

**The Role of U.S.-Japan-Australia-India Cooperation, or the “Quad” in FOIP:
A Policy Coordination Mechanism for a Rules-Based Order**

Ryosuke Hanada¹

Introduction

The quadrilateral cooperation framework which includes Australia, India, Japan and the United States was revived in 2017 after ten-year-long freeze. While the so-called “Quad” has been ambiguous in terms of its strategic objectives, this framework is becoming one of the important elements in geopolitical and geo-economic discussions in the Indo-Pacific region. One of the major challenges for the Quad would be potentially different perceptions among the members regarding the international order of the 21st century. That said, this paper argues that, due to not only the expansionist China but also uncertainties about U.S. Asia policy and the role of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Quad could be an essential instrument for Tokyo to realize the Free and Open Indo-Pacific vision, central pillar of Japanese foreign policy in the region.

Quadrilateral cooperation was revived in November 2017 when diplomats from Australia, India, Japan and the United States gathered for working-level consultations alongside the East Asia Summit (EAS) in Manila. The four governments held quadrilateral consultations in May and November 2018 on the margins of the Shangri-La Dialogue and EAS, respectively. This paper examines the origin and characteristics of the Quad. While the Quad is widely viewed in the context of security partnerships in the region, this paper finds the origin of the Quad as the result of not only some countries’ efforts for networking U.S.-led alliances and security partnerships, but the expansion of Asian regionalism to an Expanded East Asia and later the Indo-Pacific. It then analyzes the potential and limitations of the Quad based on the four dimensions of power: diplomacy, information, military and economy (DIME). While acknowledging the Quad’s role as one of the key policy coordination mechanisms for maintaining the rules-based order, this paper reiterates the importance of bilateral and trilateral relations under the Quad for actual policy implementation.²

1 The author is research fellow of the Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA). The views expressed are the author’s alone and do not represent any affiliated organizations.

2 Michael Green (2014) Strategic Asian Triangles, in Saadia Pekkanen, John Ravenhill, and Rosemary Foot (eds) Oxford Handbook for International Relations in the Asia-Pacific

One of core arguments of this paper is that the Quad should concentrate on coordinating and patchworking these lines and triangles as an informal consultative mechanism in which the four countries share the strategic objective of maintaining a favorable balance of power in the Indo-Pacific region. The paper also addresses a fundamental challenge for the Quad, which is the lack of shared visions regarding the international order of the 21st century beyond preventing China's regional hegemony. Finally, the paper explores the role of the Quad in the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) vision. The ambiguity of the Quad suggests it could assume multiple functions: a policy coordination mechanism to set priorities in the region; an important collective counterbalance to expansionist China; an anchor for U.S. engagement in Asia; an instrument for India to direct others' attention to the Indian Ocean region; and a complement to ASEAN's role as regional peace broker.

Historical Background of the Quad

Although the members of the Quad are now seen as sharing values and, more recently, strategic outlooks, the four countries had rarely been considered one group of nations both during and after the Cold War. In fact, the "Quad" with a large Q previously meant the group of advanced economies, namely Canada, the European Union, Japan and the United States in the context of trade liberalization under the GATT/WTO.³ Also, until the United States joined the EAS in 2011, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) that includes 27 countries was the only regional cooperation framework in which the current Quad countries shared membership.

So where did the Quad come from? While Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe gave birth to the idea of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue in 2007, that was based on incrementally expanded regional cooperation mechanisms, especially the EAS, and the development of triangular relations, especially Australia-Japan-U.S. trilateral security cooperation. Both were, in different ways, stimulated by increasing threat perceptions of China based on uncertainties about China's rise. In that sense, the revival of the Quad in 2017 cannot simply be attributed to Shinzo Abe's leadership but also to the fact that four governments carefully and steadily shifted their foreign policy priorities in broader East Asia or the Asia-Pacific and developed bilateral and trilateral security cooperation mechanism since 2007 in the face of a rising and assertive China. Abe recognized these developments and skillfully helped revive the Quad in 2017 with his

³ Officials meet to plan next step to free trade in Asia-Pacific, South China Morning Post (October 18, 1996). China could be the Quad: WTO puts China among big four global traders, South China Morning Post (May 3, 2002)

conceptualization of the Indo-Pacific regional concept as a pillar of Japanese foreign policy.

Australia's joining East Asia (2001 to 2005)

In late 2001 to early 2002 Japan reevaluated Australia as a key partner for not only promoting high-level economic integration and keeping America engaged in the Asia-Pacific region, but also for contributing to regional security in areas such as countering terrorism.

