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India's Call on China in the Quad: A Strategic Arch between Liberal and Alternative Structures

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Abstract

India's approach to the Quadrilateral consultative forum, which comprises Australia, India, Japan and the United States, is a statement of New Delhi's plural foreign policy arch in an evolving Indo-Pacific construct. Balancing China's growing outreach with the Indo-Pacific region while concurrently affirming bilateralism with Beijing explains India's strategic autonomy and pluralism in its foreign policy. This does not suggest India is engaging in a China-containment strategy, but rather denotes New Delhi's strategic outreach to position itself better in a liberal-order framework. The principal intent behind aligning with the Quad countries also lies in India's desire to protect its maritime interests in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). The competing India-China interests in securing energy resources, protecting maritime and other national interests are bound to collide, coupled with the boundary dispute. India's pluralistic foreign policy under Narendra Modi and Chinese leader Xi Jinping's "new era" foreign policy have manifested obstructing national trajectories. However, for India, its relationship with China is most imperative, with their relationship now playing a more defining role in the Indo-Pacific construct. Likewise, India's approach to the Quad should not be construed as an anti-China proposition.

Keywords

India, China, Quad, Indo-Pacific, Indian Ocean Region (IOR), Japan

Introduction

If pluralism is the arch of Indian foreign policy, then New Delhi's adherence to the "Quad" (MEA 2017)¹ needs to be understood within a plural and compound

¹ In popular strategic parlance, the consultative forum is called the "Quad", because of its quadrilateral character. India officially prefers to avoid the term as "Quadrilateral". The press release of November

context of India's evolving relationship architecture with major powers while protecting its strategic interests in the Indo-Pacific region. Taking advantage of its geographical centrality in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), India's approach to the Quad has been an evolutionary experience in the emerging Indo-Pacific construct where India's interdependent but complex relationship with China is a strong factor. Aligning with "likeminded" countries without making a formal alliance or discounting its relationship with countries outside the Quad is the hallmark of India's evolving foreign policy strategy. The Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speech at the Shangri-La dialogue on June 1, 2018 in Singapore explains this narrative. As eloquently stated by Modi, "India's strategic partnership with the United States is a new pillar of our shared vision of an open, stable, secure and prosperous Indo-Pacific region" (MEA 2018). At the same time, Modi expressed that India's relationship with China has "many layers", making it important for global peace and progress (MEA 2018). Likewise, India's relationship with Russia constitutes a crucial part in the shared understanding of a "multipolar world order" (MEA 2018).

As India tailors its approach towards the Quad consultative forum in Indo-Pacific, this article seeks to identify the bearing of any anti-China tendencies. It essentially argues that New Delhi's Quad stance is not an explicit move against China but rather is a calculated strategic move to protect its interests, including maritime ambitions, in view of a "revisionist" China (The White House, NSS 2017; MEA 2018) in the Indo-Pacific.² India's rendezvous with the Quad is to strengthen its foreign policy outreach against China's strategic non-equilibrium stance that poses multiple challenges to India's strategic ambitions. The Quad can therefore signify New Delhi's plural foreign policy strategy to engage more intently with a prevailing power structure, otherwise known as the liberal power structure, led by the United States to eventually gain ascendancy over the alternative structure, known as the revisionist power structure, led by China. Concurrently, India has been nurturing its relationship with China, seeking to manage the age-old boundary disputes and engage in better economic relations.

The article is structured into five parts. The first part examines the arrival and return of the Quad. The second part examines the Indian rationality behind the endorsement of the Quad proposition. The third part examines how the Quad

12, 2017 states that it is a "consultation on Indo-Pacific". See, MEA 2017.

² The *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, The White House (hereafter *NSS*), December 2017, explicitly terms China as a "revisionist power" along with Russia. India does not call China a revisionist power. In the Indian official assertion, India acknowledges China's emergence as a power and informally demands equilibrium with China. For example, a press release of the Indian government after the recent Wuhan informal summit meet between Narendra Modi and Xi Jinping states that "... the simultaneous emergence of India and China as two large economies and major powers with strategic and decisional autonomy has implications of regional and global significance." MEA 2018. In the Indian strategic community too, the debate on China as a revisionist power varies.

is a proposition of the post-Cold War rivalry legacy between the US and China and how India witnesses this unfolding US-China rivalry. The fourth part examines how India-China relations act as a balancer to ensure that the Quad does not emerge as an anti-China proposition, even though it does intend to negate China's growing unilateralism in the IOR. The concluding section analyses the undertones of the Quad's prospects from an Indian perspective.

Arrival and Return of the Quad

The Quad's growth trajectory is roughly a decade-and-a-half-old affair, beginning in 2004. The proposition died down in 2007 to return again in 2017, to be popularly called in public discourse as Quad 2.0 (Tan and Hussain 2018; Rej 2018). Arriving initially as an "ad-hoc coordinating mechanism" after the Tsunami in December 2004 at the Foreign Secretary level, Quad 1.0 was primarily stimulated by an American suggestion in 2006 that the four democratic countries had substantial naval capabilities and hence must have a consultative regional forum to deal with "maritime emergencies and security threats such as piracy" (Saran 2017). As Shyam Saran (2017) puts it, Quad 1.0 was formed with an understanding that it would not take a "military dimension" but instead be a regional consultative forum. China nevertheless called it an emerging "Asian NATO."³ The Chinese strategic community soon followed suit (Li 2017).⁴ Both China and Russia see the Quad proposition as a military and security coalition in-the-making in the IOR. It should be noted that though Beijing is familiar with India's independent foreign policy thinking, it has yet to shelve its prejudice of seeing India as a pro-American country. As Jayant Prasad aptly argues, "China has often viewed India as following a foreign policy subservient to Western interests. This is a mistake."⁵

In December 2006, during the former Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Tokyo, India and Japan had a formal discussion to further the idea of the Quad. They attempted to initiate a dialogue mechanism by establishing modalities with "likeminded" countries in Asia-Pacific (MEA 2006). Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's speech at the Indian Parliament on August 22, 2007, entitled "Confluence of the Two Seas", called for a "broader Asia" with the cooperation of Japan and India along with the United States and Australia in the entirety of the Pacific Ocean (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2017). This strength-

³ Shyam Saran, India's former Foreign Secretary, notes that China criticized the emergence of the Quad in 2005 itself during the first India-China strategic dialogue. The Indian view was that this initiative was more of a consultative mechanism and did not subscribe to any military understanding. See, Saran 2017.

⁴ Experts in India maintain that it is partly due to China's insecurity concerning American strategies which make Beijing see such a proposition as an "Asian NATO". My interviews with Prof. Alka Acharya and Prof. Srikanth Kondapalli of the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi.

