



Hope from the New Quad

This article is based on “[A collaborative tech vision for US, UAE, Israel and India](#)” which was published in the Indian Express on 19/11/2021. It talks about the new alliance of India, USA, UAE and Israel which is being termed as the ‘New Quad’ and how technology is the most important sector where the four can cooperate.

The recent meeting between the **foreign ministers of India, the US, Israel, and the UAE** has set foreign policy circles in India abuzz with talks of the potential emergence of another quadrilateral grouping being termed by analysts as a “[New Quad](#)”.

Amongst all the issues discussed, the **technology dimension of this partnership promises a far greater potential for collaboration**. Each country with its unique advantages in science and technology, innovation and start-ups can make a significant contribution to advance shared technological goals.

Working together in the field of technological developments makes it imperative for the US, Israel, UAE, and India to strengthen their newly established cooperation.

Cooperation within the ‘Other Quad’

- **Recent Israel-UAE Collabs:** Recently, Israel and UAE’s **startup sectors signed a deal to collaborate on fintech** and digital security.
 - The agreement between **Start-Up Nation Central**, an Israeli non-profit that connects the tech ecosystem, and **Dubai International Financial Centre**, the UAE’s financial hub, will create regulatory sandboxes and accelerators for start-ups and provide them with market access opportunities.
 - The signing of the [Abraham Accords](#) in 2020 has resulted in **multiple collaborative projects between Israel and the UAE**.
- **India’s Collaboration with UAE and Israel:** India and the US have been separately working with the two countries on multiple projects.
 - In May 2021, the Israel-based company Ecoppia, that specialises in robotic solar cleaning technology, **signed an agreement to utilise its manufacturing facility in India** for a project in the UAE — an initiative supported by the International Federation of Indo-Israel Chambers of Commerce.
 - Israel, the UAE and the US are also **collaborating on water and energy projects**.
- **Efforts in Quantum Technology:** Technology Innovation Institute of Abu Dhabi is building the **UAE’s first quantum computer**.
 - Israel and the US have **made research on quantum technology a priority** by allocating \$91 million and \$1.2 billion respectively to this sector.
 - Tech giants IBM and Google have already achieved breakthroughs through their quantum computers.
 - India is also fast catching up through its **National Mission on Quantum Technologies and Applications** and joining hands with countries like France to work on this technology.

Challenges

- **China's Increasing Technological Advancement and Role in West Asia:** By collaborating with Russia, and domestic flagship initiatives like “**Made in China 2025**”, Beijing has **pursued emerging technologies and successfully reduced the capability gap with Washington**. In some cases, it has, in fact, attained a competitive advantage
 - China in the recent years, has **increasingly assisted a number of [India's partners in West Asia](#)** in infrastructure, connectivity and technology related projects.
 - UAE was one of the first countries that got Huawei's (A Chinese MNC) assistance for its **5g** project.
- **Solo National Effort, Not Enough:** With the breakneck speed of technological advancement, **a solo national effort, made by even a global power like the USA**, in developing and adopting these transformative technologies **will not lead to optimal results**.
 - The **US, despite being the world's largest spender** on defence technology R&D, **no longer enjoys the absolute technological lead it earlier had**.

Way Forward

- **Opportunities for India's Tech-Hubs:** Given the recent synergies in the innovation and startup sector, it is logical that the “**new Quad**” **works towards tech-based collaboration**.
 - From the Indian perspective, such partnerships can **leverage US's venture capital funding, Israel's close-knit organic linkages** between start-ups, industry, and academia, and **UAE's funding and focus on innovation**.
 - Adding to these, **Bengaluru and potentially Hyderabad can add opportunities for scaling up** and manufacturing as they have a vibrant technology base with multiple defence public sector units and research establishments, private sector companies and several startups.
- **Major Technologies for Collaboration:** The agenda for the new Quad's technology cooperation can begin by selecting three technologies, **quantum science, blockchain, and 3D printing**.
 - These transformative technologies **offer exciting applications for encrypted communications, cryptography, aerospace engineering, and manufacturing**.
 - The startup community in the US, Israel and the UAE have already reached an advanced R&D stage providing an **opportunity for India to build expertise and offer the scale to the development** and applications of these technologies.
 - Israel has taken the lead in manufacturing about 40% of 3D printers worldwide and a Dubai based company has emerged as a pioneer in 3D printing in the region.
 - India, in contrast, has been slow in getting onto the 3D printing bandwagon but it can certainly benefit from the expertise of the US, Israel and the UAE.
- **Technology Cooperation to Assist in Other Areas:** Likewise in blockchain, India and the UAE can **leverage the American and Israeli expertise in cyber and cryptography** to craft customised **applications for use in banking, fintech and trade financing**.
 - This can contribute to reducing administration and transaction costs.
 - Moreover, their dual-use nature offers the **potential to give a technological edge to the four countries' militaries**.
 - This, in turn, can **add the security cooperation element** to the grouping's agenda.

Conclusion

- Technology-based partnerships seem to be the current trend, with many like-minded countries discussing ways to collaborate on emerging technologies.
- If the four countries plug their innovation ecosystems in this collaboration to shortlist, fund and develop technologies, it will also help to broaden the base of cooperation for this grouping, rather than restrict it to the government-to-government domain.

Drishti Mains Question

India can collaborate with its partner countries in a number of fields in which the latter has reached a

more advanced stage, technology being the most important one of those. Discuss.

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