



Prospects and Limitations for a Quad Plus Europe

Sheryn Lee





Sheryn Lee

Associated Fellow at the Asia Programme,
The Swedish Institute of International Affairs, UI.
Senior Lecturer, Swedish Defence University



Outline

For Australia, India, Japan and the United States, the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) will continue to prioritise Indo-Pacific needs – its mandate since the Quad’s revival in 2017.¹ A key part of this effort is the delivery of public goods that demonstrate to the region the value of “a free, open rules-based order, rooted in international law”.² While it was concern about China’s economic coercion and assertive military activities that brought the group together, the Biden administration’s broadening of the Quad’s agenda to vaccines, climate change and emerging technologies has sought to reduce regional criticism that the Quad is an anti-China coalition.

In tandem, deteriorating relations between China and the European Union (EU) and many individual European states in recent years have increased interest in how the Quad and Europe might work together. In particular, China’s economic coercion, military aggression and political interference in Europe have increased the desire to share assessments and counter such practices by working with like-minded Indo-Pacific partners such as Japan and Australia. Importantly, the EU’s Indo-Pacific strategy also states that the Indo-Pacific is vital to the EU’s economic growth. In the next two decades, the Indo-Pacific will constitute two-

thirds of global GDP and be at the forefront of digital and technological innovation.³

This paper discusses the Quad’s agenda and how its design is tailored to the Indo-Pacific. It argues that working with the Quad will entail individual, like-minded European and Indo-Pacific countries coordinating in ad hoc, flexible formats. Such arrangements should focus on niche issues where European countries and the EU have overlapping interests with Quad members, such as Indian Ocean and maritime security or ensuring cheap, high-quality, and reliable technologies to assist developing countries’ transition to renewable energy. It concludes with a set of policy recommendations on how to further this agenda.

What is the Quad?

Quadrilateral coordination between Australia, India, Japan, and the US began in response to the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami in order to deliver humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. The first informal meeting took place somewhat later in Manila on the sidelines of the 2007 Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum. A few months later Australia, Japan and Singapore joined the annual India-US Malabar⁴ exercises in the Western Pacific Ocean, a grouping which became affectionately known as “the Squad”.⁵ However, Beijing’s diplomatic protests and

¹ Australian Government, “Quad”, Regional architecture, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2022,

<https://www.dfat.gov.au/international-relations/regional-architecture/quad>.

² The White House, “Quad Leaders’ Joint Statement: ‘The Spirit of the Quad’”, Briefing Room, 12 March 2021,

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/12/quad-leaders-joint-statement-the-spirit-of-the-quad/>

³ European External Action Service, “EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific”, February 2022,

<https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eu-indo-pacific-factsheet-2022-02-0.pdf>.

⁴ The Malabar exercises are annual naval drills hosted by the US and India in the Indian and Western Pacific Oceans, see US Navy Office of Information, “Japan hosts Australia, India, US in Naval Exercise Malabar 2022”, US Navy, 2022, <https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/Article/3216935/japan-hosts-australia-india-us-in-naval-exercise-malabar-2022/>.

⁵ Tanvi Madan, “The Rise, Fall, and Rebirth of the ‘Quad’”, *War on the Rocks*, 16 November 2017, <https://warontherocks.com/2017/11/rise-fall-rebirth-quad/>.



the risk that the Quad might have repercussions for economic ties with China led to further Quad initiatives being shelved.

Nonetheless, the idea of a small group of values-aligned countries with the resources and motivation to effectively and quickly respond to Indo-Pacific contingencies remained compelling. A shared desire to reinvigorate the Quad grew as Canberra's, Delhi's, Tokyo's, and Washington's concerns about China increasingly overlapped. Key "like-minded" motivations were Beijing's economic coercion and political influence campaigns, the often opaque objectives of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the increasing military presence of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). Thus, efforts to renew the Quad began based on a shared vision of supporting the autonomy of regional states, balancing China's growing power in the Indo-Pacific and helping each other to resist China's attempted coercion.⁶ The first working-level Quad meeting in 2017 discussed issues such as upholding the rules-based order, ensuring freedom of navigation and overflight, and enhancing regional connectivity and maritime security.