The idea of having Australia together with New Zealand in East Asian groupings, such as ASEAN+3 (China, Japan and South Korea) emerged in late 2001.⁴ This idea was chiefly aimed at diluting China's growing influence in the discussion of economic integration under the ASEAN+3 framework in which China was likely to enhance its economic influence over developing states.⁵ Tokyo was concerned about ASEAN+3 becoming low-quality economic integration that would just eliminate tariffs on goods but not liberalize foreign investment or set economic rules including intellectual property rights or investor-state dispute settlement mechanisms.

At that time, however, Tokyo carefully avoided being viewed as countering China's influence through the inclusion of Australia and New Zealand because there were still strong advocates for Japan-China friendship within Japan's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) and, economically, Japan-China trade was expected to continuously increase due to China's dramatic economic growth.⁶

In parallel, Australia, Japan and the United States had institutionalized security cooperation, such as the Trilateral Strategic Dialogue, since the early 2000s based on increasing

4 Although it was January 2002 when the then Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi expressed the importance of inviting these two countries to the potential East Asia Community in his speech in Singapore, the original text of speech which was planned in September 2001 and later cancelled due to the terrorist attack on 9.11 did not refer to these two countries.: (Internal documents of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan. Disclosed upon the author's information disclosure request (*jouhou koukai seikyū*) submitted on 18 October 2018).

5 Takashi Terada (2010) The origins of ASEAN+6 and Japan's initiatives: China's rise and the agent-structure analysis, *The Pacific Review*, 23:1, 71-92.

⁶ Japan's trade with China has dramatically increased from 2001 to 2006, with average growth rate over 18.4 percent. See. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan. Shift of Japan-China trade (*Nicchu Boueki no Suii*): <https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/area/china/boeki.html>. As for expectation for China's economic growth, see. International Monetary Fund, 2001, *World Economic Outlook October 2001*, Chapter 1.

concern over China's military build-up and assertive behavior around Japan⁷. However, as in the case of Tokyo's invitation to Australia to participate in East Asian regional cooperation, China was not referred to as a main agenda item in the trilateral. Rather, the U.S. war on terror urgently required Japan and Australia, two U.S. allies, to enhance security cooperation in the Middle East. Since then-Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's historic decision to send the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) to support coalition operations in the Indian Ocean and reconstruction activities in Iraq since 2003, the Australian Defense Force (ADF) and the JSDF developed habits of cooperation through these missions. Remarkably, in February 2005, the Howard administration's decision to send 450 ADF personnel to protect the JSDF operating in Samawah, Iraq, helped the Koizumi administration that had to make a choice as to whether to withdraw the JSDF after Dutch forces withdrew from the mission. The Australia-Japan-U.S. trilateral also cooperated in addressing non-traditional security issues such as piracy, terrorism, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR), and human trafficking among others. This extensive cooperation later culminated in the Japan–Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation in March 2007.

In contrast to the late 1980s, when Japan and Australia cooperated for advancing inclusive economic cooperation through the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, Tokyo's approach to Canberra the early 2000s reflected a strategic calculation in response to China's rising power with respect to regional economic integration and security. Despite the relatively weak interest of the United States in the Asia-Pacific during this period, Japan started using Australia to expand regional concepts from limited East Asia (ASEAN+3) to the broader East Asian constructs (ASEAN+3+2) to mitigate the risk of China's increasing power and influence, and that was timely and important for Australia, which increasingly relied on exports to Asia. Although the Howard administration had less interest in Asian regionalism than Paul Keating, security cooperation with Tokyo matched the "Howard Doctrine" which aimed for reinforcing the ANZUS alliance.

India to East Asia (after 2005)

After seeking closer cooperation with Australia, Japan also shifted its engagement with India around 2005.⁸ In the establishment of the EAS in 2005, for example, Japan aligned with Indonesia to push India's participation in the EAS in addition to Australia and New Zealand. The idea of the

7 Tomohiko Satake (2016) Japan-Australia Security Cooperation: Emerging Challenges and Opportunities, CSIS Strategic Japan Series.

8 Interview with one of former executives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Comprehensive Economic Partnership in East Asia emerged as Tokyo's counter-narrative to the ASEAN+3 economic integration in 2006 and Japan pushed the ASEAN+6 format to include India in the process. At this time, it became clear that Tokyo was seriously concerned about China's power and influence within the limited membership of ASEAN+3 and aimed to balance it through the inclusion of other stakeholders in regional cooperation mechanisms⁹.

