

# The Coming of Quad and the Balance of Power in the Indo-Pacific

SOUMYODEEP DEB  
NATHAN WILSON

With the coming of the twenty-first century, power parity has started to shift from the Atlantic to the East, leading to conceptualization of the Indo-Pacific. The Indo-Pacific is the confluence of two major oceans: the Indian and the Pacific. The geographical area covering the region is of great significance from geo-economical and geo-strategic perspectives. The region is home to some of the major rising powers, including China, India, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). It is also a region that is in the center of geo-political rivalry, making it the hotspot for the emerging great-power competition.

The coining of term *Indo-Pacific* runs parallel with the rise of China, which, along with Beijing's growing assertive foreign policy, is taken to be the driving force fueling the great-power competition in the region.<sup>1</sup> Beijing, under its flagship Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), wants to exert China's influence in the wider Indo-Pacific region. This is seen as overturning the balance of power, having implications for the other major powers in the region. This led the United States to produce its Indo-Pacific strategy, which many view as a containment strategy to restrict the rise of China and aimed at bringing the other like-minded powers under a singular strategic framework as a balance against growing Chinese influence.

It is in this context that understanding the theoretical framework of balance of power becomes of paramount importance. The idea of the Indo-Pacific and the revival of the Quad is taken to be a balancing act to thwart the growing Chinese footprint in the region. Therefore, this article will first address the theoretical framework of balance of power, giving readers an overview about why nations balance. It will also look at how the overall idea of the Indo-Pacific and balance of power are working. The second part of the article will analyze the revival of the Quad in the geopolitical framework of twenty-first century from the perspective of balancing. It will also investigate the future of the Quad and whether it will lead to a deeper alliance of like-minded nations in the Indo-Pacific.

## Understanding the Concept of Balance of Power

The concept of balance of power is one of the most important theoretical frameworks in the field of international relations and diplomacy. It has helped

academics and diplomats better understand the structural framework of international politics and alliance systems. This concept has garnered the most scholarly attention in comparison to any other theoretical framework in international politics.<sup>2</sup> The fundamental concept of the balance of power theory is that nations will join an alliance system against a dominant or hegemonic power that poses a threat to the other nation's security.<sup>3</sup> In an anarchic world where the security of an individual is guaranteed by itself, nations resort to external alignment to safeguard their own security.<sup>4</sup> They also enhance their relative power to maintain their security, which is key in the structural framework of international politics.

Through balancing, nations try to uphold the status quo against a power that can have a potential impact on their security. The significance of this theory is one of the oldest in the field of international politics, stretching from Kautilya in ancient India to Thucydides in ancient Greece.<sup>5</sup> However, the relevance and the significance of the balance of power has amplified with the rise of China and the coming of the great-power politics in the Indo-Pacific.

### **The Coming of Indo-Pacific and Balance of Power**

The rise of China has had the most profound impact on the geopolitical landscape of the twenty-first century. This has structured the coining of a new geographical sphere, the Indo-Pacific, which many have argued to be a balancing act to restrict the assertive rise of China into a new global hegemon. The concept of Indo-Pacific was first put forward by former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007, during his state visit to India under the banner of the "confluence of two seas."<sup>6</sup> However, the significance of this concept had garnered momentum following the adoption of the US Indo-Pacific strategy in 2017 under Pres. Donald Trump.<sup>7</sup> The Indo-Pacific is considered to be a mental map carved out of imagination,<sup>8</sup> with its primary role focused on containing the rise of China.<sup>9</sup>

It is in this context that the balance of power theory supports our understanding of the current security structure in the Indo-Pacific. China's rise and its competition with the other major powers like the United States, India, Japan, and Australia have pushed these other powers to view China as a threat to their security.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, as stated under the framework of balance of power, nations will balance against a power that is deemed as a threat to their security. In the current situation, the United States perceives China to be a major strategic competitor, as highlighted in the Strategic Committee Act of 2021.<sup>11</sup> China's growing power projection capabilities have also had a great impact within Indian security and strategic circles, which view China's rise to have an impact on New Delhi's security.<sup>12</sup> The recent border clash has further exemplified this notion of rise of power competition with China. The current competition within the Sino-Australian

relations have also strained bilateral ties, with Canberra viewing China as a major competitor.<sup>13</sup> The Sino-Japanese relations have also gone downhill due to the ongoing territorial dispute regarding the Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea.<sup>14</sup> Therefore, the balance of power theory in the Indo-Pacific is centered around the rise of China and its security implications for the other major powers. The revival of the Quad under these circumstances supports the structural framework of the balance of power in the Indo-Pacific.

