



Perspective: Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting

For Prelims: [Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting](#), [Quad](#), [Indo-Pacific region](#), [War in Ukraine](#), [South China Sea](#), [East Asia Summit](#), [ASEAN Regional Forum](#), [Indian Ocean Rim Association \(IORA\)](#), [Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness \(IPMDA\)](#), [Information Fusion Centre for the Indian Ocean Region](#), [UN Convention on the Law of the Sea \(UNCLOS\)](#), [26/11 Mumbai Attacks](#), [Open Radio Access Networks \(Open RAN\)](#), [Artificial Intelligence \(AI\)](#), [Cybersecurity](#), [G20](#), [G7](#), [Global South](#), [energy security](#), [Climate Change](#)

For Mains: Significance of the Regional and International Groupings Like Quad in Securing India's Interests.

Why in News?

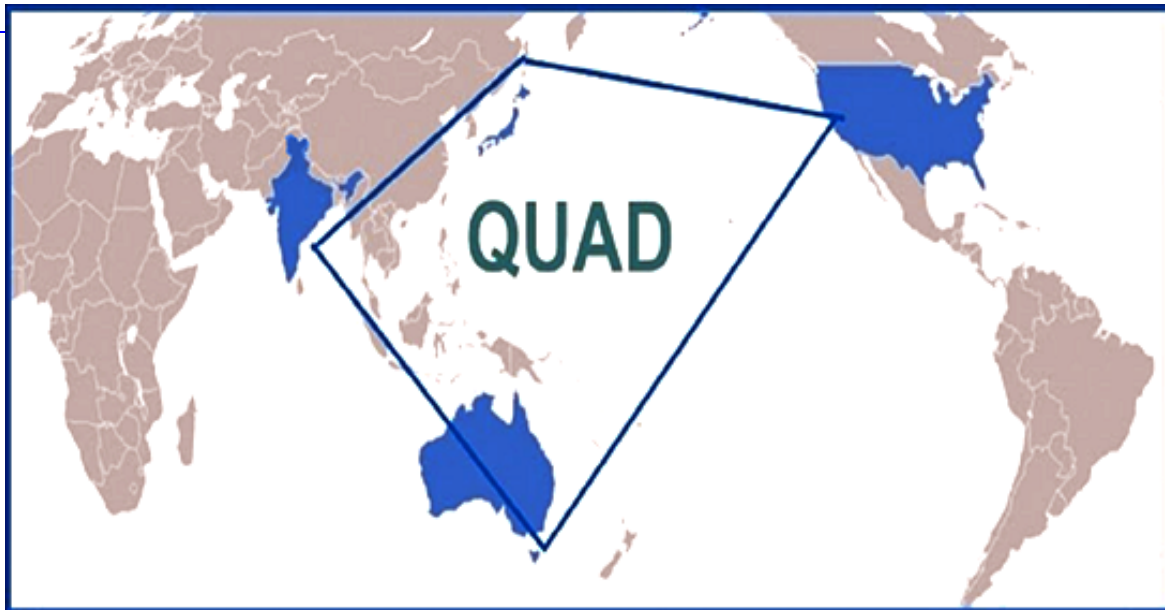
Recently, the Foreign Ministers of **India, Australia and Japan** and the Secretary of State of the **United States of America** met at the [Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting](#) in Tokyo, **Japan**.

- India highlighted the [Quad's](#) role in advancing a **free, open rules-based order**, emphasizing its practical outcomes and systemic integration into foreign policies.
- India noted the **Quad's** broad agenda, including **telecom technology, humanitarian relief, cyber and health security, and climate action**, rejecting claims that it is merely a talking shop.
- Also, it was announced that India will host the next **Quad Leaders' Summit** later this year and the US will host the next **Quad Foreign Ministers'** meeting in **2025**.

What is the Quad?