⁵ Author's interview with Shri Jayant Prasad, Director General of the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), New Delhi.

ened the Chinese-Russian assertion that the Quad is an anti-China formulation. The Malabar naval exercises involving the US, Japan, Australia and Singapore in September 2007 also confirmed an Indian interest in pursuing the Quad forum further (see Table 1. Exercise Malabar). There was a general view that the Malabar exercises were a regional consensus in response to China's continuous naval expansion in the Indian Ocean and ever-expanding military cooperation with the Central Asian states within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) (Auslin 2009). Meanwhile, China exerted pressure on Australia to go easy on the Quad formulation. Australian Foreign Minister Stephen Smith publicly assured the Chinese Foreign Minister that "... Australia would not be proposing to have a dialogue of that nature" (Australian Government 2008). Kevin Rudd's arrival in power in 2007 signalled how Australia signified China as a key partner and would not like to support interests seemingly detrimental to China. Hence, Australia retracted from the Quad proposition and the Quad formulation was shelved in 2007-08.

Table 1: Exercise 'MALABAR'

SL. No.	Name	Countries Involved	Period	Venue	Objectives
1.	Malabar-I	USA and India	May 1992	Off the coast of Goa, India	Introductory and exploratory in nature
2.	Malabar-II	USA and India	1995	Indian Ocean	To jointly conduct military exercises at a modest scale
3.	Malabar-III	USA and India	1996	Indian Ocean	To jointly conduct military exercises at a modest scale
4.	Malabar-IV	USA and India	Sept 26-Oct 03, 2002	Near Kochi, India	To increase interoperability between the two navies
5.	Malabar-V	USA and India	Oct 06-Oct 08, 2003	Near Kochi, India	To enhance mutual understanding of the two navies and increase regional cooperation
6.	Malabar-04	USA and India	Oct 01-Oct 09, 2004	Southwest coast near Goa, India	To increase interoperability and enhance cooperative security relationship between India and the US
7.	Malabar-05	USA and India	Sept 25-Oct 04, 2005	Southwest coast off Goa, India	Towards greater interaction, greater interoperability and building bridges of friendship
8.	Malabar-06	USA and India	Oct 25-Nov 05, 2006	Southwest coast of India	To develop functional skills and go beyond tactical exercises.
9.	Malabar CY-07/1	USA, India, Japan, Australia and Singapore	April 06-April 11, 2007	Pacific Ocean, off the Japanese island of Okinawa	To increase interoperability and enhance cooperative security relationship between India and the US.
10.	Malabar CY-07/2	USA, India, Japan, Australia and Singapore	Sept 04-Sept 09, 2007	Bay of Bengal, off Visakhapatnam coast, India	To increase interoperability and develop common understanding and procedures for maritime operations.

11.	Malabar-08	USA and India	Oct 15-Oct 28, 2008	Arabian Sea, off the coast of Goa, India	Focused on functional skills like ASW operations, VBSS techniques, etc.
12.	Malabar-09	USA, India and Japan	April 26-May 03, 2009	Off the coast of Okinawa, Japan	Featured execution of functional skills
13.	Malabar-10	USA and India	April 23-April 30, 2010	Near Goa, India	Fundamental coordination and communication to more advanced and complex strategic naval operations
14.	Malabar 2011	USA, India and Japan	April 03-April 10, 2011	Western Pacific Ocean, near the Luzon Strait, Philippines	To enhance military-to-military coordination and help strategize and execute tactical operations in a multinational environment
15.	Malabar 2012	USA and India	April 09-April 16, 2012	Bay of Bengal, Chennai, India	To advance multinational maritime relationships and mutual security issues
16.	Malabar 2013	USA and India	Nov 05-Nov 11, 2013	Bay of Bengal and Chennai, India	To advance multinational maritime relationships and mutual security issues
17.	Malabar 2014	USA, India and Japan	July 24-July 30, 2014	Port Sasebo and the Western Pacific Ocean, Japan	To enhance maritime cooperation among the navies of the participating nations
18.	Malabar 2015	USA, India and Japan	Oct 14-Oct 19, 2015	Chennai, India	To enhance naval cooperation among important navies of the Indo-Pacific region which helps in enhancing mutual understanding
19.	Malabar 2016	USA, India and Japan	June 10-June 17, 2016	Harbour phase: Sasebo, Japan Sea phase: Pacific Ocean	To increase interoperability amongst the three navies and develop common understanding of procedures for Maritime Security Operations
20.	Malabar 2017	USA, India and Japan	July 10-July 17, 2017	Bay of Bengal, India.	To promote common understanding and demonstrate their shared commitment to enhance maritime security and stability in the region
21.	Malabar 2018	USA, India and Japan	June 7-June 15, 2018	Off the coast of Guam, Philippine Sea Harbour phase: Naval Base Guam Sea phase: Philippine Sea	To achieve greater interoperability between the three navies to have a better strategic holding in the Indo-Pacific region. It also seeks to develop the working relationships between the countries' maritime forces more

Note: What started as a bilateral naval exercise between India and the United States in 1992 became an annual exercise the two countries conduct, known as the Malabar exercises, so as to improve regional security cooperation. While Canada, Australia and Singapore were non-permanent participants for some years, Japan was included as a permanent partner in 2015. These exercises have always been very diverse in nature, becoming more complex and broad-ranging as time went by. So far, there have been

21 such exercises, of which three were conducted before India acquired the status of a de-facto nuclear power in 1998. Following those nuclear tests, Washington, D.C. imposed economic sanctions on New Delhi and also suspended the naval military exercises. It was only after 9/11 that the military contacts were reinitiated.

(Sources: From various open sources, such as Rediff.com, The Quint, The Hindu, The Indian Express, Asia Times, The Diplomat, The Times of India, The Economic Times, Press Information Bureau: Government of India, Ministry of Defence: Government of India. Also, Sumit Ganguly, Andrew Scobell and Brian Shoup (eds.), US-Indian Strategic Cooperation into the 21st Century: More Than Words, Routledge: 2006)

The Quad idea resurfaced strongly in December 2012 when Shinzo Abe, upon his return to power, talked about “Asia’s democratic security diamond”. He explicitly argued, ‘I envisage a strategy whereby Australia, India, Japan and the US state of Hawaii form a diamond to safeguard the maritime commons stretching from the Indian Ocean Region to the western Pacific’ (Abe 2012). Even though a progressive trend was noticed in Japan’s relationship with India and with the other two Quad countries over the next few years, India was hesitant to endorse the Quad proposal publicly. Yet Japan continued to push the concept further through Abe’s “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” (FOIP) foreign policy advocacy. It also tried to establish strategic consonance with Barack Obama’s “Pivot to Asia” strategy and India’s “Act East” policy, in particular. A number of trilateral frameworks, such as US-India-Japan and India-Australia-Japan, have equally been nurtured to strengthen the Quad proposition further, endorsing the essence of the liberal spirit such as “rule of law” and “freedom of navigation”. The Quad proposition received a new thrust when Harry B. Harris, Commander of the US Pacific Command, acknowledged India’s importance and contextualized the term “Indo-Asia-Pacific” at an event in India in 2016. He stated that the United States would like to join the India-Japan-Australia trilateral cooperation since it provided an opportunity to “likeminded” nations to become ambitious in the high seas and air space (Parrish 2016).

