



TOKYO QUAD SUMMIT 2022: IMPACT OF INDIA'S CENTRALITY

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The recent Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) fourth all leaders, and the second in-person, meeting in Tokyo on 24 May 2022, reflected¹ the fast-rising importance of the Quad that managed to hold four summits in less than a year, even amidst the ongoing Russia-Ukraine crisis. All member countries demonstrated high commitment to the Quad summit, including the newly elected Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, who joined while he had barely taken his oath of office.² The summit witnessed the launch of several initiatives, wherein vibrancy and commitment of Quad participants were visible throughout their engagement; be it as a group or their bilateral meetings on the sidelines. The US president, taking the lead and reassuring his commitment, announced the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF), which witnessed an immediate acceptance by as many as 13 countries. Following the conference, the Quad issued a joint statement emphasising the relevance of the Quad as a "force for good,"³ with a positive agenda to strengthen the Indo-Pacific region's resilience in the face of multiple challenges to rule based governance, over the envisaged Free and Open Indo Pacific (FOIP) region.

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The Uniqueness of Tokyo Summit

The Quad was formed in the aftermath of the 2004 Indian Ocean Tsunami to coordinate humanitarian aid and disaster relief. Since then, it has evolved into a leading regional partnership dedicated to advancing a shared vision of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) that can deal with the varied emerging global challenges.⁴ The four Quad leaders'

summits, which have been held in quick succession, clearly signal the emerging centrality of the Indo-pacific region in the global strategic construct. Among these four, the first and fourth, are particularly noteworthy. The first summit, conducted virtually in March 2021 in the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic and escalating Chinese belligerence, formalised the cooperation structure for all the four members viz. USA, India, Japan and Australia. Their joint statement 'Spirit of the Quad' established a vision that aspired to build on areas of convergence, which intended to broaden the scope of the grouping beyond what was contained in its

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original nomenclature.⁵ While the first three summits were primarily driven by security and cooperative development issues, the fourth summit in Tokyo appeared to focus on the multiple geopolitical challenges of security and humanitarian crisis emerging on the global map in recent months amidst the Russia-Ukraine conflict

The Tokyo summit was unique in more ways than one, for not only happening in the middle of a major conflict and humanitarian crisis but also bringing a newfound resolve among the leaders of member nations to put their might behind the commitment to ensure a peaceful FOIP for future. This Quad meeting would go down in history for its focus on norm-building, evolving maintainable economic practices, safeguarding democratic values, promoting inclusivity, synchronisation of common objectives and concern for smaller nations in the Indo-Pacific region. The carefully drafted joint statement released at the end of the summit reiterates Quad's commitment. Despite their difference of opinion on the Russia-Ukraine conflict, the Quad leaders' meeting and display of togetherness highlighted their shared perspective on the Chinese challenge in the Indo-Pacific.

Another unique aspect of this summit was the inclusion and immediate acceptance of IPEF by as many as 13 nations that stand testimony, not only to the growing mutual trust and respect amongst the member nations, but also to Quad being widely gaining acceptance across the nations. The Tokyo summit also happens to be the first of its kind where China visibly seemed to be under huge pressure from the rising influence of Quad and took to skies over the Sea of Japan, by flying its jet fighters along with Russian fighters, in a bid to show its existence and strength over the region.

Joint Statement and Road Map for Future

The joint statement⁶ released at the end of the summit reflects continuity in the overarching goal for development-linked cooperative security for the region. It summarises the Quad's progress since its inaugural summit, by outlining the road map towards achieving its objectives through assertive and constructive measures. Peace and

stability in the Indo-Pacific zone continue to be the foremost area of focus for the Quad, with cooperation for global health security through vaccine diplomacy to strengthen the global health system. The emphasis was on creating Pandemic prevention, Preparedness and Response (PPR) to build better health architecture, through enhanced financing and boosting science and technology cooperation. Infrastructure and climate were the next two major areas of concern.

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The commitment toward enhancing productivity and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region through shared cooperation and infrastructure assistance was reiterated. Quad committed to infrastructure assistance and investment of about fifty billion USD, over the next five years. On the climate issue, in order to fulfil the commitment to United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the Quad launched the “Quad Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation Package (Q-CHAMP)” with “mitigation” and “adaptation” as its two themes.⁷ In addition, Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) was tasked to create the requisite infrastructure to support island countries in the region in meeting the disaster risk reduction criteria.