The Quad's first ministerial meeting was held in 2019 and by 2020 all four Quad countries had participated again in the Malabar exercises. In 2021, President Biden convened the first leaders' summit virtually with a focus on the pandemic and vaccine delivery, infrastructure development and technology partnerships. The leaders also agreed to meet annually, and this leaders' track is led by the Australian Government's Quad Sherpa.⁷ These leaders' meetings build on

the Quad foreign ministers' meetings, exchanges of strategic assessments between Quad senior officials and working-level programmes that coordinate on regional priorities such as cybersecurity, countering disinformation, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. Thus, the Quad has become an ad hoc, flexible forum for Australia, Japan, India, and the US to coordinate and then enact programmes to maintain a free and open Indo-Pacific.

The Quad's agenda

At the Quad's core remains Washington's, Tokyo's, Delhi's and Canberra's concerns about the efforts of Xi Jinping's China to reshape the regional and international environment.⁸ Each country has a set of overlapping apprehensions that shapes the current Quad agenda:

- i. Washington's bipartisan objective is to counter China's actions on Taiwan and the East and South China Seas, and to address Chinese espionage operations and intellectual property and technology theft, as well as its unfair trade practices;⁹
- ii. Tokyo's goal is to counter China's attempts to change the status quo in the East China Sea, particularly around the disputed Senkaku/Diaoyu islands, and to

⁶ Richard Maude, "ASPI Note: How to Understand the Quad – Key Points for Business", Asia Society Policy Institute, 10 February 2022, <https://asiasociety.org/policy-institute/aspi-note-how-understand-quad-key-points-business>.

⁷ Australian Government, "Quad", Regional architecture, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2022,

<https://www.dfat.gov.au/international-relations/regional-architecture/quad>.

⁸ The White House, Quad Leaders' Joint Statement: "The Spirit of the Quad".

⁹ The White House, *National Security Strategy* (Washington DC: The White House, October 2022), 17.



- iii. address China's economic coercion and technology theft;¹⁰ Delhi's goal is to counter China's attempts to change the status quo along Indian's northern border, balance deepening China-Pakistan and China-Africa ties, and address the lack of reciprocity in economic ties;¹¹
- iv. Canberra's goal is to address Chinese interference in domestic politics, as well as China's unfair trade practices and economic coercion; and to counter China's activities in the South China Sea and the South Pacific.¹²

To deflect regional concerns about an overtly anti-China stance, Quad members have taken deliberate steps to ensure that the Quad remains a low-key, ad hoc and flexible mini-lateral group with a leader-driven and Indo Pacific-focused agenda. For its part, the Quad's focus is on coordinating the delivery of "public goods" that have been absent from the Indo-Pacific. Thus, the grouping is distinct from existing regional forums such as ASEAN, Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation, and the East Asian Summit, which are important for promoting regional economic integration but

less so for exerting political influence. It also differs from the "mega trade pacts", the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), which focus on improving market access, eliminating tariffs and establishing standards and rules;¹³ and from the network of US bilateral alliances with Australia, Japan, the Philippines, Thailand and South Korea that prioritise warfighting preparedness, which includes improving integrated deterrence and interoperability.¹⁴

There is a web of overlapping arrangements between the four partners in the Quad.¹⁵ First, there are quadrilateral pacts, such as the Malabar exercises and the Pitch Black military exercises.¹⁶ Second, there are bilateral pacts, such as the mutual defence treaty between the US and Japan and the ANZUS alliances, as well as a Japan-Australia visiting force arrangement and an India-Japan civil nuclear and logistical support pact. Third, there are trilateral dialogues and military exercises between the US, Japan, and India, and between the US, Japan, and Australia. In addition, Quad working groups coordinate on COVID-19 and global health security; delivering high-quality

¹⁰ Japan Ministry of Defense, *National Security Strategy 2022* (Tokyo: Ministry of Defense, 2022), https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/agenda/guideline/pdf/security_strategy.pdf; and Japan Ministry of Defense, "Situation in China (East China Sea, Pacific Ocean, Sea of Japan)", *Security Environment Surrounding Japan*, July 2022, https://www.mod.go.jp/j/approach/surround/pdf/ch_d-act_a.pdf

¹¹ Lt Gen D S Hooda, *India's National Security Strategy* (Indian National Congress, March 2019), 11-12.

