

INDO-PACIFIC RIVALRY: PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO QUAD

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ABSTRACT

The "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" (FOIP) is a concept in US foreign policy. Its implementation began with the inauguration of President Trump's administration and is currently being extensively promoted. The approach has a strong geostrategic orientation and is based on Japan, Australia, and India, the region's main regional powers and Washington's closest allies. Despite ongoing disagreements over the objectives for a new regional security organization, members of the "Quad" are particularly concerned about China's expanding economic influence and potential military domination, not just in the Asia-Pacific but also in the Indian Ocean. As a result, the deterrent of Chinese might and the maintenance of the regional balance of power would be the general premise of the Quadrilateral security discussion in the Indo-Pacific area. South Asia's new competition emerged as a result of the rising tension in the South China Sea. This article examined the US and Chinese Expansionism in South Asia with a focus on QUAD and its most recent developments as well as the emergence of bipolarity in the region of South Asia. This study also covered India's involvement and its viewpoint on the problems.

KEYWORDS: FOIP, QUAD, Quadrilateral Security, Indo Pacific, NATO

INTRODUCTION

A security discussion involving the governments of India, Australia, Japan, and the United States is known as the QUAD. The alliance's main objective is to oppose China's expansionist policies in the Indo-Pacific. It attempts to develop creative solutions to protect the critical waterways in the area from Chinese influence. The United States is attempting to expand its influence in Asian countries, which is why we will see QUAD, AUKUS and Five Eyes. The U.S. is a member of all three alliances, which are made up of intelligence, security and military agreements. "The United States is attempting to construct an Asian NATO with blocs to restrict China.

When we look at these four nations on a global map, we can see that they form a quadrilateral, which is a two-dimensional object with four straight sides. The alliance's principal goals are to protect the Indo-Pacific region against Chinese expansionism. Shinzo Abe, the Japanese prime minister, initially suggested this strategy in 2007. However, the plan was shelved after Australia withdrew owing to Chinese pressure. After 13 years, in 2020, India, Australia, Japan, and the United States made it a reality and created the long-awaited quad alliance. Apart from that, these four countries have many important agreements and dealings with one another, but the alliance's primary goal is to counter China's expansion policy in the Indo-Pacific region, because there are many sea routes in the Indo-Pacific region, which the Chinese are well aware of, and they have always tried to expand their influence in these regions as part of their global expansion strategy. As a result, the QUAD's goal is to devise innovative measures to preserve the Indo-Pacific region's crucial water lanes free of Chinese influence.

USA AND CHINESE EXPANSION IN SOUTH ASIAN REGION

In regards of China, the US is attempting to expand its influence in Asian countries, which is why we will see QUAD, AUKUS, and Five Eyes (Chollet, 2001). The United States is a member of all three alliances, which are made up of intelligence, security, and bilateral military agreements. "The United States is attempting to construct an Asian NATO with blocs to restrict China," Wang Yi said. Business Standard, 7 March 2022. If we look at the north American continent from the East, NATO enlargement expanded America's dominance,

while from the west, QUAD, AUKUS, and Five Eyes expanded America's influence in the Asian region. It is undeniable that the West has destabilized the most democratically elected government it has ever produced. We can witness this in Canada, Finland, New Zealand, and Ukraine, where Lenin democratic governments have been replaced by youthful noisiest. As a result, there seems to be no doubt that the US has a vested interest in assisting these countries from behind. Similarly, if we look at China, we can see that it has become a worldwide expansionist. Every regional global strategic group is seen as a threat to its expansionist agenda. China now has the most neighbors in the world, with 40 nations sharing its 2000-kilometer land border. China has a maritime border with nations in and surrounding the South China Sea, including Japan, the Philippines, Taiwan, Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, and Malesia. China has settled territorial disputes with many of its neighbors, but it continues to have border disputes with nations such as India, Bhutan, Japan, Taiwan, and Vietnam, as well as a few island disputes with countries in and around the South China Sea (Qureshi & Wan, 2008).

