

RETURNING TO QUAD: INDIA'S SEARCH FOR REGIONAL SECURITY

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Abstract: *Consisting of the US, India, Japan, and Australia, the Quad consultative forum emerged as a new multi-foreign policy formation in the Indo-Pacific. Described as a strategic partnership in the face of China's increasing expansionist policies, the Quad also explains India's foreign policy's strategic autonomy and pluralistic approaches. In recent years, India's actions to improve its strategic alliances against the expansionist states in the region within the framework of the liberal order brought the Quad back to the fore of activities aimed at limiting China's actions in the region. In this context, the primary purpose of the Quad to establish a strategic partnership stems from the desire to protect maritime interests. Ensuring the security of energy resources, free trade and navigation, disputes over the border and continental shelf, and economic-based disputes are the main reasons for bringing the Quad back to the agenda. While India's pluralistic foreign policy understanding and China's recent policy perception overlap, the conflicting environment in the global world order pushes China to an expansionist policy in the Indo-Pacific; India, on the other hand, is trying to balance China by establishing various alliances. Although the scale of the economic engagement of the US with countries party to the Quad is no more significant than China's, Quad 2.0 is now a structure where the state parties can take joint steps for security and strategic partnerships due to military interests and cultural ties from the past.*

Keywords: Quad, India, China, South Asia, Indo-Pacific, Regional, Security.

Rezumat: *Întorcerea la Quad: India în căutarea securității regionale. Format din SUA, India, Japonia și Australia, forumul consultativ Quad a apărut ca o nouă formațiune de politică externă multilaterală în bazinul Indo-Pacific. Descriș ca un parteneriat strategic în fața politicilor expansioniste în creștere ale Chinei, Quad explică, de asemenea, autonomia strategică și abordările pluraliste ale politicii externe a Indiei. În ultimii ani, acțiunile Indiei*

de îmbunătățire a alianțelor strategice împotriva statelor expansioniste, în cadrul ordinii liberale, au adus din nou Quad-ul în prim-planul activităților de limitare a acțiunilor din regiune ale Chinei. În acest context, scopul principal al Quad-ului, de stabilire a unui parteneriat strategic, provine din dorința de a proteja interesele maritime. Asigurarea securității resurselor energetice, comerțul liber și libertatea de navigație, disputele asupra granițe și platformei continentale, ca și disputele economice, sunt principalele motive pentru readucerea Quad-ului pe ordinea de zi. În timp ce înțelegerea pluralistă a politicii externe a Indiei și percepția recentă a politicii Chinei se suprapun, mediul conflictual din ordinea mondială globală împinge China către o politică expansionistă în Indo-Pacific; India, pe de altă parte, încearcă să echilibreze China prin stabilirea de diverse alianțe. Deși profunzimea angajării economice a SUA cu țările ce fac parte din Quad se desfășoară la o scară mai mică decât cu China, Quad 2.0 este acum o structură în care statele părți pot lua măsuri comune privind securitatea și parteneriatele strategice, datorită intereselor militare și a legăturilor lor culturale din trecut.

INTRODUCTION

The geopolitical and economic problems of the East have started to become the focus of attention as a set of strategic studies in the analysis and evaluation of global problems in the last two decades in globalizing world politics. Issues related to maritime dominance and regional power are now considered a side argument within the idea of globalization. The problems in the Indo-Pacific region have begun to evolve within this literary conjuncture in the period up to the present. Moreover, past regional conflicts have become a global problem in today's system. But, of course, the effects of the rapidly increasing international world debates and the 'Post-Network' Society, which has been rapidly developing since the 1990s, cannot be denied¹.

Moreover, the state's problems in the rapidly growing and developing Indo-Pacific can spread to different areas regarding conflicts or frictions. When regional problems and difficulties become a situation that states cannot cope with alone, the alliance concept increases the importance of solving interstate issues. This situation drags regional conflicts into global chaos.

The Quad formation, which initially emerged as a consultation center between India, the US, Japan, and Australia, aimed at the regular exchange of views on regional challenges and dealing with threats such as ocean emergencies and

¹ Yasin Caglar Kaya, Goktug Kiprizli, *Does Democratic peace Theory Genuinely Envision Global Peace? A Critical Approach*, in "Journal of International Studies", Vol. 15, 2019, p. 74.

piracy, is now a power group in the region to rein in China – turned into a workshop. In this case, China reiterated the “Asian NATO” rhetoric concerning the Quad². At that time, these perceptions of China were widespread even when the Quad group first started negotiations. Nowadays, the Quad is an entity that has regular official meetings, holds foreign ministerial-level talks, and is aimed at forming a bloc in the Indo-Pacific region. Although China’s reactions were not considered condescending and notable in this conjuncture, the primary purpose of the formation of this group was clearly to prevent China’s economic and military expansionism³. If issues such as Quad+ and Quad 3.0 are being discussed in official meetings today beyond Quad 2.0, it is undoubtedly because of the fear of imminent Chinese expansion in the countries party to this group⁴.

Considering today’s conjuncture, although China does not openly express its concerns about grouping, China’s adverse reaction against such groupings continues. China’s attitude towards protecting its national interests in the Indo-Pacific and the US’s efforts to establish superiority over China in this region seem to push the Quad and AUKUS⁵ from diplomacy to military integration in the current status quo. China’s recent rise in the maritime field and its desire to protect its regional interests also reveal the paradox of uncertainty in the final purpose of the Quad formation.

This article is structured into four parts. The first part outlines a typology of the return of the Quad within the framework of the new political and economic understanding in the Indo-Pacific. The second part elaborates on the rise and expansion of China that comes with China’s growing disproportionate power in the Indo-Pacific. The third part examines the background of India’s involvement in the Quad and India’s pursuit of security in the Indo-Pacific. The concluding section analyses the regional alliance’s economic, political, and military

² Mahima Duggal, *Quad as Asian NATO: A Practical Proposition?*, in “Multilateralism in the Indo-Pacific”, London, Routledge, 2022, p. 15.