On November 12, 2017, the Quad framework - now dubbed Quad 2.0 - returned with the officials of the four countries formally meeting in Manila. Instead of releasing a joint statement, the countries had four different press releases, indicating how their strategic objectives and preferences in the region differ from each other. The release of these four separate press releases was indicative of Quad 2.0 being simply a consultative forum among the four countries. A commonality in agenda was missing in action even though all four press releases reflected upon the security challenges posed by terrorism and North Korea’s nuclear and missile programme. There was also a collective endorsement of upholding “rule based

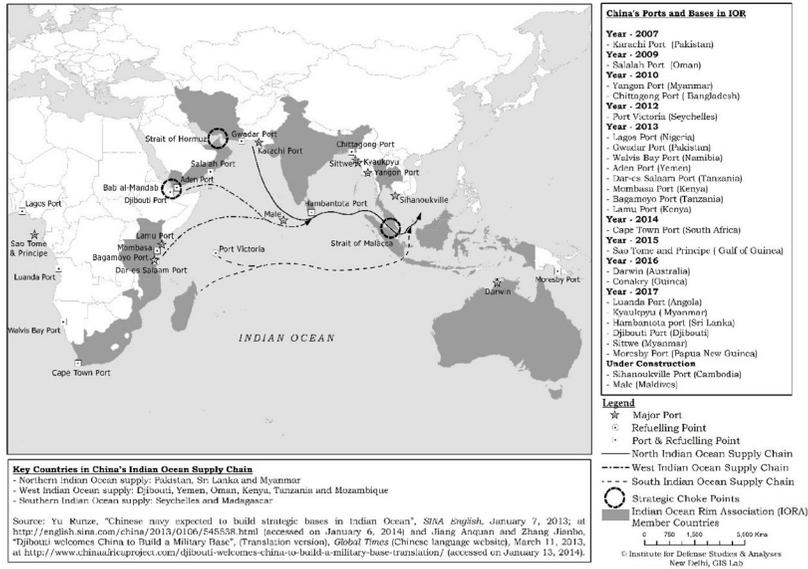
order” and promoting a FOIP, but in varied tones and languages. For example, the Indian perspective endorsed a FOIP and emphasized the necessity of an “inclusive” character to achieve it. The US press release emphasized the enhancement of connectivity, “freedom of navigation and overflight” and “maritime security” consistent with international law and standards (Nauert 2017). Japan, as a alliance partner of the US, echoed the American spirit and stressed “rule based order”, “freedom of navigation” and “maritime security” in the Indo-Pacific region (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan 2017). The Australian press release stressed “rule-based order” and “freedom of navigation and overflight”, apart from enhancing connectivity (Australian Government 2017).

The Indian press release, it may be noted, was somewhat more cautious than of the other three partners. It expressed concerns on terrorism, North Korea’s proliferation linkages and also stressed promoting connectivity. It reiterated the centrality of the Act East policy in the Indo-Pacific and advocated a “free, open, prosperous and inclusive Indo-Pacific” (MEA 2017). The significance of “inclusiveness” in the Indian narrative indicates that the Indian perspective on the Quad does not necessarily run into the Chinese wall, even though New Delhi maintains a strategic consonance with Australia, Japan and the United States in the Indo-Pacific. The term “inclusive” points to India’s advocacy of a “free and open” Indo-Pacific and does not exclude China’s presence in the region, despite New Delhi’s concerns about a stronger Chinese maritime presence in the IOR. This perspective became stronger after Modi’s speech at the Shangri-La dialogue on June 1, 2018 when he stated that “India does not see the Indo-Pacific as a strategy or as a club of limited members ... And by no means do we consider it as directed against any country” (MEA 2018; Ungku & Kim 2018). In fact, Modi’s speech not only clearly articulated India’s Indo-Pacific vision but also endorsed China and Russia as prospective partners in the Indo-Pacific configuration. As Jayant Prasad rightly views, Modi, through his Shangri-La dialogue speech, had “indirectly invited China and Russia to be part of the Indo-Pacific, which he said was not directed against any country”.⁶ Strengthening this testimony was India’s recent decision not to be a direct part of the US-led trilateral initiative involving Japan and Australia in the Indo-Pacific Business Forum that will theoretically act as a counterweight to China’s infrastructure projects.⁷

⁶ Author’s interview with Shri Jayant Prasad, Director General of the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), New Delhi.

⁷ The US-led trilateral initiative to finance infrastructure development to counter China’s outreach in Indo-Pacific was launched on 30 July 2018. India decided not to join this initiative, promoting the spirit of “inclusiveness” and “multipolarity” in Indo-Pacific. Chaudhury, 2018.

Map 1



(Source: GIS Lab, IDSA)

Why Does India Endorse the Quad?

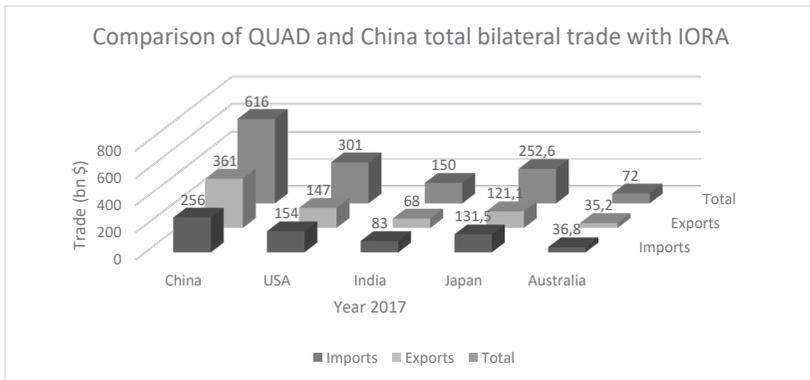
The debate continues over the prospects of Quad 2.0 in India and elsewhere. A second official consultation meeting of Quad 2.0 was held on the sidelines of the ASEAN Summit on June 7, 2018 to express stronger cooperative resolve towards a FOIP. The Indian endorsement of Quad 2.0 has led to a debate about whether India has abandoned its traditional non-aligned foreign policy in order to embrace a strategic formulation such as the Quad that explicitly endorses a US-led liberal order (Raja Mohan 2017, p. 2). India certainly foresees Quad 2.0 as a strategic pivot against China, but the Indian perspective is more open as well as opaque than it appears to be. The puzzling element in this regard is New Delhi's changing relationship discourse with China as an immediate neighbour, both within and without the context of Indo-Pacific region. Their relationship has improved and has become more institutionalized from 2004 onwards - at about the same time as the commencement of the Quad. India too, has been simultaneously increasing its association with the other Quad countries, bilaterally, trilaterally and multilaterally.