On the strategic side, India had been incrementally embedded in security partnerships around the Australia-Japan-U.S. triangle thanks to a policy change of the United States. Japan explicitly added the strategic dimension to Japan-India bilateral relations in April 2005 because of the rapprochement between the United States and India. With the improvement of the U.S.-India relations, the first Shinzo Abe administration advanced strategic cooperation with India under the concept of the "Arc of Freedom and Prosperity", including reframing the Japan-India Partnership to the Japan-India Strategic Global Partnership in December 2006 and Abe's historic speech of the "Confluence of Two Seas" in the Indian Parliament in August 2007. Even after Abe's sudden resignation, a Japan-India Declaration of Strategic Partnership like the Japan-Australia declaration was announced in October 2008.

The so-called Quad originated in 2004 when the four militaries engaged in joint humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HA/DR) operations after the Boxing Day Indian Ocean tsunami¹⁰, but the turning point for the materialization of the Quad was 2006. In May 2006 senior officials from Australia, India, Japan and the United States arranged an inaugural Quad meeting on the sidelines of the ARF in Manila to discuss ways to take the four-power relationship forward.¹¹ However, positive and negative events followed in 2007. The positive was the Malabar 2007-02 exercise in which the four countries plus the Singaporean navy conducted naval exercises in the Bay of Bengal.¹² While the exercise ostensibly focused on HA/DR operations because of the tragedy of the Indonesian tsunami, the exercise also aimed at improving interoperability among the five navies in the area of anti-submarine operations.¹³ The negative was Australian Prime

⁹ Japan's Diplomatic Bluebook has firstly referred to Australia and India together in 2006, saying that "(the both) jointly included to the EAS. It continued to mention the two together, in a way such as "stable democratic states in the region (2007)", "sharing mature democracy and other fundamental values (2010)", and "sharing fundamental values and responsibility for the stability and prosperity of the region (2013)".

¹⁰ Satake *ibid.*

¹¹ Shinzo Abe became the prime minister in September 2007. Battening down Asia's hatches, *Straits Times* (4 September 2007)

¹² Exercise Malabar 07-2 Kicks Off, See https://www.navy.mil/submit/display.asp?story_id=31691.

¹³ Exercise Malabar 07-2 Kicks Off, *ibid.*

Minister Kevin Rudd's decision to withdraw from the quadrilateral format, which is still seen as betrayal by Indian experts, and weakened the momentum for Quad cooperation. Rudd's decision was believed to be based on China's severe criticism of the Quad, and Rudd also decided to stop supplying uranium to India¹⁴, which fueled perceptions that Australia prioritized its relationship with China over the Quad. Those developments combined with a change of administration in Tokyo from Abe to Yasuo Fukuda and a lack of enthusiasm in Delhi and Washington caused the momentum for the Quad to dissipate further.

The Status of the Quad and DIME Analysis

The Quad was revived in 2017 as a diplomatic consultation mechanism held alongside other regional meetings. This section reviews the trajectory of the reemergence of the Quad and analyzes its potential and limitations based on the four dimensions of power: diplomacy, information, military and economy (DIME).

Although no one can underestimate the impact on the Quad of the reelection of Abe as Japanese leader in December 2012, the Quad concept did develop somewhat after 2007 primarily because bilateral and trilateral relations involving the Quad members had steadily and significantly progressed. There were chiefly three shifts in the relationship of the Quad; Australia-Japan security relations, India's approach to the United States and Japan, and the U.S. rebalance to Asia.

First, Japan and Australia set up multiple agreements related to security cooperation as articulated in a joint statement in September 2012¹⁵, such as the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA) agreed in 2010¹⁶ and Information Security Agreement (ISA) signed in 2012¹⁷. Under the Abe administration, these agreements came into force and momentum for bilateral defense cooperation has continued as seen in the defense information sharing agreement signed in October 2016.

In addition to these legal frameworks, the ADF and JSDF have also developed bilateral

¹⁴ Selling uranium to India is wrong: Rudd, *The Sydney Morning Herald* (15 August 2007)

¹⁵ 4th Australia-Japan Foreign and Defence Ministerial Consultation, *Australia and Japan – Cooperating for peace and stability, Common Vision and Objectives*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan.

