

QUAD: Quadrilateral Security Dialogue

[UPSC Notes]

What is a QUAD?

QUAD- Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD) is an informal strategic forum comprising four nations, namely, the USA, India, Australia, and Japan. QUAD was formalized by former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007. The prime focus of the QUAD group is to establish a free and secure Indo-Pacific region.

QUAD: Timeline of Events

The timeline of events that led to QUAD- Quadrilateral Security Dialogue formation are:

2007: Asian Arc of Democracy- Australia Backed out

The Quadrilateral was supposed to form an 'Asian Arc of Democracy'. Ultimately, it was envisioned to include countries in Mongolia, the Korean Peninsula, Central Asia, and some other countries in South-East Asia. However, the QUAD did not include China to be a part of 'The Asian Arc of Democracy'. This led to severe critics such as the former U.S State Department stating this was an Anti-Chinese move. While others called this a 'democratic challenge'. The Chinese anger over the Quadrilateral caused uneasiness among the Australians. In 2008, Kevin Rudd (Former Prime Minister of Australia) finally terminated the Quadrilateral, signaling closer relations with the Chinese Government.

2012: Democratic Security Diamond- Maritime security from the Indian Ocean to the Western Pacific.

The Japanese Government has vowed to revisit the pacifist constitution. Particularly, the Prime Minister of Japan: Shinzo Abe. He has also vowed to re-calibrate the security alliance of Japan with the United States of America along with steering the establishment of the 'Democratic Security Diamond'. It is a proposed strategic alliance of like-minded, Indo-Pacific Countries. All these countries are insecure about the growing naval power of China.

2017: Entry of Australia again- China's Response

The Australian Government under the leadership of Kevin Rudd (Former Prime Minister of Australia) found the grouping to be in high conflict with the Australian Economic relationship with China. Hence, they decided to withdraw from the formal discussion in 2008. However, the Australian Government decided to take a firm and assertive stance over the previous reluctance.

2020: Trilateral India- US, Japan, Malabar Naval Exercise

The Malabar Exercise started in 1992. However, this exercise was suspended from 1998 to 2001. This was because the U.S Government imposed sanctions (military and economic) on India after India conducted the nuclear missile test. Finally, it was revived by the two countries in 2002. Later on, Japan became a permanent member of the Malabar Exercise in 2015. This exercise includes combat manoeuvres and simulated war games.

QUAD Nations and China

Since China is not a member of QUAD, let's take a look at other country's take on China-

The USA-

- To contain China's growth in East Asia the USA followed the policy of containment against it. Accordingly, the United States perceives the coalition as a means to get back its influence in the Indo-Pacific region.
- Both China and Russia have been described as strong rivals to the United States in their national security strategy Pentagon report on Indo-Pacific strategy and National Defence strategy.

Australia-

- The Chinese government has shown an interest in the land Infrastructure polluted universities of Australia which has become a matter of concern to it.
- This is because it can be seen from the comprehensive strategic partnership between China and Australia indicates Australia's dependence on China for its economic prosperity.

Japan-

- China has been trans dressing its territorial boundaries in the region for the past decade and Japan has strongly expressed its disagreements about it.

- Japan's economy remains heavily dependent on trade with China with net exports that account precisely for one-third of the country's recent economic growth.
- Therefore Japan has to be taken care of by Japan in order to balance its economic needs with its territorial concern with China.

India-

- The violations of international norms committed by China and recent years especially its expansion of military facilities on reclaimed islands in the South China Sea and expansion of military and economical power have raised some strong challenges to India.
- India knows the strategic importance of China and is smartly balancing the relationship between China and US thereby remaining committed to the strategic autonomy of China which is reassuring to it.
- In fact, India has prohibited Australia to participate in the Malabar trilateral Maritime exercises that happen between India US, and Japan concerning that it might send a negative message to China which is the wary reason for the exercise.
- It is a positive development that Narendra Modi and Xi Jinping value the strategic guidance to the stakeholders in both countries at Mamallapuram Summit.

What is the Spirit of QUAD?

Spirit of QUAD is actually a joint statement issued by the member countries of QUAD in March 2021. In this statement, the members of QUAD clearly mentioned that-

- They strive for a free, open, inclusive, healthy region that is anchored by democratic values.
- They support the rule of law and freedom of navigation in the Indo-Pacific region. Come to work together along with a good range of partners.
- They pledged to combat the climate changes, foster the economies of the countries, and improve the health impacts of covid-19.
- To advance the goals and priorities said by the member countries they aim to 3 double their commitments towards squad engagement and combine the Nations scientific financing and manufacturing capabilities establishing a vaccine expert for effective vaccine distribution.

What is QUAD Plus?

QUAD Plus is an Indo-Pacific Mini lateral engagement that came to integrate other vital emerging economies into the QUAD. Furthermore, it offers a multipolar vision that allows us to analyze and assess the multilateral growth of nations being involved in QUAD.

Therefore the quad plus can be seen as an extension of the existing QUAD.

In contrast to the quad plus which has largely aimed to create a cooperation framework to address shared International challenges the quad still continues to be strategic in dialogue and exam issues related to Maritime infrastructure technology and health challenges.

Principles of QUAD

The prime focus of establishing the QUAD group is to safeguard the sea routes in the Indo-Pacific Ocean from foreign invaders. QUAD is basically a strategic grouping to reduce Chinese domination. Through QUAD principles, the main objective is to secure a rules-based global order, freedom of navigation, and a liberal trading system. It also aims to offer alternative debt financing for nations in the Indo-Pacific region.

The QUAD focuses on reducing Chinese trade and predatory policies and aims at providing liberal trading and freedom of navigation.

Significance of QUAD

The QUAD strategically counters China's economic and military rise. The significance of QUAD, especially for India are:

- India can take the support of the other QUAD nations in the event of rising Chinese hostilities on its borders.
- India can take advantage of naval extensions in the Indo-Pacific region for strategic exploration.
- China's aggressiveness and coercive nature in the strategic Indo-Pacific region are said to be a frequent topic of discussion among the QUAD nations.

QUAD Summit 2022

The QUAD Summit was held in Tokyo on 24th May 2022. Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the Summit in person. The issues addressed in the QUAD Summit 2022 were China and Taiwan, China and the Solomon Islands, Ukraine and Russia, and North Korea Missiles. Whereas the initiatives discussed were Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA), Space Cooperation, Vaccine Partnership, and Quad Fellowship.

QUAD Summit 2023

The next in-person QUAD Summit 2023 will be hosted by Australia.

The QUAD needs to have a clearer vision for itself. It is important for QUAD to exhibit openness, and ensure that all talk of a 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific' is more than just a mere slogan. The QUAD should focus on building a robust regional consultation mechanism and coordinate with ASEAN nations on issues of regional importance.

Challenges Before QUAD

There are certain challenges in the way of the QUAD group, which include:

- China's territorial claim on the complete ownership of the South China Sea region and the power to manufacture the islands in it. Though the claim was rejected outright by the court of arbitration in 2016, still China is not stepping back.
- China has close relations with the ASEAN countries, and with the recent example of the Regional Cooperation Economic Partnership (RCEP), China's increasing influence over ASEAN nations could not be ruled out.
- Since the QUAD group restricts China and many terms like trading and navigation in the Indo-Pacific and western regions via sea routes, it is difficult for countries like Japan and Australia to sustain themselves because they are totally dependent on China.
- The coherence among the countries participating in a quadruple group is missing because of the countries' interests and aspirations being fulfilled.

