Whose Centrality?

ASEAN and the Quad in the Indo-Pacific

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Abstract

Why has Southeast Asia been particularly lukewarm to the idea of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (or Quad)? If Japan, India, Australia, and the United States collectively work under the Quad to confront China, Southeast Asia's biggest and most difficult strategic challenge, should not the region embrace and support the Quad? This article seeks to answer these questions by examining the different Southeast Asian views on the Quad. It further examines whether and how the Quad leaders could gradually develop mechanisms to induce a strategic buy-in from Southeast Asia. I argue in particular that the Quad should not reinvent the wheel in terms of regional architecture building and instead seek to become a "strategic filler" for and a "strategic amplifier" to existing ASEAN-led mechanisms and institutions. Furthermore, as far as Southeast Asians are concerned, the idea of the Quad boosting ASEAN institutions is perhaps more appealing than expanding the Quad into a "Quad Plus" by inviting, for example, South Korea, New Zealand, Brazil, Israel, and Vietnam. The key to a future Quad–ASEAN relationship therefore lies in finding a calibrated partnership based on shared principles and interests as well as practical cooperative engagements. The following sections expand on and elaborate these arguments.

Is There an "ASEAN View" of the Quad?

It should be noted from the outset that there is no "ASEAN view" of the Quad, whether in its first iteration in 2007 or the latest Quad 2.0 that reconvened in 2017.[1] What we have are different "Southeast Asian views" of the Quad. This distinction between ASEAN as a regional multilateral organization on the one hand and the different Southeast Asian states on the other is not simply a matter of semantics. The distinction matters because it tells us there is no single, agreed-upon consensus in Southeast Asia about the Quad. There is certainly no official ASEAN-related mechanisms or dialogues, as of yet, involving the Quad. Different Southeast Asian states have also expressed different views about the potential benefits and challenges associated with the Quad. In general, despite the different rationales, most Southeast Asian states are not publicly and fully

embracing the Quad, nor are they energetically working to challenge or denounce the nascent dialogue.

A recent regional elite survey by the Singapore-based Institute of Southeast Asian Studies (ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute) shows for example that support for the Quad was "soft," as less than half the respondents consider the grouping as having a "positive" or "very positive" impact on regional security (more than half view it as having either "negative,' "very negative," or "no impact").[2] Somewhat paradoxically, however, many (more than 60 percent) expressed that Southeast Asian countries should participate in the Quad's security initiatives and military exercises. However, different Southeast Asian countries appear to have differen degrees of ambivalence. According to the same survey, Indonesia, Malaysia, Laos, Thailand, and Cambodia are top skeptics of the Quad; Vietnam and the Philippines, on the other hand, are the biggest supporters.

These recent findings mirror and confirm earlier surveys that show the different degrees of ambivalence among Southeast Asian states over the Quad. For example, according to the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI), roughly more than half of regional experts were on the fence, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with the Quad.[3] In fact, the same survey notes that almost 40 percent thought that the Quad had more of a "diplomatic and symbolic value," rather than becoming a critical initiative for the Indo-Pacific. It also notes that different Southeast Asian countries view the Quad differently. On the one hand, Vietnam, Thailand, and the Philippines appear to be among the biggest supporters of the Quad, while Singapore and Indonesia were the skeptics.[4]

While these two elite surveys differ in some of their specific country-by-country results, they still demonstrate the absence of a coherent picture. On the one hand, the Quad skeptics do not necessarily share identical reasonings for their reticence. Indonesia is more concerned about the sidelining of ASEAN—and by implication, its own regional leadership profile—while Singapore is likely to be more concerned about the sharpening of the US–China competition. Indonesia under the current Joko Widodo administration also appears to be less concerned about foreign policy issues that are not "popular among its people," including the Quad.[5] Laos and Cambodia, meanwhile, are more likely to be wary of the impression of the Quad as an "anti-China" coalition—given their increasingly close ties with Beijing.