The joint statement highlighted the vision of Quad leaders towards initiating the first-ever Quad Cybersecurity architecture through capacity building programs and close coordination while embracing and exploiting the critical emerging technologies. The emphasis on ensuring unobstructed critical technology supply chains was included, to strengthen cooperation on semiconductors by creating a framework for a safety net through the new International Standards Cooperation Network (ISCN) in the region. The Joint statement also highlighted the inclusion of Quad fellowship, Space and Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) as the three new areas of focus, in order to enhance people to people contact and transfer of knowledge. The Quad fellowship programme would initially induct 25 students from each Quad country per year into top US Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) institutions pursuing higher level studies of Masters’ or PhD level.⁸ The creation of the “Quad Satellite Data Portal” to share satellite data on climate change, disaster vigilance and viable uses of oceanic resources, was agreed upon unanimously by all Quad partners. Furthermore, a new initiative in the form of the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA) was agreed upon to create a framework for rapid response to humanitarian and natural disasters and combat illegal fishing in the region.

The Quad is therefore undoubtedly on a rising trajectory and has established itself as a vital, and well-institutionalised framework in the Indo-Pacific. Projects such as the MDA and its infrastructure investment plans demonstrate that the grouping can bring

valuable benefits to the region while also countering China's increasing clout in the region. Yet, questions still remain about the group's future. Will the Quad build on the tangible benefits it has brought in domains like technology and health to become a security-focused body? Or will it continue on its present trajectory and look to focus on non-traditional security and critical developmental issues?

The Tokyo summit saw one of the strongest statements by the Quad yet, showing their commitment

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to the incremental progress to drive the future of the Quad. It is likely that, barring a dramatic worsening of ties between China and the Quad states, this future will continue along the same lines. Quad recognises that to truly counter Beijing's economic and military clout, its foremost goal in the region must be to gain wider acceptance. Becoming an outrightly 'anti-China' or 'security alliance' would only make it more difficult for the Quad to work with regional partners (like the ASEAN states), many of whom still rely on China for their economic growth. In this context, in the near to middle-term future, the Quad will continue to build on its present, highly diverse portfolio of interests, and focus on expanding its reach within the Indo-Pacific. Ultimately, the Quad will continue to advance a positive vision for the region's future.

Indo-Pacific Economic framework (IPEF)

On 23 May 2022, a day before the Tokyo summit, US President Joe Biden, announced the launch of IPEF, a concept aiming to develop a new era of economic grouping that has clear objectives of seeking stronger economic engagement towards "continued growth, peace, and prosperity."⁹ Lessons learned from the pandemic and other changes in the region, the IPEF vision is based on four pillars viz. Trade, supply chain, clean energy through decarbonisation with adequate infrastructure and finally tax and anti-corruption measures.

The primary objectives of IPEF, as stated are:

- a) To stimulate growth through sustainable and comprehensive economic measures to accrue a benefit for both the consumer as well as the worker.
- b) Undertaking commitments towards creating better anticipatory mechanisms and prevent any interference in supply chains while continuing to work towards Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI). The establishment of an early warning system to coordinate emergency response in the event of any breakdown or disruption was considered an inescapable requirement.
- c) The third objective brought out the need for commitment from participating countries to promote better paying jobs through sustained efforts in ensuring clean energy,

decarbonisation, and infrastructure development in realising the overall aim of IPEF.

d) Lastly, IPEF sought the creation of an efficient and strong tax, anti-money laundering, and anti-corruption systems to curb tax evasion and corruption in the Indo-Pacific region.

Impact of India's Centrality

During the closed session of the Tokyo summit on 24 May 2022, US President Joe Biden praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for addressing the Covid-19 epidemic in a democratic manner. He further added that the success of India has shown the world that democracies can deliver, like India from being a regional partner since the formation of the Quad in 2004 has rapidly emerged as a major stake holder in the geopolitical construct of the revived Quad of 2017 or the "Quad 2.0". The assertiveness of India is working towards rule based order in the region, which was noticed by the major like-minded nations in 2015, where for the first time Mr Modi during his official visit to Mauritius discussed the innovative concept of 'Security and Growth for All in the Region' (SAGAR).¹⁰ India, with the wide acceptance of the SAGAR concept, was quickly moving forward in playing a pivotal role in Indo-Pacific Maritime Zone (IPMZ). In 2017, India figured as the major Asian player in Japan's 'Open Indo-Pacific Strategy',¹¹ the first Indo-Australia virtual summit in 2020 immediately after Australia joined Quad and US President Donald Trump's statement that India is vital to the revival of Quad. These all were the indicators of the rising importance of India.

