

GS Paper 2

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Regional groupings /Agreements in South Asia

Indo Pacific Region

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Context:

March 2023: Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida arrived in India for a two-day visit.

PM Kishida has said that a new plan on **Free and Open Indo-Pacific** will be announced during his two-day visit to India and will present concrete ideas about the future of it at "this historical turning point." (**Japan's New Plan for a Free and Open Indo-Pacific**) (FOIP))

As per the official Twitter handle of the Japan PMO, "This year, Japan holds the G7 presidency while India chairs the G20. Prime Minister Modi and I will exchange views on the role our two countries should play as we work to resolve mounting international challenges."

What is 'Indo Pacific' Region?

- It refers to the confluence of the Pacific and Indian Oceans, which interconnect in Southeast Asia.



What is significance of Indo Pacific region?

- Demographic significance
- Economic significance
- Strategic significance
- Mineral Resources

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Discuss the Recent Geo-Political Developments in the Indo-Pacific Region

I) India's policy towards Indo Pacific

The Prime Minister of India during Shangri La dialogue in June 2018, marked, “India does not see Indo- Pacific as a strategy or a club of limited members or as a grouping that seeks to dominate others”.

India is committed to the idea of a “Free and Open Indo-Pacific”.

II) US' Indo-Pacific Strategy

- Soon after coming to power, the Trump administration had renamed Asia Pacific as Indo-Pacific and identified India as **one bookend** of the region.
- In February 2022, the Biden administration announced its long-awaited **Indo-Pacific strategy**.
- ✓ The document focuses on building **collective capacity** to deal with challenges in the region — China's assertiveness, the pandemic and climate change, among others.
- ✓ The US will seek an Indo-Pacific that is free and open, connected, prosperous, secure and **resilient**.
- ✓ Washington will 'continue to support India's rise and regional leadership' as per the new Indo Pacific strategy.

The US' Indo-Pacific Strategy



III)EU's Indo-Pacific Strategy

The EU already sees itself and the Indo-Pacific as “natural partner regions”.

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IV)Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific(FOIP)

March 2023: Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida arrived in India for a two-day visit and gave the vision of Free and Open Indo-Pacific(FOIP)

Pillars of cooperation' under the new FOIP:

1)Principles for peace and rules for prosperity: Includes

- ✓ engagement in economic development programmes (Promoting the implementation of the G-20 Principles for “Quality Infrastructure Investment” in Vulnerable countries.)

2)Addressing challenges in Indo-Pacific region.

3)Creating Multi-layered connectivity:

- Introducing connectivity projects in Southeast Asia, South Asia and the South Pacific/Pacific Island countries.
- Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund of \$100 million (It will promote the Bay of Bengal-Northeast India industrial value chain concept in cooperation with India and Bangladesh)
- Supporting development of New Palau International Airport Terminal project (in the western Pacific Ocean).

4)Extending efforts for security and safe use of the “sea” to the “air”:

- Strategic use of **Official Development Assistance (ODAs)**. (Japan's funding is known as ODAs)
- Mobilization of a total of more than \$75 billion in public and private funds in the Indo-Pacific region by 2030 in infrastructure development.

(V)QUAD (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue)

Quad or Quadrilateral Security Dialogue is a group of ‘four like-minded countries’ i.e., India, US, Australia and Japan.



Evolution of QUAD

- **Initiation Phase:** The US, Japan, India and Australia came together in the aftermath of the **2004 Indian Ocean tsunami**. Later, officials of the four countries met in 2007 “to look at issues of common interest.” These meeting led to the genesis of the concept of Indo-Pacific.
- **Dormant Phase:** After the initial meetings, Australia pulled out of the grouping citing China’s apprehensions regarding it. This resulted in the grouping going into the dormant phase and the activity staying limited to the trilateral (Japan, India and US) or at times bilateral (India and US) Malabar exercise.
- **Revival Phase:** In 2017, the dialogue was revised on fringes of East Asia Summit (EAS) in Philippines.

Need/ Objective of QUAD

Shared vision for an Indo-Pacific region that is free, open, resilient and inclusive.

- ✓ To ensure that the Indo-Pacific is accessible and dynamic, governed by international law.
- ✓ To ensure a free and open international order based on the rule of law in the Indo-Pacific.

Key Objectives

- Ensuring maritime security,
- Addressing the risks of climate change,
- Creating an ecosystem for investment in the region
- Boosting technological innovation.
- Building Supply Chain resilience which is not dependent on China
- Combating the Covid-19 crisis, especially vis-à-vis vaccine diplomacy.

Recent Context

16th May 2023—QUAD Summit was supposed to take place in Sidney, Australia. Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese however said that this summit would not go ahead without U.S. President Joe Biden, who postponed his trip to Australia due to debt ceiling negotiations in Washington. Leaders of Australia, the United States, India and Japan decided to meet at the G7 in Japan on 20th May 2023.