- **About:**
 - The '**Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD)**', commonly referred to as the [Quad](#), is an **informal strategic forum** consisting of four countries: **India, the United States, Australia, and Japan**.
- **Objective:**
 - One of its main goals is to promote a **free, open, prosperous, and inclusive [Indo-Pacific region](#)**.
- **Origin:**
 - Initially proposed by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007, the Quad became a formal group in 2017 after overcoming challenges, including Australia's initial withdrawal due to Chinese pressure.
- **Significance:**
 - **Achievements:** The Quad has achieved significant milestones in providing [Covid-19 vaccines](#), **sharing satellite data for [disaster management](#)**, and **offering [STEM scholarships and infrastructure fellowships](#)**.
 - **International Cooperation:** India at the recent meet emphasized the Quad's commitment to **shared democratic values and international cooperation**, asserting that it serves as a contemporary example of effective multilateral engagement.

- **Strategic Counter to China:** The Quad forum is perceived as a **strategic counter** to **China's economic and military rise**.
 - Discussions within the Quad frequently address China's aggressive and coercive actions in the **Indo-Pacific**.
 - The Quad does not exist solely to counter China but regularly addresses its influence and activities.
- **Opportunities for Multilateral Cooperation:** The Quad provides India with opportunities to engage in multilateral initiatives aimed at ensuring a **free and open Indo-Pacific**.



What are Key Highlights from the Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting?

- **Commitment to International Order:**
 - The Quad members reaffirmed commitment to upholding international order for global good, discussing shared challenges and plans for the **Quad** to benefit the **Indo-Pacific region**.
 - The Quad expressed deep concern about the [war in Ukraine](#) and the humanitarian crisis, as well as the situation in **Gaza and Myanmar**.
- **Strong Message to China:**
 - The Quad reaffirmed its commitment to a **free and open Indo-Pacific**, opposing unilateral actions by China that alter the status quo through force or coercion.
 - Concerns were raised over China's actions in the [South China Sea](#), including the militarization of disputed features and the dangerous use of coast guard and maritime militia vessels.
- **Support for Regional Institutions**
 - The Quad members endorsed **ASEAN's** central role and the ASEAN-led regional architecture, including the [East Asia Summit](#) and [ASEAN Regional Forum](#).
 - Also, committed to supporting the [Pacific Islands Forum \(PIF\)](#) and [Indian Ocean Rim Association \(IORA\)](#).
- **Expanded Maritime Domain Awareness:**
 - The Quad plans to extend its [Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness \(IPMDA\)](#) program to the [Indian Ocean](#) and operationalize the [South Asia](#) program through India's [Information Fusion Centre for the Indian Ocean Region](#).
- **Commitment to Free and Open Order:**
 - The Quad emphasized upholding a **rules-based global order**, respecting [sovereignty](#), [human rights](#), and **democratic values**.
 - There was a call for adherence to international law, including the [UN Convention on the Law of the Sea \(UNCLOS\)](#), to address maritime challenges.
- **Countering Terrorism:**

- The Quad condemned terrorism, including the [26/11 Mumbai attacks](#), and called for **action against UN-listed terrorist groups such as Al-Qa'ida, ISIS/Daesh, Lashkar e-Tayyiba (LeT), and Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM)**.
- The group urged countries to prevent their territories from being used for terrorist activities.
- **Critical Technologies and Innovation:**
 - New initiatives include developing a secure telecommunication network and implementing [Open Radio Access Networks \(Open RAN\)](#) in **Palau**.
 - Members called for progress in [Artificial Intelligence \(AI\) research and semiconductor supply chain resilience](#), and exploration of synthetic biology cooperation.
- **Cybersecurity Initiatives:**
 - The Quad established **Quad Cyber Ambassadors Meeting** and accelerated **capacity building projects**. Addressed [cybersecurity](#) in critical infrastructure and mutual recognition of cybersecurity standards.
- **Disaster Response and Humanitarian Assistance:**
 - The Quad members supported disaster response **coordination and humanitarian assistance**, including relief efforts in Papua New Guinea.
 - The group finalized **Quad Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)**.
- **Climate Change and Clean Energy:**
 - Under the Quad **Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Package (Q-CHAMP)**, focused on enhancing climate and clean energy cooperation and supporting Pacific island countries.