### **The Current Paradigm of Balance of Power in Indo-Pacific**

The re-emergence of great-power competition has made balancing a significant foreign policy initiative of all the major powers in the Indo-Pacific. According to Stephen Walt, there are two types of balancing that states conduct: (1) balancing with internal effort, and (2) balancing with external effort.<sup>15</sup> The concept of internal balancing refers to increasing the relative power of a state by increasing its own military capabilities, enhancing economic growth, and focusing on policies that will increase its relative power. External balancing, on the other hand, increases the relative power by forging alliances against the targeted nation.<sup>16</sup> With the anarchic nature of world politics, the security of a nation should be guaranteed by itself, given that today's ally might be tomorrow's competitor. Therefore, this leads nations to take a more dynamic approach in mixing internal and external balancing to safeguard their security.

With the coming of great-power politics in the Indo-Pacific, major powers of the region are enhancing their internal balancing. It has been a measure focusing mainly on China's growing power parity and assertive foreign policy in the region. China's relative annual increase in defense budget,<sup>17</sup> which is the highest among its regional peers, has raised eyebrows in the other Asian capitals. Along with Beijing's foreign policy, which is predominated by power projection, this has led the other major powers to enhance their relative power capabilities in addition to structuring an alliance. This enhancement has been through increasing these nations' military capabilities, enhancing their economic power, and making strategic policy decisions that would provide them with some strategic edge. The current power competition in the Indo-Pacific has led Canberra to increase its defense spending significantly;<sup>18</sup> it has also ramped up Australia's military upgradations and capabilities.<sup>19</sup> This best illustrated by the launch of the Australia–United Kingdom–United States (AUKUS) alliance on 15 September 2021, which is a joint security pact between the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia. Due to this, “one of the first tasks of the new AUKUS partnership would be to help Australia acquire a fleet of nuclear-powered submarines to be built in Adelaide in cooperation with the United Kingdom and the United States,” simultane-

ously cancelling the French–Australian submarine deal.<sup>20</sup> Such developments have only increased the pre-existing power competition within the Indo-Pacific.

Japan too has set a record increase in its defense budget, with its primary focus being given to stealth jets and long-range missiles.<sup>21</sup> Apart from military balancing, some observers see the Asia–Africa Growth Corridor, initiated by Tokyo and New Delhi, as a major alternative to China’s BRI.<sup>22</sup> This clearly portrays the various balancing approach initiated by the Indo-Pacific nations to enhance their respective power in military and economic terms.

The recent Sino-Indian border clash has been one of the most impactful events in their bilateral relations. Beijing still holds strategic advantage in the Himalayan border from the perspective of logistics and air bases vis-à-vis New Delhi. However, India’s growing modernization drive is clearly reducing the gap between India and China in the high altitudes. For example, India recently completed its planned infrastructure projects around the border with China for the next five years in just one year.<sup>23</sup> This drive, with its structural shift from the continental to the maritime sphere, is also indicative of how New Delhi is pulling up its socks to manage China’s growing push in the region. However, it is the Sino-US rivalry that is having the most significant impact on the overall security of the Indo-Pacific. The rise of China is the most significant challenge that the United States has faced since the end of Cold War, and America has devoted its attention to tackling this challenge. The pivot to Asia is basically America’s push to contain the rise of China. As pointed out by then-Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta, the United States will deploy 60 percent of its navy in the Pacific by 2020.<sup>24</sup> However, the United States never did deploy 60 percent of its naval assets into the Indo-Pacific, during the Obama administration. It was not until the Trump administration “adopted the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) strategy—the concept, originally an invention of Abe,” as the nexus for bringing Quad 2.0 and Quad Plus in existence, that such advances occurred.<sup>25</sup> The results of which, showed that the United States has been expanding its security in the region to enhance its ability to maintain the balance of power in Washington’s favor.

However, it has been the external balancing under the framework of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) that has been the most debated and analyzed issue in the Indo-Pacific. External balancing through alliance formation has always been key to understanding the notion of balance of power. This section of the article will look at the emergence of the Quad as a balancing factor and its implications for the regional security and the future of the initiative.

