer-in-2021/>.

7 "Australia, China tensions rise over coronavirus inquiry call", *The Straits Times*, 28 April 2020. <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/australianz/australia-china-tensions-rise-over-coronavirus-inquiry-call>.

8 Bec Strating, "Australia lays down the law in the South China Sea dispute", *The Interpreter*, 25 July 2020. <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/australia-lays-down-law-south-china-sea-dispute>.

9 Scott Waldron, "The Logic of China's Economic Coercion on Australian Agriculture", *Future Directions International*, 3 December 2020. <https://www.futuredirections.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/The-logic-of-Chinas-economic-coercion-on-Australian-agriculture-FINAL.pdf>.

10 Jonathan Kearsley, Eryk Bagshaw and Anthony Galloway, "If you make China the enemy, China will be the enemy: Beijing's fresh threat to Australia", *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 November 2020. <https://www.smh.com.au/world/asia/if-you-make-china-the-enemy-china-will-be-the-enemy-beijing-s-fresh-threat-to-australia-20201118-p56fqs.html>.

democracies in the Indo-Pacific to counter China's growing maritime, economic and diplomatic assertiveness. Cooperation among the four Quad members can certainly act as a force multiplier to push back against China's revisionist designs. This approach also gives Australia more leverage when it engages with China bilaterally on contentious issues. Second, the institutionalisation of the Quad can help guarantee and sustain US commitment to the region. Then President Donald Trump's strictly reciprocal and transactional foreign policy, especially vis-à-vis its regional allies, did cast a shadow of doubt over the American security commitments. However, compared to the previous Barack Obama administration, Trump had energised America's Indo-Pacific strategy, confronted China on multiple issues and occasions and invested heavily in the Quad. Finally, the Quad also institutionalises India's role as a net security provider for the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). As Australia is also an Indian Ocean state, the regional order within the Indian Ocean is of huge significance. India's commitment to the international liberal order and rule of law makes it an ideal partner for Australia in the IOR. Thus, the Quad integrates India's efforts with other powers in the Indo-Pacific.

In its efforts to combat Chinese influence in the Indo-Pacific, Australia has worked with the other members of the Quad, employing both hard and soft balancing. Hard balancing includes the use of financial resources and military signalling while soft balancing includes the development of norms and standards to influence Chinese behaviour. In its attempts to counter Chinese investments, Australia has worked with Japan and the US to make available funding for connectivity, infrastructure and governance challenges in the region. It has committed to establishing an infrastructure fund and earmarked nearly US\$2 billion (S\$2.65 billion) to infrastructure development in the Pacific.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, Australia and India have increased defence cooperation through Two-Plus-Two strategic dialogues between their defence and foreign ministers. The Australia-India naval exercises started in 2015 and have gained intensity in the last five years. These

*In its attempts to counter Chinese investments, Australia has worked with Japan and the US to make available funding for connectivity, infrastructure and governance challenges in the region.*

11 Jonathan Pryke and Richard McGregor, "The new US–Japan–Australia infrastructure fund", *The Interpreter*, 31 July 2018. <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/the-new-us%E2%80%93japan%E2%80%93australia-infrastructure-fund>. Also see Elizabeth Roche, "Australia to set up \$2 billion infrastructure fund for Indo-Pacific region", *Mint*, 8 November 2018. <https://www.livemint.com/Politics/ANikTu6HaJRh8OhIbzABjP/Australia-to-set-up-2-billion-infrastructure-fund-for-Indo.html>.

military exercises have focused on the Chinese naval threat in the Indian Ocean and have included drills on anti-submarine warfare.<sup>12</sup> On the side of soft balancing, Australia is working with the US, Japan and India to develop necessary standards and norms that define and bolster a regional order underpinned by liberal values. Here, initiatives like the blue dot network and standards on the governance of emerging technologies can help shape the adoption and deployment of investments and technologies. Hence, cooperating with the Quad and other like-minded countries will help strengthen the liberal order and counter China's influence in the region.

*Notwithstanding the recent convulsions in Sino-Australian relations, Australia will have to arrive at a coherent strategy vis-à-vis China.*

Notwithstanding the recent convulsions in Sino-Australian relations, Australia will have to arrive at a coherent strategy vis-à-vis China. To this end, there are lessons to learn from Japan's engagement with China. Currently, they are embroiled in a territorial dispute over the Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea and there remains a strong nationalistic sentiment in China over Japan's invasion in the past. However, the two countries continue to maintain a stable economic relationship which is mutually beneficial. Achieving a balance where each country is aware of the other's red lines will be necessary if Australia and China wish to pursue a mutually beneficial relationship.

## India

For much of the post-Cold War period, India has tried to engage China in the hope that the two Asian powers could peacefully coexist. There was a general understanding in the post-Cold War period that relations between them could move forward even if the border dispute remained unresolved.<sup>13</sup> When Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi entered office in 2014, New Delhi also engaged China for its economic potential. He followed dual-track diplomacy where India simultaneously engaged China for its economic opportunities and adopted a firm and resolute military posture to protect its claims and interests on the border issue.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Grant Wyeth, "With AUSINDEX, Australia and India Team Up", *The Diplomat*, 30 March 2019. <https://thediplomat.com/2019/03/with-ausindex-australia-and-india-team-up/>.

<sup>13</sup> David M Malone and Rohan Mukherjee, "India and China: Conflict and Cooperation," *Survival* 52, no.1 (2010): p. 143.

