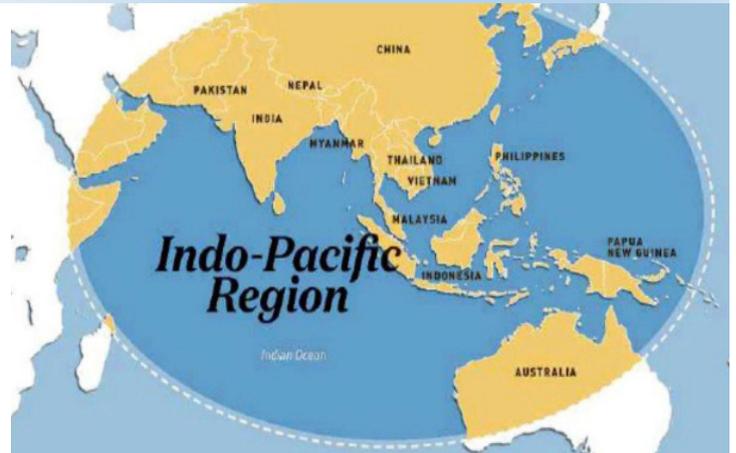




CENTRE FOR AIR POWER STUDIES (CAPS)

Forum for National Security Studies (FNSS)

INDO-PACIFIC NEWSLETTER



A monthly Newsletter on Security and Strategic Issues on Indo-Pacific Region from Centre for Air Power Studies

From Editor's Desk

Over the past month or so, as the international society has interacted over numerous conferences and forums, India-France synergy seems to be emerging as a key theme in the Indo-Pacific. The meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Emmanuel Macron saw them highlighting their “common ambitions” and indicated that Delhi sees Paris as an indispensable and premier partner for sustaining peace and stability in the region. In this vein, we bring to you an article reviewing France’s position in the Indo-Pacific post the advent of the Australia-United Kingdom-United States (AUKUS) trilateral that was a huge blow to its defense industry. Further, we also present a CAPS brief analyzing what the transatlantic tensions mean for India’s France policy in the coming times. Next, we address the making of a critical minilateral – the emergence of a ‘Quad’ grouping, involving India, Israel, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and the US – that adds to the existing (and rapidly strengthening) regional security architecture. We will also address Taiwan’s continued status as a critical fault line between the US and China and how it is poised to act as a test case, which could determine the course of great power rivalry in the region. Lastly, do check out our social media corner, which continues to feature some truly riveting cherry-picks of the month – including a contrarian perspective arguing how AUKUS could potentially limit Australian choices and box its decision-making.

Jai Hind

Vol 1, No 6 , 07 November 2021

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PEEP-IN

Does Pentagon have a Pacific posture predicament ?

Read on more about it at :-

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Indo-Pacific/Analysis-Pentagon-has-a-Pacific-posture-predicament>

QUOTE

“India remains committed to strengthening respect for shared values of multilateralism, rules-based international order, international law and sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations. I look forward to participating in the 18th ASEAN-India Summit”

Narendra Modi
PM, India

Opinions/Review/Expert View

France, Indo-Pacific Outlook and
AUKUS Tensions:

Assessing India's Position

Source: Mahima Duggal, Centre for Air Power Studies

<https://capsindia.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/CAPS-Issue-Brief-No.-148-France-Indo-Pacific-Outlook-and-AUKUS-Tensions-Assessing-Indias-Position.pdf>. 09 Oct, 2021.

The In a telephonic meeting between Indian Minister of External Affairs, S. Jaishankar and the French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian on September 18, 2021, New Delhi and Paris discussed recent developments in the Indo-Pacific and the worsening Afghanistan situation. Both sides pledged to collaborate on a shared plan of “concrete actions” to safeguard a “truly multilateral international order” while resolving to pursue a deeper Indo-Pacific partnership based on “political trust”. This agenda took further shape during the Foreign Ministers’ meeting in New York along the sides of the United Nations General Assembly in September, which resulted in a “comprehensive” discussion on contemporary issues and reaffirmation of a “solid” strategic partnership in the United Nations Security Council. In an example of growing synergy between them, India and France signed an Memorandum of Understanding to find innovative energy transition solutions on October 6, 2021.