## **The Framework of Quad**

Although, the Quad found its origins “in the so-called ‘Tsunami Core Group,’ an ad-hoc grouping that sprang up to respond to the devastating Boxing Day tsunami of 2004,” efforts to hold the grouping together in its first iteration met with failure as members left the group in 2007–2008.<sup>26</sup> The resurrection of the grouping during the 2017 ASEAN Summit in Manila, indicated the countries’ renewed desire to balance the rise of China.

In the group’s first iteration, now dubbed Quad 1.0, leaders established a multilateral framework for addressing cross-regional concerns. The nature of the Quad achieved its own political element in 2006, with a speech by Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Aso titled “Arc of Freedom and Prosperity: Japan’s Expanding Diplomatic Horizons.”<sup>27</sup> This aimed to promote networks that were “actively pushed by then Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe that appeared designed to isolate Beijing”<sup>28</sup> and would involve “the countries of Central Asia, India, Southeast Asia, the Korean Peninsula and Mongolia virtually all the countries on China’s periphery, except for China itself.”<sup>29</sup> This is while also expanding “Japanese diplomatic efforts to promote freedom and the rule of law.”<sup>30</sup>

The first full-fledged meeting of the Quad 1.0 took place in 2007 at the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in Manila. Observers viewed this as an “informal grouping,” which only addressed certain areas in which Quad nations had common interests such as humanitarian and disaster relief operations, from when the group had emerged.<sup>31</sup> After the 2007 ARF, the Quad held its only joint military exercise in September of that year, an expansion of the pre-existing Malabar series between the United States and India. The second Malabar exercise, “featured the four navies, together with the Singaporean navy, exercising in the Bay of Bengal.”<sup>32</sup> The drill had “expanded for the first time to also include Japan, Australia and Singapore.”<sup>33</sup> Ultimately, this military exercise was the last under the auspices of Quad 1.0, facing intense backlash from Beijing. Spooked by the potential damage China might render upon the Australian economy, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd withdrew his country from the grouping in 2007. This first iteration of the grouping seemed to represent a gradual organic, albeit stillborn, evolution rather than a rapid expansion into a full-blown alliance.

## **Factors Leading to the Rise of Quad 2.0**

Subsequently, the origins of Quad 2.0 arrived in a similar fashion, to that of Quad 1.0. This showing that instead of emerging as a rapid expansion, it arrived rather as an underlying organic evolution. This aimed to build upon the original Quad, while remaining clear that in 2008, such an entity had not reached a certain

level of maturity. However, significant changes in the external political dynamics had made the idea of Quad much more reasonable. Prime Minister Abe had never really given up on the idea, as evidenced for example by Japan partaking in further Malabar exercises “in 2009 and 2014”<sup>34</sup> and then becoming a “permanent member of the formerly bilateral USA India naval exercise, Malabar, in 2015.”<sup>35</sup> Following the demise of the Rudd administration in Australia, there were signs of renewed interest from Canberra, including a request to participate in the trilateral Malabar naval exercise—a request denied by New Delhi, which was still weary of Australian intentions. However, with the continued shift in global geopolitics, the revival of the Quad looked increasingly likely.

All this remains especially relevant post-2015, with the emergence of a more assertive China in the Indo-Pacific. With the launch of the BRI, Beijing sought to expand China’s strategic outreach throughout the Indo-Pacific under its Maritime Silk Road Initiative.<sup>36</sup> The rise of China has been a key determining factor in the revival of the Quad initiative and the grouping’s new aggressive foreign policy approach, which stretches from the South China Sea to the Pacific and on to the Indian Ocean. With China’s president Xi Jinping coming to power in 2013, Beijing “has pursued an extremely assertive foreign policy in the region and elsewhere, riding on the back of unprecedented material prosperity as well as nationalist sentiment in the Chinese mainland.”<sup>37</sup> The other major powers of the region have viewed this resurgence as revisionist in nature, with perceived implications for their respective security. Under the structural framework of international politics, as mentioned earlier, nations tend to balance against a state that is perceived as a threat to their security. This therefore has heightened the sense of mutual interest and action in the tackling of such events among the Quad nations.

A rising China has presented multiple factors for Quad to face. The growing Chinese footprint via the BRI has been a central issue of concern among the Quad nations. Some observers have argued that the BRI, under its maritime initiative, has the potential to overturn the balance of power in the Indo-Pacific.<sup>38</sup> The construction of some of the major ports stretching from Sri Lanka and Myanmar to Pakistan and the South Pacific appears to have extended Beijing’s strategic power in the region. The concept of China’s debt-trap diplomacy has also gained prominence following Beijing acquiring the Hambantota port in southern Sri Lanka, as Colombo was unable to repay its debts associated with this mega project.<sup>39</sup> This further solidified claims that Beijing was pursuing the so-called String of Pearls strategy, which could have a significant implication on the balance of power in the Indo-Pacific. Therefore, one could argue that upholding the current balance of power is the structural factor in the revival of the Quad 2.0.