On the other hand, those who are potentially more welcoming of the Quad seem to share similar concerns over China's recent behaviors, especially in the South China Sea. Vietnam and the Philippines, for example, are perhaps the two South China Sea claimants that have been increasingly at loggerheads with China lately.[6] This was particularly the case over the landmark 2016 UNCLOS

tribunal ruling that favored Manila over Beijing—and practically invalidated China's infamous "nine-dash line" map. It should be noted however that other South China Sea claimants like Malaysia and Brunei appear to be more muted in their responses to China's militarization and aggressive behaviors—largely due to domestic politics and economic constraints.

In any case, there is no clear, consistent, and coherent picture of Southeast Asian views of the Quad other than the fact that some appear to be skeptical of the grouping while others may (partially) welcome it. Aside from the country-specific concerns above, this general lack of clarity seems to be a function of several factors. First, there is a lack of clarity among the Quad states themselves; they have yet to fully agree on what the group is and could be (although this might be changing in light of the growing tension between India and Australia with China). They also define the broader Indo-Pacific region in different ways.[7] The group's 2017 meeting addressed seven broad themes: (1) a rules-based order in Asia, (2) freedom of navigation and overflight in the maritime common, (3) respect for international law, (4) enhancing connectivity, (5) maritime security, (6) the North Korean threat and nonproliferation, and, (7) terrorism.[8] However, it remains unclear how exactly the Quad will proceed on these major policy areas. The latest Quad meeting in October 2020 in Tokyo also did not address practical initiatives on those seven issues—focusing instead on future meetings.[9]

Second, there is a lack of a clarity among Southeast Asian states on whether China—the unspoken primary "threat" the Quad is seeking to address—represents the biggest challenge for their respective interests. Numerous studies have noted that different Southeast Asian states consider China as representing varying degrees of opportunities (especially economic) and challenges (especially security).[10] For that matter, Southeast Asian views of the United States have also been historically ambivalent as well.[11] Despite the aspirations of many regional analysts, the structural ambivalence between Southeast Asia and the great powers is unlikely to change anytime soon. In other words, the more the Quad seeks to engage Southeast Asia driven by great-power politics, the more likely the structural ambivalence among Southeast Asian states becomes more pronounced.

Finally, there remains a concern among Southeast Asian states about the extent to which the Quad may or may not supplant existing ASEAN-related institutional mechanisms such as the East Asia Summit (EAS) or the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).[12] There is also a concern that the Free and Open Indo-Pacific outlook inherent in the Quad may simply be another way to "step on China's toes."[13] These concerns persist, even though in reality, Quad meetings have taken place on the sidelines of the ARF and EAS meetings and have focused on issues

promoted by ASEAN. In short, ASEAN-related mechanisms have "facilitated the Quad process rather than the Quad process threatening ASEAN."[14]

However, the concerns over the Quad's supposed challenge to ASEAN is less about multilateral institutions and regional groupings coexisting in the same strategic sphere. Instead, such concerns are about: (1) whether the Quad gets to drive the broader regional agenda (a distinct possibility given the strategic heft of its members), (2) whether different members of ASEAN, ARF, and EAS might decide to spend more energy and resources for the Quad rather than ASEAN-related institutions, and (3) whether some ASEAN members like Indonesia could afford to surrender regional order management to others at a time when they could not develop new strategic alternatives beyond ASEAN.[15] In other words, for all the talk about ASEAN Centrality, some ASEAN members remain deeply insecure about the prospect of an alternative regional order-making institutions like the Quad.

It should perhaps be noted that ASEAN Centrality is more of a process than an outcome. As defined by the ASEAN Charter, Centrality is the notion that ASEAN should be the "primary driving force" in shaping the group's external relations in a regional architecture that is open, transparent, and inclusive. In other words, ASEAN Centrality is, at heart, an ongoing process of continuous engagements with external partners.[16] As such, a significant feature of ASEAN Centrality lies in whether regional and great powers are "willing" to surrender regional initiatives and agenda-setting to ASEAN.[17] This is part of the reasons why ASEAN champions like Indonesia are often "sensitive" to the possibility of ASEAN no longer driving the regional agenda.