¹⁶ Approved by the Japanese Diet in 2011, and took force in 2013. See: Japanese Embassy in Australia: https://www.au.emb-japan.go.jp/pdf/20130131ACSA_exchange_of_notes_eng.pdf

¹⁷ At that time, Japan had signed the same agreement with the U.S. (Aug. 2007), NATO (Jun. 2010) and France (Oct 2011)

and trilateral operational cooperation. Since the first trilateral exercises with U.S. forces in 2011 in the Red Flag Alaska, ADF and JSDF have joined in the Cope North (since 2012), the Talisman Sabre (2015, 2017), the Southern Jackaroo (2017) and multilateral Kakadu (since 2016) and RIMPAC (since 1980) exercises, involving not just their naval forces but also ground and air forces. Given the risks of contingency in the Sea Lanes of Communication, the most recent trilateral exercise focused on mine warfare conducted off the southern coast of Japan.¹⁸

Second, India became a more active security partner of the United States and its allies. India has purchased more than \$7 billion in U.S. defense equipment since 2007, with plans to spend upwards of \$150 billion till around 2020.¹⁹ Also legal frameworks for defense cooperation have been settled. After the renewal of the new framework for India-U.S. cooperation in 2015, Delhi and Washington signed a Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA)²⁰, which “will facilitate access to advanced defense systems and enable India to optimally utilize its existing U.S.-origin platforms.” COMCASA follows the signing of the U.S.-India Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) in 2016 and the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) in 2002.²¹ Japan and India also agreed on an information security arrangement²² and defense equipment transfer agreement, respectively. Tokyo and Delhi agreed on the launch of the negotiations for the ACSA in a 2018 vision statement.

At the operational level, India accepted Japan’s participation in the India-U.S. Malabar Exercises occasionally since 2007 (2007, 2009, 2011, 2014), and regularly since 2016. Australia and India, the weakest link in the Quad, also launched the AUSINDEX, a bilateral maritime exercise, since 2015 though Australia’s participation in the Malabar Exercises remains to be seen.²³

18 US, Japan, Australia to conduct Mine Warfare Exercise: See.

<https://www.amphib7flt.navy.mil/Media/News/Article/1689658/us-japan-australia-to-conduct-mine-warfare-exercise/>

19 India Moves to Reduce Its Reliance on Russia's Defense Imports, Bloomberg (13 April 2018):

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2019-03-10/china-asks-local-airlines-to-ground-boeing-737-max-caijing-says>

20 India, U.S. sign landmark military communications, security agreement COMCASA, The Hindu (6 September 2018): <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/india-us-sign-landmark-comcasa-deal/article24881277.ece>

21 Ankit Panda, What the Recently Concluded US-India COMCASA Means, Diplomat (9 September 2018), <https://thediplomat.com/2018/09/what-the-recently-concluded-us-india-comcasa-means/>

22 AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA CONCERNING SECURITY MEASURES FOR THE PROT: See:

<https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/files/000117472.pdf>

23 Center for International Maritime Security, See: <http://cimsec.org/ausindex-2015-australia-pivots-to-the-indian-ocean-2/19287>

India and the United States plan to hold a first-ever tri-service exercise on the east coast of India in 2019.

Finally, the rebalance to Asia put the United States back to the Asian theater through the participation in the Trans-Pacific Partnership in 2009, and the EAS in 2012. The United States also focused on networking security alliances, and that certainly cemented bilateral and trilateral security cooperation among the Quad members.

Thus, even before the reelection of Abe in December 2012, the four governments had developed experience in security cooperation that formed a foundation for the Quad. After spending four years to deepen strategic relations with the United States, Australia, India and importantly Southeast Asian states under the banner of a “proactive contribution to peace” and “a diplomacy taking a panoramic perspective of the world map of the globe” since 2013, Abe introduced the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) concept in 2016 as an overarching foreign policy framework for the protection of the rules-based order.²⁴

The FOIP concept became increasingly attractive in the face of China’s assertiveness in the East and South China Seas and massive infrastructure development projects in Southeast Asia and Africa meant to enhance its economic influence. The Indo-Pacific concept arguably provided a framework within which the Quad can clarify its roles and objectives. Although the relationship between the Quad and FOIP is unclear, the Quad could be a vehicle for achieving foreign policy objectives under FOIP.

In this sense, whereas the Quad in 2007 was viewed as just countering China without a clear vision, the Quad in 2017 could be considered a collective effort of regional order-building, especially in terms of maritime security and regional connectivity, with better legitimacy. Japan’s FOIP aims at maintaining and enhancing a free, open, inclusive, and rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific region, wherein all sovereign states, regardless of size or political system: (1) must comply with agreed-upon rules, such as international law, and be equal under the law; (2) shall have freedom to seek economic prosperity based on free trade and market economy; (3) are expected to contribute to global public goods, especially open sea lines of communication and airways and

24 Address by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at the Opening Session of the Sixth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD VI), Saturday, August 27, 2016 (Kenya International Convention Centre (KICC), Nairobi, Kenya) https://www.mofa.go.jp/afr/af2/page4e_000496.html

open and transparent infrastructures.²⁵ Despite the ambiguous and low-key nature of the Quad, the core objectives of the current Quad are almost identical to those of FOIP.²⁶ The question is how much the Quad can uniquely contribute to the establishment of a rules-based Indo-Pacific compared to other frameworks and policy measures.

