

International Relations Class 18

12th February, 2024 at 9:00 AM

INDO PACIFIC REGION (9:14 AM)

- **Blue Dot Network (BDN)**
- Unlike BRI, BDN does not offer loans to the project, rather it is an accreditation initiative meant to provide credit ranking to different initiatives funded by the West.
- It was signed in 2019 with important actors being the US, Japan, and Australia.
- **Build Back Better World Initiative**
- It was launched in 2021 by G7 countries to provide value-added development projects in developing countries.
- **Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment, PGII**
- It is an initiative of G7 to fund infrastructural projects.
- It is an important initiative within Biden's doctrine (focusing on increasing US influence)

Significance (9:39 AM)

- Demographic
- The region caters to more than 50% of the world's population.
- It thus creates a wide consumer base for trade and investment.
- Economic
- This region produces one-third of the global economic output (expanding ideas within the blue economy).
- A few of the world's largest economies for instance India, Japan, Australia, and South East Asia fall in this region.
- Strategic
- One of the most important sea lanes of communication i.e. Strait of Malacca falls in this region
- This makes this region important not only from the trade and energy perspective but also from the security perspective.
- Also, this region includes a few very important countries like Japan, Australia, South Korea, North Korea, and Southeast Asia which makes this region another flash point in global politics
- Because of the presence of these countries, this region involves extra-regional actors like the US, EU, China, and Russia.
- Mineral Resource
- The region is rich in natural resources and rare earth metals.
- It is also rich in fishery resources.
- **India's policy towards Indo-Pacific**
- India does not see the Indo-Pacific as a strategy, a club of limited members, or a grouping that seeks to dominate others.
- India is committed to the idea of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" i.e. free from any security threats and absence of barriers in trade.
- **US Indo-Pacific Strategy**
- The Trump administration renamed the Asia Pacific as the Indo-Pacific, with India identified as one bookend.
- In February 2022, the Biden administration announced its Indo-Pacific strategy, emphasizing collective capacity to address challenges including China's assertiveness, the pandemic, and climate change.
- It aims for a free, open, connected, prosperous, secure, and resilient region, with continued support for India's rise and regional leadership.

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

- Engagement in economic development programs, such as promoting quality infrastructure investment in vulnerable countries.
- Addressing challenges in the Indo-Pacific region.
- Introducing connectivity projects in Southeast Asia, South Asia, and the South Pacific/Pacific Island countries.
- Establishment of the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund of \$100 million, focusing on promoting industrial value chains in the Bay of Bengal-Northeast India region.
- Extending efforts for security and safe use of sea and air.
- Mobilization of over \$75 billion in public and private funds in Indo-Pacific infrastructure development by 2030.

QUAD (QUADRILATERAL SECURITY DIALOGUE) (10:11 AM)

- It is a group of four like-minded countries i.e. India, the US, Australia, and Japan.
- They all are democratic countries.
- They believe in a free, open, inclusive, and rule-based order in the Indo-Pacific.
- Building collective capacity to deal

Evolution of QUAD

- It formed at the backdrop of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami.
- Initial meetings in 2007 to address common interests, laying the groundwork for the Indo-Pacific concept.
- Australia's withdrawal from the grouping due to China's concerns led to a dormant phase.
- Limited activity primarily focused on trilateral (Japan, India, and US) or bilateral (India and US) Malabar exercises.
- Revival of dialogue in 2017 during the East Asia Summit (EAS) in the Philippines, marking renewed interest and engagement in the Indo-Pacific concept.

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 ChinaCombating the Covid-19 crisis, especially vis-à-vis vaccine diplomacy.

Criticism of QUAD (11:00)

- China has often criticized QUAD as an Asian NATO due to the following reasons:
- 1. Importance of Asia in the US Foreign Policy:
 - The growing focus of the US in Asia is illustrated by renaming Asia-Pacific as Indo-Pacific
 - China alleges that the US wants to put India as a counterbalance to China in the Indo-Pacific.
 - The US actually has been wooing India by giving multiple concessions like a waiver from CATSA and concessions in oil purchases from Iran and Russia.
 - The US also did not react as expected when India received a \$ 400 million missile defense system from Russia (this purchase was motivated by India's security concerns vis-a-vis China).
- 2. Due to new development in Indo-Pacific led by the US turning this region as alleged by China into an arena of Cold War.
- Some critiques suggest that the enlargement of QUAD in terms of UQAD+ and new QUAD is taking place at a similar level as that of NATO.
- Thus China suggests that these developments could be considered as NATOification of QUAD.
- However, this could not be completely true, because India does not carry a NATO mentality.
- QUAD and QUAD+ and now recently New QUAD which aims to target all the countries which do not follow the international order.
- Thus, unlike NATO (which targeted the USSR and now Russia) QUAD and new formations are not openly targeting any single country.
- These formations are not purely an anti-China drive but rather have other aspects of cooperation as well.
- Since India is part of QUAD and not guided by NATO mentality, this apprehension of China of QUAD turning into Asian NATO remains out of question.
- Unlike NATO, QUAD does not promise to provide military support to its members.
- **Note:** Refer handout for the impact of QUAD on India

QUAD+

- Expansion of the QUAD to include additional countries or stakeholders.
- Aims to enhance regional security, address common challenges, and promote stability in the Indo-Pacific.
- Potential members may include countries like South Korea, Vietnam, and New Zealand, among others.
- Focuses on fostering cooperation on issues such as maritime security, infrastructure development, and economic prosperity.

New QUAD

- Refers to an evolved or strengthened version of the original QUAD framework.
- Inclusion of more robust mechanisms for strategic cooperation and coordination among member countries.
- Increased emphasis on areas like cybersecurity, supply chain resilience, and climate change mitigation.

AUKUS (11:53 PM)

- AUKUS stands for Australia, United Kingdom, and United States Security Partnership.
- Announced in September 2021, AUKUS aims to enhance trilateral cooperation in defense and security.
- Key focus areas include technology sharing, particularly in the field of nuclear-powered submarines.
- It is seen as a response to shared concerns about China's growing military capabilities and assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific region.
- The partnership sparked controversy, particularly in relation to its impact on existing defense arrangements and non-proliferation commitments.
- AUKUS has led to increased strategic alignment and collaboration among the three member countries in areas such as intelligence-sharing and defense capabilities development.

The topic for the next class: Regional organization (SAARC and BIMSTEC)