India's importance to Quad 2.0 appears unquestioned and it has been termed the "strategic fulcrum" of the Indo-Pacific. Australia sees India as a "significant strategic partner" in the IOR (Padmanavan 2018). Japan views India as a key strategic

partner in Shinzo Abe's FOIP strategy (MEA 2017). The US acknowledges India as a "leading global power" in the making in the region (NSS 2017). It recently renamed the US Pacific Command as the US Indo-Pacific Command, factoring India's centrality in its Indian Ocean strategy (The Economic Times 2018). The intent is unequivocal: all the three countries want India to play a constructive and crucial role in shaping the Quad.

However, Beijing's emergence as a stronger "maritime power" has endangered the Quad members' strategic interests. The prime context behind Quad 2.0 is Beijing's Maritime Silk Road (MSR), which is an integral part of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) under Xi Jinping. What coerces India to endorse the Quad as a strategic proposition is to protect its own maritime interests which are being threatened by the rising Chinese presence in the IOR. Since Hu Jintao's ascendancy to power in 2003-04, China has been focusing more on critical maritime infrastructure, emphasizing key maritime zones, investment in port construction, protection of maritime zones and finding alternative routes in the Indo-Pacific region (see Map 1). Beijing's blunt statement that the "Indian Ocean is not India's Ocean" (Wang 2010, p.97) has come as a challenging portent to India's maritime superiority in the region for some time now.

Graph 1



The Indian Ocean along with the Taiwan Strait, the South China Sea, the Strait of Malacca and the Arabian Sea are seen as being the "maritime lifeline" for Beijing because of China's increasing demand for energy resources in order to sustain its economic growth. However, analysts and strategists in Beijing realized early on that China had never had an overarching Indian Ocean strategy. To overcome this deficiency, China has worked hard over the years to strengthen its contacts with key countries in the region, including the most important multilateral institution, the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) (Panda 2014). China's collective bilateral trade contacts with the IORA countries at present are much higher than those of the other Quad-associated countries (see Graph 1). Special commercial

and strategic contacts have been established with some of the IORA members since they are central to China's energy transportation in the Indian Ocean, particularly in the three chokepoints: Strait of Hormuz, Bab el Mandeb, and Strait of Malacca (see Table 2). Beijing's approach has not only been how to overcome the challenges it faces in the Malacca Strait but also to find a new alternative medium of routes in the IOR and to combine it with emerging maritime strategy have been the hallmark of China's Indian Ocean strategy. Additionally, under Xi Jinping's leadership, more autonomy, authority and power have been offered to the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), where PLAN is emerging as one of the most powerful blue-water navies in the world. Indeed, the first-ever bluebook by Beijing, released in 2013, signalled how India's Act East policy is a key challenging portent to China's maritime interests in the IOR (WantChinaTimes 2013).

Table 2: China, Major Chokepoints and Key IORA Members

Major Chokepoints	Significance in China's Energy Transport	IORA Countries
Strait of Hormuz	Almost 40 per cent of China's crude oil transport from three IORA countries pass through it	Iran, UAE, Oman
Bab el-Mandeb	China is dependent on oil transport from South of Sudan on the Red Sea	Yemen
Strait of Malacca	Almost 37 per cent of China's LNG imports, 46 per cent of gas imports and 59 per cent of oil imports pass through IOR and enter this strait	Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore

Another pressing reason behind the return of Quad 2.0 and India's embrace of it is the Chinese Silk Road initiative. Beijing has used the Silk Road concept traditionally to expand its overseas business and expand commercial interests in the IOR. If the Silk Road Economic Belt (SREB) is the key initiative behind China's land corridor connectivity routes, the Maritime Silk Road (MSR) is attached to protect its ever-growing security interests in the IOR and enhance critical infrastructure in the region (Panda 2017). Underlying China's MSR strategy is an orderly diplomatic, economic and maritime quest for power. Xi Jinping's speech at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) replicated this ambition. Xi explicitly stated that "China will coordinate land and maritime development, and step up efforts to build the country into a strong maritime country" (Xinhua 2017). A core aim behind this strategy is to rebrand China as an economic, political and maritime power in the IOR as well as in the neighbouring region. Accordingly, China's relationship with the IOR countries - including the South Asian countries - has been given the utmost importance. This however, brings Indian maritime interests into direct conflict with Chinese interests. For instance, China's relationships with the Maldives, Nepal, Bhutan and Sri Lanka are all on the ascendancy, challenging not only India's influence and investment interests in its immediate neighbourhood but the other Quad countries interests in the IOR.

New Delhi has tried to revitalize its maritime strategy in recent years. Initiatives such as Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR), the Cotton Routes, the Spice Routes, Project Mausam and an inter-continental consultative framework like the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC) are intended to protect India's commercial and maritime interests in the IOR. These initiatives aim at empowering India's coastal provinces through the upgrading of infrastructure and by linking them strategically with the IOR countries. In order to restrict the rising Chinese influence, India has been attempting to concede as little strategic depth as possible to China in the IOR and therefore finds strategic consonance as a local power with the other Quad countries (Panda 2017, p.84).

The Quad countries' strategic and maritime interests are constantly challenged by Beijing as it signs new contracts, agreements and memoranda of understanding with various IOR states along with building strategic infrastructure such as ports and bases (see Map 1). Countries like the Maldives, Sri Lanka and Djibouti have shown significant interest in China's maritime investment projects under the MSR, with China possessing a military base operated by the PLAN in Djibouti in the Horn of Africa (Parasar 2015; Panda 2017). These Chinese actions encourage India to participate in a consultative forum like the Quad. But will India ever nurture the Quad as a strategic proposition, primarily against China? Answering this fundamental question requires an understanding of how India has positioned itself and responded to China's rise in the two contrasting power structures: the liberalist power coalition led or dominated by the United States, and an alternative power coalition that is still emerging and is centred on and around China.