DIME Analysis of the Quad

No single measurement can evaluate state power or states' foreign policy initiatives. While international relations scholars chiefly attribute states' power to military capability, international political economy scholars, such as Susan Strange's theory of structural power, incorporate industrial and financial capabilities as a source of one state's influence over others.²⁷ Given that global politics is no longer just a military chess-game²⁸, this paper aims to investigate the Quad from four dimensions: diplomacy, information, military and economy, or the so-called DIME. As the Quad is by no means formally institutionalized, however, the analysis is basically for understanding the Quad's potential and limitations based on existing bilateral and trilateral initiatives.

Diplomatic

The most significant characteristic of the Quad should be relatively exclusive and functional diplomatic consultation. In fact, the past three Quad meeting since 2017 have been held among diplomats from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Department of State. They addressed broader agendas in the Indo-Pacific region alongside the other regional security meetings, namely EAS and the Shangri-La Dialogue.

First, one of the diplomatic meanings of the quad is basically policy-coordination. Given the multiplicity of issues in the region, including maritime security, connectivity, multilateralism and so on, the coordination of positions, or at least comparing notes, among like-minded states are becoming more important than ever. As the strength of the Quad is that membership is limited,

²⁵ Ryosuke Hanada, *Quadrilateral Cooperation: Japanese perspective*, CSIS AMTI (6 June 2018).

²⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *Press Release, Japan- Australia-India- U.S. Consultations*, https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e_002062.html

²⁷ Susan Strange (1997): *Casino Capitalism*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. 1-207.

²⁸ Robert D. Blackwill and Jennifer M. Harris (2016), *War by Other Means: Geoeconomics and Statecraft* (Belknap Press).

though not necessarily exclusive, the members can skip the stage of confidence-building or preventive diplomacy among themselves, while inclusive frameworks such as the ARF are always struck in this stage due to the divergent interests and values of the participants. The Quad dialogue can directly discuss specific policy measures based on shared perspectives on regional security.

Second, the Quad could be a result-oriented initiative. While the Quad's institutional norms are undeveloped, the Quad does not have to be constrained by the conventional ASEAN Way, or the combination of the principles of non-intervention and consensus-based decision making. ASEAN's norms are indispensable for maintaining cohesion among multi-cultural and diverse political entities in Southeast Asia. ASEAN also enabled regional cooperation in East Asia and the Asia Pacific in the post-Cold War era, connecting great powers to an inclusive, if process-oriented, regional dialogue centering on ASEAN. However, given intensifying great power rivalry and emerging uncertainty over China's adherence to the principle of the rule of law, actions and implementation of policies are required. The Quad is a forum in which the members share political systems, basic values and strategic perspectives and could be an alternative instrument to bring out actual policy apart from process-oriented regional cooperation frameworks.

This does not mean that the Quad should replace ASEAN as an alternative driver of regional security cooperation. ASEAN remains not only as the fulcrum of the Indo-Pacific region, but the key provider of inclusive regional security dialogue. Because of the rising tension between the United States and China, the inclusiveness and confidence-building role of ASEAN-led institutions should increase. The Quad is, just like many bilateral meetings held before multilateral or regional meetings, can be a venue for the four democratic and maritime states to exchange their views and coordinate their positions. In that sense, any country that shares basic objectives and threat perceptions should be welcomed to the Quad consultation as a "Plus One member"²⁹. France, the United Kingdom and individual Southeast Asian states, such as Vietnam and Indonesia, are and should be qualified to occasionally participate in the consultation under the Quad.

Information

As the Quad is not an alliance, there would be limits to intelligence or information sharing among members. Even Japan is still excluded from the "Five Eyes" intelligence sharing cooperation

²⁹ Track 2 Quad Plus dialogue has been conducted since 2013 by the Heritage Foundation. See, The Quad-Plus: <https://www.heritage.org/the-quad-plus>

framework to which Australia and the United States committed themselves since the Cold War.