What Should Be the Quad's Ideal Role?

Given the above structural ambivalence and concerns, what should be the next ideal step for the Quad? First, the Quad needs to provide a systematic, coherent, and consistent framework to institutionalize and deepen the cooperative mechanisms among its member states. If the Quad members cannot agree on a long-term strategic framework for the grouping, there is no reason the rest of the region should take it seriously. How do we know, for example, that the Quad will not fade away once again as it did when Australia pulled the plug in 2008? If anything, the Quad could perhaps learn from ASEAN's missteps when the latter organization tried to expand its mechanisms beyond Southeast Asia in the 1990s and 2000s too soon without first solidifying its own community-building and integration projects.[18] Overall, the Quad's prospects will be determined by the extent to which national interests and threat perceptions align across all four of its members.[19]

Second, if and when the Quad could develop and implement its own long-term strategic framework, then perhaps there are ways to consider how the group could engage Southeast Asian states as well as ASEAN-related institutions. After all, there is no consensus across Southeast Asia rejecting any future role for the Quad. Indeed, almost half the respondents in the 2018 ASPI survey thought that the Quad complements existing regional security frameworks to varying degrees.[20] Again, bearing in mind the concerns above, there is nothing inherently toxic about the Quad's future engagement with ASEAN.

The key, therefore, is to find "the right ladder and the right rung." The Quad's external engagement with ASEAN would be effective if it meets the strategic interests of both groups (the right ladder) and when the specific engagement mechanisms are a good match for ASEAN's pre-existing initiatives and capacity with what the Quad could offer (the right rung). In the long run, finding the right ladder means figuring out the convergence of strategic interests between the Quad as a minilateral grouping and ASEAN as a multilateral one. These include, for example, (1) the extent to which regional order depends on multilateral and collective efforts, rather than unilateral power projections; (2) the extent to which regional institutions enhance strategic autonomy, rather than becoming extensions of great-power politics; and (3) the extent to which prosperity and security are not mutually exclusive, just as no regional country should be left out of regional institutions.

These normative benchmarks should not be too difficult for leaders of the Quad and ASEAN to agree on. The ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), for example, is filled with normative principles and norms many regional countries have agreed on for years. Surely the Quad members could easily align the group with and support the AOIP in principle. After all, since the AOIP commits no resources and practical mechanisms, there is virtually no risk for the Quad members to come out and publicly declare their support for AOIP. In other words, while the AOIP may have been defective at birth as far as strategic outcomes are concerned, it can still provide an initial normative launching pad for closer collaboration with other regional groupings such as the Quad.[21] The more difficult challenge lies in how the two groups could potentially build on shared normative principles to practical engagements.

In this regard, finding the right rung is essential. This means that the Quad should avoid reinventing the wheel in terms of regional initiatives, whether about maritime security, trade, or military exercises. Instead, the Quad should aim to be a strategic filler, supporting and elevating existing ASEAN-led initiatives where they exist and suggesting collaborative new ones where they are absent. In the defense and security sphere, for example, the Quad could provide an additional

layer of cooperative engagement, from joint exercises to training, in areas where ASEAN-related institutions (e.g., ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting–Plus [ADMM+]) remain underdeveloped.[22] The Quad could also support ASEAN-led initiatives such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership or the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity. After all, ASEAN has traditionally been more comfortable with the so-called "ASEAN Plus" mechanisms—dialogues and cooperative mechanisms between ASEAN and a single or several strategic partners.[23] Indeed, for more than a decade, ASEAN Plus forums like the ARF, EAS, and ADMM+ have been among the premier tools of the group in its efforts at regional architecture building. In essence, the Quad should find areas where it can boost ASEAN institutions rather than seeking to create new ones as alternatives.