¹² Australian Government, *2020 Defence Strategic Update* (Canberra: Department of Defence, 2020), 11-15.

¹³ Michael D. Sutherland, "Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)",

Congressional Research Service Report, *In Focus*, IF11891, 17 October 2022, 2.

¹⁴ Kristien Bergerson, "China's Efforts to Counter US Forward Presence in the Asia", Staff Research Report, US-China Economic and Security Review Commission, 15 March 2016, 11.

¹⁵ Enrico D'Ambrogio, "The Quad: An emerging multilateral security framework of democracies in the Indo-Pacific region", European Parliamentary Research Service Briefing, March 2021 – PE 690.513, 6.

¹⁶ Exercise Pitch Black is a biennial three-week multinational air force exercise hosted in Australia, see Royal Australian Air Force, "Exercise Pitch Black", 2022, <https://www.airforce.gov.au/news-and-events/events/exercise-pitch-black>.



infrastructure; combating the climate crisis; coordinating on emerging technologies, space and cyber-security; and supporting the next generation of science, technology engineering and mathematics (STEM) talent in the Quad states.¹⁷ Such working groups take a long-term view and aim to supplement existing national efforts to strengthen the Indo-Pacific's prosperity, security and technological advantages.¹⁸

Some observers have criticised these Quad initiatives as a sign that it is "at risk of losing its strategic focus".¹⁹ However, the areas of securing supply chains, technology standards and high-quality infrastructure investment are ill-served by existing regional forums.²⁰ Quad coordination fills a niche gap by addressing how science, technology, industry, and supply chains are increasingly connected to security and defence issues. For instance, one of the aims of the critical and emerging technology working group is to create an open, accessible, and secure technology ecosystem. This has led to a mapping of Quad members' capabilities and vulnerabilities in semiconductor supply chains, cooperation on securing mobile networks and the diversification of 5G suppliers, and an exploration of cooperation

with industry partners on how to secure telecommunications and undersea cables.²¹

From the Quad's perspective, engaging "Plus partners" risks watering initiatives down, making them cumbersome and overly bureaucratic. Given the need to achieve consensus, bringing in other partners would also make coordination more complicated.²² Bringing non-members into the working groups risks slowing the Quad's pace due to the increased range of industrial needs that would have to be addressed. For example, the goal of distributing COVID-19 vaccines led to Quad-Plus meetings that included South Korea, Vietnam, and New Zealand in 2020, and Brazil, Israel and South Korea in 2022.²³ These meetings were short-lived, however, due to "vaccine nationalism, internal coordination hiccups, and regional wariness".²⁴

Such problems could also extend to the development of technology and securing supply chains. For instance, finding common agreement between Quad members on technology standards will raise regulatory challenges such as: (a) unpredictable business models that rely on emerging technologies, particularly in service provision; (b) domestic concerns over data

¹⁷ The White House, "Fact Sheet: Quad Leaders' Summit", Briefing Room, 24 September 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/09/24/fact-sheet-quad-leaders-summit/>.

¹⁸ Maude, "ASPI Note: How to Understand the Quad – Key Points for Business".

¹⁹ Brahma Chellaney, "The Quad is at risk of losing its strategic focus", Opinion, Nikkei Asia, 11 September 2022, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Opinion/The-Quad-is-at-risk-of-losing-its-strategic-focus>.

²⁰ Joshua Kurlantzick, "ASEAN's Year of Misery", *Asia Unbound*, Council on Foreign Relations, 22 February 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/blog/aseans-year-misery>.

²¹ Garima Mohan and Kristi Govella, "The Future of the Quad and the Emerging Architecture in

the Indo-Pacific", Policy Paper, German Marshall Fund, June 2022, 6.

²² Susannah Patton, "Does the Quad plus add up", *The Lowy Interpreter*, 21 March 2022, <https://www.loyyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/does-quad-plus-add>.

²³ Brazil was included as it was a main recipient of Indian-produced vaccines. South Korea was included as it was already part of Indo-Pacific vaccine delivery dialogues. Israel was included as it had the experience and data of the rapid rollout of COVID-19 vaccinations.