<sup>14</sup> Harsh V Pant and Yogesh Joshi, *The US Pivot and Indian Foreign Policy: Asia's Evolving Balance of Power* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 74-76.

However, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and recent border clashes between India and China along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), India has been forced to revise its dual-track policy of cooperation and competition. This review comes against the backdrop of multiple border standoffs between India and China and the general deterioration of relations due to the border disputes. There have been a growing number of voices in India which have argued that the Chinese actions are an attempt to unilaterally change the status quo along the LAC.<sup>15</sup> In recent years, China's behaviour along the border has turned highly aggressive. In 2017, China attempted road-building activities in the disputed region of the Doklam plateau between Bhutan and China. If constructed, the road would have threatened the strategically vulnerable Siliguri Corridor, a vital road link between India and its Northeast region. China's actions forced the Indian military to intervene, and the latter's pre-emptive actions resulted in a major standoff between the two countries.

*In recent years, China's behaviour along the border has turned highly aggressive.*

In the aftermath, Modi and Xi initiated a high-level diplomatic dialogue with a summit meeting in Wuhan, China. However, despite these efforts, from an Indian perspective, China has continued its assertive military posture. China's continued military pressure finally resulted in the most violent standoff in the Sino-Indian border dispute since 1975. During this standoff, Indian and Chinese troops clashed in the Galwan River valley, resulting in the death of 20 Indian soldiers and an unidentified number of People's Liberation Army troops.<sup>16</sup> This caused outrage among the Indian public and it has been called an inflection point in the Sino-Indian relationship. Furthermore, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, India has also attempted to decouple its economy from that of China. New Delhi disallowed any predatory acquisition of Indian companies by Chinese firms in view of the economic hardships caused by the pandemic. To reduce its trade dependence on China and utilise the economic opportunities offered by the pandemic, the Modi government has emphasised the

<sup>15</sup> Ananth Krishnan, "For minor tactical gains on the ground, China has strategically lost India, says former Indian Ambassador to China", *The Hindu*, 21 June 2020. <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/interview/for-minor-tactical-gains-on-the-ground-china-has-strategically-lost-india-says-formerindian-ambassador-to-china/article31884054.ece>.

<sup>16</sup> "India-China clash: 20 Indian troops killed in Ladakh fighting", *BBC*, 16 June 2020. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-53061476>.

domestic development of India's industrial base through initiatives like *Atmanirbhar Bharat* (Self-reliant India).<sup>17</sup> Given this fundamental reorientation of Indian foreign policy, the Quad allows India to develop partnerships with other 'like-minded' countries and shift from a multi-alignment strategy focusing on strategic autonomy to a 'pointed-alignment' strategy.

*However, India looks to leverage the Quad not only to build closer ties with each of the members but also to ultimately create a security coalition in the Indo-Pacific.*

Through this strategy, India will look to leverage its partnerships to improve its comprehensive national power vis-à-vis China as the two countries appear to be entering a more competitive and adversarial phase in their relationship. Currently, the Quad is an informal grouping between the four pre-eminent Indo-Pacific powers. Before the Quad was resuscitated in 2017, India had already moved to improve bilateral relations with each of the Quad members. However, India looks to leverage the Quad not only to build closer ties with each of the members but also to ultimately create a security coalition in the Indo-Pacific. India and Japan have had a history of positive engagements which the Quad can take forward. Both countries already hold Two-Plus-Two ministerial-level talks between their defence and foreign ministers. Recently, the two countries also concluded the Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement which would allow the armed forces of the respective countries to use each other's military facilities.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, India has been cooperating with Japan in delivering infrastructure projects to neighbouring South Asian countries as it competes with China's BRI. As an example of such efforts inside and outside the region, India and Japan had jointly proposed developing the East Container Terminal (ECT) in Colombo under a public-private partnership (the Sri Lankan government recently scrapped the 2019 agreement to develop the ECT, but approved a proposal to develop the Western Container terminal) and have also embarked on efforts to develop infrastructure in Africa.<sup>19</sup> India and Australia have also

17 "English Rendering of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's Address to the Nation", Press Information Bureau, 12 May 2020. <https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1623418>.

18 Rezual H Laskar, "India, Japan sign key pact for reciprocal provision of supplies, services between defence forces", *The Hindustan Times*, 10 September 2020. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/japan-s-pm-shinzo-abe-speaks-on-phone-with-narendra-modi-lists-elevation-of-global-partnership-between-the-two-countries-as-a-key-achievement/story-dgAYdfesU7Vtz2Miu6z7M.html>.

19 Constantino Xavier, "The quest for regional connectivity", *The Hindustan Times*, 5 February 2020. <https://www.hindustantimes.com/analysis/the-quest-for-regional-connectivity-opinion/story-DZU7JLrCXBebOmZHkwUbBL.html>.

enhanced their military partnership by instituting a Two-Plus-Two ministerial-level dialogue and have begun conducting military exercises. India has also strengthened its relationship with the US by signing the four foundational agreements and continues to procure military hardware from the US. However, on the fronts of economics and soft engagement, there are several opportunities which the Quad also offers. India has launched maritime-focused initiatives like Project Mausam and Security and Growth for All in the Region to develop closer links between Indian Ocean littoral states. Mausam is a project by the Ministry of Culture of the Indian government that looks to foster closer links between the coastal states in India and the Indian Ocean littoral states and connect coastal areas to the hinterlands.<sup>20</sup> Specifically, the project aims to bring together scholars on regional cultures and history from different parts of the IOR to engage in dialogue and share knowledge. The initiative has not been implemented fully but it offers an avenue to increase the Quad's soft power in the region.