³ Jagannath Panda, *Beijing’s ‘Asian NATO’ Maxim on Quad Is Structural*, in “Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA)”, 2019, <https://idsa.in/system/files/news/PacNet-Commentary-Beijing.pdf> (Accessed on 15.05.2023).

⁴ Kei Koga, *Japan and the Development of Quadrilateral Cooperation*, in “Pensamiento Propio”, 2021, p. 160.

⁵ AUKUS is a trilateral security partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, primarily focused on security and defense cooperation in the Indo-Pacific. It aims to enhance the capabilities of these countries and promote regional stability.

implications in the Quad context for all Indo-Pacific countries. The authors find that during the transition from Quad 1.0 to Quad 2.0, China's geopolitical and geoeconomic approach against the background of its rise and increasing expansion in the region pushed the countries that are party to the Quad to cooperate again in different dimensions. Analyzing these interactions between the Quad and China gives us a complete picture in explaining the balance between the political decision-making mechanisms of countries in the Indo-Pacific region revolving around the multidimensional international system, infrastructure investment, and regional balancing. In this context, the last section ends with some predictions about how this series of interactions will affect the Indo-Pacific security and economic order.

RETURNING TO QUAD

Quad Dialogue is a consultation mechanism specific to the Indo-Pacific region that was first launched in 2007 between Japan, the US, Australia, and India at the initiative of then-Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzo. The main goal of this dialogue was to create a meeting format for senior officials to talk about regional security issues and to evaluate the naval exercises and the strategic infrastructure deficiencies of these countries on a single table. The cooperation within the core group, formed during the joint intervention in the tsunami in 2004, came together again in 2007 and tried to unite the interests on a common denominator⁶. Japan's and India's approaches to this unification were especially relatively moderate then. Abe's speech before the Indian Parliament emphasized the connection between the Indian and the Pacific. Although the focus of Abe's speech was the importance of Japan-India relations, implementing seas of freedom and prosperity for the well-being of this region was mentioned⁷. At that time, this rhetoric could be understood as usual rhetoric for the two states in China's grip. But at that time, these visits also included the search for a strategy for the two regional powers that had problems with China in the region.

After the US implemented the "Pivot to Asia" strategy in 2011, targeting China in different areas and efforts to contain China made it essential to make the

⁶ Shinzo Abe, *MOFA: Speech by H.E. Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan, at the Parliament of the Republic of India 'Confluence of the Two Seas'*, 2007, in <https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/pmv0708/speech-2.html> (Accessed on 07.05.2023).

⁷ *Ibid.*

Quad functional later. Washington's attempts to form new alliances to balance Beijing reveals the importance of the concept of the "New Cold War" in this respect⁸. Washington, which pursues a policy of rapprochement with India as the country with the highest potential in balancing China, supported India's post-cold war nuclear armament policies⁹. Beijing closely followed its support. Afterwards, the US invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan increased the importance of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization in China. As a result of the US's search for an alliance in the Indo-Pacific, it also opened the door to China's attempts to form a new partnership with Russia and Pakistan. Until 2017, China's development of Pakistan's Gwadar Port and initiation of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Project, the China-Myanmar Economic Corridor, the typical Central Asian policies with Russia, and the port and transportation infrastructure ultimatums of China in South Asian states¹⁰. It is all about breaking the power of the existing alliance and taking control of the trade routes.

The Quad, which was almost re-established in 2017 and gained a more institutional identity because of then-President Donald Trump's harsh policies towards China, stated that the Quad's Indo-Pacific region should be "free and open" with a statement published at the end of the talks held in November 2017. It was stated that it was based on a consensus. This containment policy against China naturally expected a military alliance from the Quad formation from that time on. However, it is still too early to talk about the transformation of this alliance into a military structure. There are severe and problematic issues regarding the current Quad formation.

Firstly, in the traditional foreign policy of India, the largest country in the Quad in terms of population, procedures have been followed based on the non-aligned movement since its establishment. Notably, New Delhi, following a balanced policy and trying to develop the Make in India Innovation program¹¹,

⁸ Robert D. Kaplan, *A New Cold War Has Begun*, in "Foreign Policy", 2019, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/01/07/a-new-cold-war-has-begun> (Accessed on 05.05.2023).

⁹ Tanvi Madan, *Fateful Triangle: How China Shaped U.S.-India Relations During the Cold War*, Washington, D.C, Brookings Institution Press, 2020, p. 34.

¹⁰ Arzan Tarapore, *Zone Balancing: India and the Quad's New Strategic Logic*, in "International Affairs", Vol. 99, No. 1, p. 241, DOI: 10.1093/ia/iia281.

¹¹ Make in India is an initiative launched by India in 2014 with the aim of promoting India as an important investment destination and a global hub for manufacturing, design, and innovation. The program seeks to encourage both multinational and domestic companies to manufacture their products in India. It emphasizes the creation of job

entering such a formation will result in the risk of investment resources from China, where it receives the most FDI support¹². In addition, the dependence on Russia in the defense industry may not be welcomed by Russia in such a rapprochement, and it may also lead to pressure from the US for CAATSA¹³ sanctions in such an alliance relationship.

Secondly, a change must be made in Article 9 of its Constitution to enter such a formation in Japan. At the time, work on a change to this clause was initiated by Abe. But no conclusion was reached. On top of that, there is no national consensus on whether to change this article of the Constitution or whether such a study could be carried out in an environment of increasing tension when Abe was assassinated.