²⁴ Amalina Anuar and Nazia Hussain, "The Quad and Regional Health Security: Implications and Prospects for the Indo-Pacific", RSIS Policy Report (Singapore: NTU, February 2022), 11.



privacy, ownership and consumer protection; and (c) the fact that current regulatory frameworks are not well-suited to how emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) operate.²⁵ Solutions are likely to be further complicated by concerns in the EU, Japan and South Korea about the impact of the Biden administration's export control legislation and protectionist sentiments on their industries.²⁶ While the 2022 US National Security Strategy states that the US-EU Trade and Technology Council could work with the Quad on critical and emerging technology and open next-generation digital infrastructure, the primary goal is said to be to bolster "US and allied technology leadership".²⁷

Tailored to the Indo-Pacific

Thus, it is likely that the Quad will not expand its membership but remain open to temporary partnerships based on tangible outcomes that support the Quad-defined Indo-Pacific "rules-based order". Quad members are still working hard to reduce regional scepticism that the Quad is an anti-China coalition.²⁸ To do so, it actively courts

ASEAN support by promoting "ASEAN unity and centrality and...practical implementation of ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific".²⁹ It has also enacted initiatives based on local security concerns, such as the Quad's satellite-based Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA) to boost Southeast Asia's ability to track illegal fishing and maritime militia.³⁰ This has partially allayed concerns that partnering with the Quad is all about containing China. In a 2020 survey, the majority of Southeast Asian respondents viewed the Quad as having a negative or no impact on regional security.³¹ In 2022, however, the majority of respondents viewed strengthening the Quad through practical cooperation as constructive for Southeast Asia.³²

Moreover, the Quad has also prioritised strengthening coordination, "individually and collectively ... to enhance [Pacific island countries'] economic well-being, strengthen health infrastructure and environmental resilience, to improve their maritime security and sustain their fisheries, to provide sustainable infrastructure, to bolster educational opportunities, and to mitigate

²⁵ The World Bank, "Emerging technologies (AI) challenges and principles of regulation", *Digital Regulation Platform*, International Telecommunications Union (ITU), 16 December 2021, <https://digitalregulation.org/3004297-2/>.

²⁶ Javier Espionza et al., "Trade rift between EU, US grows over green industry and jobs", *Financial Times*, 30 October 2022, <https://www.ft.com/content/48178f1e-5572-496e-8f8e-bb4c0e3ec8ea>.

²⁷ The White House, *National Security Strategy*, 33

²⁸ Kishore Mahbubani, "Why Attempts to Build a New Anti-China Alliance Will Fail", *Argument*, *Foreign Policy*, 27 January 2021, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/01/27/anti-china-alliance-quad-australia-india-japan-u-s/>.

²⁹ The White House, "Quad Joint Leaders' Statement", Briefing Room, 24 May 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/05/24/quad->

[joint-leaders-statement/](#). The ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific asserted ASEANs central role as the region's facilitator and convenor amid Sino-US strategic competition. See The Asean Secretariat, "ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific," 23 June 2019, ASEAN https://asean.org/asean2020/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/ASEAN-Outlook-on-the-Indo-Pacific_FINAL_22062019.pdf.

³⁰ The White House, "FACT SHEET: Quad Leaders' Tokyo Summit 2022", Briefing Room, 23 May 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/05/23/fact-sheet-quad-leaders-tokyo-summit-2022/>.

³¹ Tang Siew Mun et al., *The State of Southeast Asia, 2020* (Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2020), p.33.

³² Sharon Seah et al., *The State of Southeast Asia: 2022* (Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2022), p.28



and adapt to the impacts of climate change”.³³ This commitment is motivated by the desire of some Pacific Island countries, such as Fiji, Samoa and Vanuatu, for Australia, the US and Japan to provide genuine alternatives to China’s offer on the financing of investment.³⁴ In 2020 and 2021, Australia, Japan and the US agreed to jointly fund the construction of undersea communications cables for Kiribati, Nauru, Palau and the Federated States of Micronesia.³⁵ Australia, Japan, the US and New Zealand are also cooperating on delivering 75 percent of Papua New Guinea’s electricity by 2030.³⁶ Recent data shows that China’s total development financing in the South Pacific is in overall decline, despite increases in Kiribati and the Solomon Islands.³⁷