Interestingly, the conversation assumed merely a day after France recalled its ambassadors to the United States and Australia for consultations with President Emmanuel

Macron following the launch of the landmark AUKUS pact and cancellation of the Paris-Canberra submarine deal. The development indicates the need for a recalculation of France’s Indo-Pacific outlook. Where does India stand in this reassessment? New Delhi is a critical partner in France’s vision for the region; with France-US and FranceAustralia ties shrouded in tensions, Paris’ partnership with India will undertake further significance moving forward.

France’s Quest for Recognition as an Indo Pacific Power

Although a geographically distant mainland state, France has made Indo-Pacific a key concept of its foreign policy since 2018 when Macron first announced his policy and objectives towards the region in a speech in Sydney. To realise this, Paris has accelerated its efforts to engage with the Indo-Pacific to establish itself as a credible player in the highly contested geopolitical space.

Unlike other European powers, France holds extensive territories in the Indo-Pacific (like the Mayotte, La Réunion, New Caledonia and French Polynesia islands) that give it the world’s second-largest exclusive economic zone (EEZ) across the region.

This has included escalated participation in regional organizations—such as the ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting-Plus (ADMM+), Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), Pacific Islands Forum, Pacific Community and the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)—and transnational initiatives like the International Solar Alliance (ISA) alongside India, the Pacific Initiative for Adaptation and Biodiversity, and the Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems (CREWS) Initiative. Simultaneously, in the military domain, France augmented its naval operational activities

in the Indo-Pacific, such as via the deployment of a frigate in the East China Sea to counter illegal North Korean activity,⁶ an attack submarine in the South China Sea, and led a naval exercise (La Pérouse) with the Quad states India, Japan, Australia and the United States.⁷ These activities demonstrated not only France's deep commitment to the region, but also that it envisages itself as a resident regional power.

Unlike other European powers, France holds extensive territories in the Indo-Pacific (like the Mayotte, La Réunion, New Caledonia and French Polynesia islands) that give it the world's second-largest exclusive economic zone (EEZ) across the region. Further, these territories also make France a littoral neighbour of five Indian Ocean and 12 Pacific Ocean nations. Amongst these, India ranks as one of France's topmost strategic partners and

a centerpiece of its regional strategy. Not only does New Delhi feature in France's Indo-Pacific engagements (like the Paris-Delhi-Canberra axis and the gradually shaping Paris-Delhi-Tokyo trilateral), but it is also a major defence partner. As part of their steadily rising bilateral trade (USD 10.75 billion in 2020), defence trade is key, with India procuring 36 Rafale fighter jets and six Scorpene submarines amongst other essential military hardware. India-France cooperation crucially extends to the maritime, space, civil nuclear and climate action domains, with Paris taking up the responsibility of the Maritime Resources pillar of India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI). In essence, India has advanced as a substantive strategic partner for

Despite being plagued with several issues (such as cost overruns and delays) since its inception in 2016, the France - Australian submarine pact played a crucial role in Paris' Indo-Pacific strategy as a sign of its abiding commitment to the region and values like freedom of navigation.

France's regional ambitions, even as both sides look to further bolster ties to imbibe their full potential.

French Fury over AUKUS: Paris Sidelined?

India's criticality in France's regional outlook only becomes more important in light of the recent announcement of an Australia-UK-US (AUKUS) Indo Pacific alliance. Aimed at bolstering joint capabilities, the AUKUS involves sharing of advanced technology (like artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and cyberwarfare) from the UK and US to Australia,

and first major initiative under this domain comes with the US and UK providing nuclear propulsion technology transfer and technical assistance to build a fleet of nuclear-powered submarines. This prompted Canberra to (rather callously and without any notice or consultation) cancel its €56 billion conventional submarine deal with France – a move Paris called a “stab in the back” from Canberra and reminiscent of former President Donald Trump's ‘America First’ ideology – “brutal, unilateral, unpredictable” and “insufferable”.

France's fury, evidenced by its public reaction and the unprecedented move to recall its ambassadors, roots from not just the economic fallout of the breakup but also, and more importantly, its impact and implications for France's regional strategy. Despite being plagued with several issues (such as cost overruns and delays) since its inception in 2016, the Franco-Australian submarine pact played a crucial role in Paris' Indo Pacific strategy as a

sign of its abiding commitment to the region and values like freedom of navigation. For Paris, the decision undermined its regional presence and efforts to structure a strong partnership with Quad state Australia, thus sidelining France as a European ally in the Indo-Pacific. In other words, France is concerned that AUKUS could indicate Paris is being shut off from the slowly strengthening US network of security alliances and partnerships in the Indo-Pacific. The move has already resulted in repercussions in the region, with France pulling out of the much-lauded strategic Paris-Delhi-Canberra axis formed in 2020.