During the Melbourne summit of Foreign Ministers of the Quad countries, White House Principal Deputy Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre stated, "We recognise that India is a like-minded partner and leader in South Asia and the Indian Ocean, active in and connected to Southeast Asia, a driving force of the Quad, and an engine for regional growth and development".¹² India's stand on terror issue was widely acknowledged and the two terror attacks on Mumbai 26/11 and Pathankot 2016 were condemned by the Quad. India has gradually gained the importance amongst Quad and Quad plus partners and has emerged as a mature and responsible nation on multiple counts with a clear vision of promoter of democratic values and rule based governance with equal opportunity to all.

In the Tokyo summit, India has not only consolidated its position in the Quad but also has now much wider acceptance across the Indo-Pacific nations in playing a lead role in furthering the objectives of various initiatives like IPEF, IPMDA, Q-CHAMP, SCRI, CDRI along with impetus on cyber security as well as progressing STEM initiative of Quad fellowship programme. India has come a long way in reaching this status of being a pivot to the rising global aspirations in making the Indo-pacific region as area of free and

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open trade under mutual trust, cooperation, and secure environment and truly aligned with the novel concept of SAGAR. To a large extent, India's centrality in the Quad, and the Indo-Pacific framework at large, is visible in the way that New Delhi's partner states have handled India's strategic stance on the Russia-Ukraine matter. Through skilful diplomacy and multi-directional engagement, India's stature on the global stage has grown significantly. This is demonstrated by the fact that today, India occupies a place alongside advanced economies and democracies like the US, Japan and Australia. At the same time, as India finds itself operating in an entirely new strategic environment, there is no question that the world expects more from it.¹³ Accordingly, India will need to respond to the profound transformations emerging in the international order, and ensure that it continues to be a pillar for a free, open, inclusive, peaceful, and prosperous region.

Notes:

¹ "Quad leaders meet in Tokyo at second in-person summit", *The Economic Times*, May 24, 2022, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/quad-leaders-meet-in-tokyo-at-second-in-person-summit/articleshow/91754858.cms>. Accessed on May 25, 2022.

² Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan, "Quad Summit Indicates Growing Strength", *The Diplomat*, May 26, 2022, <https://thediplomat.com/2022/05/quad-summit-indicates-growing-strength/>. Accessed on May 27, 2022.

³ Kallol Bhattacherejee and Dinakar Peri, "Quad is a 'force for good'", *The Hindu*, May 24, 2022, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/quad-leaders-meet-in-tokyo-at-2nd-in-person-summit/article65455849.ece>. Accessed on May 27, 2022.

⁴ *White House*, "FACT SHEET: Quad Leaders' Tokyo Summit 2022", Statements and Releases, May 23, 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/05/23/fact-sheet-quad-leaders-tokyo-summit-2022/>. Accessed on May 27, 2022.

⁵ Girish Luthra, "Forward from the Tokyo Quad Summit and IPEF", ORF, May 27, 2022, <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/forward-from-the-tokyo-quad-summit-and-ipef/>. Accessed on May 27, 2022.

⁶ *White House*, "Quad Joint Leaders' Statement", May 24, 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/05/24/quad-joint-leaders-statement/>. Accessed on May 27, 2022.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ "US, India, Australia and Japan Launch QUAD Fellowship: Here's Everything You Should Know About It", *Swarajya*, May 24, 2022, <https://swarajyamag.com/news-brief/us-india-australia-and-japan-launch-quad-fellowship-heres-everything-you-should-know-about-it>. Accessed on May 27, 2022.

⁹ Kavaljit Singh, "The What, How and Why of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework", *Wire*, May 27, 2022, <https://thewire.in/economy/the-what-how-and-why-of-the-indo-pacific-economic-framework>. Accessed on May 27, 2022.

¹⁰ "BS Nagial, "Significance of QUAD and the Role of India" *CLAWS Issue Brief No 280*, April 2021, https://www.claws.in/static/IB-280_Significance-of-QUAD-and-the-Role-of-India.pdf. Accessed on May 28, 2022.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² “India driving force of Quad, says White House”, *The Hindu*, February 15, 2022, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/india-driving-force-of-quad-says-white-house/article65051307.ece>. Accessed on May 28, 2022.

¹³ PTI, “India’s stature grown significantly, world expects more from country: EAM”, *Business Standard*, December 21, 2021, https://www.business-standard.com/article/current-affairs/india-s-stature-grown-significantly-world-expects-more-from-country-eam-121122100535_1.html.



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