Taken together, the Quad should ideally first recognize that as far as its external engagement is concerned, it should invest and seriously consider how it could persuade and obtain buy-in from Southeast Asian states. Differences regarding China aside, almost every Southeast Asian state is unlikely to turn its back on initiatives seeking to strengthen existing ASEAN-led mechanisms and institutions. Given the geopolitical and geostrategic centrality of Southeast Asia within the Indo-Pacific theater, whether there is regional buy-in could very well determine the long-term strategic viability of the Quad. The Quad leaders should, therefore, also formulate a gradual, long-term engagement strategy built around (1) a strategic commitment to a set of shared principles and interests and (2) a set of institutionalized mechanisms to provide strategic amplification to ASEAN-led mechanisms and institutions. In other words, rather than waiting for different Southeast Asian states to finally come around on their own volition to engage the Quad, leaders of the Quad members should find ways to present how the grouping could strengthen and support ASEAN. At the very least, the effort made to find the right ladder and the right rung between the Quad and ASEAN could create channels of communication and habits of dialogue that were not present before.

Quad Plus: Whose Centrality?

The potential for a dialogue or an engagement mechanism between the Quad and ASEAN is more strategically productive than seeking to expand the former. The expansion of the Quad Core group of Australia, Japan, India, and the United States to a Quad Plus format, including possibly Vietnam, New Zealand, South Korea, Israel, and/or Brazil has recently gained some traction.[24] Japan, for example, sees the Quad Plus idea as potentially beneficial to strengthen its "strategic synergy" in the maritime defense domain with the new set of countries, while Tokyo seeks to create a sustainable economic post–COVID-19 structure in Asia.[25]

There are certainly plenty of reasons to expand the Quad, but to include ASEAN member states like Vietnam could strengthen the critiques that the Quad undermines ASEAN Centrality. While joining the Quad and remaining an ASEAN member is certainly not mutually exclusive, the Quad would nonetheless miss out on gaining the buy-in of a wider set of countries. For one thing, many in Southeast Asia do not appear excited for the expansion of the Quad. As the 2018 ASPI survey notes, a median of 68 percent across all ASEAN member states think that the Quad should not be further expanded.[26] For another, if the Quad presents itself less of an alternative to ASEAN and more of a strategic complement, it has the potential to develop more sustainable partnerships across Southeast Asia, rather than with just one or two countries.

Such an argument of course requires a mental switch. If the Quad leaders remain convinced that it needs to compete with or confront China—in whatever terminology accepted—than the goal should not be how to "pry away" a few Southeast Asian states from China. Instead, they should focus on boosting the region's strategic autonomy as a collective whole. For all its faults and inability to deal with immediate strategic crises like the South China Sea, ASEAN remains the only regional mechanism that all Southeast Asian states still embrace. Finding mechanisms to strengthen ASEAN-related institutions would also complement existing bilateral and minilateral engagements each of the Quad members has developed with different Southeast Asian countries over the past decade (including maritime capacity building, for example). In other words, for the Quad to remain "central" in the minds of Southeast Asian policy makers, the group should find practical ways to boost ASEAN Centrality.

The COVID-19 pandemic and China's growing tension with India and Australia have given new impetus for the Quad. After the latest Quad meeting in early October 2020, for example, it is likely that Quad meetings may evolve into stand-alone events, rather than relying on the sidelines of ASEAN-related venues.[27] On the military side, India has recently extended an invitation for Australia to join the trilateral India–Japan–United States Malabar exercises. This would mark the first military exercises by all four members of the Quad since the group reconvened in November 2017.[28] Bilaterally, the signing of the India–US Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement in late October 2020 could further boost the Quad's increasingly militarized outlook.