Implications for India

India has welcomed AUKUS as a sign of Washington's readiness to transfer more advanced military technologies (like nuclear propulsion) with its Indo-Pacific partners. Considering the overlapping interests and membership of the Quad and AUKUS, India and Japan likely saw the possibility of eventually merging the groupings to form a concerted force to counter Chinese aggression and uphold shared values in the region. For India, the new coalition symbolises Washington's strong commitment and resolve to deter China, thus setting the stage for more vigorous security architecture in the region that helps stabilize the balance of power in the Indo-Pacific.

Yet, with the US ruling out India and Japan's potential inclusion¹⁶ in what has become an Anglo-Western bloc, there clearly remains a gap between India and the US in the absence of a security alliance treaty. While India is an increasingly close security partner of the US, based on their four

foundational security agreements, New Delhi's proclivity to avoid binding alliances in favour of strategic pointed alignments and issue-based multilateral coalitions precludes it from access to new sensitive tech (including nuclear).

On the other hand, for France, AUKUS marks a breach of trust between traditional allies – particularly because of how the AUKUS deliberations and cancellation of the submarine contract were hidden from Paris despite their direct impact on French interests and goals in the Indo-Pacific. In fact, in high-level diplomatic US-France discussions over the past month, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken repeatedly assured Paris that the France-Australia submarine deal was a crucial element of France's role in the IndoPacific. Now, this cancellation as well as the abrupt and rather undiplomatic manner

in which the US and Australia handled the issue with France will likely force Paris to recalculate its strategy in the Indo-Pacific, and increased focus on India can be a part of such a rethinking.

In essence, AUKUS can act as an impetus for India

and France to escalate their cooperation through increased exchanges and concrete collaborations in areas ranging from security and defence to the economy and climate change. As France revisits its Indo-Pacific approach and explores ways to further engage with and demonstrate its commitment to the region, collaborations in the Indian Ocean can feature at the forefront of its new strategy. Paris and New Delhi are already coordinating their stances in regional multilateral institutions; moving forward, they can establish joint projects in third countries in the Indian

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Ocean Region (IOR) to further boost their engagement. Such projects could span areas like infrastructure and connectivity development, digital connectivity support, blue economy and climate change.

That is not to say that the US and Australia will not remain key Indo-Pacific partners for both India and France. Macron and Biden are already set to meet in October 2021 to clear tensions and mend ties; Paris is also sending back its ambassador to the US for “intensive work” with US officials. In India’s case too, New Delhi will remain deeply invested in the Quad partnership with the US (alongside Australia and Japan) as well as its bilateral ties with Washington. The high momentum in India-US ties and India’s position towards the Quad is visible in Prime Minister Modi’s ongoing visit to Washington for the second Quad Leaders’ Summit (the first one in-person) as well as a private meeting with President Joe Biden and Vice President, Kamala Harris. In other words, the AUKUS security alliance is not likely to become obsolete or lose its immense importance in the member states’ IndoPacific outlooks.

Nevertheless, the AUKUS debacle has demonstrated the need for “intense and mature diplomacy to tap into opportunities beyond binaries”. For France, the incident is a clear notice that transatlantic frictions, which dominated under Trump’s presidency, will continue to plague the US-France ties. It was a reminder of the US poor track record as a senior partner in alliances where its interests diverge.

New Delhi will remain deeply invested in the Quad partnership with the US (alongside Australia and Japan) as well as its bilateral ties with Washington.

The very fact that India-France discussions featured Afghanistan as a key area for cooperation adds credence to their potential for an effective and critical partnership in the Indo-Pacific, and IOR and South Asia particularly

Moving forward, France (and perhaps even the EU), will consider more serious policies like strategic autonomy – which India regards essential in its foreign policy thinking. Under such conditions, India and France can find more to unite them and greater synergy to drive their partnership forward.