Still, there might be some space for information sharing among the Quad members, such as on maritime domain awareness (MDA)³⁰. The Quad members' major military assets are located throughout the Indian Ocean and the Western Pacific, from Djibouti, Diego Garcia, Mumbai, Visakhapatnam and Andaman to Nichobal, Perth and Darwin, Okinawa and Yokosuka, and Guam and Hawaii. This geographical coverage made possible by the four countries makes monitoring the vast oceans in the Indo-Pacific essential.

Maritime security in the Indo-Pacific faces both traditional and non-traditional threats. One is the so-called gray zone tactics by littoral states, mainly China.³¹ In the South China Sea, China has gradually changed the situations to its favor in covert and assertive ways as seen in the incidents such as their de facto control over the Scarborough Shoal in 2008, harassment of the U.S. Impeccable in March 2009, and more recently Chinese warship's approaching to the USS Decatur sailing past the Gaven and Johnson reefs. To make matters worse, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) successfully completed the land reclamation and installment of military equipment on the maritime features. Although the arbitration award under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) Annex VII rejected China's historical rights within the nine-dashed line in July 2016, it has not deterred China's assertiveness to date. These situations demand littoral states in Southeast Asia to be well-equipped in their coast guard and MDA capabilities to avoid contingencies. Other types of challenges are related to the sea lanes of communication such as piracy and maritime accidents. Although Somali pirates were almost eradicated as of 2018, and the total number of piracy incidents hit a record low in 2018 thanks to multilateral patrolling in certain areas, this is still an essential security concern as there were 180 incidents including murders and kidnaps in 2018. Although accidents are somewhat inevitable, MDA capabilities and capacity for search-and-rescue (SAR) operations in the broader Indo-Pacific region are scarce. The Malaysian Airlines Flight MH370 accident in March 2014 revealed the challenges associated with SAR in the Indo-Pacific region.

To address these challenges, the Quad countries could promote more information sharing

³⁰ Jeffrey Hornung, The Potential of the Quadrilateral, CSIS AMTI, <https://amti.csis.org/the-potential-of-the-quadrilateral/>

³¹ Gray zone tactics is defined as "the use of tactics that challenge the status quo without resorting to war". See Van Jackson (2017) Tactics of Strategic Competition: Gray Zones, Redlines, and Conflicts before War, Naval War College Review Vol.70, Number 3.

related to maritime security. First, they can form tangible agreements for information sharing. For example, Australia, Japan and the United States currently share defense related information as agreed upon in October 2016.³² Given that India already created foundations for information sharing with the United States and Japan, it would be possible to develop a maritime information sharing agreement among the four. Second, the four can cooperate to enhance regional maritime security cooperation initiatives, such as the Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP), which has an information sharing center in Singapore³³. The Japanese government now sees cooperation through ReCAAP as a part of the FOIP Initiative³⁴.

Military

The military aspect is indispensable for the Quad to be relevant to regional security. Due to the lack of security alliances between India and the other three countries and between Australia and Japan, Quad military cooperation would not be for the sake of mutual defense. There is also the limitation for the war-time or high-intensive military confrontation which may immediately shift to war-time. Military cooperation among the Quad countries could apply to peacetime or so-called gray-zone threats. There could be mainly three areas for military cooperation under the Quad: (1) interoperability, (2) military technology and defense equipment transfer among the Quad, and (3) capacity-building of Indo-Pacific regional states.

First, as already discussed, the four militaries have conducted multiple exercises since 2004. The trilateral Malabar or Australia-Japan-U.S. exercises have improved interoperability in anti-submarine warfare, mine sweeping, anti-piracy, HA/DR, and search-and-rescue operations. As Admiral Phil Davidson noted, the military component of the Quad could be shelved³⁵, and quadrilateral exercises would be unlikely for a while. Yet, these trilateral and bilateral exercises remain key for improving interoperability.

Related to the first point, the four militaries can improve interoperability if they use similar hard equipment and software systems. Australia and Japan share a lot of American

³² Nihon Keizai Shimbun (26 October 2016)

³³ See ReCAAP website: http://www.recaap.org/about_ReCAAP-ISC

³⁴ Japanese mission to the United Nations. Twitter @JapanMissionUN (February 6, 2018)