## **The Future of the Quad**

Along with the core four Quad nations, there is a potential for future expansion of the grouping—the Quad Plus—including other Indo-Pacific powers like France and the United Kingdom, both of which have territories and economic interests in the region. With China’s broader international goals becoming more evident, the “many challenges faced by Europe today are not so different from those faced by the likes of Australia, India, and Japan.”<sup>40</sup> The Quad Plus initiative has featured other Indo-Pacific nations that share similar concerns regarding China. This was evidenced by shared telecommunications between original the Quad members regarding the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which included three additional Indo-Pacific powers: New Zealand, South Korea, and Vietnam and other tangential actors, such as Brazil and Israel.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, the virtual meetings of the past few years have “shared their assessments of the current situation with respect to COVID-19 and discussed ways to synergize their efforts to counter its spread.”<sup>42</sup>

The recent face-to-face meeting held between the Quad leaders, on the 24 September 2021, in Washington, DC, one day before the UN General Assembly is of great significance.<sup>43</sup> This summit highlights that the Quad is picking up its pace and moving toward the four nations synchronizing their actions for the overall betterment of the Indo-Pacific. Many view the growing interaction as vital for the development of the region along with keeping it free, open, and inclusive.

In addition to the Quad, the recent announcement of the AUKUS has also raised a lot of speculations regarding the regional security architecture. Unlike Quad, many take the AUKUS to represent purely security and military implications. The AUKUS nations signed a deal that is about supplying Australia with eight nuclear attack submarines that will bring a dramatic change in the geopolitical landscape of the Indo-Pacific.<sup>44</sup> Beijing has condemned the pact as an act of containment that will undermine regional stability and enhance the arms race.<sup>45</sup> The creation of AUKUS reaffirmed the emphasis on the region and the growing relationship toward joint security pacts and procedures. However, there has been some speculation that the coming of AUKUS will sidelined the Quad initiative, but such speculation comes to soon for certainty.

Secondly, under French president Emmanuel Macron “there has been a marked increase in intensity in France’s strategic Indo-Pacific focus, with a clear emphasis on ‘French interests’ within the region.”<sup>46</sup> Yet, on an official level, the French Indo-Pacific strategy “is coordinated with the EU, but up till recently there was not an EU’s Indo-Pacific policy, due in part to the EU’s complex relationship with China.”<sup>47</sup> Therefore, such overlap remains present when examining the future for

Quad 2.0. Yet, upon the cancellation of the French–Australia submarine deal and the announcement of AUKUS, France issued sharp criticism toward the parties involved. French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian described the arrangements as “a stab in the back,” and France recalled its Australian and American ambassadors on 17 September 2021.<sup>48</sup> Seemingly, the results of this have witnessed an end to French and Australian attempts to deepen security partnerships between the two nations.

In addition, France has also sought to pursue stronger relations with India, as demonstrated by the “first trilateral dialogue between France, India and Australia was held through videoconference on 9th September 2020.”<sup>49</sup> This came on the heels of an earlier trilateral dialogue held in February 2021, and the inclusion of French naval vessels arriving in Kerala, in advance of joint naval exercises between the Quad member states. However, in the aftermath of the AUKUS announcement, France called off the next previously scheduled trilateral meeting.

Additionally, other EU nations besides France are currently forming their own Indo-Pacific strategy. This is because the “EU has a big stake in the Indo-Pacific region and should do its part to keep the regional order open and rules-based.”<sup>50</sup> This is especially relevant as Quad 2.0 nations view such actions as a threat to their own security and their strategic alliances. The Quad Plus expansion makes sense for several reasons: “One is the common security concern these countries share regarding China’s behaviors. Each have faced Chinese pressure plays in recent years, and harbor concerns regarding China’s military and political expansion into areas they consider their ‘neighborhood.’”<sup>51</sup> Alongside this, all these Quad 2.0 nations are presently in no “position to effectively challenge China on a bilateral basis, making mini lateral cooperation with like-minded partners a better approach.”<sup>52</sup>