*India has launched maritime-focused initiatives like Project Mausam and Security and Growth for All in the Region to develop closer links between Indian Ocean littoral states.*

However, India does not see the Quad as an exclusive group but rather a pluralistic grouping. In India's view, the grouping can include more members from the region, a notion dubbed in the media as 'Quad Plus'. By bringing in other 'like-minded' countries into a 'Quad Plus' mechanism, it offers the potential for initiatives undertaken by the Quad to gain further legitimacy and be more widely adopted. A 'Quad Plus' process can also incorporate nuances that arise from different national contexts and perceptions of various countries in the region. In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic where each nation-state is facing both economic and diplomatic challenges, the 'Quad Plus' idea promises a process of engagement and dialogue to collectively respond to the region's myriad challenges.

## Japan

The Quad grouping was conceived by Abe back in 2007 during his first term as prime minister. The origins of the Quad can be traced to the joint humanitarian and disaster relief operations undertaken

<sup>20</sup> "Project Mausam", Ministry of Culture, Government of India, last modified 26 January 2021. <https://indiaculture.nic.in/project-mausam>.

by the navies of Japan, India, Australia and the US in the aftermath of the 2004 tsunami in the IOR. The idea, however, was short-lived; both India and Australia pulled out because of Chinese reservations. The initiative also lost steam due to Abe's exit from power in 2007. However, after returning to power in 2012, Abe reinvigorated the Quad and worked with the other members to achieve some degree of institutionalisation.

*After a period of gradual engagement in the late 1990s and early 2000s, which saw the rapid growth in Sino-Japanese economic cooperation, political relations between the two countries started to become strained.*

Japan and China have had a history of difficult relations. The Empire of Japan's military had invaded and occupied parts of the Chinese mainland in 1937 and through World War II. The history of such wartime aggression is intricately linked to the Chinese conception of the 'Century of Humiliation' where the Chinese empire was oppressed by foreign powers.<sup>21</sup> After a period of gradual engagement in the late 1990s and early 2000s, which saw the rapid growth in Sino-Japanese economic cooperation,<sup>22</sup> political relations between the two countries started to become strained. Maritime sovereignty dispute over the Senkaku Islands has been a constant source of friction since the 1970s when China initiated its territorial claim following the United Nations' report of potential petroleum resources under the East China Sea. The territorial dispute has only been exacerbated by China's desire to achieve hegemony in the East and the South China Seas through the construction of artificial islands, military bases and declarations of air identification zones in the region.

Abe's vigorous efforts to resuscitate the Quad were a direct outcome of the ever-increasing Chinese threat in the Indo-Pacific. China's actions impinged on Japan's sovereignty and, in a large part, undermined the democratic and liberal international order. The BRI is also seen as an effort to promote a China-centric order in the region. Engaging with the Quad and developing a unified front against China's attempts to revise the existing order would strengthen Japan's diplomatic and military position. Institutionalising the Quad would allow Japan to

21 For a general outline linking Japanese aggression to Chinese nationalism, see Yinan He, "History, Chinese Nationalism and the Emerging Sino-Japanese Conflict", *Journal of Contemporary China* 16, no. 50 (2007): pp. 1-24.

22 Denny Roy, "The sources and limits of Sino-Japanese tensions", *Survival* 47, no. 2 (2005): pp. 205-207; and Min Gyoo Koo, "The Senkaku/Diaoyu dispute and Sino-Japanese political-economic relations: cold politics and hot economics?", *The Pacific Review* 22, no. 2 (2009): pp. 205-232.

kick-start an extensive strategic cooperation regime among the major powers in the region and create a deterrent against Chinese coercion in the future. It also allows Japan to send a strong message to China that international rules and norms need to be respected and that a rules-based order needs to be maintained.

In a 2012 opinion article titled *Asia's Democratic Security Diamond*, Abe argued for greater cooperation among the Quad members following China's aggressive behaviour in the East and South China Seas,<sup>23</sup> and Japan unveiled its Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) strategy in 2016, which implicitly endorsed the Quad as the primary institutional framework for security cooperation in the region.<sup>24</sup> Through the FOIP strategy, Japan is seen to counter China's increasing military assertiveness on its periphery and its growing economic clout in Asia and around the world.

While advocating for an inclusive rules-based order, Japan has since made equipment and monetary resources available to the smaller countries in the region. Japan has pledged the supply of new maritime patrol vessels to Vietnam to help boost its maritime security and counter China's grey zone operations.<sup>25</sup> It has signed similar agreements to strengthen Manila's capabilities to protect its coastal waters.<sup>26</sup> Japan has also been competing with China to provide economic and financial resources to the region's small and island states for infrastructure development.<sup>27</sup> To this end, Japan

*Through the FOIP strategy, Japan is seen to counter China's increasing military assertiveness on its periphery and its growing economic clout in Asia and around the world.*

23 Shinzo Abe, "Asia's Democratic Security Diamond", Project Syndicate, 27 December 2012. <https://www.project-syndicate.org/onpoint/a-strategic-alliance-for-japan-and-india-by-shinzo-abe?barrier=accesspaylog>.