France already places equal importance (if not more) on the Indian Ocean as compared to the Pacific via its rather extensive and inclusive definition of the Indo-Pacific (“from Djibouti to Polynesia”). If India can act adeptly and effectively, it can position itself as the foremost partner for Paris in the region. Notably, the Modi administration has already taken steps to emphasize its ‘friendship’ with France and Paris’ importance to the Indo-Pacific meta-narrative as well as a driver of the EU’s pivot to the region. Apart from the Jaishankar-Le Drian telephonic conversation discussed earlier, India also reached out to France on September 21 (before beginning his US trip on

September 22) to discuss closer collaborations and highlight the “great value” that India places on its “cherished” Strategic Partnership with France, including within the United Nations

Security Council. Similarly, in a sign of the importance Paris places on India moving forward, Macron stressed that the India-France relationship was a close one, based on “mutual trust and respect”. Not only did both states pledged to bolster economic cooperation, but Paris also committed to reinforcing India’s strategic autonomy by supporting its industrial and technological base. The very fact that India-France

discussions featured Afghanistan as a key area for cooperation adds credence to their potential for an effective and critical partnership in the Indo-Pacific, and IOR and South Asia particularly. Both can deepen their maritime connect via the IPOI; potentially, France could be considered as India looks to purchase new submarines.

With a livid France withdrawing from the Paris-Delhi-Canberra trilateral talks (that were set to take place on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in September 2021), it is crucial that India and France accentuate their bilateral ties. Ultimately, the Indo-Pacific security architecture will be characterized by an assortment of alliances and partnerships; a deepened India-France partnership, built on trust, equality and congruence of interests can be a critical regional axis.

Taiwan and the Indo-Pacific

Source: Harsh V Pant, ORF

<https://www.orfonline.org/research/taiwan-and-the-indo-pacific/>. 20 Oct, 2021.



India's Amidst an all-out confrontation between the United States of America and China, Taiwan is fast emerging as a critical fault-line. The delicate balancing act that the US had long maintained on the issue is increasingly becoming difficult to sustain. The Indo-Pacific is witnessing a power transition unlike any witnessed in the recent past and its implications are being felt far and wide. As China becomes bellicose and aggressive and as the US with its regional partners is undertaking a strong pushback, the pressure on the regional environment is rising with no institutional mechanisms available to mediate tensions and conflicts. The scale and the speed of transition are seemingly much faster than the ability of regional actors to manage the externalities generated by the process that are mostly negative.

Recent weeks have seen strong signalling from all sides. After the Chinese president, Xi Jinping, warned that "reunification" with Taiwan "must be fulfilled", Taiwan's president, Tsai Ing-wen, defiantly made it clear on Taiwan's National Day that the nation would not bow to pressure from China and would defend its democratic way of life. Tsai, whose defiance of Beijing has made her immensely popular at

home, has pitched her nation as one “standing on democracy’s first line of defence”. She has effectively linked that fate of Taiwan with the future of peace and democracy in Asia.

Beijing has been upping the ante on the question, trying to test Taiwanese defences as well as the red lines of the US. A record number of Chinese warplanes, including J-16 fighters and 12 H-6 bombers with nuclear capabilities, have been repeatedly entering Taiwanese air defence zone. Much like in other parts of the region, Beijing is seeking to unilaterally alter the status quo away from peace and stability even as there are renewed worries in China that Taiwan’s government is inching towards a formal declaration of independence. Heightened military manoeuvres are China’s way of warning Taiwan and its supporters that Beijing remains prepared for military action.

Compared to any other time in recent decades, Taiwan today is viewed more positively in the international community, especially when compared to the loss of prestige China has seen in recent years. There are growing concerns about the future of Taiwan as Beijing’s aggressive display of military might is becoming more explicit by the day. Amidst this deteriorating environment, Xi Jinping and the US president, Joe Biden, reached out to each other and agreed to abide by the ‘Taiwan agreement’. Although this means that Washington will continue to persist with its longstanding ‘One China’ policy under which it recognizes China rather than Taiwan, it also entails the US continuing to supply weapons to Taiwan to defend itself as part of Washington’s Taiwan Relations Act. That

the US has no intention of giving up on Taiwan was also made clear by the US national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, who suggested recently that the US will “stand up and speak out” over any actions that may “undermine peace and stability” across the Taiwan Strait.

