

## Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD)

The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD) or QUAD is an informal strategic forum comprising India, Japan, Australia and the United States of America. It is a grouping frequently seen in the news nowadays because of the current geopolitical situation in the world. Hence, it is an important topic for the [UPSC exam](#).

### QUAD - Basic Facts

The QUAD is an informal strategic dialogue with four members, namely, India, Japan, Australia and the US. The shared objective is to ensure and sustain an open, free and prosperous Indo-Pacific region.

- The QUAD is maintained by semi-regular summits, meetings, information exchanges and military drills of all the members.
- It is seen as a coalition of maritime democracies.
- The idea for the QUAD is attributed to former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe who mooted it in 2007. However, its origins can be traced back to the 2004 Tsunami when India conducted relief and rescue operations for itself and neighbouring countries and was joined by Japan, the US and Australia.
- The move was paralleled by the joint military [exercise 'Malabar'](#) which was held at an unprecedented scale involving India, Japan, Australia, Singapore and the US.
- China issued formal diplomatic protests to the members of the QUAD.
- Then, Australia backed out from the QUAD presumably due to pressure from the Chinese.
- Again in 2012, Abe brought forth the idea of Asia's "Democratic Security Diamond" comprising Japan, India, the US and Australia to protect the maritime commons from the Indian Ocean to the Western Pacific.
- It was in 2017, however, that the first official talks under the QUAD took place, in Manila, the Philippines.

### QUAD Guiding Principles

The idea behind the QUAD is to keep the strategic and significant sea routes in the Indo-Pacific free of any influence (read Chinese influence).

- It is seen as a strategic grouping to preempt and reduce Chinese influences.
- The core objectives of the QUAD is to secure a rules-based global order, liberal trading system and freedom of navigation.
- It seeks to contain a 'rising China' and work against its predatory trade and economic policies.
- Another purpose of the QUAD is to offer alternative debt financing for nations in the Indo-Pacific region.

### QUAD Significance

Analysts point out that viewing the QUAD solely as a bureaucratic-level foreign-ministry-led dialogue that meets occasionally might not be correct given the growing military engagements and the matrix of trilateral and bilateral relationships among the members of the QUAD.

- It is believed that if Chinese aggressions increase on the borders, India can take the support of the other QUAD members to counter the Chinese.
- India can take advantage of its naval front (unlike the continental front where China and Pakistan surround the country) and conduct strategic explorations in the Indo-Pacific region.

There are some challenges also facing the QUAD. While the member countries have recently come together sensing an expansionist China, they themselves have different aspirations and interests. It would be interesting to see how these varied disparities play out and the countries narrow their differences. Also, considering the economic might of China, none of the QUAD countries can afford to really take a vivid anti-China stance.

### Way Forward

The QUAD members will have to chart out a clearer vision for the grouping. A “free and open Indo-Pacific” should not merely be a slogan. The QUAD should work out a working regional consultation mechanism and also work more closely with the ASEAN.