Post-Cold War Sino-US Rivalry and the Quad

Fundamentally, the Quad's arrival was an anticipated contest about ideas and interests. The Quad's development explains a gradual evolution of the post-Cold War economic model and growth story rivalries that the two competing models of the "Washington consensus" and the "Beijing consensus" offer to world politics (Symoniak, 2010-11).⁸ The disintegration of the Soviet system in the 1990s and the Persian Gulf War offered a new context for the United States to construct a "new world order." For China, it was the beginning of a "new international system"

⁸ John Williamson in 1989 prescribed a few economic reforms guidelines targeting the developing countries for policymakers in Washington, which came to be popularly known as "Washington Consensus". Williamson's three main prescriptions were: (a) macroeconomic discipline, (b) promoting a market economy, and (c) openness and transparency to the world. See Williamson; also see, Symoniak, 2010-11. The "Beijing Consensus" has been seen in contrasting perspective to "Washington Consensus" even though there is very little in common between them. The lead story behind the "Beijing consensus" is the success of the Chinese economy. "Beijing consensus" emphasizes flexibility, innovation and "peaceful rise", citing China's success as a model of growth in international experience. The "Beijing Consensus" is portrayed as an alternative discourse of development in the developing world, opposing the Western-dominated developmental experience and model of growth. See Turin 2010, Kurlantzick 2013.

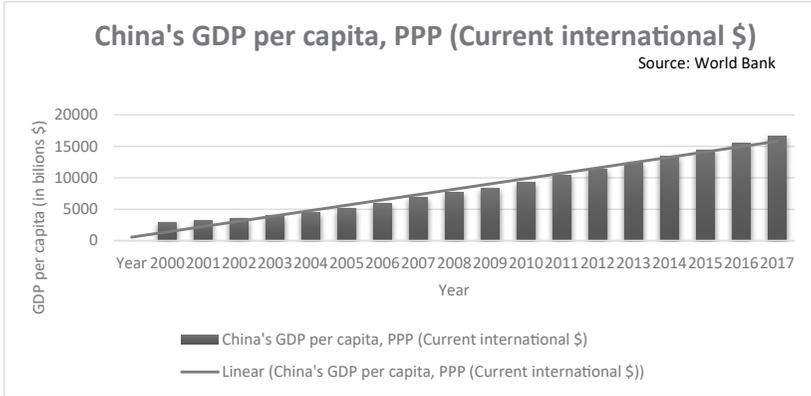
(Gurtov 2010). Deng Xiaoping stated, “I recommend that the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, which were formulated by us Asians in the 1950s, should serve as the norms for the New International Order for a very long period of time to come” (Gurtov 2010; Hu 2013). Accordingly, Beijing has been trying to establish a systemic order in Asia to keep Western powers out of the region, and India has been seen as a prospective partner despite China’s range of growing conflicts with it, including the boundary dispute.

If the Washington consensus was about protecting the liberal political tenets, including rule of law, respect for human rights and enhancing the democratic ideals in the world, the Beijing consensus emerged as an alternative to build a consensus principally on the establishment of an international system “without the West.” Importantly, it aimed to do so by avoiding the rule of law and rigid political and economic standards imposed by the Bretton Woods system (Gurtov 2010; Hu 2013). China’s advocacy of a Beijing consensus was linked to its “New Security Concept”, preparing a foreign policy platform to envision an alternative order (Gurtov 2010; Hu 2013).

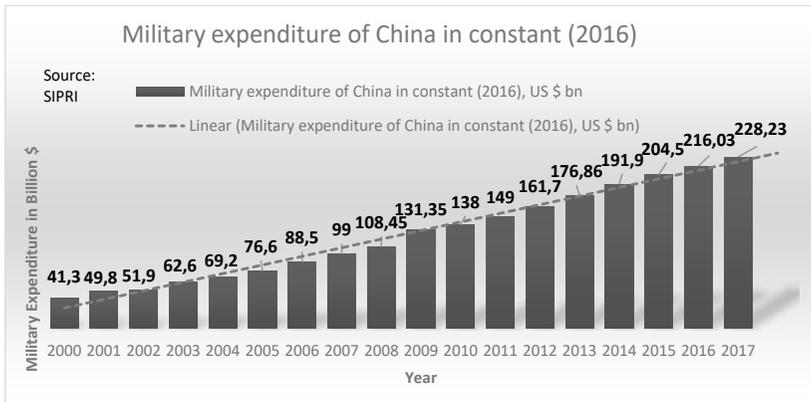
China’s emergence as a stronger power was viewed with concern in Washington and hence, the United States has tried different approaches over the years to curb China’s influence and rise. The Quad is a reflection of this evolving post-Cold War contest between the US and China. Japan, as a strategic ally of the US, has contributed a great deal to enhancing the formulation of the Quad through Abe’s FOIP strategy. Australia and India have further enhanced it by participating in this proposition. This comes as a virtual acknowledgement of the Washington consensus and the essence of the Quad’s can be said to protect the democratic ideas and interests of likeminded countries in the Indo-Pacific. This is particularly the case in the maritime domain, where the unilateral adventures of China appear to precipitously challenge the systemic configuration in the region.

The Quad’s growth trajectory from 1.0 to 2.0 corresponds to China’s rapid rise as a military and economic power. The beginning of this century witnessed China not only maintaining a stable economic growth but equally increasing its military expenditure (see Graphs 2 and 3), causing concern in India and elsewhere. The course of China’s rise has not only posed serious consequences for Asia’s structure of relations but also the overall economic and political landscape (Doug 2009, Hernandez 2009). China’s impressive economic growth and simultaneous rise in military budget was a key factor behind the Indian perception of the Quad vis-à-vis China. In particular, China’s assertive claim over the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh has intensified, complicating the India-China boundary dispute.

Graph 2



Graph 3



The American debate on China has also undergone some changes in the current century. The United States’ official *National Security Strategy (NSS)* offers a synopsis of the US’s trajectory of concerns over China in the last one and a half decade. For example, in September 2002, the *NSS* under President George W. Bush welcomed the “emergence of a strong China” while expressing concern over its systemic transformation and internal development (The White House 2002). The United States’ security concern regarding China was clearly visible during 2002-2006 when the second *NSS*, released on March 16, 2006, expressed its concern about China’s expansion of its military in a “non-transparent way” (The White House 2006). This is the period when Quad 1.0 was discussed but rapidly dismissed. The May 2010 *NSS*, released under President Barack Obama, welcomed China’s leadership role in global affairs, yet again expressed concern about China’s military, stating that it would monitor its military modernization programme closely (The White House 2010). The February 2015 *NSS* also raised

concerns over China's military modernization and insisted that China uphold international rules and norms on maritime issues, trade and human rights (The White House 2015). The current *NSS*, released under President Donald Trump, explicitly mentions China as a strategic threat to the American global interest, terming it as a "revisionist" power (The White House 2017).