20th May 2023----Quad Summit took place on the sidelines of the G7 Summit in Hiroshima (Japan)

Key take aways from The Hiroshima Summit 2023

1) Quad strongly condemned the acts of terrorism including the 26/11 attacks in Mumbai and Pathankot. They also underscored their commitment to pursuing designations, as appropriate, by the UN Security Council 1267 Sanctions Committee. While China was not mentioned, it is well known that this country is placing obstacles in the process of designation of notorious terrorists.

2) While laying their **emphasis on the importance of adherence to international law** the leaders expressed their concern, at the militarisation of disputed features, the dangerous use of coastguard and maritime militia vessels, and efforts to disrupt other countries offshore resource exploitation activities.

3) The Summit stressed PM Modi's statement that this is not an era of war, adding that the Quad remains committed to dialogue and diplomacy. In the context of Ukrainian conflict, the Quad leaders stressed a comprehensive, just, and lasting peace consistent with the UN Charter, while noting its terrible and tragic humanitarian consequences. They also condemned North Korea's destabilising ballistic missile launches and pursuit of nuclear weapons in violation of multiple UN Security Council resolutions (UNSCRs).

4) The East and South China Seas were especially mentioned. While expressing their serious concern at the militarisation of disputed features, the dangerous use of coastguard and maritime militia vessels, and efforts to disrupt other countries' offshore resource exploitation activities, they emphasised the importance of adherence to international law, particularly as reflected in the **United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)**, and the maintenance of freedom of navigation and overflight.

5) They expressed support for ASEAN centrality and unity. **They stated that the Quad's work will remain aligned with ASEAN's principles and priorities and will continue to support the implementation of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP).**

6) The leaders conveyed that the **Quad would continue cooperation with Indo-Pacific partners to meet the region's infrastructure priorities.**

7) QUAD announced the **launch of the private sector-led Quad Investors Network (QUIN)**, which aims to facilitate investments in strategic technologies, including clean energy, semiconductors, critical minerals, and quantum.

In the summit 2023, PM Modi, in his opening remarks, pointed out that the Quad has assumed an important place on the world stage and it has become broader and more effective.

He further stressed that the Quad is carrying a constructive agenda, which will further strengthen its image as 'a Force for Good.'

India had stated earlier that it is not against any country but is for the establishment of peace and security in the region and a positive concept based on Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR).

The next Summit will be held in India.


6th June 2023---US, Australia, Japan Forming New Quad With Philippines. Should India Be Concerned?

The US, Japan and Australia held their first round of quadrilateral defence talks with the Philippines in a more pronounced opposition against China and gave shape to a New QUAD as per some analysts.

in Indo-Pacific region

The New quadrilateral setup  upholds the ASEAN centrality of the Indo-Pacific strategic framework.

Analysis

- > The New quadrilateral setup in Indo-Pacific region has emerged as a response to rising Chinese assertiveness in the region.
 - > China has already criticize QUAD as Asian NATO within this narrative the idea of QUAD plus is also not well taken by China.
 - > India not been part of new QUAD has thus gain attention. However, analyst argues that India should not see any cause of concern with the rise of this new group because of following reason-
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Criticism of QUAD as “ASIAN NATO”

conti....



~~Analysis~~

1. Priority of both the group (QUAD and new QUAD) are different though both fit into the larger vision of Indo-Pacific. In the new QUAD importance is given to military cooperation and is mostly centered on the issue of Chinese adventurism in Indo-Pacific as oppose to this QUAD focuses on trade, investment, infrastructure development, security concerns including HADR along with the creation of deterrence against actors not following rule based order.
 2. The new QUAD is more directly aimed at countering China while QUAD have other points in its agenda.
- > Although these two initiatives can co-exist in the region it is argues that it is good for India not to be part of this anti China grouping keeping into mind India's close border with China and a cautious approach towards it.
 - > India's strategic significance will remain unaffected by the formation of new QUAD since any major Indo-Pacific collaboration will require India's support.
 - > Neither the new QUAD will act as a balancer to the existing QUAD nor will it downsize it.
 - > However, the Philippines associated QUAD could create pressure on India to respond to the challenges of Indo-Pacific in a stronger way. However, this will not reduce India's position as a crucial member in Indo-Pacific region.

March 2023---Quad Foreign Ministers' Meet in New Delhi--The Foreign Ministers of Quad countries reaffirmed the grouping's commitment for a free and open Indo-Pacific and said it strongly supports the rule of law, sovereignty, territorial integrity and peaceful settlement of disputes, in comments seen as an oblique message to China.

It was announced that a Quad working group on counter-terrorism would be established to explore measures to counter new and emerging forms of terrorism, radicalisation and violent extremism.

The ministers vowed to work closely to align and complement Quad's agenda with Japan's presidency of the G7, India's presidency of the G20 and the United States' APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation) "host year" in 2023.

Japanese foreign minister Hayashi said , “This is not a military group. We don’t try to exclude anybody, including China. As long as China abide by international norm and laws then this is not a conflicting issue between China and Quad”.

Australian foreign minister noted the leadership role India plays in bringing global powers and agendas on a platform. Calling India an integral force, Australia FM said, “India is a critical power, great power in the region that there is no reshaping of the Indo-Pacific without India. We've seen that India is a civilisational power that brings a different perspective to some of the challenges of this time.”