Thirdly, Australia has very close economic relations with China. Close ties with China may economically drag Australia into chaos due to its involvement in such a formation. Another relevant aspect is that China has been the country that has invested the most in Australia since its first formation¹⁴. In Australia, there are severe reactions regarding the negative steps taken against China and the moves towards rapprochement with the US. As a result, there will be no consensus for the Quad in Australia and Japan, which have strong democratic structures despite a possible alliance. Finally, the Quad has not yet established an institutional basis, content, and scope other than joint declarations and political statements. This makes it impossible to treat the Quad as a construct yet. Considering the argument that China has become a superpower by using its strengthening economy, military modernization moves, and free trade in place, in the future, after the formation of the Quad group, a part of the power balance in the region will be managed by an

opportunities, skill enhancement, and overall economic growth, thus contributing to the country's development and reducing its dependency on imports.

¹² Wooyeal Paik, Jae Jeok Park, *The Quad's Search for Non-Military Roles and China's Strategic Response: Minilateralism, Infrastructure Investment, and Regional Balancing*, in "Journal of Contemporary China", Vol. 30, 2021, No. 127, p. 41, DOI:10.1080/10670564.2020.1766908.

¹³ CAATSA stands for the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, which was signed into law in the United States in August 2017. It aims to deter these countries from engaging in activities that pose a threat to the national security of the United States and its allies.

¹⁴ Elena Collinson, *Australian Perspectives on the Belt and Road Initiative*, 2019, in <https://www.australiachinarelations.org/content/australian-perspectives-belt-and-road-initiative> (Accessed on 09.05.2023).

absolute authoritarian power¹⁵. In the joint statement published in September 2021, the principle for the Indo-Pacific region to be free and open was repeated; international law, freedom of navigation, the issue of solving problems by peaceful methods, and the rule of law are emphasized¹⁶. In today's world conjuncture, the Western bloc of the past forms the basis of the strategy for today's US. The adventures of the US–India Malabar Naval Exercise, which started in 1992, seem to take place with the Quad as of 2011 when the US has assumed a relationship of interest in this region and its new regional strategies¹⁷. But if there is no such dilemma as Australia's stepping back in 2008, Quad's security dialogue seems to be operational again today.

THE RISE AND EXPANSION OF CHINA

The cold war was a period when the parties involved did not hesitate to use all kinds of tools on the global scale to wear each other out. The USSR and the US, which took on a plan- and policy-determining role in all competitive environments, including the ideological ground, clashed with the surrounding countries rather than the global power struggle between them¹⁸. In addition, these two states were in serious cooperation in protecting their common interests with secret works. Of course, the biggest reason for this was that global actors had nuclear weapons.

While the policies of mutual balancing and deterrence between the US and the USSR continued, the field of struggle between them started to shift from Europe to Asia over time. The establishment of the People's Republic of China and

¹⁵ Raymond Kwun-Sun Lau, *The Rise and Fall of China's 'Peaceful Rise': Implications for US-China Geopolitical Competition in the Indo-Pacific*, in "Stosunki Międzynarodowe – International Relations", Vol. 2, 2022, No. 8, p. 8.

¹⁶ The White House, *Joint Statement from Quad Leaders*, 2021, in <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/09/24/joint-statement-from-quad-leaders/> (Accessed on 05.05.2023).

¹⁷ Kate Sullivan De Estrada, *India and Order Transition in the Indo-Pacific: Resisting the Quad as a 'Security Community'*, in "The Pacific Review", Vol. 36, 2023, No. 2, p. 386, DOI:10.1080/09512748.2022.2160792.

¹⁸ Cengiz Topel Mermer, *QUAD'in Güney Pasifik'teki Tamamlayıcı Halkası; AUKUS [QUAD's Companion Ring in the South Pacific; AUKUS]*, in "Türk Asya Stratejik Arastirmalar Merkezi", 2022, in https://tasam.org/tr-TR/Icerik/70115/quadin_guney_pasifikteki_tamamlayici_halkasi_aucus (Accessed on 08.05.2023).

the policy of importing regimes to neighboring countries triggered countermeasures by the US and its allies. The rivalry between the two poles extended to the South Pacific geography. During this period, the main parameter that the western side could not understand was the pressure on China created by the USSR's punishment of allied states. According to the analyses of that period, this situation was not understood until the 1970s. Realizing there was no unity between the USSR and China, the West started to develop a policy of dividing the USSR and China after this period¹⁹. After Kissinger's contact with China through Pakistan and diplomatic activities, they began cooperating with China against the USSR covertly. This rapprochement can be accepted as the end of the USSR and the first step of China as a new superpower on the world stage. As a result of this development, which was the first significant step that brought forth the end of the cold war, both bloc leaders made a strategic mistake²⁰. The effort of the USSR to confine China within itself and the unofficial support of the US for China marked the beginning of the end of the cold war. This situation made the USSR question the existence of its hegemony in the world and itself. On top of that, it resulted in China's expansionist policies, threatened the US in many areas, and opened the doors to a new threat for the next 20–30 years of the US.

Another leap forward in China's development is the effort to reform the Chinese economy and functionalize its bureaucratic administration. Deng Xiaoping's border problems, territorial claims, and organizational structure in the administrative system were a policy aimed at breaking the pressures of the international system to strengthen China's economy²¹. China's rise as the global manufacturing hub can be attributed to its strategic utilization of soft power policies, which have enabled it to foster strong economic ties and partnerships with various countries. By employing a combination of economic incentives, cultural diplomacy, and international aid programs, China has effectively expanded its influence and strengthened its position in the global market²². The

¹⁹ Aaron L. Freidberg, *The Growing Rivalry Between America and China and the Future of Globalization*, in "Texas National Security Review", Vol. 5, 2022, No. 1, p. 101, DOI:10.15781/BOSB-PY52.

²⁰ Zaki Laidi, *Rethinking Post-Cold War*, in "Economic and Political Weekly", Vol. 29, No. 32, 1994, p. 2068.