Relations between the US and China are being shaped by their burgeoning strategic rivalry. Even basic diplomatic engagement is becoming difficult to accomplish. Biden reportedly asked Xi for a face-to-face meeting but the Chinese president has remained non-committal, asking instead that the tone and tenor of the relationship improve first. Washington has doubled down on its Indo-Pacific policy with two leaders’-level summit of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue — the Quad — within six months and the announcement of the tripartite Aukus pact. For the US, these are all aimed at ensuring “that we have an open, free, interconnected and inclusive Indo Pacific”; for Beijing, this is all about containing China.

Taiwan is an important test case for both the US and China. It is about America’s credibility in the Indo-Pacific in the aftermath of its withdrawal from Afghanistan. And it is about China’s age-old ambition of national reunification and Xi Jinping’s project of national rejuvenation. For Taipei, this is about preserving its democratic values and way of life. These cross-currents of history and contemporary strategic trends are shaping the actions and the counter-actions of the major actors in this unfolding drama. The implications can be potentially very serious not only for the region but also for the evolving global order.

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France's Indo-Pacific "Third Way"

Source: Philippe Le Corre, Carnegie Europe

<https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/85525>. 07 Oct, 2021.



Following France's furore over the September 15 announcement of AUKUS—an Australian-British-U.S. security pact that entails Canberra scrapping a 2016 major submarine contract with Paris—one might wonder where the storm over the Australian fallout leaves France's Indo-Pacific strategy.

French defense contractor Naval Group may have lost a \$66 billion deal to the United States, but it is a fact that France has no intention of withdrawing from a region it has long considered one of its priorities.

The country's presence in the Indo-Pacific predates that of many major powers, including the United States. La Réunion, a département in the Indian Ocean, became a French territory as early as the eighteenth century. Today, with a 859,000-strong population, it still sends seven members of parliament to the National Assembly in Paris. Even the tiny Wallis and Futuna in the Pacific have their own French members of parliament. So do the other French territories in the region.

The recent and still unresolved crisis raises

three related questions.

The first question is: where do French-Australian relations go from here and where does Paris ultimately want to position itself within this huge region?

In the past two decades, France has indeed gradually transformed its historical presence into strategic interests. The Indo-Pacific, says the government in its newly revised strategy of August 2021, "has become a geopolitical and geo-economic reality. The global economy's centre of gravity has shifted from the Atlantic to the Pacific."

In 2018, President Emmanuel Macron visited the region to consolidate ties with allies and signed a strategic partnership with Australia. He recently declared France's aim "to help make the Indo-Pacific a free, safe and open space, which has high ambitions in terms of oceans, the climate and

Despite the fallout over AUKUS, France does not intend to withdraw from the Indo-Pacific. The diplomatic crisis has given President Macron a chance to make his country's voice heard on a major geostrategic issue.

biodiversity, and is integrated with regard to infrastructure and human exchanges."

Such great intentions will now have to be revisited, together with what promises to be a bitter legal battle with Australian Prime Minister

Scott Morrison's government and advisers over the cancelled contract. Trust between the two countries will have to be rebuilt and France's long-term relations in the region will have to extend far beyond Australia, to include countries such as India, Indonesia, and Vietnam.

The second question has to do with the EU's pride. As leaders of the AUKUS countries decided to announce their initiative just a day before the EU planned to launch its own Indo-Pacific strategy, what were they thinking?

By blatantly ignoring the EU's claims, they sent the wrong message to the Europeans, as France is undoubtedly the most active European country in the Indo-Pacific. The nation has an extensive maritime domain in the region in addition to 1.6 million citizens and a 7,000-men military presence—larger than that of all the other twenty-six EU member states combined.

France's Indo-Pacific strategy partly inspired the Dutch and German strategies as well as the aforementioned EU strategy, which had been in the works for months. It will take time for U.S. President Joe Biden's administration—now gifted with a new assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs, veteran Karen Donfried—to rebuild trust.

Although U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken's meeting with Macron on October 5 in Paris paved the way for a better recognition of France's role in the region, Europeans now understand Washington's unilateral pivot toward the Indo-Pacific.

Despite statements about rallying like-minded democratic countries, the Biden administration failed to anticipate France's reaction. This will have long-term negative consequences on the United States' image and on transatlantic relations, already damaged by Donald Trump's presidency.