Indian EAM S Jaishankar listed three main agendas or issues that QUAD needs to address.

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Sep 2022-----The foreign ministers of India, United States, Japan and Australia met and signed a set of guidelines on Quad's partnership on humanitarian assistance and disaster response (HADR).

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India and QUAD (Discuss in context of growing idea of QUAD Plus)

QUAD lies

Positive Impact

- In line with India's regional power ambitions and the vision of being the Net Security Provider in the region
- Building India's manufacturing capacity
- Support during potential bilateral dispute with China
- Garnering support on global issues

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The negative impact could be-

- Escalation of border issues
- Direct impact on the economic relationship
- Cannot get military support from OUAD

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Challenges in the functioning of QUAD

- **Assertiveness of China**
- **Challenge from China as the most important trading partner in the region**
- **Diverse Approach of Member Countries**

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Q: QUAD is transforming into a trade block from a military alliance in present time.

Discuss. (Mains 2020)

- > Since the inception of QUAD it has been considered as a constructive force regarding HADR and as security dialogue.
- > As per few analyst it emerged as military alliance between like minded countries to curb Chinese assertion in the region, however since India is member of QUAD partnership is more preferred than alliance.
- > Security issues both traditional and non-traditional, natural and man-made were key to QUAD's agenda initially at the same time it was against militarization of this region done by China and North Korea.
- > However in present time Quad is transforming into a trade block and even beyond it. In the era of globalization and complex inter dependence QUAD has emerged as trade block with new trade partnerships a part from other areas of cooperation such as connectivity, innovation, Science and technology innovation, infrastructure development etc.
- > IPEF is one such economic initiative with QUAD countries as members all these initiatives suggest that QUAD has transformed itself from a narrow idea to being a constructive force and development partner in the region.
- > However, it will suffer from severe challenges due to ongoing militarization by North Korea and China in the region.

VI) AUKUS

New trilateral security partnership for the Indo-Pacific, between Australia, the UK and the US.

Q. The new tri-nation partnership AUKUS is aimed at countering China's ambitions in the Indo-Pacific region. Is it going to supersede the existing partnerships in the region? Discuss the strength and impact of AUKUS in the present scenario. (Mains 2021)

- > This new trilateral security partnership between Australia, UK and USA aims to provide technologies to build nuclear power sub marines to Australia no doubt it is seen as deterrence to China's aggression in the region.
- > AUKUS has huge strength and impact on its side the agreement involves cooperation on advanced cyber information, AI, quantum technologies, hypersonic and counter hypersonic electronic warfare, under water capabilities and information sharing, it aims to ensure free and open Indo-Pacific space which would include close defense cooperation in terms of joint military exercises to the extent that AUKUS involves advance technological cooperation it has a great impact on creating deterrence against China in the region.
- > Despite such strength and impact AUKUS would not supercede rather compliment existing arrangements in Indo-Pacific such as QUAD, QUAD+, new QUAD and Five eyes intelligence system.

VII)Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF)

- It is a US-led initiative
- Aims to strengthen economic partnership among participating countries to enhance resilience, sustainability, inclusiveness, economic growth, fairness, and competitiveness in the Indo Pacific Ocean.
- Launched in 2021
- Not a Free Trade Agreement (FTA)
- The launch of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) coincided with the **Quad summit** , signifying the essence of the **Quad and its extension as a “plus” grouping.**

- The negotiations will be along **four main pillars**.
 - Supply-chain resilience
 - Clean energy, decarbonisation & infrastructure
 - Taxation & anti-corruption
 - Fair & resilient trade.
- Currently, **India and 13 countries located in the Pacific Ocean** are its members,
 - Australia, Brunei, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, United States, and Vietnam.

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Recent Context:

Sep 2022---The Minister of Commerce & Industry addressed the **IPEF Ministerial meeting in the US**, where **India decided to stay away from the Fair & resilient trade Pillar**. India agreed to three out of four pillars, which are Supply Chains, Tax & Anti Corruption and Clean energy.

March 2023---An Inter-Ministerial delegation from India led by Department of Commerce participated in the second Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) negotiating round in Bali, Indonesia from March 13-19, 2023. During the Bali Round, discussions covered all the four pillars of the IPEF: Trade (Pillar I); Supply Chains (Pillar II); Clean Economy (Pillar III); and Fair Economy (Taxation & Anticorruption) - (Pillar IV). India participated in the discussions related to Pillars II to IV.

July 2023---The US wants India to join the trade pillar of the 14 nation bloc IPEF and wants to conclude negotiations on all pillars by the end of 2023.

What are the Major Challenges in the Indo-Pacific Region?

- Aggressive Policies of Certain Countries
- China's rising assertiveness
- Unwillingness to Act Against China
- Issues with IPEF
- Terrorism

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Ques/- Examine the strategic significance of Indo-Pacific region for India. Also, discuss how India should tackle Chinese dominance in Indo-Pacific region?

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Way Forward

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