CHINA'S DIPLOMACY

Why does China have so many land disputes with other countries? China now has the most neighbors in the world, with 40 nations sharing its 2000-kilometer land border. We may think of it as a negotiating method that China employs with its neighbors on a larger scale, and it is very much a component of its arm-twisting diplomacy. This form of diplomacy can only be carried out by a powerful government that is unconcerned about international conventions or the opinions of others. Following the 1978 Chinese economic reform, China's economy grew to the point that it is now one of the world's top economies. However, with an economic growth mindset, China also strives to expand its physical size by engaging into border disputes and using them as a bargaining chip with its neighbors. China's economy is mostly based on exports, and the country also boasts the world's greatest navy. As a result, whatever China exports must originate in the South China Sea. As a result, there are several strategic marine routes in the Indo-Pacific area that are vital to China.

Aside from the border dispute, China has one of the largest economies in the world, but because of its emphasis on economic expansion, it also seeks to increase its physical size by becoming involved in border conflicts and using them as leverage with its neighbors. China needs to travel via a number of critical sea lanes in the Indo-Pacific region. China makes significant investments in developing countries, especially those of geostrategic importance, and when they fail to make payments, China sets the terms to consolidate its influence over the region and advance its maritime interests. Therefore, whatever China exports must come from the South China Sea. The Jointly unveiled the Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness programme at the QUAD Summit 2022 (IPMDA). An unofficial division of the Chinese navy is the marine militia, which is also present in China. This fisherman is a member of China's naval militia, according to US intelligence. In addition, China maintains a marine militia, which the US Department of Defense refers to as the People Arm Forces Maritime Militia (PAFMM). This marine militia is an unauthorized division of the Chinese navy. To help the nations of the Indo-Pacific region monitor their waterways, the Quad has launched a new initiative called IPMDA. The purpose is to stop Chinese maritime militia from engaging in illegal fishing. The civilian fishing boats, which are China's maritime militia, purposely crash their boat into the foreign boat anytime they notice any foreign military actions and surveillance. China is developing artificial islands with airstrips and other military equipment. It will be regarded as a war crime if the same actions are carried out by Chinese naval ships (Kennedy & Erickson 2017).

China has a policy known as Outward Foreign Direct Investment (OFDI) (OFDI). China now holds roughly \$133 billion in OFDI, making it the world's largest investor. China invests substantially in emerging nations, particularly those of geostrategic significance, and when those countries fail to repay, China dictates terms to build control for China's maritime interests. Debt Trap Diplomacy was the name given to it by western countries. If we look at the United States' military sites across the world, we can see that it has formed alliances with other nations to protect its interests. China, on the other hand, is solely interested in making economic and military agreements and is not interested in building alliances or commitments. As a result, both the United States and China have their own distinct expansionist strategies (Brautigam, 2020).

CONTEMPORARY DEVELOPMENT

Recently, at the QUAD Summit 2022, the Jointly announced a new initiative called Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA) to monitor the Indo-Pacific region for any illegal activities, such as illegal fishing, the unauthorized use of coastguard vessels, keeping an eye on maritime militia, and other activities. They are undoubtedly targeting China because it has been accused of similar operations in the South China Sea region on several occasions (Kraska & Monti, 2015). China also has a marine militia, which is an unofficial branch of the Chinese navy and is formally known as the People Arm Forces Maritime Militia (PAFMM) by the US Department of Defense. China sponsors a large number of civilian vessels that are supervised by the Chinese navy, and these civilian vessels enter contested waters because the Chinese navy is

unable to do so officially. It is evident that the US is observing using remote sensing and satellite imagery, therefore the civilian vessel, also known as the commercial fishing fleet, operates like a mafia gang, with some people in charge. According to US intelligence, this fisherman is a member of China's marine militia. It's not a new phenomenon; it's been going on since 1950 (Kennedy & Erickson 2017).