## **Conclusion**

The current geopolitical framework throughout the Indo-Pacific readers the balance of power the most relevant international relations theory to be applied to its study. The balance of power theory in the Indo-Pacific is centered on the rise of China, which many observers believe will not prove to be peaceful, with Beijing trying to overturn the power index in its favor. Beijing, under its BRI, has exponentially increased its foothold and power projection capabilities around throughout the Indo-Pacific. This has led other major powers to view Beijing’s growing capabilities—topped with assertive foreign policy and so-called wolf-warrior diplomacy—as a security challenge. One can point to this as the primary factor for the formulation of the Indo-Pacific construct and the revival of the Quad. One can also argue that the fundamental aspect of this Quad initiative is to maintain



the current balance of power in the region. However, the Quad is still far from being a formal military alliance and is labeled instead as a grouping of like-minded democracies. Still, it is a fact that military and security issues form a major portion of the grouping's foundation and goals. Moreover, observers can point to China's growing assertiveness as pushing more nations to be willing to be part of this initiative. While some have speculated that the Quad initiative will eventually evolve into a NATO-esque treaty organization, such speculation is premature. The end state of the grouping remains very much open to conjecture. ★

### **Soumyodeep Deb**

Mr. Deb is a PhD student at Lingnan University, Hong Kong, and a researcher with the Consortium of Indo-Pacific Researchers. His area of study focuses on China's foreign policy, India-China relations, geopolitics of rising powers, strategic signaling, and great-power politics.

### **Nathan Wilson**

Mr. Wilson is an MSc Global Security student at the University of Glasgow. His area of focus is on ASEAN and Indo-Pacific geopolitics and security.

### **Notes**

1. Bruce Jones, "China and the Return of Great Power Strategic Competition," *Global China*, February 2029, 11, <https://www.brookings.edu/>.
2. Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth, *World Out of Balance: International Relations and the Challenge of American Primacy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008).
3. Stephen M. Walt, "Alliance Formation and the Balance of World Power," *International Security* 9, no. 4 (1985): 3–43. doi:10.2307/2538540.
4. Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Boston: McGraw Hill, 1979), 129.
5. Brian Healy and Arthur Stein, "The Balance of Power in International History: Theory and Reality," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 17, no. 1 (1973): 33–61. <https://www.jstor.org/>.
6. Garima Mohan, "Europe in the Indo-Pacific: A Case for More Coordination with Quad Countries," *German Marshall Fund of the United States*, 14 January 2020, <https://www.gmfus.org/>.
7. Lindsey W. Ford, "The Trump Administration and the 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific,'" *Brookings*, 5 May 2020, <https://www.brookings.edu/>.
8. Udayan Das, "What Is the Indo-Pacific?," *The Diplomat*, 13 July 2019, <https://thediplomat.com/>.
9. Abhijit Singh, "Containing China Has Always Been the 'Indo-Pacific' Initiative's Goal," *South China Morning Post*, 28 November 2017, <https://www.scmp.com/>.
10. Seema Guha, "As China Threat Grows, Quad Holds Its First Virtual Summit," *Outlook India*, 11 March 2021, <https://www.outlookindia.com/>.
11. Sara Hsu, "Senate's Strategic Competition Act Will Make China-US Relations Worse, Not Better," *The Diplomat*, 27 April 2021. <https://thediplomat.com/>.
12. Arun Sahgal, "Implications of China's Rise: An Indian Perspective," *USI of India*, March 2006. <https://usiofindia.org/>.