24 "Address by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at the Opening Session of the Sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD VI)", Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Japan, 27 August 2016, last modified 27 January 2021. [https://www.mofa.go.jp/afr/af2/page4e\\_000496.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/afr/af2/page4e_000496.html). For analysis, see Ash Rossiter, "The 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific' Strategy and Japan's Emerging Security Posture", *Rising Powers Quarterly* 3, no. 2 (August 2018): pp. 113-131; and Céline Pajon, "Japan's Indo-Pacific strategy: Shaping a Hybrid Regional Order", *War on the Rocks*, 18 December 2019. <https://warontherocks.com/2019/12/japans-indo-pacific-strategy-shaping-a-hybrid-regional-order/#:~:text=The%20first%20is%20the%20Free,Africa%20to%20the%20South%20Pacific.>

25 Khanh Vu, "Vietnam agrees \$348 million Japan loan to build six patrol vessels: media", *Reuters*, 28 July 2020. <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-vietnam-japan-defence-idUSKCN24T1J5>.

26 Prashanth Parameswaran, "What's Next for Japan-Philippines Defense Relations Under Duterte?", *The Diplomat*, 16 February 2017. <https://thediplomat.com/2017/02/whats-next-for-japan-philippines-defense-relations-under-duterte/>.

27 Ravi Prasad, "The China-Japan Infrastructure Nexus: Competition or Collaboration?", *The Diplomat*, 18 May 2018. <https://thediplomat.com/2018/05/the-china-japan-infrastructure-nexus-competition-or-collaboration/>.

has partnered with the other Quad members to provide alternative financing options for investment projects over Chinese investment. For instance, India and Japan jointly launched the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor in 2017 to provide funding for developing infrastructure and capacity-building programmes in Africa.<sup>28</sup> Japan is also looking to work with Australia to fund infrastructure projects in the Pacific island countries.<sup>29</sup> Finally, for Japan, enhancing a rules-based order is critical to containing China. Hence, expanding engagement with other countries is essential to the success of the Quad. Increasing participation by the other states of the region would allow rules, norms and standards on issues such as infrastructure, investments and governance of emerging technologies to be widely adopted. To this end, ASEAN's approach to the Quad will be critical.

*Japan has engaged ASEAN in the hope of preventing it from being dominated by China, and bringing it into the Indo-Pacific framework.*

While ASEAN has issued support for the Indo-Pacific concept, it has reiterated that the concept must be in line with ASEAN's core principles. In its document titled 'ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP)', the ASEAN member states maintained that any geopolitical construct which covers Southeast Asia, including the Indo-Pacific construct, needed to be underpinned by ASEAN's core principles. These include ASEAN centrality, transparency, inclusivity, a rules-based framework, respect for sovereignty, non-intervention, complementarity with existing cooperation frameworks and respect for international law, among others.<sup>30</sup> Japan has engaged ASEAN in the hope of preventing it from being dominated by China, and bringing it into the Indo-Pacific framework. Japan and ASEAN issued the 'Joint Statement of the 23<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN-Japan Summit on Cooperation on ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific' in November 2020. The statement underlined the need to focus efforts under the Indo-Pacific concept in line with ASEAN's

28 Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury, "India, Japan come up with AAGC to counter China's OBOR", *The Economic Times*, 26 May 2017. <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/economy/policy/india-japan-come-up-with-aagc-to-counter-chinas-obor/articleshow/58846673.cms>.

29 Lisa Murray, "Japan pushes infrastructure program into Pacific to counter China's influence", *Financial Review*, 23 October 2018. <https://www.afr.com/world/japan-pushes-infrastructure-program-into-pacific-to-counter-chinas-influence-20181023-h16zh7>.

30 "ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific", Statements and Communiqués, Association of Southeast Asian Nations, last modified on 3 March 2021. [https://asean.org/storage/2019/06/ASEAN-Outlook-on-the-Indo-Pacific\\_FINAL\\_22062019.pdf](https://asean.org/storage/2019/06/ASEAN-Outlook-on-the-Indo-Pacific_FINAL_22062019.pdf).

principles as stated in the AOIP. The statement also looked to bolster Japan and ASEAN's cooperation in key areas of interest highlighted in the AOIP.<sup>31</sup>

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31 "Joint Statement of the 23rd ASEAN-Japan Summit on Cooperation on ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific", Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 12 November 2020. <https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/files/100114942.pdf>.

## Synergies and Divergences

It is far from certain whether the recent momentum will continue to give wings to the Quad or if it will eventually dissipate, as was the case in the late 2000s. Furthermore, forming an alternative regional security architecture may inevitably complicate each member's relationship not only with Beijing but also with ASEAN, which appears hesitant to take a position on the region's emerging geopolitical fault lines. The future of the Quad will ultimately depend on its institutionalisation and expansion among like-minded states. This leads to another crucial question: How willing are the Quad members in coordinating their security policies and agreeing on explicit military and diplomatic commitments?