²¹ Kalpit A. Mankikar, *Preserving National Security, the Xi Jinping Way*, in "Observer Research Foundation (ORF)", New Delhi, 2021, p. 11, <https://www.orfonline.org/research/preserving-national-security-the-xi-jinping-way/> (Accessed on 07.05.2023).

²² Mammadli, Rasim, and Kalfaoglu, Rabia, *BRICS in the Arctic: The Member-States' Interests and the Group's Disregard*, in "Contemporary Chinese Political Economy and Strategic

Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), for instance, stands as a prominent example of China's soft power initiatives, as it aims to promote economic cooperation and connectivity across Asia, Africa, and Europe. Additionally, China's emphasis on building robust trade relationships through initiatives like the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and various bilateral trade agreements have further enhanced its status as a pivotal player in the global economy.

Moreover, China's role as the primary production base for the world's leading corporations can be attributed not only to its soft power strategies but also to the active involvement and investment of Western nations. Western companies, attracted by China's low-cost labor and vast consumer market, have heavily invested in China, effectively contributing to its transformation into the world's manufacturing powerhouse²³. This symbiotic relationship between China and the West has not only fueled China's economic growth but it has also shaped the dynamics of global trade and investment, leading to a complex interdependence that continues to influence the global economic landscape. The most considerable success of this production center was undoubtedly China's refraining from declaring its global targets openly, which it had applied to international politics since the 1970s²⁴. When it became clear that China was combining its economic gains with military gains, India and the United States began to get closer. So they sought an alliance in a possible crisis. The US's "Pivot to Asia" strategy starts with these convergences. China considers this strategy a move to revive the concept of the "New Cold War"²⁵.

Over the last decade, China has emerged as a global hegemonic power. The "Pivot to Asia" strategy's main objective was to maintain the US's influence in the Indo-Pacific geography. This was a development that China had already expected. China has been preparing to compete with the US for a long time. Chinese President Xi's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and bilateral alliances and programs with other states to revive the silk road can be evaluated. China's innovation

Relations", Vol. 7, 2021, No.1, p. 192.

²³ Aydin Gulsen, Yüce Müge, *China's Hard Power versus Soft Power in Central Asia: An Analysis of the One Belt One Road Initiative as a Soft Power Instrument*, in "Caucasus International", Vol. 8, 2018, p. 67.

²⁴ Goktug Kiprizli, Seçkin Köstem, *The Onset of BRICS Cooperation on Climate Change: Material Change, Ideational Convergence and the Road to Copenhagen 2009*, in "Third World Quarterly", Vol. 44, 2023, No. 6, p. 1201, DOI:10.1080/01436597.2023.2177632.

²⁵ Mrityika Guha Sarkar, *China and QUAD 2.0: Between Response and Regional Construct*, in "Maritime Affairs: Journal of the National Maritime Foundation of India", Vol. 16, 2020, No. 1, p. 115, DOI: 10.1080/09733159.2020.1794526.

program beyond this region includes many global plans, from railways to economic corridors, from oil and gas pipelines to new port constructions²⁶. In this context, the China–Pakistan economic corridor and the China–Myanmar Economic Corridor, jointly run with Pakistan, constitute this program’s two most vital structures. From the military base in Djibouti to its discourses on the South China Sea, Taiwan, and India, China, which has become more aggressive in the military field, does not neglect use of military force in everything it plans²⁷. This aggressive attitude of China’s also worries the US and all the countries in Indo-Pacific. The creation of the Quad, or rather its revival, is a product of this aggression. As a matter of fact, because of this uneasiness, Quad discussions started today. South Korea, Vietnam, and the Philippines are also mentioned in the Indo-Pacific²⁸.

The US seem to be aware that it is a little late against China, which is planning to become a dominant military power in the Indian Ocean to protect its commercial interests and hegemony. The US, which think that China’s rapid rise will threaten its interests in the medium and long term, want to balance the problem with China over the South China Sea by means of the Quad again. As a result of China’s attitude and rhetoric that does not comply with international law, the relations between the two countries gradually resumed, increasing the number of anti-Chinese views in Australia. Alternatively, China’s starting to be active in economic projects in countries neighboring India within the scope of its policy of containment of India and even starting to benefit from some of Pakistan’s military ports threatening India the most. Considering that China has ensured energy security and strengthened its military institutions by the economic projects it has achieved in other countries in the area, the impression that all these generalizations lie within the scope of the policy of containing India further strengthens its argument. This situation is reflected in the Quad, which can be an alliance that supports this expansionism. When the member states of the Quad saw China’s military and economic gains as an existential threat to them, they felt obliged to establish security mechanisms against China²⁹. Still, today, every state

²⁶ Kalim Siddiqui, *One Belt and One Road, China’s Massive Infrastructure Project to Boost Trade and Economy: An Overview*, in “International Critical Thought”, Vol. 9, 2019, No. 2, p. 216, DOI: 10.1080/21598282.2019.1613921.

²⁷ Mankikar, *Preserving National Security, the Xi Jinping Way...*, p. 11.

²⁸ Bhubhindar Singh, *Japan’s Responses to China’s Rise: Soft Balancing in Southeast Asia*, in “Asian Security”, Vol. 18, 2022, No. 1, p. 12, DOI: 10.1080/14799855.2021.1942849.

²⁹ Jennifer Lind, *Asia’s Other Revisionist Power*, in “Foreign Affairs”, 2017, [https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/asia/2017-02-13/asias-other-revisionist-](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/asia/2017-02-13/asias-other-revisionist)

that has problems with China in the Indo-Pacific is a party in this formation against China. Therefore, attempts to develop strategies take place. In this context, the US's global economic and military system, which withdraws from the Middle East, will be concentrated on the Indo-Pacific³⁰.