13. John Power, "Amid China Warnings, Australia to Spend US\$581 Million on Military," *South China Morning Post*, 28 April 2021, <https://www.scmp.com/>.
14. William Choong, "China and Japan's Island Dispute," *The Interpreter*, 4 June 2020, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/>.
15. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 129.
16. John A. Vasquez, "The Realist Paradigm and Degenerative versus Progressive Research Programs: An Appraisal of Neotraditional Research on Waltz's Balancing Proposition," *American Political Science Review* 91, no. 4 (1997): 899–912, doi:10.2307/2952172.
17. Xuanzun Liu, "China Hikes Defense Budget by 6.8 % in 2021, Faster than 6.6% Growth Last Year," *Global Times*, 5 March 2021, <https://www.globaltimes.cn/>.
18. Colin Packham, "Australia to Sharply Increase Defence Spending with Focus on Indo-Pacific," *Reuters*, 1 July 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/>.
19. John Power, "Amid China Warnings, Australia to Spend US\$581 Million on Military," *South China Morning Post*, 28 April 2021, <https://www.scmp.com/>.
20. Douglas Peifer, "French Anger over the AUKUS Trilateral Security Partnership Explained," *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs*, 21 September 2021, <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/>.
21. Tim Kelly, "Japan Sets Record \$52 Billion Military Budget with Stealth Jets, Long-Range Missiles," *Reuters*, 21 December 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/>.
22. Frank-Jürgen Richter, "The Alternative to Chinese Debt for Africa from Japan and India," *Nikkei Asia*, 23 November 2018, <https://asia.nikkei.com/>.
23. Asian News International, "Indian Army Rapidly Develops Infrastructure for Troops at LAC in Ladakh, Northeast," *Economic Times*, 24 May 2021, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/>.
24. "Leon Panetta: US to Deploy 60% of Navy Fleet to Pacific," *BBC News*, 2 June 2012, <https://www.bbc.com/>.
25. Hannah Fodale, "RESOLVED: Abe's Investment in His Relationship with President Trump Has Advanced Japanese Interests," *Debating Japan* 3, no. 1(30 January 2020), <https://www.csis.org/>.
26. Patrick Gerard Buchan and Benjamin Rimland, "Defining the Diamond: The Past, Present, and Future of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue," *CSIS*, 16 March 2020. <https://www.csis.org/>.
27. Kent E. Calder and Francis Fukuyama, *East Asian Multilateralism* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press Books, 2008).
28. Frank *Korea Times*, 24 February 2008, <https://www.koreatimes.co.kr/>.
29. Ching, "Asian Arc of Democracy."
30. Buchan and Rimland, "Defining the Diamond."
31. Buchan and Rimland, "Defining the Diamond."
32. Buchan and Rimland, "Defining the Diamond."
33. Mahendra Ved, "Indian Navy's Malabar and Other Exercises," *India Strategic*, September 2007, <https://www.indiastrategic.in/>.
34. Prashanth Parameswaran, "The Malabar Exercise: An Emerging Platform for Indo-Pacific Cooperation?," *The Diplomat*, 12 June 2016, <https://thediplomat.com/>.
35. Buchan and Rimland, "Defining the Diamond."
36. Michael J. Green, "China's Maritime Silk Road: Strategic and Economic Implications for the Indo-Pacific Region," *CSIS*, 2 April 2018. <https://www.csis.org/>.
37. Abhijnan Rej, "Reclaiming the Indo-Pacific: A Political-Military Strategy for Quad 2.0," *ORF*, March 2018, <https://www.orfonline.org/>.

38. Thanasis Karlis and Dionysios Polemis, "The Belt and Road Initiative. A Geopolitical Analysis" (paper, IAME 2019 Conference, Athens, Greece, 25–28 June 2019), doi:10.13140/RG.2.2.12968.21764.
39. Maria Abi Habib, "How China Got Sri Lanka to Cough Up a Port," *New York Times*, 25 June 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/>.
40. Mohan, "Europe in the Indo-Pacific."
41. Jeff Smith, "An Agenda for the 2021 Quad Summit: Five Next Steps," *Heritage Foundation*, 23 September 2021, <https://www.heritage.org/>.
42. Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan, "Towards a Quad-plus Arrangement," *ORF*, 7 May 2020. <https://www.orfonline.org/>.
43. Jeff M. Smith, "How America Is Leading the 'Quad Plus' Group of 7 Countries in Fighting the Coronavirus," *Heritage Foundation*, 1 April 2020, <https://www.heritage.org/>.
44. Adam Vidler and Rebecca Masters, "Australia to acquire Nuclear powered submarines in historic security pact with US and UK," *9News*, 16 September 2021, <https://www.9news.com.au/>.
45. "AUKUS: UK, US and Australia launch pact to counter China," *BBC News*, 16 September 2021, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/>.
46. "AUKUS," *BBC News*.
47. Cleo Paskal, "04 France and the Indo-Pacific," *Chatham House – International Affairs Think Tank*, 23 March 2021. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/>.
48. Paskal, "04 France and the Indo-Pacific."
49. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France, "The Indo-Pacific: 1st Trilateral Dialogue between France, India and Australia (9 September 2020)," 9 September 2021, <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/>.
50. Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury, "India-US-Japan-Australia Quadrilateral Initiative Explores Partnership with EU," *Economic Times*, 15 March 2021, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/>.
51. Rajagopalan, "Towards a Quad-plus Arrangement."
52. Rajagopalan, "Towards a Quad-plus Arrangement."