The Quad’s geographical priorities also include South Asia and the Indian Ocean Rim countries. It is notable that when the Quad was launched in 2007, it was to deliver humanitarian assistance to those countries

affected by the Indian Ocean tsunami and earthquake. The Quad’s 2022 IPMDA also includes the Indian Ocean, a reminder of the Quad’s geographic scope. In addition, Japan and India agreed in 2017 to develop an “Asia-Africa Growth Corridor” to link India, South Asia, Northeast and Southeast Asia and the Pacific by sea routes.³⁸ In 2022, Japan’s aid agency signed an agreement with India to improve the power supply to the Andaman and Nicobar island chain – an area that makes up 30 per cent of India’s exclusive economic zone, which is located at the confluence of the Indian and Pacific Oceans, and at the western entrance to the Malacca Strait.³⁹ Japan and India are also collaborating on various projects in India’s sensitive north-east region, close to China’s south-western border. Australian and Indian foreign ministers held a trilateral with Indonesia in 2022 to discuss, among other issues, maritime governance in the Indian Ocean,⁴⁰ and the US and India launched “I2U2” with Israel and the United Arab

³³ The White House, “Quad Joint Leaders’ Statement”. Briefing Room, 24 May 2022.

³⁴ Charu Sudan Kasturi, “Riots and snubs: In Pacific Islands, a growing wariness of China”, Al Jazeera, 10 March 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2022/3/10/riots-and-snubs-in-pacific-islands-a-growing-wariness-of-china>.

³⁵ ABC/Reuters, “New undersea cable for Nauru, Kiribati and the Federated States of Micronesia will be funded by Australia, the US and Japan”, ABC News, 12 December 2021, <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2021-12-12/new-undersea-cable-internet-pacific-australia-us-japan/100694212>; and Yohei Hirose, “Japan, US and Australia to finance undersea cable for Palau”, *Nikkei Asia*, 28 October 2020, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Japan-US-and-Australia-to-finance-undersea-cable-for-Palau>.

³⁶ RNZ, “Japan and World Bank pledge ongoing support to Papua New Guinea”, Radio New Zealand, 2 July 2021, <https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific->

[news/446011/japan-and-world-bank-pledge-ongoing-support-to-png](https://www.rnz.co.nz/international/pacific-news/446011/japan-and-world-bank-pledge-ongoing-support-to-png).

³⁷ Alexandre Dayant et al, “Aiding the Pacific in the time of Covid-19: Launch of the 2022 Pacific Aid Map update”, *Lowy Institute*, 31 October 2022,

<https://www.lowyinstitute.org/event/aiding-pacific-time-covid-19-launch-2022-pacific-aid-map-update>.

³⁸ RIS, ERIA and IDE-JETRO, “Asia Africa Growth Corridor: Partnership for Sustainable and Innovative Development – A Vision Document”, May 2017, <https://www.eria.org/Asia-Africa-Growth-Corridor-Documents.pdf>.

³⁹ Sohini Bose, “India-Japan collaborations: Andaman and Nicobar Islands in focus”, *Observer Research Foundation: Raisina Debates*, 14 April 2022, <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/india-japan-collaborations/>.

⁴⁰ Lisa Singh and Lewis Baker, “Australia’s shared security in the Indian Ocean”, *Lowy: The Interpreter*, 26 October 2022, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/australia-s-shared-security-indian-ocean>.



Emirates to build “food parks” based on “climate smart technologies”.⁴¹

The Quad’s successes in delivering on local concerns has also meant ensuring that the Quad’s broader work on climate change, supply chains, cyber and space, as well as emerging technologies feeds into existing development needs and fills Indo-Pacific critical infrastructure gaps. For instance, the Japan-India cooperation on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands will ensure that power supply enhancements are based on renewable energies. Should a European partner want to join a Quad Plus arrangement, it would have to consider what tangible resources it could pledge to Southeast Asian, South Pacific, and South Asian countries that do not compete with the broad swathe of existing Quad initiatives. Such a Quad Plus arrangement would also have to be sensitive to concerns that the Quad should not be dominated by “western interests”, but rather investments made to enhance Indo-Pacific public goods.