INDIA'S SEARCH FOR REGIONAL SECURITY

Despite attempts to give the impression that the Quad is not an open move against China, India's view of the Quad is a calculated strategic move to protect its interests in the Indo-Pacific against China's maritime ambitions. Essentially, India's involvement in the Quad strengthens China's foreign policy reach in response to China's volatile stance that challenges India's strategic ambitions³¹. From this perspective, it can be expressed as a plural foreign policy strategy for the Quad to engage more carefully with a dominant power structure led by the United States to eventually gain superiority over an alternative arrangement, also known as India's liberal power structure. The so-called Quad 1.0 formation did not have a military meaning at that time but there was a suggestion that it would be a regional consultation forum³². However, China regarded this situation as "Asia's NATO" at that time. This situation resulted in China having an independent foreign policy and seeing India as a pro-American country. J. Panda explains this situation because China is following an erroneous foreign policy that serves the interests of the West³³.

This Quad group gathered again in Manila in November 2017; instead of making a joint statement due to the changing conjuncture of the period, they made statements showing how different their strategic goals and regional preferences were from each other³⁴. This case indicated that Quad 2.0 was also just a consultation forum. The common point of these press releases is related to the security

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³⁰ Rory Medcalf, *Reimagining Asia: From Asia-Pacific to Indo-Pacific*, 2015, in <https://theasanforum.org/reimagining-asia-from-asia-pacific-to-indo-pacific/> (Accessed on 13.05.2023).

³¹ Rahul Roy-Chaudhury, Kate Sullivan de Estrada, *India, the Indo-Pacific and the Quad*, in "Survival", Vol. 60, 2018, No. 3, p. 189, DOI: 10.1080/00396338.2018.1470773.

³² Lau, *The Rise and Fall of China's 'Peaceful Rise' ...*, p. 13.

³³ Jagannath Panda, *India's Call on China in the Quad: A Strategic Arch between Liberal and Alternative Structures*, in "Rising Powers Quarterly", Vol. 3, 2018, No. 2, p. 90.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

problems created by terrorism and nuclear programs; there is hardly any common consensus. The only issue agreed upon was the preservation of the rule-based order. While the statements of the US, Japan, and Australia were related to the development of maritime security and freedom of navigation following international law, India made more cautious statements³⁵. Making a statement with a focus on terrorism and the expansionism of North Korea, India emphasized the importance of the freedom of the Indo-Pacific. Although India's statements matched those made by other states about inclusion, there were constructive statements that the ideas about the Quad were not contrary to China's direct interests³⁶. India's inclusiveness issue also points to its advocacy of a "free and open" Indo-Pacific. Although India is worried about a strong Chinese navy in Indo-Pacific, it does not exclude the presence of China in the area. Modi's speech in the Shangri-La dialogue in 2018 was in this vein again. All of these statements clearly articulate India's vision of the Indo-Pacific. In addition, considering that Russia and China follow standard policies, it may be concluded that China and Russia will collaborate against other states in the Indo-Pacific³⁷. In this case, India will create a theoretical opposition to China's infrastructure projects. Although India will not participate in the Indo-Pacific Business Forum-2023, it implicitly supports this argument.

What kind of expectations India has of Quad is still not fully explained. Indeed, India's endorsement of Quad 2.0 brings forth a debate as to whether India is abandoning its traditional non-alignment foreign policy to adopt a strategy that openly supports a US-led liberal structure³⁸. In this context, it is evident that India sees Quad 2.0 as a strategic structure against China; however, India's main impasse in the Indo-Pacific is the dilemma between its economic relations with China and the fact that its neighbor China is a threat to its territory. India's primary purpose in increasing its relations with the countries that have been parties to the Quad for a long time is to grow regional cooperation and develop a counter strategy as a deterrent to diplomatic collaboration on all issues it sees as a threat to itself. Other parties to the Quad see India as a strategic pillar of the Indo-Pacific³⁹. Diplomatic attitudes such as Japan's inclusion of India in its strategic

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

³⁶ Jennifer Lind, *Asia's Other Revisionist Power...*

³⁷ Igor Denisov et al., *Russia, China, and the Concept of Indo-Pacific*, in "Journal of Eurasian Studies", Vol. 12, 2021, No. 1, p. 80, DOI: 10.1177/1879366521999899.

³⁸ Panda, *India's Call on China in the Quad...*, p. 84.

³⁹ Darshana M. Baruah, *India in the Indo-Pacific: New Delhi's Theater of Opportunity*, in "Carnegie Endowment for International Peace", 2020, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2020/06/30/india-in-indo-pacific-new-delhi-s->

partnerships with this region and the US's opening of a separate parenthesis for India in the Indo-Pacific phenomenon reveal the importance of these attitudes and evaluations. In this context, other parties to the Quad have high expectations for India to play a constructive and vital role in the Quad.

Although there are various analyses and comments regarding the fact that China does not have any general strategy regarding the Indian Ocean⁴⁰, China has long been working to strengthen its contacts with the strategic and geographically essential states in the region to ensure energy security. Moreover, China's commercial relations with the countries that are party to the Quad are even higher than the trade volume of the countries that are party to the Quad. Even this situation is a great trump card in China's hands against the states that have established a strategic partnership with itself. Although India adopted the Quad to create a balance element in Indo-Pacific, China's policies to expand its overseas trade network and these policies' efforts to strengthen its military power with ports it bought from other states, China's diplomatic and economic activities in the Indo-Pacific, as well as its naval force, are superior to any general interest in the Quad's states, including divers cooperation⁴².

India has made many breakthroughs in its maritime strategies in recent years. While strengthening the connection of its ports with commercial regions with the SAGAR project within the scope of the Make in India program, it went on the path of developing its economic basin by entering various bilateral dialogues, especially with the states in Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, through varied intercontinental bilateral cooperation. Another expectation of India regarding the Quad is to increase investment in the country by including the countries party to the Quad in these development programs and to take a precaution against Chinese expansionism on its shores by strengthening bilateral security dialogues with

theater-of-opportunity-pub-82205 (Accessed on 20.10.2023).