Debate continues, both in the United States and elsewhere as to whether China is a revisionist power or not.⁹ But a broader consensus exists that China is certainly not a traditional status-quo power. The shades of Chinese revisionism in establishing new institutions and its flagship BRI have encouraged the United States to apply different mechanisms to check China's rising influence. The United States backing of the Quad 2.0 is a direct reflection of this.

On the other hand, Beijing has projected itself as a more confident power over the last decade. The Chinese leadership has successfully envisioned positioning China as one of the centres of power in the global political and economic structure. For example, the implementation of the "going-out" strategy in the late 1990s was a major development in China's foreign policy strategy where the main objective was to encourage the Chinese enterprises to invest abroad (Hongying Wang & XueYing Hu 2017). Over the next ten years, China intensively pursued its "going-out" strategy, primarily aiming to expand its maritime outreach in the IOR. Indeed, even though the Chinese narrative tells of how the liberal order, led by the United States and averse to its rise, has attempted to thwart the growth of Chinese power over the last two decades, China continues to exercise caution in not discounting key Asian powers like Japan and India as "Asian partners." It does so even though Beijing is aware that both these powers are strongly affiliated with the United States and will generally endorse the liberal values of the Washington consensus.

With Hu Jintao's arrival to power in 2003, China started countering the "China threat" scheme through its "peaceful rise of China" theory, which China later revised to "peaceful development of China." As a proponent of the "peaceful rise of China" theory, Zheng Bijian's speech at the Boao Forum for Asia in 2003 highlighted how China planned to progress internationally while focusing on Asia.

⁹ Unlike the United States, India does not strictly see China as a revisionist power. Some of China's initiatives and strategic tendencies might indicate shades of revisionism. Prof. Srikanth Kondapalli of the JNU suggests that the CICA conference in May 2014 indicates the revisionist attitude that China holds since its ambition is to emerge as a leader of Asia. This assertion from China holds utmost strategic importance for India. Based on the author's interview with Prof. Srikanth Kondapalli of the JNU. A similar line of confirmation is also offered by Prof. Alka Acharya when she states that "China is not a revisionist power in the strict sense of the term – it has no intention to bring about a wholesale transformation of the current world order. However it is under no illusions that the contemporary international political and financial architecture is governed by the rules laid down by the Western powers and has therefore begun to take a proactive approach in shaping alternative approaches to security and economic frameworks". Author's interview with Prof. Alka Acharya of JNU.

He argued, “In today’s world, how can Asian countries – China included – follow a path that serves nobody’s interest? China’s only choice is to strive to rise and, more importantly, to strive for a peaceful rise” (Zheng 2003). A hallmark of this theory was to deepen China’s bilateral relationship with the Asia-Pacific countries, including India (Okuda 2016, p. 125). Hu Jintao’s first term witnessed China advocating its “major developing country” foreign policy proposition, which attempted to avoid a confrontation any Asian power or with the United States (Masuda 2018, pp. 6-7). China also preferred to maintain a “low profile” during Hu Jintao’s first tenure with a modest focus on Asia.

Hu Jintao’s second term, starting from 2008-09, witnessed China emerging as a more confident power in world politics. It did so by successfully hosting the 2008 Summer Olympics and demonstrating a new assertiveness towards the United State, particularly after the global financial crisis. As Hu’s decade in power came to a close, a number of factors, to include China’s rising military posture over Taiwan, China-US military rivalry in the South China Sea, China’s double-digit economic growth and simultaneous growth in military budgets, encouraged the Quad countries to again discuss China’s rise among themselves. The “anti-China” notion emerged as a stronger stance even though the initial Quad consultative forum was meant to mainly address non-traditional security issues in the maritime domain.

India-China Relations vis-à-vis the Quad

Often viewed as a “quintessentially political process” to preserve the CPC’s legitimacy (Ming Xia 2009), China’s rise has been intensely debated across the Asia-Pacific/Indo-Pacific region, both in its domestic and international context. As such, New Delhi’s participation in the Quad should be viewed in this light and understood as a phenomenon of the growing strategic inequity that India faces at present with a dominant China as a neighbour. The Indian outlook towards the Quad is to position itself more with a liberal US-led structure to gain strategic importance in China’s alternative vision of frameworks and also, most plausibly, vice versa. Taken together, the concerns of the US, Japan and India have established a strategic confluence in the region where Australia is seen as a potential partner in the Quad formulation. The Quad’s prospects are, however, heavily dependent upon how India-China relations will evolve in the Indo-Pacific region. For example, a parallel track of engagement was noticed in India’s relationship architecture with China vis-à-vis the Quad members since 2004.

In 2004-05, India adopted a new strategic discourse to its relationship with China through the “Strategic and Cooperative Partnership of Peace and Prosperity”. Increased political exchanges, better economic cooperation, and the forging of stronger connectivity were the main objectives; the intent between the two coun-

tries was to promote an “all-round and comprehensive development” in their bilateral relations (MEA 2005). If the India-China relations have become institutionalized today, much of the credit should go to this 2005 official undertaking. A range of bilateral dialogue mechanisms – such as the Financial Dialogue, Defence and Security Dialogues, Strategic Economic Dialogue (SED), Working Mechanism for Consultation on India-China Border Affairs and Special Representatives (SRs) dialogue – made it a comprehensive bilateral relation. Importantly, India even have a Maritime Affairs dialogue with China today.

President Hu Jintao’s visit to India in 2006 witnessed stability and willingness in their relationship to keep the “irritants aside and move forward”. Hu Jintao’s visit saw China proposing a “five points” proposal – increase political trust, business cooperation, cultural and social exchanges, multilateral cooperation, and address the boundary dispute – to prepare a comprehensive trajectory for India-China relations in the years to come (Luan 2006). This was the phase when discussions over Quad 1.0 were increasing. So, with Hu Jintao’s visit to India, the rumours of India-China relations turning sour due to increasing India-US bonhomie were temporarily put to the rest (Panda 2006), even though the perception of China as a ‘suspect’ power continued in the Indian strategic outlook – primarily as a legacy of the 1962 War.