*It is obvious that all members of the Quad increasingly see China as a revisionist power and agree that the Quad's institutionalisation provides greater leverage to them in their engagements with China, both individually and collectively.*

It is obvious that all members of the Quad increasingly see China as a revisionist power and agree that the Quad's institutionalisation provides greater leverage to them in their engagements with China, both individually and collectively. Both India and Japan are embroiled in territorial disputes with China. These disputes have only intensified in recent years. Australia's relationship with China has also deteriorated after it pushed back against its attempts to undermine the liberal international order. Now the two countries are embroiled in a trade war. Finally, under the Trump administration, the US has taken an increasingly belligerent stand towards China's rise. The 2018 National Defence Strategy released by the Trump administration labels China as a "strategic competitor" which uses its military strength, predatory economic policies and influence operations to coerce its neighbours.<sup>32</sup> The US has increased the pace of freedom of navigation operations in the South China Sea to challenge China's irredentist claims.<sup>33</sup> It has also sought to curtail the growth of China's technology giants like Huawei and ZTE by restricting their access to advanced technologies and global markets.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup> "Summary of the 2018 National Defence Strategy of the United States of America", Department of Defence, 1-3. <https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf>.

<sup>33</sup> Josh Power, "US freedom of navigation patrols in South China Sea hit record high in 2019", *South China Morning Post*, 5 February 2020. <https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3048967/us-freedom-navigation-patrols-south-china-sea-hit-record-high>.

<sup>34</sup> For background, see Adam Segal, "Seizing Core Technologies: China Responds to U.S. Technology Competition", *China Leadership Monitor*, 1 June, 2019. <https://www.prcleader.org/segal-clm-60>.

Against the backdrop of these developments, there has been a greater momentum and urgency in the engagements among the Quad members. While they have been expanding the bilateral and trilateral partnerships among themselves, the Quad has attempted to institutionalise initiatives and dialogues to some degree. When the Quad was revived in 2017, discussions were attended by sub-ministerial level officials and on the sidelines of other multilateral dialogues.<sup>35</sup> However, in 2019, the Quad members held their first ministerial-level meeting.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, in the wake of the border standoff between India and China, Australia was invited to participate in the Malabar series of naval exercises.<sup>37</sup> This was the first military exercise held among all the Quad members since 2007. This trend indicates an increasing commitment on the part of the members to institutionalise the Quad to some degree. The ministerial-level meeting has also become a regular feature for the Quad members. The incoming Joe Biden administration aims to keep the momentum. Within a month of assuming command in the White House, the new administration engaged the Quad members. Following the Quad foreign ministers' talk in February 2021, the first-ever summit-level meeting was held in March 2021, with the leaders issuing a joint statement pledging to "redouble [their] commitment to Quad engagement".<sup>38</sup>

*The ministerial-level meeting has also become a regular feature for the Quad members.*

To what extent the current trajectory can be sustained will depend on how each country manages its relationship with China and the other regional states. There is an implicit understanding among all members of the Quad that this grouping cannot become an exclusive "club" or take a predominantly militaristic approach in dealing with China. The success of the grouping hinges on its ability to include other members

35 Ankit Panda, "US, Japan, India, and Australia Hold Working-Level Quadrilateral Meeting on Regional Cooperation", *The Diplomat*, 13 November 2017. <https://thediplomat.com/2017/11/us-japan-india-and-australia-hold-working-level-quadrilateral-meeting-on-regional-cooperation/>.

36 "'Quad' Gets an Upgrade as Foreign Ministers of India, Japan, Australia, US Meet", *The Wire*, 27 September 2019. <https://thewire.in/diplomacy/quad-gets-an-upgrade-as-foreign-ministers-of-india-japan-australia-us-meet>.

37 Snehash Alex Philip, "Quad countries come together for complex second phase of Malabar naval exercise", *The Print*, 16 November 2020. <https://theprint.in/defence/quad-countries-come-together-for-complex-second-phase-of-malabar-naval-exercise/545548/>.

38 "Quad Leaders' Joint Statement: The Spirit of the Quad, The White House, 12 March 2021. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/12/quad-leaders-joint-statement-the-spirit-of-the-quad/>.

into the evolving regional security and governance architecture. For now, each state has committed to this approach and the Quad has attempted to bring other members into its fold. All members have reiterated a commitment to ASEAN centrality. Furthermore, the Quad members have held discussions with South Korea, New Zealand and Vietnam during the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>39</sup> Canada had recently joined the Quad members in participating in the Sea Dragon naval exercise in January 2021, which focused on anti-submarine warfare.<sup>40</sup> Other countries such as France and Israel have also been put forth as possible partners in a Quad Plus framework.<sup>41</sup>

However, as with all coalitions, the Quad members must also confront the challenges that have traditionally arisen in other alliance architectures: those of entrapment and abandonment. Entrapment is the fear of a state being drawn into conflicts of its alliance or security partners which may not necessarily be in its interest. Abandonment is a concern on the part of a state where it fears that its alliance or security partner may not honour its commitments. This happens generally when the alliance partner may assess that the interests at stake in a particular conflict are not worth the resources required to protect it or that it needs to realign its overall policy approach.<sup>42</sup>

*Due to the close economic ties that each Quad member shares with China, there is a limit to which each country can explicitly adopt an anti-China policy.*

The Quad members are acutely aware of these challenges. Due to the close economic ties that each Quad member shares with China, there is a limit to which each country can explicitly adopt an anti-China policy. Hence, apart from engaging the Quad, each member is also trying to independently manage its relationship with China. Japan and India have attempted to reset their relations with China in the wake of escalating border confrontations. In the aftermath of the Doklam border standoff in 2017, Modi and Xi attempted to recalibrate the Sino-Indian relationship through high-level summit

39 Derek Grossman, "Don't Get Too Excited, 'Quad Plus' Meetings Won't Cover China", *The RAND Blog*, 9 April 2020. <https://www.rand.org/blog/2020/04/dont-get-too-excited-quad-plus-meetings-wont-cover.html>.