The civilian vessel is used by China because it provides a level of deniability; if something goes wrong, China can easily claim that these are impoverished fishermen conducting business. As an example, the Philippines recently accused China's coastguard of obstructing a supply shipment (18 Nov, 2021. www.aljazeera.com). If we look at the South China Sea, we can see a lot of little contested islands, as well as things like corder leaves, sand waves, and atolls. So, in the south China sea, there are many tiny island features, and China is building artificial islands with airstrips, shelter ports, and other military infrastructure, and the civilian fishing boats, which are China's maritime militia, what they do is intentionally crush their boat into the foreign boat whenever they see any foreign military activities and surveillance, in order to damage their sonar devices or any other exploration devices. If the same acts are carried out by Chinese navy ships, it will be considered a war crime. To circumvent this, it is said that China pays for these civilian fishing boats to do the work for them without causing serious problems. Having a marine militia is a clever approach that has allowed China to violate international treaties that regulate international waters, such as the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. If we look at the fishing vessel, we can tell that it is a Chinese stooge in the South China Sea, helping China spread its influence in the disputed area. As a result, QUAD members have established a new effort dubbed IPMDA to assist Indo-Pacific nations in monitoring their waters not just for humanitarian and natural disaster purposes, but also to prevent illicit fishing by Chinese maritime militia.

QUAD members have also committed to invest \$50 billion in Indo-Pacific infrastructure projects over the next five years. This investment goes against China's Belt and Road Initiative (May 25, 2022 Business Standard), which comprises both public and private investment in areas such as health care, essential technology, infrastructure, and climate change-related programmes and schemes. Despite the fact that most Indo-Pacific nations are located near the equator, they are susceptible to a variety of deadly diseases, hence money will most likely be focused on vaccine development. Every year, many storms hit the Equatorial area, which we refer to as tropical cyclones, hurricanes, and typhoons, causing huge damage to property, life infrastructure, and so on. As a result, some money will likely be invested in disaster mitigation programmes. Investing in crucial technology entails monitoring the whole Indo-Pacific area through satellite, so that any natural disasters or unlawful actions may be monitored and action taken ahead of time.

INDIA'S PERSPECTIVES

When we look at the QUAD, we can see that each of the four members adhered to democratic norms in both their social and political discourse. However, India has a significant distinction in terms of democratic values. India also adheres to the concept of nationalism, which is deeply rooted in its culture. Because Indian culture is the world's oldest surviving culture, the concept of nation has always existed. It did not occur after 1947, as many leftist historians and contemporary people claimed. A territory is a physical limit termed a state or a country, but a nation is an identity made up of culture, community, people, customs, rituals, and language. We cannot construct a country without a nation, and a nation can exist without a state. India Despite thousands of years of foreign invasion, Indian culture has survived and been passed down from generation to generation. The concept of nationality and dharma is difficult for western countries to grasp. When people hear the word nationalism, the first thing that springs to mind is Adolf Hitler, so that's how they've been taught; yet, Indians are aware of the differences.

In the 5th century BC, "Herodotus" uses the term "democracy." Today, the term democracy is associated with left Lenin in this spectrum; as we can see, the United States is the champion of democracy, but the western model of democracy is a flop model that has caused more harm than good in the name of democracy. As a result, we can see that the US is always attempting to exert pressure on the international community to adopt a left-wing Leninist political position. The same scenario happened when the United States and European Union nations tried to get India to vote against Russia at a United Nations Security Council meeting, but India declined to do so on its own. The US even stated to India, "Which side of history do you want to be on?" When Daleep Singh, the deputy national adviser, visited India in the first week of April 2022, he remarked, "If China violates the LAC again, Russia will not come running to India's rescue." In the middle of April, US intelligence claimed that India and Pakistan might be on the verge of a large-scale conflict (2022 Business Standard).

Since the Quad's resurgence in 2017, the organization has had difficulty determining a core ideology upon which to base a long-lasting framework. It has been difficult to come up with content, even though the symbolism of the grouping has sparked interesting discussions among those who work in the field of strategy.