⁴⁰ Kondapalli, Srikanth, *China's Evolving Naval Presence in the Indian Ocean Region: An Indian Perspective*, in David Brewster (ed.), *India and China at Sea: Competition for Naval Dominance in the Indian Ocean*, New Delhi, Oxford Academic, 2018, DOI:10.1093/oso/9780199479337.003.0007.

⁴¹ Megal Jahanzaib, Mirza Muhammad Nadeem, *String of Pearls and Necklace of Diamonds: Sino-India Geo-Strategic Competition in the Indian Ocean*, in "Asia-Pacific", Vol. 40, 2022, pp.21–41, DOI: 10.47781/asia-pacific.vol40.Iss0.5862.

⁴² Ashok Rai, *Quadrilateral Security Dialogue 2 (Quad 2.0) – a Credible Strategic Construct or Mere 'Foam in the Ocean'?*, in "Maritime Affairs: Journal of the National Maritime Foundation of India", Vol. 14, 2018, No. 2, p. 140, DOI:10.1080/09733159.2019.1572260.

these countries⁴³. However, how India will position itself in this formation and whether it will take a side against China is directly related to how aggressive a policy China will follow in Indo-Pacific.

THE YIELDS OF REGIONAL ALLIANCES

When the member states of the Quad met again in November 2017, it was a widely mentioned issue among the analyses that, although the current status gave the impression of a return to the Quad, not much was done to improve cooperation among themselves. The parties to the Quad were already continuing to develop bilateral and tripartite relations to coordinate their policies toward the Indo-Pacific⁴⁴. There were also regional differences of opinion on specific issues, such as India's opposition to Australian participation in the Malabar exercises⁴⁵.

The Quad formation was needed mainly cyclically in connection with the evolution of the great power rivalry between China and the United States over the past two decades. Particularly in the last 15 years, with China's emergence as a global superpower and severe competitor to dethrone the US, the Quad countries were also concerned about their security paradigms⁴⁶. In the last two decades, China's tripling of purchasing parity, leaving the US behind, and the concern that US officials will lag behind China in defense modernization have pushed the US to take some measures to rein in China in the global arena. Moreover, China's investments and innovations in the defense industry are not limited to modernization. With the skills China has acquired in various levels and tools, such as integrated air defense strategies in the defense industry, conventional ballistic missiles, and unique software systems in cyber technology⁴⁷, its studies on

⁴³ Degang Sun and Yahia H. Zoubir, *Securing China's 'Latent Power': The Dragon's Anchorage in Djibouti*, in "Journal of Contemporary China", Vol. 30, 2021, No. 130, p. 681, DOI: 10.1080/10670564.2020.1852734.

⁴⁴ Jagannath Panda, *India, the Blue Dot Network, and the 'Quad Plus' Calculus*, in "Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs", Vol. 3, 2020, No. 3, p. 7.

⁴⁵ Harsh V. Pant and Anant Singh Mann, *India's Malabar Dilemma*, in "Issue Brief of Observer Research Foundation (ORF)", 2020, p. 4, https://www.orfonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/ORF_IssueBrief_393_Malabar.pdf (Accessed on 05.05.2023).

⁴⁶ Lau, *The Rise and Fall of China's 'Peaceful Rise...*, p. 11.

⁴⁷ Christian Ploberger, *One Belt, One Road - China's New Grand Strategy*, in "Journal of Chinese Economic and Business Studies", Vol. 15, No. 3, 2017, p. 301, DOI:10.1080/14765284.2017.1346922.

regional security have reached levels that seriously threaten the safety of the states. In this case, the United States naturally pushed their allies in the Indo-Pacific to work to make it a deterrent against China in the field of defense. That is what the Quad means to the US.

The United States are now aware of the dangers. Through its Indo-Pacific strategy, it has attempted to create a comprehensive entity covering the economic, military, and diplomatic fields. In this context, the goals of the US strategy are to ensure that the Indo-Pacific region, which imagines the Indian and Pacific oceans as a single system, remain "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)" to flight and trade for all countries⁴⁸. The main argument for achieving this goal is to respect the law and not be under the revisionist domination of a single power. In this US-led effort to defend the global order, the Trump administration has sought to strengthen the Quad coalition with Japan, India, and Australia. After the Covid period, this was further extended, and a new policy was developed called Quad Plus⁴⁹. From the 2018 national defense strategy of the Trump administration, the US call China a strategic competitor to become a hegemonic power in the Indo-Pacific in the near term and threaten US interests. With the US taking an increasingly aggressive stance against China, the concept of the "New Cold War" began to be mentioned a lot in the specialized literature⁵⁰. During the pandemic, Trump's "Chinese Virus" slogan was not a coincidence but timing. Twenty years ago, the Bush administration referred to China as a virus⁵¹. Therefore, although the discourses have changed, the goal of the regional plan is to ally a precaution against Chinese expansionism.

⁴⁸ David Vergun, *Freedom of Navigation in South China Sea Critical to Prosperity, Says Indo-Pacific Commander*, in "U.S. Department of Defense", 2019, <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/2025105/freedom-of-navigation-in-south-china-sea-critical-to-prosperity-says-indo-pacif/> (Accessed on 05.05.2023).

⁴⁹ Indrani Bagchi, *Focus on Covid in Quad Plus Meet*, in "The Times of India", 2020, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/jaishankar-discusses-covid-19-with-counterparts-in-us-5-other-countries/articleshow/75702875.cms> (Accessed on 05.05.2023).

⁵⁰ Rob Huebert, *A New Cold War in the Arctic?! The Old One Never Ended!*, in "Arctic year book", 2019, <https://arcticyearbook.com/arctic-yearbook/2019/2019-commentaries/325-a-new-cold-war-in-the-arctic-the-old-one-never-ended> (Accessed on 05.05.2023).