40 Abhijnan Rej, "Quad Plus Canada Participate in Anti-Sub War Exercise", *The Diplomat*, 22 January 2021. <https://thediplomat.com/2021/01/quad-plus-canada-participate-in-anti-sub-war-exercise/>.

41 Jaganath Panda, "India and the 'Quad Plus' Dialogue", *RUSI Commentary*, 12 June 2020. <https://rusi.org/commentary/india-strategic-quad>.

42 Glenn Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics", *World Politics* 36, no. 4 (Jul 1984): pp. 461-495.

meetings.<sup>43</sup> Although the meetings did not result in any concrete suggestions to end the boundary dispute, India did resist pressures to increase coordination within the Quad to accommodate such a reset.<sup>44</sup> The meeting also saw efforts by both sides to reinforce existing mechanisms to maintain peace and stability on the Sino-Indian border.<sup>45</sup> Abe and Xi have also attempted to reset relations after their ties deteriorated in 2012. During Chinese Premier Li Keqiang's visit to Japan in May 2018, the two countries looked to develop a series of measures to prevent escalation along their contested maritime borders. These included measures to increase high-level dialogue between the two militaries and standard operating procedures to minimise accidents.<sup>46</sup> In the hope of stabilising the Sino-Japanese bilateral relationship and further opening economic opportunities for Japan, Abe also travelled to China in October 2018. The visit resulted in the signing of several economic agreements such as a US\$30 billion (S\$39.7 billion) credit swap deal between the two countries' central banks.<sup>47</sup> China and Japan also agreed to cooperate on infrastructure development in the Third World countries, provided that the projects entailed "transparent procurement practices, the ensuring of debt sustainability and the high standards of economic, fiscal, financial, social and environmental sustainability".<sup>48</sup> Finally, previous attempts to recalibrate relations with China continue to shape the members' approach to the Quad. The US had previously flirted with the idea of a G2 where it would cooperate with China to address international

*Finally, previous attempts to recalibrate relations with China continue to shape the members' approach to the Quad.*

43 Tanvi Madan, "Dancing with the Dragon? Deciphering India's 'China Reset'", *War on the Rocks*, 26 April 2018. <https://warontherocks.com/2018/04/dancing-with-the-dragon-deciphering-indias-china-reset/>. Also see John Cherian, "India & China: Resetting relations", *Frontline*, 8 November 2019. <https://frontline.thehindu.com/world-affairs/article29766997.ece>.

44 Suhasini Haider and Josy Joseph, "No Australian presence in naval drills", *The Hindu*, 29 April 2018. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/no-australian-presence-in-naval-drills/article23714285.ece>; and Andrew Tillet, "India dashes hopes for military role for Quadrilateral Security Dialogue", *Financial Review*, 11 March 2019. <https://www.afr.com/politics/india-dashes-hopes-for-military-role-for-quadrilateral-security-dialogue-20190311-h1c8ak>.

45 "India-China Informal Summit at Wuhan", Press Release, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, 28 April 2018, last modified 5 February 2021. [https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/29853/IndiaChina\\_Informal\\_Summit\\_at\\_Wuhan](https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/29853/IndiaChina_Informal_Summit_at_Wuhan).

46 "China-Japan cooperation going global", *East Asia Forum*, 29 October 2018. [https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2018/10/29/china-japan-cooperation-going-global/?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=newsletter2020-08-30](https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2018/10/29/china-japan-cooperation-going-global/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsletter2020-08-30).

47 Yuan Yang, Tom Mitchell and Robin Harding, "China and Japan reset strained relationship", *Financial Times*, 26 October 2018. <https://www.ft.com/content/160b3666-d8e3-11e8-a854-33d6f82e62f8>.

48 As quoted in Stephen R Nagy, "A reset in Japan-China relations?", *The Japan Times*, 24 October 2019. <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2019/10/24/commentary/japan-commentary/reset-japan-china-relations/>.

issues. The idea had several proponents in the US at the time.<sup>49</sup> Officials in the current Biden administration have also highlighted the need to have the space to engage China while confronting it on several other issues.<sup>50</sup> Hence, the possibility of any member of the Quad reaching a separate peace with China continues to impede the process of its institutionalisation.

*China has used its weight to create differences within ASEAN to counter the voices of countries that have been protesting its muscular approach to the South China Sea dispute.*

The threat of abandonment is aggravated by China's attempt to use economic incentives to divide multilateral groupings. In recent years, China has used economic incentives to increase its influence both within states and in multilateral forums.<sup>51</sup> The ASEAN forum is an example of this strategy in practice. ASEAN is divided on regional security issues such as the South China Sea dispute. China has used its weight to create differences within ASEAN to counter the voices of countries that have been protesting its muscular approach to the South China Sea dispute.<sup>52</sup> Similarly, China has attempted to use economic incentives of market access to improve relations with the Quad members. During Chinese Premier Li Keqiang's visit to Japan in May 2018, China and Japan reached an agreement to allow Japanese banks to invest in China's bond and equities market. Li also stated that China would "accelerate the process of granting bond business licenses to Japanese-owned financial institutions and entry to the Chinese market based on laws and regulations."<sup>53</sup> Shortly after the Doklam standoff was resolved and in the run-up to Modi's visit to Wuhan, China signalled a flexible position on some foreign policy disagreements with India. In an interaction at Jawaharlal Nehru

49 Robert B Zoellick and Justin Yifu Lin, "Recovery: A Job for China and the US", *The Washington Post*, 6 March 2009. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/03/05/AR2009030502887.html>. Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Group of Two that could change the World", *Financial Times*, 13 January 2009. <https://www.ft.com/content/d99369b8-e178-11dd-afa0-0000779fd2ac>.