However, recent events seem to indicate that the Quad may finally be receiving the guidance required to create a reliable and long-lasting framework. India is the only nation in the Quad that directly borders China on land, and it's a border that has a checkered past and is currently a source of controversy. Southeast Asian countries will be suspicious of any coalition with alliance overtones. Additionally, a solely military justification for the Quad is not in the long-term interests of the area, which is dealing with a number of other pressing crises including terrorism, climate change, and other important ones. A forum that encourages trust and collaboration from the region's nations is necessary to address these issues. India has consistently pushed for the Quad to develop into an inclusive forum. One reflection of this mindset is making sure the Quad does not explicitly associate with "alliance politics." The summary from the Australia-U.S. summit was unambiguous in mentioning "Australia's strong support for Ukraine since Russia's incursion," which was obviously a reference to China's advances to Taiwan.

Chinese interests in the maritime realm outweigh their opportunistic aspirations to seize land in the Himalayas. Chinese trade is largely conducted via the Indian Ocean routes, which cross major shipping lanes. In the event of any border action by China, India, along with the Quad countries, may be able to stifle Chinese trade. As a result, unlike in the continental sphere where India appears to be in a "nutcracker like situation" as a result of China-Pakistan cooperation, the maritime sphere is entirely open to India and offers numerous opportunities for coalition building, rule setting, and other forms of strategic exploration. Great powers are becoming more interested in the maritime sector, particularly with the introduction of the "Indo-Pacific" idea. For instance, the Indo-Pacific plans of many European nations have just been published. The idea of a "broader Asia" that can extend its influence outside of physical bounds can be realised with India, which is strategically placed at the centre of the Indo-Pacific geopolitical imagination. India can also support collective action in disaster relief and humanitarian aid, monitoring shipping for search-and-rescue or anti-piracy operations, providing infrastructural support to states with susceptible climates, connection projects, and other related activities. India can also curb China's imperialist actions in the Indian Ocean region with the help of the Quad countries, ensuring regional security and prosperity for all.

CONCLUSION

Over the next five years, the members of the Quad have agreed to invest \$50 billion in infrastructure projects throughout the Indo-Pacific. This investment is contrary to China's Belt and Road Initiative, which calls for both governmental and private investment in infrastructure, programmes and projects addressing climate change, health care, key technologies, and other sectors (May 25, 2022 Business Standard). Vaccine development will probably receive funding since, despite the fact that the majority of countries are close to the equator, they remain vulnerable to a number of severe illnesses. China's rapid economic success is undoubtedly a result of its unethical, illegal, and diplomatic trade practices. The neoliberal economy, however, appears to be under danger from Chinese expansion. By working closely together and taking joint action, liberal democratic nations might resolve this issue by developing strict policies and putting them into practice in an effort to restrain Chinese expansion. A useful outcome of this to counter China might be QUAD.

In terms of democratic ideals, India stands out significantly. India is another country that upholds nationalism, which is ingrained in its culture. Indian culture has endured and been passed down from generation to generation despite hundreds of years of foreign invasion. In order to universally establish the strategically significant Indo-Pacific grouping, India has expended a lot of diplomatic capital. India's efforts are intended to develop a respectable normative framework that will act as a vision statement for the future direction of Quad. The success of Quad will depend on its capacity to establish itself as a conference that will address Indo-Pacific issues. It ought to support a regional order based on sovereign equality and observance of the law of nations. However, in order to maximize their benefits, QUAD members should concentrate on expanding their partnerships outside of the maritime sector and into the Indo-Pacific region. A rising great power The Indo-Pacific Vision has to be adequately articulated by the Quad states in a comprehensive framework with the aim of advancing everyone's economic and security interests. As opposed to Chinese claims that the Quad is some form of military alliance, this will reassure the littoral States that it will be a factor for regional good. The upcoming Ministerial meetings could provide an opportunity to clarify the concept and determine a course for the future.

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