⁵¹ *George W. Bush Warned of Not Preparing for Pandemic in 2005*, ABC News, 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=spcj6KUr4aA> (Accessed on 21.10.2023).

As one of the few major powers that did not openly support the US's framework for an alliance bringing together Australia and Japan, India has been an active partner in the Quad process. More importantly, India was the country that diplomatically supported the Quad the most, with the perception of its being the putative alliance of like-minded countries mainly in the Indo-Pacific. Along with the meetings held at the level of foreign ministers during the pandemic, there have been many discussions on mutual diplomatic cooperation, creating a consultative understanding channel and, more importantly, increasing collaboration⁵². In this case, this explains that despite the reluctance to take sides with the Quad, India risks incurring economic losses. However, this risk has not occurred. On the contrary, India has concluded many technology transfer settlements even during the negotiation stages of this formation⁵³.

For Japan, the Quad has been evaluated along different dimensions over the past decade. After the failure of Quad 1.0, the idea of such a grouping was in the background of Japan's foreign policy agenda until 2012⁵⁴. There is a consensus that this is due mainly to government changes in the country. Abe's article titled "Asia's Diamond of Democratic Security" was published after he regained the prime ministership in 2012⁵⁵. The claims about resources, navigation, and freedom of flight against China's assertive stance in the maritime field required the member countries of the Quad to come together again and define a strategy in the Indo-Pacific. Although Abe discovered Chinese expansionism earlier than other states, his search for an alliance was met after about five years. Of course, before this process, it had been rooted in the unsuccessful struggles of Southeast Asian states for resources against China's expansionist policies. After the tension with China following Japan's nationalization of Senakaus in 2012, Abe once again started working on developing cooperation with the countries that are party to the Quad⁵⁶. He tried to prepare the infrastructure by establishing bilateral and

⁵² Zongyou Wei, *The Evolution of the 'QUAD': Driving Forces, Impacts, and Prospects*, in "China International Strategy Review", Vol. 4, 2022, No. 2, p. 295, DOI: 10.1007/s42533-022-00119-w.

⁵³ Indrani Bagchi, *Focus on Covid in Quad Plus Meet...*

⁵⁴ Daniel Flitton, *Who Really Killed the Quad 1.0?*, in "The Interpreter", 02.06.2020, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/who-really-killed-quad-10>, (Accessed on 05.05.2023).

⁵⁵ Shinzō Abe, *Asia's Democratic Security Diamond*, in "Project Syndicate", 2012, <https://www.project-syndicate.org/magazine/a-strategic-alliance-for-japan-and-india-by-shinzo-abe> (Accessed on 05.05.2023).

⁵⁶ Kei Koga, *The Rise of China and Japan's Balancing Strategy: Critical Junctures and Policy*

trilateral dialogues with the US, India, and Australia so that Japan could make these strategic networks multilateral. Four years after the Abe government took office, the strategic landscape in East Asia changed dramatically. The growing concerns of the Japanese government, the increasing pressure from the BRI, and the subsequent economic destruction have also necessitated Japan's regional cooperation⁵⁷.

Australia, on the other hand, can be described as the most reluctant ring of the Quad. Australia has long had very close commercial, cultural, and economic relations with the US. Even though they had very close ties with China during the Quad negotiations, they decided to freeze the process in the first phase of the Quad upon China's criticism of the Quad as "Asian NATO" and the criticism of the increasing attitudes towards China in Australia⁵⁸. Even if the Quad is considered a commercial and economic structure today, it is evident that Australia's biggest allies will still be Japan and India⁵⁹. For example, within the scope of the Japan–Australia Economic Corridor, Japan's FDI seems to increase exponentially in the future. Japan has critical investments in India's technology, infrastructure, and industrial sectors. With the integration of Australia into the Sagar Mala project in 2020, the dependency on China for the supply chain was also reduced. In addition, given India's action-oriented security and growth initiatives, the trade volume between Australia and India has exceeded \$22 billion recently. Australia is also present in all tripartite table meetings formed by India⁶⁰. In short, India's foreign policy is focused on choosing Australia as a partner in these regional policies. But Australia doesn't put all its eggs in one basket for various reasons⁶¹. The first of these reasons is its very close trade relations with China. Secondly, China is active in almost all of Australia's domestic markets. All 5G investments come from China.

Shifts in the 2010s, in "Journal of Contemporary China", Vol. 25, 2016, No. 101, p. 780, DOI: 10.1080/10670564.2016.1160520.

⁵⁷ Brendon J. Cannon, Ash Rossiter, *Locating the Quad: Informality, Institutional Flexibility, and Future Alignment in the Indo-Pacific*, in "International Politics", 2022, p. 5, DOI: 10.1057/s41311-022-00383-y.

⁵⁸ Sarkar, *China and QUAD 2.0...*, p. 121.

⁵⁹ Sullivan De Estrada, *India and Order Transition in the Indo-Pacific...*, p. 379.

⁶⁰ David Walton, *Australia and the Quad*, in "East Asian Policy", Vol. 14, 2022, No. 1, p. 40, DOI: 10.1142/S1793930522000034.

⁶¹ Henry Storey, *Why Australia Shouldn't Put All Its Eggs in the Quad Basket*, in "The Interpreter", 2022, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/why-australia-shouldn-t-put-all-its-eggs-quad-basket> (Accessed on 01.06.2023).

The Huawei company is building the foundation of the entire national infrastructure technology⁶². Moreover, this situation severely pressures the Australian government, which is a vulnerability for Australia. The main objective of Australia's becoming a party to the Quad was to try to suppress China commercially⁶³.

Thirdly, considering Australia is the country that is farthest from the war in the current system, it is about being in a military formation for no reason in a possible alliance, in its integrity, when there is no danger. In this case, a threat element will inevitably be pulled over them. Against Quad, however, Australia has a different perspective. While other states are directly involved in the problems in Indo-Pacific, Australia is reluctant to prioritize these issues as it is under the umbrella of influence due to themselves.