As these developments suggest an upward strategic trajectory for the Quad, the leaders from all four countries should start engaging Southeast Asia early on—before the voices of regional insecurities grow louder. Additionally, the Quad should consider new diplomatic and economic initiatives when engaging Southeast Asian states. If the Quad only develops institutionalized cooperation built

around the defense sector, Beijing could easily present the Quad as nothing more than an "anti-China coalition" to Southeast Asian states. If there are concerns that the Quad is moving too fast and too furious at challenging China while sidelining ASEAN-related mechanisms, it would be harder to gain strategic buy-in from Southeast Asia.

Conclusion and Implications

The Indo-Pacific is in a state of strategic flux. The strategic competition between the United States and China risks creating a new bipolar structure across the region. The frequency and duration of crises among the region's powerholders—between Japan and South Korea, India and China, Australia and China, North and South Korea and others—have also grown in recent years. Historical legacies, territorial and maritime disputes, as well as broader strategic competition are all creating regional flashpoints.[29] While these strategic trends are slowly unfolding, day-to-day security challenges, from illegal fishing to transnational crime, continue to strain the resources of regional countries. Domestic political populism across the region has also led to stronger protectionist and isolationist impulses, leaving cumbersome multilateral institutions fiercely competing for attention. The pandemic has also likely accelerated and exacerbated these destabilizing trends.

Under these conditions, it would be strategic malpractice for Indo-Pacific states to not develop new foreign policy options. For more than two decades, ASEAN-led regional institutions have tried to develop a region-wide habit of dialogue and cooperation, on the one hand. On the other, traditional bilateral alliances and strategic partnerships have also proliferated. However, as the Indo-Pacific increasingly becomes a single geostrategic and geopolitical theater, the slow-paced nature of multilateralism and the limited scope of bilateral partnerships are no longer seen as sufficient. The rise of minilateralism—more than two countries but less than a full multilateral grouping—across the Indo-Pacific has increasingly become a "new normal."[30] Indeed, the rise of the Quad certainly fits this pattern.

In this regard, the Quad may seem like a strategic inevitability, even though many argue it is nothing more than "a forum for discussion and information exchange intended to lead to better policy coordination" between the four countries.[31] The United States, Japan, India, and Australia certainly cannot hope to "compete" with China on their own without each other. While paying regular homage to ASEAN Centrality, the fact of the matter is that these countries no longer consider ASEAN institutions as sufficiently agile and capable to respond to the strategic challenges posed by China. Policy makers in Tokyo, New Delhi,

Canberra, and Washington are certainly aware of how divided ASEAN has been in recent years and how some member states are now publicly aligning themselves with China. Therefore, Southeast Asian leaders are aware that getting the Quad leaders to disband once again may seem like a fool's errand. After all, ASEAN itself has increasingly seen its own miniliteral arrangements. The ASEAN Our Eyes information-exchange initiative on violent extremism, radicalization, and terrorism (Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand) under the purview of the ADMM builds on existing subregional cooperation such as the Malacca Strait Patrols (Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore) and the Trilateral Cooperative Arrangement in the Sulu Sea (Indonesia, Malaysia, and Philippines).[32]

This is one of the reasons why Indonesia has pushed for the AOIP. If Southeast Asia cannot stop the Quad in its strategic tracks, it can at least articulate an alternative strategic vision—no matter how devoid of resources and practical steps it may be. After all, as Indonesian scholar Dewi Fortuna Anwar notes, because Southeast Asia is located at the geographic midpoint between the Indian and Pacific oceans and all the lands around and within them, ASEAN must, in Jakarta's view, continue to retain its centrality in the evolving Indo-Pacific construct.[33] Southeast Asian states in general, after all, remain committed to strategic nonalignment and hedging in the Indo-Pacific—if only to avoid the impression that they are taking sides in the face of growing great-power rivalry.[34] However, that does not mean that they would seek to push back or prevent the Quad from moving forward.