50 Kurt M Campbell and Rush Doshi, "How America Can Shore Up Asian Order", *Foreign Affairs*, 12 January 2021. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-01-12/how-america-can-shore-asian-order>.

51 For further readings, see Hoo Tiang Boon, "Hardening the Hard, Softening the Soft: Assertiveness and China's Regional Strategy", *Journal of Strategic Studies* 40, no. 5 (2017): pp. 639-662; Philippe Le Corre, "China's Rise as a Geoeconomic Influencer: Four European Case Studies", Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 15 October 2018. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/10/15/china-rise-as-geoeconomic-influencer-four-european-case-studies-pub-77462>.

52 Amantha Custer et. al, "Ties that Bind: Quantifying China's public diplomacy and its "good neighbour" effect", US Department of State, June 2018, p. 14.

53 "Premier of the State Council of China Li Keqiang Visits Japan, Japan-China Summit Meeting and Banquet", Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Japan, 9 May 2018, last modified February 4, 2021. [https://www.mofa.go.jp/a\\_o/c\\_m1/cn/page3e\\_000857.html](https://www.mofa.go.jp/a_o/c_m1/cn/page3e_000857.html).

University in November 2017, Beijing's envoy to India, Luo Zhaohui, expressed his keenness to accomplish a bilateral friendship and trade agreement with India and even suggested that China could consider alternative routes or change the name of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). He stated that "we can change the name of CPEC" and "[c]reate an alternative corridor through Jammu and Kashmir, Nathu La pass or Nepal to deal with India's concerns."<sup>54</sup>

Ironically, among the Quad members, the inclination to stabilise relations with China at a bilateral level increases the fear of abandonment at the level of the collective. However, one of the reasons for this approach is the members' desire to avoid entrapment in conflicts that do not converge with their specific interests. Each member in the Quad is concerned about China's growing influence in specific geographical regions. For instance, Chinese investments in South Asia and its growing naval presence in the IOR have been a major source of anxiety for India. Similarly, Australia is concerned with China's growing role in the South Pacific region while Japan is primarily focused on its conflict with China in the East China Sea and the general security of the sea lines of communication. The US, on the other hand, is more concerned with China's overall rise, as it wishes to remain the pre-eminent power in the Asia-Pacific. Given the militarised nature of the conflicts in the East and South China Seas and the Himalayan frontier, the Quad members have an enduring interest in not being dragged into conflicts far away from their immediate areas of interest.

Due to such divergent interests, the purpose of the Quad also differs from one member to another. As noted above, for India, the objective of joining the Quad is to increase its comprehensive national power. However, Australia and Japan are more focused on preserving the existing liberal order and are looking at initiatives that are focused on rule-making and standard-setting. This difference in priorities stems from the fact that the members within the Quad have vastly different resources and capabilities. Unlike Japan and Australia, India

*Each member in the Quad is concerned about China's growing influence in specific geographical regions.*

<sup>54</sup> Kallol Bhattacharjee, "China proposes alternative routes for CPEC via J&K, Nepal", *The Hindu*, 18 November 2017. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/china-proposes-alternative-routes-for-cpec-via-jk-nepal/article20546919.ece>.

*India differs from several developed countries, including its Quad partners, on the development of standards governing emerging technologies.*

is still a developing country. Hence, several of India's engagements with the Quad and the individual members look to increase its military power and economic resources. However, Japan and Australia have been much more proactive in developing standards for infrastructure investment and emerging technologies. The security of information and communication technology networks and deterring cyber-attacks have been a key focus during the Japan-Australia-US trilateral dialogues.<sup>55</sup> India differs from several developed countries, including its Quad partners, on the development of standards governing emerging technologies. India had refused to sign the Osaka Declaration in June 2019 which committed countries to the free flow of data.<sup>56</sup> It was signed by most members of the G20. Hence, within the Quad, there exist differences in both ideas on standard-setting and on the capacity to lead such efforts. This may lead to further friction between the Quad members whenever the grouping attempts to further coordinate the security policies of each of its members.

55 "Trilateral Strategic Dialogue Joint Ministerial Statement, August 1, 2019", Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Japan, last modified 26 January 2021. <https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000503888.pdf>.

56 Shubhajit Roy, "G-20 Osaka summit: India refuses to sign declaration on free flow of data across borders", *The Indian Express*, 29 June 2019. <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/g-20-osaka-summit-narendra-mod-india-declaration-on-free-flow-of-data-across-borders-shinzo-abe-5805846/>.

## Conclusion

The members of the Quad are being driven by the fear of China's rising power and its revisionist behaviour. A desire to develop a strategic hedge or gain some leverage in their engagement with China has made the Quad members flock together. To this end, all the states have stepped up their military, diplomatic and economic cooperation with one another. They are looking to use the Quad to pool their resources and compete against China's BRI. They are also looking to cooperate militarily to build capacity and interoperability. The members are also aiming to draw in other like-minded countries which will help strengthen the liberal order in the region.