In 2008, India and China framed an understanding to build a “Shared Vision for the 21st Century” to globalize their relationship architecture. The emphasis was on democratization of international relations, factoring the significance of multilateral engagement, promoting economic globalization and to advocate an “open, fair, equitable, transparent and rule-based multilateral system” for India-China cooperation (MEA 2008). With its establishment, their relations have become significantly institutionalized. In addition, as developing countries and as emerging economies, both India and China have started influencing the global economic structure through their multilateral chain of contacts and alignments. Growing India-China multilateral contacts are noticed today in forums such as the BRICS¹⁰, the BASIC climate grouping¹¹, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), the Asian Investment Infrastructure Bank (AIIB), and also the Russia-India-China (RIC) trilateral framework. These are the results of this “Shared Vision,” all of which can be said to relatively enfeeble the Quad proposition (Panda 2018). Indeed, India’s continued association with the RIC and BRICS aptly demonstrates how New Delhi has not really distanced itself from China and Russia multilaterally, while managing its continued participation in Quad 2.0.

¹⁰ An association of five major emerging national economies composed of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

¹¹ A bloc of four large newly industrialized countries composed of Brazil, South Africa, India and China.

The recent informal meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin reiterated strengthening of India-Russia relations by developing a “new security architecture” based on non-alignment and non-bloc principles (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation 2018). The current political jingle of the “post-American” world states that the RIC is vital to regional politics and remains a balancing trilateral framework to downplay the overriding India-China strife (Panda 2012). The RIC framework is a much more stable trilateral framework than the other two trilaterals – India-Japan-Australia and India-Japan-US – which exemplify the Quad. Though the India-China border dispute and the growing discord in areas such as water and maritime security often make the two countries appear as Asian rivals, it should not be overlooked that India-China multilateral contacts are much stronger today, making them interdependent both bilaterally and globally. Above all, China’s foreign policy does factor India as an important partner, though mostly as a conditional partner, both for economic diplomacy and for other global objectives. For instance, Xi’s 2035 and 2049 vision of a “new era” foreign policy is one where improving relations with all countries is a priority for China. It is difficult to assume that Beijing would not like to improve relations with India in a period when it would prefer a stable neighbourhood to promote and ease its own rise.

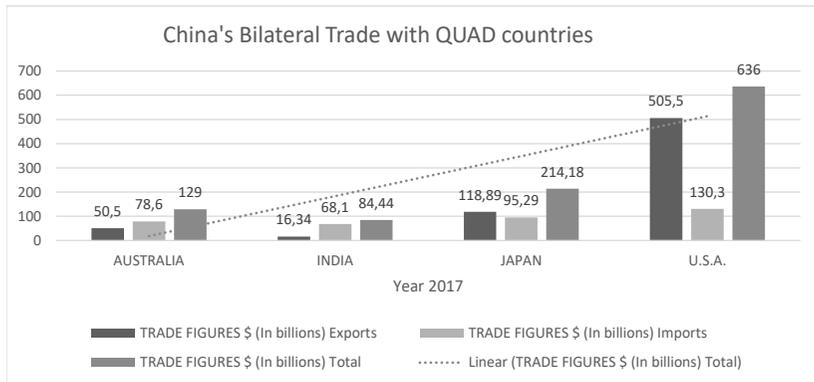
Beijing’s global foreign policy objective is to sideline American supremacy in Asia and further abroad. For this, China requires India’s partnership. As former foreign policy practitioner Jayant Prasad noted, “As a rising power, China wishes to find its place in the world commensurate with its growing comprehensive national power. If it does not see its own rise in Asia and the world in zero-sum terms, this could be an opportunity for India. If not, it will be an obstacle”.¹² Nevertheless, Beijing still needs India’s partnership in addressing global governance issues in favour of the emerging economies, such as climate change and reforming global financial institutions. Beijing also expects India to promote the chemistry of RIC trilateralism better in Asia-Pacific, or what it hesitates to call as “Indo-Pacific,” both within and outside the architecture of the SCO and BRICS. This Chinese expectation from India is not far-fetched. India has not been clubbed as an enemy country in the Chinese formulation thus far. Rather, Beijing sees this as an opportune moment to work on India-China relations, particularly when India-US relations have not perceptibly improved under Narendra Modi and Donald Trump. This encourages China to take India on board as a possible partner. India is also a part of the AIIB and BRICS’s New Development Bank (NDB). This multilateral set of engagements will seriously check Quad 2.0’s progress in emerging as an anti-China proposition.

¹² Author’s interview with Shri Jayant Prasad, Director General of the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), New Delhi.

Summing Up: The Quad Disorder

The essence of Quad 2.0 is an outcome of the strategic concerns and contingencies that Australia, India, Japan and the United States collectively share in regards to China and its unilateral measures. But having strategic congruity on China’s rise does not necessarily guarantee the Quad’s endurance as a credible strategic proposition. The differing perspectives on China’s rise and differing foreign policy strategies of each of the Quad participants enfeeble it. Every one of them shares strong trade contacts with China (see Graph 4). Therefore, promoting Quad 2.0 as an anti-China scheme will not be easy. Besides, the American perspective of Quad 2.0 is fairly different from that of Australia, Japan and India, even though all of the four countries anticipate China’s rise as the single most uniting factor in Quad 2.0, as well as in Indo-Pacific formulation.

Graph 4: China’s Bilateral Trade with QUAD Countries



SOURCES: China ministry of Commerce at <http://english.mofcom.gov.cn>, United States Census Bureau at <https://www.census.gov/>, World Bank website at www.wits.worldbank.org, Sipri website at www.sipri.org and Australian Bureau of Statistics at www.abs.gov.au

American concern over China’s rise is primarily linked to the structural advantage that Beijing currently enjoys as a developing economy in global financial institutions, while possessing the capability of a developed economy to challenge US supremacy in the global political and economic structure. Beijing’s capability to establish new institutions without withdrawing from participation in existing Bretton Woods institutions has severely threatened American interests as a superpower, encouraging the US to establish strategic coalitions to contain Chinese influence (Zheng 2015). The Quad concept fits aptly into this American formulation. As such, China’s rise has not only challenged the hegemonic status of the United States in the global power structure, but also the “ideological incompatibility” that China today is celebrating with the CPC’s lead to emerge as

a “revolutionary power” intent on offering systemic revisionism and challenging the Western democratic value system (Ming Xia 2009). The US-China contest is more about power and authority, apart from the opposing leadership vision (Kagan 2009, p. 2). For the United States, it is about upholding its leadership; while for China it is ascendancy to leadership.