As the above analyses have shown, the challenge is figuring out whose centrality matters and how to ensure that both the Quad and ASEAN can not only coexist but also complement one another in regional architecture building. As a relatively new grouping, the ball is in the Quad's court, so to speak. The Quad leaders should be the ones to persuade Southeast Asia of its strategic utility, rather than the other way around. As I have suggested above, finding the right ladder and the right rung is essential for the future of Quad–ASEAN relations. The Quad becoming a strategic filler to and a strategic amplifier for existing ASEAN initiatives and institutions are certainly not the only means forward. However, at this point, such cooperation provides perhaps the best chance to get a region-wide buy-in from Southeast Asia. By strategically positioning the Quad as a strong supporter of ASEAN, the new grouping can certainly challenge the Chinese view that it will be nothing more than "a foam in the ocean." ✪

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Notes

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2. Tang Siew Mun, et al., *The State of Southeast Asia 2020 Survey Report* (Singapore: ISEAS–Yusof Ishak Institute, 2020), 33.

3. Huong Le Thu, *Southeast Asian Perceptions of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue: Survey Findings* (Canberra, ACT: Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 2018), 11.

4. Huong, *Southeast Asian Perceptions of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue*, 24.

5. Shafiah Muhibat and M. Habib Abiyan Dzakwan, "Indonesia and the Quad: can't or won't decide?", *The Strategist*, 7 December 2018, https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/.

6. See the discussion in Madhu Sudan Ravindran, "China's potential for economic coercion in the South China Sea disputes: a comparative study of The Philippines and Vietnam." *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 31, no. 3 (2012): 105–132; Carlyle A. Thayer, "Chinese Assertiveness in the South China Sea and Southeast Asian Responses." *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 30, no. 2 (2011): 77–104.

7. See the discussion in Rahul Roy-Chaudhury and Kate Sullivan de Estrada, "India, the Indo-Pacific and the Quad," *Survival* 60, no. 3 (2018): 181–94; and Sharon Stirling, ed., *Mind the Gap: National Views of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific* (Washington, DC: German Marshall Fund of the United States, 2019).

8. *See* Ankit Panda, "US, Japan, India, and Australia Hold Working-Level Quadrilateral Meeting on Regional Cooperation," *The Diplomat*, 13 November 2017, https://thediplomat.com/.

9. Jesse Johnson and Satoshi Sugiyama, "'Quad' meeting in Tokyo prizes symbolism over substance," *Japan Times*, 7 October 2020.

10. See for example, David Denoon, ed., *China, The United States, and the Future of Southeast Asia: US-China Relations* (New York: NYU Press, 2017); Don Emmerson, ed., *The Deer and the Dragon: Southeast Asia and China in the 21st Century* (Palo Alto CA: Stanford University Press, 2020); and Sebastian Strangio, *In the Dragon's Shadow: Southeast Asia in the Chinese Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2020).

11. See the discussion in John D. Ciorciari, *The Limits of Alignment: Southeast Asia and the Great Powers since 1975* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2010); and Evelyn Goh,

"Great Powers and Hierarchical Order in Southeast Asia: Analyzing Regional Security Strategies," *International Security* 32, no. 3 (2008): 113–57.

12. See the discussion in Anton Tsetov, "Will the Quad Mean the End of ASEAN Centrality?," *The Diplomat*, 15 November 2017, https://thediplomat.com/.

13. Joel Ng, "The Quadrilateral Conundrum: Can ASEAN Be Persuaded?," *RSIS Commentary*, 17 July 2018.

14. Malcolm Cook and Hoang Thi Ha, "Formal and Flexible: ASEAN and the New Strategic Disorder," *ISEAS Perspective*, 17 August 2020, 5, https://www.iseas.edu.sg/.

15. On Indonesia's lack of strategic options, *see* Evan A. Laksmana, "Buck-passing from Behind: Indonesia's Foreign Policy on the Indo-Pacific," *Order from Chaos* (blog), 27 November 2018, https://www.brookings.edu/.