Finally, a key question mark for Australia is the possible impact of the tripartite security arrangement known in the region as AUKUS on Australia's role in the Quad. AUKUS is broadly a military and technological advancement plan that encompasses Australia's mechanisms for procuring nuclear-powered submarines and explicitly intensifies Australia's deterrence capability in the face of the growing dangers of Chinese naval power⁶⁴. The problem here is not the structure of AUKUS but the danger of the Quad evolving into such a structure. Indeed, AUKUS is founded on the same ideals as Quad⁶⁵. So increasing the number of mini-sided engagements designed to complement each other with a comparable sense of purpose means bringing more countries under one concerned roof to stabilize and deter China.

The initial reactions from the state parties to the formation process of Quad 2.0 revolved around the need for greater policy coordination by understanding the strategic position of the power of the member states. Also, while Australia, Japan, and the USA expressed their willingness to continue the Quad in the first place, India remained silent about its format and continuity⁶⁶. In addition, even when the free and open Indo-Pacific term is used again by Australia and India in the first place, it does not make sense in terms of their policy, understanding that they would be involved in such a formation in the military and technical field, even though they did not encounter any terminological technical problems⁶⁷. Moreover,

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ Walton, *Australia and the Quad...*, p. 41.

⁶⁴ Shakthi De Silva, *Quad 2.0: Australia's Reaction to the 'China Threat,'* in "Journal of Strategic and Global Studies", Vol. 6, 2023, No. 1, p. 17, DOI: 10.7454/jsjgs.v6i1.1103.

⁶⁵ Walton, *Australia and the Quad...*, p. 45.

⁶⁶ Kei Koga, *Japan and the Development of Quadrilateral Cooperation...*, p. 171.

⁶⁷ Tanvi Madan, *The Quad as a Security Actor*, in "Asia Policy", Vol. 29, No. 4, 2022, p. 52, DOI: 10.1353/asp.2022.0065.

the past Quad has already begun to be referred to by terms such as Quad Plus, Quad 3.0. With the resulting synergy, it is of vital importance to the security architecture of the Indo-Pacific. The idea of such a multi-faceted expansion of the Quad will be realized largely when like-minded countries adopt this vision.

CONCLUSIONS

The Quad's effort to strengthen alliances in the Indo-Pacific region has increased over the past few years. It pushes China, which is rising and increasing the expansionism of the four countries, to create multiple mini-sided platforms to constrain it in both security and economic dimensions. China's decision-makers and analysts are also aware of this situation. China is aware that in the case of Quad 2.0 and Quad 3.0 in the future, there will be severe blocking in Indo-Pacific. This blocking will hinder China's plans within the framework of BRI programs economically and militarily. Conversely, the state parties in the Quad intend to make the Quad more functional in various agendas to collectively counter China's military and economic power in a new formation with the experience China gained in the past coalition with Quad 2.0. In this respect, this Quad may turn into a configuration like Quad 3.0 in the future.

The authors examined the efforts of the Quad countries to balance China with mini-lateral coordination in the Indo-Pacific region in the context of the dangers posed by the evolution of Chinese expansionism from the past to the present. But, of course, such a formation is not strategically isolated and independent; however, in the context of the US–Chinese rivalry in the Indo-Pacific, the intensifying economic war due to this situation pushes China to take more cautious and sharper steps against the Quad. In this regard, while China uses the divide-and-rule tactic, it also tries to hinder the Quad's development by improving its bilateral trade relations with these countries, either by coercion or menace. While examining China's relations with other states, it is necessary to consider China's debt trap diplomacy by assuming that while establishing various relations against the Quad, at the same time, it tries to create mini and multilateral platforms with other states in Indo-Pacific. Various cooperation and strategic alliances with other states in the Indo-Pacific are also a result of these policies. China's ultimate suppression policy on Sri Lanka and its economic corridors up to the countries party to the Arabian Sea in the context of China–Pakistan are steps taken in line with China's aim to counter the Quad with alternative sources and means to BRI.

So, how does the re-emergence of Quad 2.0 under the leadership of the US and the increasing oppressive influence of China in the region affect the order in the Indo-Pacific? Three scenarios can be suggested for the following periods. First, the Quad's non-military cooperation could result in China being labeled as a military challenge to the US regional rule-based order in the coming years. This situation justifies the perception that China has created Quad 2.0, even Quad 3.0, to limit itself. From a realist paradigm, the vision of hegemonic competition and even non-military issues will accelerate the cooperation developed in Quad 2.0. Secondly, it will result in China's suppression of other states in the region to increase its influence; on the other hand, developing its economic relations with Japan, Australia, and India will deter this formation economically so that it should not pose a danger to itself through mini and multilateral economic cooperation. The reaction of the public in Australia to Quad 2.0, the changes in the expectations of the Japanese public about the Quad after Abe's assassination, the efforts to increase its effectiveness in the BRICS and Shanghai Cooperation Organization in India, China's efforts in the countries that are party to the Quad suggest that China might use its economic power to destabilize in the future. China's broader economic relations with these states than those of the the USA also support this argument. The last scenario is related to China's suppression of possible parties to Quad 3.0, dragging the current order into an environment of conflict and, in this way, its effort to suppress the Quad. The Taiwanese attitudes toward China and the US almost brought about a hot war. In the context of the BRI, China's economic corridors stretching from Kuala Lumpur to Jakarta also endanger the trade routes of the state parties to Quad 2.0. A tense environment is also developing in the context of the Kashmir issue between India and Pakistan. In the event of a possible conflict in the future, the parties in Quad 2.0 being involved in such a conflict may push China and other states in the region to have disagreements with the countries that are parties to Quad 2.0. A more collaborative order emerges in the first two scenarios, but the last scenario may further strain the current political environment.

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