



## India and the AUKUS Grouping

This editorial is based on [“India and the Anglosphere”](#) which was published in the Indian Express on 15/02/2023. It discusses the Issue with the AUKUS Grouping and related implications for Asia and India.

**For Prelims:** Indo-Pacific region, AUKUS agreement, Quad, South China Sea, Applied AI, Quantum Technologies,

**For Mains:** Global Groupings, Important International Institutions, Bilateral Groupings & Agreements, Effect of Policies & Politics of Countries on India's Interests

Recently, the **US, UK and Australia have unveiled details of their plan to create a new fleet of nuclear-powered submarines**, aimed at countering China's influence in the [Indo-Pacific region](#). Under the AUKUS pact Australia is to get at least three nuclear-powered submarines from the US.

The [AUKUS agreement](#), which involves Australia acquiring nuclear-powered submarines with the help of the US and the UK, is being praised and criticized simultaneously. It is viewed as a means of strengthening deterrence and stability in the Indo-Pacific. However, **China sees it as a dangerous alliance that the US is building in the area**, along with the [Quadrilateral forum or the Quad](#).

This pact will **trigger multiple strategic consequences for Asia, including India**. However, it is also an opportunity for India to develop a unique set of arrangements with the US and its allies.

### What is AUKUS Grouping?

- It is a trilateral security partnership for the [Indo-Pacific](#), between Australia, the UK and the US (AUKUS) which was signed in 2021.
- The major highlight of this arrangement is the sharing of US nuclear submarine technology to Australia.
- Its Indo-pacific orientation makes it an alliance against China's assertive actions in the [South China Sea](#).
- It involves a new architecture of meetings and engagements between the three countries, as well as cooperation across emerging technologies ([applied AI, quantum technologies and undersea capabilities](#)).

### What are the Concerns related to AUKUS Grouping for Asia?

- **Regional Security:**
  - The AUKUS partnership has been **perceived as a challenge to the security and stability of the region**, particularly by China. The **agreement includes the sharing of sensitive defense technologies and intelligence**, which has raised concerns about its

impact on the strategic balance in the region.

▪ **Diplomatic Implications:**

- The AUKUS partnership has **also been viewed as a diplomatic setback for countries** such as India, Japan, and South Korea, which have traditionally been seen as key allies of the United States in the region.
- These countries fear that the **new partnership will sideline them and reduce their influence in the region.**

▪ **Impact on Non-Proliferation:**

- The AUKUS partnership **involves the transfer of nuclear-powered submarine technology to Australia, which has raised concerns about its impact on global non-proliferation efforts.** Some experts have expressed concern that this move could set a dangerous precedent and encourage other countries to pursue nuclear capabilities.

▪ **Economic Consequences:**

- The AUKUS partnership has also **raised concerns about its economic implications, particularly for countries such as India that have significant defense industries.** The agreement is expected to lead to increased competition and could potentially impact the ability of these countries to sell defense equipment to Australia.

## What will be the Strategic Consequences for India?

▪ **Strengthening ties with Australia:**

- With Australia's upgraded scientific and technical capabilities, **there is an opportunity for India to deepen its S&T cooperation with Australia,** which could eventually expand to sensitive strategic areas.
- This **would enhance India's own technological capabilities** and contribute to regional peace and security.

▪ **Recognizing the Continuing Global Strategic Salience of Britain:**

- India tends to neglect the strategic importance of Britain, but the AUKUS deal may boost UK's profile in Asia.
- **India could explore opportunities for closer cooperation with Britain** on Indo-Pacific security issues.

▪ **Embracing the idea of an "Anglosphere":**

- Despite India's difficult past relations with the Anglosphere, the **AUKUS deal has brought enduring geopolitical bonds** between the US, UK, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand back to life.
  - An Anglosphere is also called the world of English-speaking people bound by common political beliefs, similar legal traditions, and shared geopolitical interests.
- India could **explore opportunities to expand its ties with the English-speaking world,** particularly in the areas of technology and defense.

▪ **Developing a Unique Set of Arrangements:**

- With the US seeking to boost the strategic capabilities of its allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific, **India has a rare opportunity to develop its own set of arrangements with the US and its allies.**
- This could **involve closer military cooperation, joint exercises, and intelligence sharing,** among other things.

## How can India Safeguard its Strategic Interests?

▪ **Exploring Opportunities for Collaboration:**

- India can explore opportunities for collaboration and technology transfer with the AUKUS countries, while also ensuring that its own national security interests are not compromised.
- India can seek collaborations with AUKUS countries in areas such as maritime security, cybersecurity, and intelligence sharing.

▪ **Maintaining Balance:**

- India should maintain a balance between its engagement with AUKUS and other key partners, such as Russia, France, and Japan.
- India should avoid being drawn into a zero-sum game and strive to maintain strong ties with all relevant countries.
- This is particularly important given the complex geopolitical landscape of the Indo-Pacific

region.

▪ **Strengthening Quad:**

- India should work towards strengthening the Quad, which could provide a counterbalance to AUKUS and help promote a rules-based regional order.
- India should leverage the Quad to promote regional stability and balance of power.

▪ **Ensuring the Interest of Smaller Countries:**

- India needs to ensure that the interests of smaller countries in the region are not overlooked in any engagements with AUKUS. India should take a leadership role in promoting a cooperative and inclusive approach to regional security issues.
- This could involve initiatives such as capacity building for smaller countries in the region and promoting greater regional integration and connectivity.

***Drishti Mains Question***

How does the AUKUS grouping impact India's strategic interests in the Indo-Pacific region and what should be India's approach towards this new development?

**UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)**

***Mains***

**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. **(2021)**

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