³⁵ Pentagon clarifies that diplomatic 'quad' is ongoing after comments from US Indo-Pacific Command leader, The Associated Press (10 March 2019): <https://www.navytimes.com/news/your-navy/2019/03/10/pentagon-clarifies-that-diplomatic-quad-is-ongoing-after-comments-from-us-indo-pacific-command-leader/>

equipment, and there are generally positive trends between India and the United States since India has dramatically increased its purchase of American equipment since 2005. Yet, while the 2018 COMCASA may open the window for India to access more sensitive military technology from the United States, Russian military hardware accounted for 62 percent of India's total weapons imports from 2013-2018.³⁶ It remains to be seen how India can incorporate U.S. systems to its own ground, air, naval and missile defense forces, including the Russian S-400.³⁷ Japan-India negotiations for the US-2 amphibious aircraft have stalled as well despite multiple compromises from the Japanese side regarding production and prices.³⁸

Finally, capacity-building for littoral states in Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean region could be a key form of military cooperation under the Quad. Japan has provided vessels and training aircraft together with personal training to Southeast Asia³⁹. The Australia-Japan-U.S. trilateral has coordinated capacity-building for the Philippines⁴⁰. The remaining regions are the Indian Ocean region and the Pacific.

By combining these measures, the Quad could contribute to preventing a power-vacuum in the region, and thereby preserve free and open SLOCs. Although only the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command is capable enough to see the Indo-Pacific as its operational area, it could at least prevent China from focusing either east or west by maintaining strong security partnerships with both Japan and India.

Economy

Finally, the economic dimension presents two major issues, economic integration and regional connectivity, and one potential agenda for the future. At this stage, no idea for the economic integration of the Quad, involving trade and investment liberalization, exists. The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) only includes Australia, India and Japan while the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) now includes only Australia and Japan because of the withdrawal of the United States. And APEC still excludes India. It is also unrealistic to envision economic integration of the Quad given that India and Washington appear to be embracing somewhat

³⁶ India and US sign military deal amid tensions over Iran sanctions, Aljazeera (6 September 2018): <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/09/india-sign-military-deal-tensions-iran-sanctions-180906121325566.html>

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Interview with MOFA officials (28 October 2018).

³⁹ MOFA, Free and Open Indo-Pacific: <https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/files/000430632.pdf>

⁴⁰ MOD, Japan's Defense Capacity Building Assistance, p.7: <https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/files/000146829.pdf>

protectionist economic policies, like Make in India or America First.

On the other hand, regional connectivity is emerging as a new challenge and could encourage cooperation among Quad countries. China's Belt and Road Initiative has made a huge impact on the existing norms for infrastructure development. Despite some backlashes in Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Maldives and Myanmar recently, the capital-inflow from China matches demands of many developing states in the region. In response, Japan, for example, proposed \$110 billion infrastructure investment to Southeast Asia from 2016-2020⁴¹ and additional \$50 billion 2018⁴². The United States, under the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act 2018, pledged \$1.5 billion in spending for "develop(ing) a long-term strategic vision and a comprehensive, multifaceted, and principled United States policy for the Indo-Pacific region, and for other purposes"⁴³, in addition to Secretary Mike Pompeo's \$113 million in new technology, energy and infrastructure initiatives⁴⁴. Australian prime minister Scott Morrison also expressed Australia's Pacific Pivot, promising "\$2 billion in funding for infrastructure and \$1 billion in financial support to small and medium-sized Australian businesses to operate in the South Pacific, along with an increased ADF presence in South Pacific nations"⁴⁵.

There are ongoing bilateral and trilateral initiatives on regional connectivity. Australia, Japan and the United States also agreed on trilateral investment cooperation, involving Australia's DFAT and Export Finance and Insurance Corporation (Efic), the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), and the U.S. Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC).⁴⁶ Also, Japan and India have extensively discussed an Asia-Africa Economic Corridor, although it is still an embryonic idea without actual outcomes.

As the Quad consultation held in November 2018 touched upon regional connectivity as

⁴¹ Abe Shinzo, "The Future of Asia: Be Innovative" - Speech by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at the Banquet of the 21st International Conference on the Future of Asia, (21 May 2015), https://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/97_abe/statement/2015/0521speech.html

⁴² Abe pledges \$50bn for infrastructure in Indo-Pacific, *Nikkei Asian Review* (11 June 2018): <https://asia.nikkei.com/Spotlight/The-Future-of-Asia-2018/Abe-pledges-50bn-for-infrastructure-in-Indo-Pacific>

⁴³ S.2736 - Asia Reassurance Initiative Act of 2018.