Finally, the leaders of Australia, the UK, and the United States seem to have ignored the fact that some 280,000 French citizens living in New Caledonia will soon—most probably in December—decide by referendum whether they should remain part of France or not.

As New Caledonia is geographically one the

closest territories to the Australian continent, this may affect the regional balance of powers. Should the territory become independent, it risks coming under strong financial and political pressure from China—not unlike Vanuatu, Fiji, Samoa, or Papua New Guinea, for example. Many of these countries have their own Chinese communities and were persuaded by China to join its Belt and Road Initiative.

Should the New Caledonian situation deteriorate in the future, Australia would have no choice but to get involved, and may not have the means to do so, unless it relies on the United States. Cooperating

with France might be an option if both parties were willing to talk. Australia also awaits the critical signature of a free trade deal with the EU—now delayed by France.

Still, there might be a silver lining to this diplomatic crisis.

Ahead of the April 2022 presidential and legislative elections, politicians and analysts in France are debating the Indo-Pacific more than ever before. This means the strategy will move on. Macron has managed to make his country's voice heard far beyond the transatlantic sphere on a major geostrategic subject.

On September 22, President Biden acknowledged the “strategic importance of French and European engagement in the Indo-Pacific region, including in the framework of the European Union's recently published strategy for the Indo-Pacific.”

Back in Europe, Macron was also able to make his point about European defense at a summit in Slovenia. Fellow Europeans may not feel the urge

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to keep their distance from the United States, but there is a growing sentiment—including in France's neighbor Germany—that Washington's new focus on the Pacific is not in line with EU interests. That is why France's "third way" in the Indo-Pacific might not be such a bad idea after all.

A Quad for the Middle East?

Source: Rajeshwari Pillai Rajagopanan, ORF

<https://www.orfonline.org/research/a-quad-for-the-middle-east/>. 22 Oct, 2021.



Minilateralism appears to be the flavor of the season. After the Indo-Pacific Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, or the Quad – Australia, India, Japan, and the United States – has taken a firmer footing, a second quad is in the making.

The inaugural meeting between the foreign ministers of India, Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States is a significant development. The foreign ministers met on October 20 with India's S. Jaishankar and Israel's Yair Lapid joining in person while U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan joined the meeting virtually. Jaishankar was on an extended visit to Israel already, and he joined the meeting from there. Coincidentally, two

The establishment of a new quad in the Middle East reflects a recognition that the China challenge goes beyond the Indo-Pacific and has to be met in other regions, too."

prominent and well-connected Indian analysts referred to the possibility of such a new quad the day before, on October 19.

Interestingly, the foreign ministers of three members of this new quad had met together the previous week in Washington to review the progress in the Abraham Accords between Israel and the UAE, signed in August 2020. This new quad adds India to that trilateral.

This new quadrilateral is significant for four reasons. First, it is a clear recognition that the Biden administration is now actively involved in responding to China in multiple regions. The Biden administration has already re-energized U.S. involvement in the Indo-Pacific. It has not only deepened the Indo-Pacific Quad, but also established AUKUS. Both reflect the Biden administration's clear intent to meet China's challenge in the Indo-Pacific region. The establishment of a new quad in the Middle East reflects a recognition that the China challenge goes beyond the Indo-Pacific and has to be met in other regions, too.

Second, the same imperative appears to be driving the Indian involvement as well. After the Galwan confrontation in 2020, and China's continued intransigence along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), India has become much more enthusiastic about the Indo-Pacific Quad. Note that this enthusiasm was missing after the Doklam confrontation in 2017. In fact, after the Doklam confrontation, India and China held two informal leadership summits at Wuhan and Mamallapuram to try to resolve their differences. Probably as a consequence of these efforts, India dragged its feet on restarting the Quad initiative.

India joining this new Middle Eastern quad is a recognition that New Delhi also understands that the China challenge has to be met not only to India's north and east but also toward India's west.

The third point to note is that both India and the U.S. now recognize that they need each other to meet these China challenges. The U.S. has always been comfortable engaging with other partners across many regions, but India has never been one of them. India's material left now makes it a valuable partner for the U.S., in the Indo-Pacific but also in other regions. This is more of a departure for India, but clearly India also recognizes that the United States is needed to anchor any effort to counter China's spreading influence. It is also a reflection of India's growing comfort in dealing with the United States and its trust in Washington, belying predictions that the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan would lead to distrust of the U.S. capacity and commitment elsewhere.