16. For a longer discussion, *see* Evan A. Laksmana, "ASEAN Centrality in the South China Sea," in *Southeast Asian Perspectives on US-China Competition*, ed. Aaron Connelly (Council on Foreign Relations and Lowy Institute for International Policy, 2017), 9–13.

17. After all, ASEAN Centrality was historically correlated with the incapacity of great powers to successfully mediate their relations on their own in the post-Cold War world. *See* Lee Jones, "Still in the 'Drivers' Seat,' but for how Long? ASEAN's Capacity for Leadership in East-Asian International Relations," *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs* 29, no. 3 (2010): 95–113.

18. After all, achieving ASEAN Centrality in regional architecture building versus maintaining represents a different set of challenges requiring a different set of tools. See the discussion in Mely Caballero-Anthony, "Understanding ASEAN's Centrality: Bases and Prospects in an Evolving Regional Architecture," *Pacific Review* 27, no. 4 (2014): 563–84.

19. Euan Graham, "The Quad Deserves its Second Chance," in *Debating the Quad*, Centre of Gravity Series, ed. Andrew Carr (Acton, ACT: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, 2018), 4.

20. Huong, *Southeast Asian Perceptions*, 15.

21. *See* Evan A. Laksmana, "Flawed Assumptions: Why the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific is Defective," *AsiaGlobal Online*, 19 September 2019, https://www.asiaglobalonline.hku.hk/.

22. See for example the discussion in See Seng Tan, "The ADMM-Plus," *Asia Policy* 22 (2016): 70–75, https://muse.jhu.edu/.

23. See the discussion in Chien-peng Chung, "China and Japan in 'ASEAN Plus' Multilateral Arrangements: Raining on the Other Guy's Parade," *Asian Survey* 53, no. 5 (2013): 801–24, https://www.jstor.org/.

24. See for example the discussion in Nguyen Quang Dy, "Vietnam May Turn Threats into Opportunity," Yale Global Online, 2 June 2020, https://yaleglobal.yale.edu/.

25. *See* Jagannath Panda, "The Abe Doctrine on Quad Plus," *Japan Times*, 17 July 2020.

26. Huong, *Southeast Asian Perceptions*, 18.

27. Sarah Teo, "What the Quad Meeting Means for ASEAN?," *The Diplomat*, 9 October 2020, https://thediplomat.com/.

28. Ankit Panda, "Australia Returns to the Malabar Exercise," *The Diplomat*, 19 October 2020, https://thediplomat.com/.

29. See the discussion of these key trends in Brendan Taylor, *The Four Flashpoints: How Asia Goes to War*. (Carlton, VIC: La Trobe University Press, 2018).

30. *See* Bhubhindar Singh, and Sarah Teo, eds., *Minilateralism in the Indo-Pacific: The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, Lancang-Mekong Cooperation Mechanism, and ASEAN* (New York: Routledge,

2020); Wooyeal Paik and Jae Jeok Park. "The Quad's Search for Non-Military Roles and China's Strategic Response: Minilateralism, Infrastructure Investment, and Regional Balancing," *Journal of Contemporary China* (2020): 1–17; and Troy Lee-Brown, "Asia's Security Triangles: Maritime Minilateralism in the Indo-Pacific," *East Asia* 35, no. 2 (2018): 163–76.

31. Ian Hall, "Meeting the Challenge: The Case for the Quad," in *Debating the Quad,* 13.

32. Cook and Ha, "Formal and Flexible," 5.

33. Dewi Fortuna Anwar, "Indonesia and the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific," *International Affairs* 96, no. 1 (2020), 114. *See also* I Gusti Bagus Dharma Agastia, "Understanding Indonesia's Role in the 'ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific': A Role Theory Approach," *Asia Pacific Policy Studies* (2020): 1–13, https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/.

34. See the discussion in See Seng Tan, "Consigned to Hedge: South-east Asia and America's 'Free and Open Indo-Pacific' Strategy," *International Affairs* 96, no. 1 (2020), 131.