⁴⁴ Pompeo announces \$113 million in technology, energy and infrastructure initiatives in 'Indo Pacific' region, *Washington Post* (30 July 2018)

⁴⁵ Michael Shoebridge, Morrison's Pacific pivot, *The Strategist* (9 November 2018): <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/morrison-pacific-pivot/>

⁴⁶ JOINT STATEMENT OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF AUSTRALIA, JAPAN, AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ON THE TRILATERAL PARTNERSHIP FOR INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT IN THE INDO-PACIFIC: <https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/files/000420368.pdf>

part of the agenda, the Quad should play a coordination role to determine the division of labor and priorities among the four. Given the magnitude of India's economic growth and its strategically essential locations, this may include investment to India, especially in Arunachal Pradesh and Andaman Nicobar as well. Yet, these investments should consider not just India's development demand, but how to broadly connect the Bay of Bengal region or Central Asia more to the Indian Ocean through India.

Challenge for the Quad: Different visions for future international order

The Quad has thus far stood on bilateral and trilateral cooperation, and more recently appears to have found a place in the Free and Open Indo-Pacific concept. Like the FOIP, the Quad has refrained from explicitly referring to China. However, it does always keep China in mind, and the origin of the Quad or the Indo-Pacific concept is based on a change in threat perception caused by China's assertive behavior. The Quad will likely remain as far as China chooses to walk the paths of an authoritarian regime and expansionist rising power.

However, the question for the Quad is whether the four countries share a vision for the ideal international order of the 21st century beyond preventing China's authoritarian hegemony. So far, the Quad has not sufficiently discussed the big picture of the Indo-Pacific region. This section attempts to address this question based on three aspects: (1) power, (2) interests and (3) norms.

First, the international order consists of several elements, including diplomacy, international law, the balance of power, institutions and norms⁴⁷. From a realist point of view, power matters the most. Therefore, when it comes to exploring the future of the international order, the embrace of the rules-based order is by no means sufficient because the rules-based order should have support from the balance of power. The post-1945 order which was basically rules-based was built by the western powers, especially the United States, and they created international laws and institutions.

Japan's position on the international order is, thus, to preserve the relative supremacy of the United States as the guardian of the rules-based order. Australia shares a similar view, and few in Canberra consider the option of Asia without the United States. However, Australia is also seeking to create a "multipolar rules-based order" with not just the United States, Japan and India,

⁴⁷ Hedley Bull (1977) *The Anarchical Society, A Study of Order in World Politics*.

but China and Southeast Asian states.

India has repeatedly expressed dissatisfaction with existing rules. India's engagement with China, and occasionally Russia, as exemplified by the BRICS dialogue (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) and the China-India-Russia trilateral framework. It should be noted that Delhi is seeking more security cooperation with the United States and Japan because of the cold calculus of the disparity of power with China. India, as the largest democracy, would not accept China's authoritarian and hierarchical order. However, there also is no evidence that Delhi envisions a U.S.-led order in the 21st century. India's desirable order is arguably a "multipolar rules-based order with amendments of some existing rules," and this is not necessarily unreasonable.

The United States under the Trump administration poses challenges for this discussion. Peace through strength, or a tough stance against China adopted by the current administration, would be effective to protect the current international order led by United States and governed by international rules. Given China's increasing military and economic presence, the importance of U.S. power has only increased. However, the America First policy emphasizing the withdrawal from international agreements such as the TPP and Paris Accord arguably weakens the legitimacy of American leadership. The willingness to provide global public goods may have waned significantly under the current administration.

But it is too early to suggest that these differences could complicate efforts to advance the Quad. The challenges posed by China are eminent in the Indo-Pacific region and the Quad should focus on actual policy coordination to address them. Should the United States become more unilateral, the Quad, which can certainly counter China's assertiveness, could also be framed as a framework to hedge against overreliance on U.S. leadership for the maintenance of the international order.

Conclusion

The Quad could be viewed as potentially contributing to the preservation of the existing rules-based order led by the United States. Compared to 2007, the Quad has not only patchworked bilateral and trilateral cooperation, but the Indo-Pacific regional concept has emerged and can accommodate the Quad.

As of 2019, the Quad is low-key and strategically ambiguous. The Quad cannot be an

alliance per se, but it should be a coordination mechanism for realizing functional cooperation in a range of areas. The Quad most likely will not develop an “anti-China policy” but should at least counter Chinese assertiveness. However, the Quad is not well formed enough to impose a cost-imposing strategy on China that would generate a coalition of like-minded countries to protect the rules-based order.

Even though it is not realistic for the Quad to reach that level, it should not be overly sensitive to China’s views on the Quad framework. China need not consider the Quad provocative as it is a new effort to preserve and enhance the rules-based order from which China benefits. In this sense, synergizing the Quad with the even broader FOIP vision will become more and more important.