The fourth point to note is that these quads – both in the Indo-Pacific and in the Middle East – are a reflection of the understanding that the China challenge is not just a military one but a far broader matter including political and economic aspects. As Navdeep Suri has noted, China's influence in the Middle East, particularly in Israel and the UAE, had been growing despite the fact that both are close U.S. security partners. This was not so much a direct security threat – even though there were security concerns also – but a broader expansion of Chinese political and

economic influence in the Middle East. While concerns about the Chinese military threat are important, there has not been as much focus on other aspects of China's power, even though these other aspects are equally vital. Both these quadrilateral groups are a reflection that the U.S. and India are gearing up for this far broader struggle even while they are also intent on meeting China's direct military pressure.

Interestingly, the foreign ministers of three members of this new quad had met together the previous week in Washington to review the progress in the Abraham Accords between Israel and the UAE, signed in August 2020. This new quad adds India to that trilateral.

Finally, Israel and the UAE are good partners for India and the United States. India and the U.S. enjoy good bilateral relations with both Israel and the UAE, which was a necessary facet for building a Middle Eastern quad. Second, both are emerging technology powers in their own right. Israel's technological prowess in military and civilian areas is well known. Less well known is the fact that the UAE is also gearing up for technological advances in areas such as outer space exploration. The UAE's recent Mars probe, Hope, is a case in point. In addition, the Abraham Accords brought Israel and the UAE together, thus resolving some of the difficulties of building a Middle Eastern coalition.

Although quads are a particular form of minilateral engagements, they depend on specific conditions. We should expect more minilaterals, even if they are not all going to be quads. As I pointed out elsewhere, the difficulties with traditional multilateralism are leading to a renewed focus on minilateralism, and the new quad is one more example of that.

Social Media Corner

Cherry-picks of the Month

1. Artificial Intelligence and Big Data in the Indo-Pacific - <https://thediplomat.com/2021/10/artificial-intelligence-and-big-data-in-the-indo-pacific/>
2. AUKUS is a backward step for Australia - <https://www.ussc.edu.au/analysis/aukus-is-a-backward-step-for-australia>
3. What's behind the spike in Chinese incursions into Taiwan's air defence zone? - https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/whats-behind-the-spike-in-chinese-incursions-into-taiwans-air-defence-zone/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Daily%20The%20Strategist&utm_content=Daily%20The%20Strategist+CID_5b2af48054d0902e0ca563ff38fed91d&utm_source=CampaignMonitor&utm_term=Whats%20behind%20the%20spike%20in%20Chinese%20incursions%20into%20Taiwans%20air%20defence%20zone
4. How to make the Quad truly quadrilateral - <https://asia.nikkei.com/Opinion/How-to-make-the-Quad-truly-quadrilateral>

Interviews / View Points

1. Indo-Pacific Security: China's Hypersonic Missile Test and Taiwan - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PeivMgAciU8>
2. Australia, China & the Indo-Pacific: A Discussion with Tony Abbott, 28th Prime Minister of Australia - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mZ7DkKKn4uU>

3. India is central to Indo-Pacific: British envoy to India - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1FK7IjG4tws>

Debates

1. AUKUS and Future of Indo Pacific Security - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7m_MkTHMqfk
2. AUKUS Resetting the European Thinking on Indo Pacific - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1t3diKchnpM>
3. Biden's Indo-Pacific Strategy: The State of Play - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2IR2-Pa9CPA>

Podcasts

1. John Brennan on U.S. Partnerships and Intelligence in the Indo-Pacific Region - <https://theasiagroup.com/category/podcasts/>
2. What's All the RAUKUS About? The View from Australia - <https://podcasts.google.com/search/indo%20pacafic>
3. Rising Tensions in the Indo-Pacific - <https://podcast.thedispatch.com/p/rising-tensions-in-the-indo-pacific>

Video Links

1. Secretary Blinken's Remarks at the Fourth Indo-Pacific Business Forum - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UllqY79dsN0>
2. F-35 the 'fighter of choice' in the Indo-Pacific - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZuL7FlwigA>



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