Japan shares strategic congruity with the United States in the Quad more than Australia and India. If China's rise in Asia has been a success story over the last two decades, it has arguably been at the expense of Japan's influence as a power. This has affected Tokyo's regional and global economic outreach (Iokibe and Kubo 2017).¹³ What has essentially encouraged Tokyo to openly endorse and perhaps promote the Quad 2.0 is the emergence of a stronger “military China” threatening Japanese security and maritime interests - despite a (somewhat) guaranteed US-Japan alliance (Chanlett-Avery 2018). Japan imports almost 80 per cent of its oil through the Malacca Strait and is heavily dependent on free passage in the seas for its energy imports. Japan's economy is also somewhat dependent on sea-based trade, where Tokyo trades in major raw materials, including food items. Japan's target is to protect those limited but vital chokepoints that separate Japan from key sea lines of communication (SLOCs) – at the Sea of China and near the Strait of Okhotsk, and potentially control them in a possible conflict with China. Tokyo sees the emergence of China's blue-water navy and the Chinese naval force as detrimental to its maritime strategic interests. Therefore, it seeks to overcome this challenge by revising its pacifist constitution, particularly Article 9, which restricts its choice to use force. It also hopes to strengthen and extend the US-Japan alliance network through trilateral and quadrilateral forums. India is progressively being seen as a prospective partner in Tokyo's worldview, across the bilateral, trilateral, and quadrilateral format.

Australia's perspective on the Quad should be understood as a measure of its shared security understanding with the United States and with Japan rather than as a security alliance against China. More than the other Quad countries, Australia has maintained strong economic ties with China and has acknowledged Beijing's strategic presence openly. Australia's 2016 Defence White Paper acknowledged the US pre-eminence in the region and in upholding a rule-based order in the region (Australian Government 2016). Australia sees the effort to revive the Quad as a part of its ongoing economic and strategic engagement with all

¹³ Experts argue that China's rise has been the main factor why Japanese interests have been challenged, both regionally and globally. But there are additional factors that have also contributed to Japan's declining influence. Among several other factors, Japan's indecisive foreign policy and lack of a resolute Japanese policy to address the territorial disputes are equally strong factors that have allowed countries like Russia and South Korea to take advantage to some extent in Northeast Asia. For instance, Japan's territorial claims were challenged by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev's visit to the disputed Northern Territories in November 2010 and South Korean President Lee Myung-Bak's visit to Takeshima in August 2012. See Iokine and Kubo, 2017, pp.235-256.

the Quad countries, including India (Lee 2017). Australia sees the Indo-Pacific as a strategic proposition that not only enhances Canberra's outlook towards the region, but also as a proposition that endorses the legitimacy of the US-led liberal order ahead of a Chinese-led order (Australian Government 2017).

India's perspective on the Quad needs to be understood in the light of four aspects, as follows. First, India's envisages the Quad more as a strategic proposition at present which could possibly become a platform to address the rising power asymmetry in Asia (Panda 2018). India has long sought for a power equilibrium with China. Participating in the Quad assists India to put forward a demand that China endorses a multipolar Asian structure. For example, then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's speech at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing in January 2008 endorsed China's rise and stated that "India cannot remain untouched by China's rise which is a momentous process" (MEA 2008). Stressing further that "there is enough space for both India and China to grow and prosper", he stated that economic interdependence should be the basis of India-China cooperation both within and outside the Asian structure, including an "open inclusive economic architecture from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific" (MEA 2008) where India sees China as a partner in the larger Asia-Pacific/Indo-Pacific construct.

These perspectives have, however, been overshadowed by China's growing profile as a military and economic power and its increasing assertiveness on a range of issues in Asia and the world. China has surpassed India and other powers on many accounts to improve its "comprehensive national power", compelling India to rethink China's vision of an Asian structure with India. Besides, Beijing is pursuing a "new era" foreign policy which is more US-centric, aimed at sharing an international platform with the United States as an equivalent power rather than taking Asian countries' concerns and interests on-board (Panda 2018). Establishing a strategic consonance with the Quad countries allows India to maintain a balancing position to draw more attention from China in the Asian and global spheres.

Second, China's emergence more as a revisionist power through its Silk Road strategy has influenced India's strategic interests in the immediate and extended neighbourhood, particularly around the Indo-Pacific region. Xi Jinping's flagship BRI is a unilateral proposition of China with the aim of enhancing infrastructure investment abroad, improve road and railway connectivity, and people-to-people contacts between China and the world. At the CPC's 19th National Congress, Beijing inserted the BRI in the CPC Charter, thus giving it more policy weightage and making it a national political project. This insertion formally implies that Beijing is serious about the international community joining the BRI, and signing mutually acceptable agreements. Importantly, the BRI restricts India's investment and economic engagement choices in the immediate neighbourhood and fur-

ther abroad. In particular, Beijing's MSR poses a challenge to India's maritime superiority, as it focuses on infrastructure along "alternative" routes in the Indian Ocean. Beijing's militarization approach in the South China Sea, its provocative approach to Japan in the East China Sea dispute, and its rising assertiveness vis-à-vis the India-China boundary dispute have further compelled New Delhi to find strategic consonance with the Quad members. Indeed, given these valid concerns, India is the only major economy that is yet to formally endorse or support China's BRI.

Third, the Quad does not necessarily guarantee India's security against China against the backdrop of any anticipated border conflict or eventuality. Neither will India's security interests be protected under the Quad mechanisms as none of the Quad countries has taken an open stand on the boundary dispute and supported India's case against China. The recent Doklam border stand-off may be taken as an example. While the United States urged both India and China to resolve the 73 days-long stand-off through "bilateral dialogue" (Financial Express 2017), Australia expressed interest that peace must be restored and tensions should not be escalated (Baghchi 2017). Japan too, though somewhat bold and eloquent, stated that the border stand-off should not change the status quo of the boundary dispute and must be resolved peacefully (Panda 2017). These perspectives sufficiently indicate that none of the Quad countries is currently willing to take a position which might infuriate China.

Fourth, India's approach to the Indo-Pacific finds strategic consonance with the liberal-order framework led by the United States against a unilateral global discourse propelled by China. Emphasizing a consultative nature of growth environment in the Indo-Pacific, India enhances the spirit of inclusivity in the region. This is designed to maintain a balance with both the power structures led by the United States and China. For instance, the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor (AAGC) that is being envisioned by India and Japan is based more on the consultative nature of cooperation focusing on infrastructure building, enhancing connectivity and aiming to promote the universal character of growth based on people-to-people contacts. This is meant as a balance to China's BRI, which is a country-specific proposition based on Beijing's unilateralism. India's advocacy of "Security and Growth for All in the Region" (SAGAR), which calls for universalism and inclusivity, is also a testimony to this. There is no caveat in this inclusivity and universalism that excludes China. Rather, the whole Indian approach is to position its security interests - maritime and otherwise - front and centre in India's relations with Beijing while at the same time further establishing consonance and compatibility with the US, Japan and Australia.

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Bio

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