As Glenn Snyder has previously pointed out, "the risks of abandonment and entrapment vary inversely."<sup>57</sup> This paradox is now developing in the Quad. As the Quad members attempt to balance China, they are developing closer links among themselves. To mitigate the fears of abandonment and entrapment, the Quad members are trying to develop a framework of engagement that is sustainable. However, differences in ideologies, approaches and overall national capabilities threaten to thwart the Quad's institutionalisation. Furthermore, avoiding entrapment whilst preventing abandonment appears to be an enduring challenge that each of the Quad members will have to address. Overall, the Quad's future will not only depend upon how well it addresses the China question but also whether it transforms organically into a "soft and succinct regional cohesive grouping that promotes a culture of democratic ideals."<sup>58</sup>

*To mitigate the fears of abandonment and entrapment, the Quad members are trying to develop a framework of engagement that is sustainable.*

57 Glenn Snyder, "The Security Dilemma in Alliance Politics", *World Politics* 36, no. 4 (Jul 1984): pp. 461-495.

58 Jagannath Panda and Ippeita Nishida, "The Quad's Future is Tied to Soft Security," *Pacnet#9*, 20 January 2021. <https://pacforum.org/publication/pacnet-9-the-quads-future-is-tied-to-soft-security>.

## Appendix 1 About the Panel Discussion

**ISAS-SPF Panel Discussion (Webinar)**  
**Institutionalising the Quad:**  
**Can it Seize the Momentum for the Future?**  
20 January 2021

### Programme

- 2.00pm      **Panel Discussion**  
**Institutionalising the Quad: Can it Seize the Momentum for the Future?**  
Chairperson  
**Mr Ippeita Nishida**  
Senior Research Fellow  
The Sasakawa Peace Foundation, Japan
- Panellists  
**Dr Kei Koga**  
Assistant Professor  
Public Policy and Global Affairs Programme  
School of Humanities and Social Sciences  
Nanyang Technological University, Singapore
- Dr Jagannath Panda**  
Research Fellow and  
Coordinator of the East Asia Centre  
Manohar Parrikar Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis, India
- Dr Lavina Lee**  
Senior Lecturer  
Department of Modern History  
Politics and International Relations  
Macquarie University, Australia
- 2.40pm      **Discussion Session**
- 3.30pm      **End of Session**

## Appendix 2

### About the Authors

**Dr Yogesh Joshi** is a Research Fellow at the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) at the National University of Singapore. Before joining ISAS, Dr Joshi was a MacArthur and Stanton Nuclear Postdoctoral Fellow at the Center for International Security and Cooperation, Stanford University, United States (US). He is also an alumnus of the Summer Workshop on the Analysis of Military Operations and Strategy, Columbia University and the International Nuclear History Boot Camp, Woodrow Wilson Center. He has a doctorate in International Politics from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

Dr Joshi is the co-author of three books: *India and Nuclear Asia: Forces, Doctrines and Dangers* (Georgetown University Press, 2018); *Asia's Emerging Balance of Power: The US 'Pivot' and Indian Foreign Policy* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); and *India's Nuclear Policy: A Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press, 2018). His research has been published in *Survival*, *Asian Security*, *India Review*, *US Naval War College Review*, *International Affairs*, *Contemporary Security Policy*, *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, *Asia Policy*, *International History Review* and *Harvard Asia Quarterly*.

Dr Joshi's research focuses on contemporary Indian foreign and national security policy, with an emphasis on the Indo-Pacific's balance of power, the evolution of India's military power and its approach to the use of force in international relations.

**Mr Ippeita Nishida** is a Senior Research Fellow of the International Peace and Security Department at the Sasakawa Peace Foundation (SPF). In this position, he conducts research on Japan's foreign engagement policies and tools, in particular, foreign aid and security cooperation (defense diplomacy). Additionally, he manages and oversees the mutual visitation exchange program for senior field officers between the Japan Self-Defense Forces and the Vietnamese People's Army, a flagship initiative of SPF on defense cooperation. Currently, he serves as an expert panel member of the Development Assistance Accountability Committee at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, and he teaches at the Hosei University and the Aoyama Gakuin University as an adjunct lecturer.

Prior to joining SPF in October 2016, he held the position of research fellow at the Tokyo Foundation where he worked on several key policy research projects and published reports

such as *The Quad Plus: Towards a Shared Strategic Vision for the Indo-Pacific* (co-editor, Wisdom Tree Publisher, 2015); *Rethinking Japan's Foreign Aid: Widening the Scope of Assistance from a Security Perspective* (co-author and editor, the Tokyo Foundation, 2014); and *Maritime Security and the Right of Self-Defense in Peacetime* (co-author and editor, the Tokyo Foundation, 2013). He earned his Master of Science in Development Studies from the London School of Economics and Political Science.

**Mr Nishant Rajeev** is a Research Analyst at the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) at the National University of Singapore. Before joining ISAS, Mr Rajeev worked in a public affairs firm in New Delhi where he focused on the Indian government's cyber, drone and automotive policies, as well as projects on police reform and child rights. His articles have been published on the websites of *The Diplomat*, *National Interest* and *Pragati*.

Mr Rajeev earned his Master of Science (Strategic Studies) from the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies at the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. He holds a Bachelor of Engineering degree from the RNS Institute of Technology and a Graduate Certificate in Public Policy from the Takshashila Institution, both based in Bangalore, India.



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