What is the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA)?

- The IPMDA Initiative, announced at the **Quad Leaders' Summit in Tokyo in 2022**, aims to integrate the **Pacific Islands, Southeast Asia, and the Indian Ocean region (IOR)** within the **Indo-Pacific**.
- Its main objective is to track vessels that disable their **Automatic Identification System (AIS)** to avoid detection.
- The IPMDA is a key effort to enhance security and stability in the **Indo-Pacific**, a region of significant global geopolitical importance.
- Additionally, the initiative focuses on monitoring tactical-level activities to address climate and humanitarian events and protect fisheries vital to many **Indo-Pacific** economies.

What are the Challenges for the Quad?

- **Navigating Multilateral Platforms:** The Quad faces challenges in balancing its agenda with other significant multilateral platforms like the [G20 and G7](#), which are also led by Quad countries.
- **Consensus Building Amidst Global Divisions:** One major challenge is achieving consensus on contentious global issues, such as the war in Ukraine.
- **Addressing Global South Concerns:** The Quad must address the concerns of the [Global South](#), including those in its neighborhood. China has positioned the Quad as an "**exclusionary bloc**," gaining traction in regions that feel marginalized by global discussions.
- **Balancing Security and Development:** Emerging economies are skeptical of Western sanctions on Russia due to their negative impact on [energy security and commodity prices](#). While on other hand India has increased its oil imports from Russia causing **conflict of interest** for India within the Quad forum.
- **China's Opposition to Quad:** China has consistently opposed the Quad, viewing it as a strategy to encircle China and incite discord among regional powers.
 - In 2018, China's Foreign Minister criticized the Quad as a "**headline-grabbing idea**" and has pressured countries like Bangladesh to avoid aligning with the group.

Ways Forward

- **Leverage Multilateral Platforms:** Utilize the Quad's leadership roles in **G7 and G20**, to **synchronize agendas and reinforce common goals**. Ensure that the Quad's initiatives align with broader multilateral discussions to enhance their global impact.
- **Integrate Quad Goals:** Address global challenges such as the **Ukraine conflict and climate change** with a unified approach that complements the Quad's efforts within these larger frameworks.
- **Engage with Emerging Economies:** Ensure that the interests of developing countries are reflected in Quad initiatives to counter China's narrative of the Quad as an exclusionary bloc.
- **Expand Technological Initiatives:** Advance projects in **artificial intelligence (AI), semiconductor supply chains, and cybersecurity**. Continue developing secure telecommunication networks and exploring synthetic biology cooperation.
- **Collaborate on Cybersecurity:** Enhance cybersecurity initiatives through mutual recognition of standards and capacity-building projects.
- **Building Consensus and Accommodating Global Voices:** Achieving consensus requires more than public statements. **Effective consensus-building** involves behind-the-scenes negotiations, concessions, and addressing the concerns of global players. The Quad's ability to manage these complexities while presenting a unified front will be crucial to its success.
 - The Quad must balance its security-focused agenda with developmental concerns, ensuring it accommodates diverse global perspectives.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims:

Q. In which one of the following groups are all the four countries members of G20? (2020)

- (a) Argentina, Mexico, South Africa and Turkey
- (b) Australia, Canada, Malaysia and New Zealand
- (c) Brazil, Iran, Saudi Arabia and Vietnam
- (d) Indonesia, Japan, Singapore and South Korea

Ans: (a)

Q. The term 'Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership' often appears in the news in the context of the affairs of a group of countries known as (2016)

- (a) G20
- (b) ASEAN
- (c) SCO
- (d) SAARC

Ans: (b)

Mains:

Q. Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) is transforming itself into a trade bloc from a military alliance, in present times Discuss. (2020)