Who wants to work with whom?

The broader Indo-Pacific perception is that Europe lacks the resources and political will to follow through on its declared Indo-Pacific policies and strategies.⁴² Unlike the Quad countries, there is no European consensus on the best approach to counter China’s goals on reshaping the international environment. For the Quad members, the Quad is one of

many important instruments for building trust with regional countries by providing long-term, sustainable, and credible alternatives to China’s finance, investment, and technology. While there are common goals between Quad countries, the European Union, and individual European countries, it is unclear in the Indo-Pacific which European countries and which institutions could play a tangible role the region.

Despite the rhetoric of the EU’s High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell, on the need for the EU to be a political and security actor in the Indo-Pacific, the EU does not have the capabilities to play that role.⁴³ For instance, French, German, and Dutch naval deployments to the Indo-Pacific in 2021 were conducted not under the EU but under national flags. Moreover, the EU’s focus will continue to be on preventing negative effects on its economic security from geopolitical competition in the Indo-Pacific. Thus, the EU is likely to remain committed to existing multilateral frameworks that align with the EU’s trade and investment goals, which require limited coordination of member states’ assets and do not require new resources or the need to make new political commitments.

In addition, should the EU and major European countries wish to partner with the Quad, they would need to distinguish the arrangement from the G7 of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom

⁴¹ The White House, “Joint Statement of the Leaders of India, Israel, United Arab Emirates, and the United States (I2U2)”, Briefing Room, 14 July 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/07/14/joint-statement-of-the-leaders-of-india-israel-united-arab-emirates-and-the-united-states-i2u2/>.

⁴² Bethany Allen-Ebrahimian, “4. Europe continues to sound alarm on China”, *Axios China*, 18 October 2022, [https://www.axios.com/newsletters/axios-china-](https://www.axios.com/newsletters/axios-china-9dccc4e08-2466-4216-a4a2-2241e0c0b311.html)

[9dccc4e08-2466-4216-a4a2-2241e0c0b311.html](https://www.axios.com/newsletters/axios-china-9dccc4e08-2466-4216-a4a2-2241e0c0b311.html); and Frederick Kliem, “How the EU can Still Succeed in the Indo-Pacific Despite the War in Ukraine”, *The Diplomat*, 28 May 2022, <https://thediplomat.com/2022/05/how-the-eu-can-still-succeed-in-the-indo-pacific-despite-the-war-in-ukraine/>.

⁴³ Sciences Po/CERI, “European Union”, *Observatory: Indo-Pacific*, 2022, <https://www.sciencespo.fr/ceri/observatory-indo-pacific/eu/>.



and the US of which the EU is a non-enumerated member. Quad and G7 priorities for 2022 were broadly similar: accelerating the global energy transition, the recovery of the global economy, pandemic prevention and control, sustainable infrastructure development and promoting democratic values.⁴⁴ The US and Japan are members of both groups, so there would probably be little appetite to make the Quad's membership more similar to the G7, due to the increased risk of overlap.

Consequently, the most likely prospect for European countries working with the Quad would be individually through the Quad's bilateral and trilateral arrangements. Smaller groupings with shared interests and a clear approach would have a greater chance of delivering on programmes that are relevant for both the Indo-Pacific and Europe. For instance, France's South Pacific and Indian Ocean territories make it a logical partner for Quad coordination on development assistance and maritime-capacity building.⁴⁵ The UK's involvement in the Australia-US-UK (AUKUS) technology sharing agreement could lead to accelerated work with other regional countries such as Japan and New Zealand on joint ventures such as AI and

quantum computing.⁴⁶ In addition, to contribute to military readiness, individual European forces are likely to continue to be welcome in joint military exercises with Quad members, such as Exercise Pitch Black, Exercise Kakadu⁴⁷ and RIMPAC.⁴⁸

Broader initiatives on linking the traditional European focus on the West African littoral, Japan and India's focus on the Western Indian Ocean and the US and Australian focus on the Eastern Indian Ocean would probably also be welcomed by Quad members.⁴⁹ Although ambitious, such a programme has a precedent. Operation Atalanta, the EU's first Indo-Pacific military deployment, was in the north-west Indian Ocean to monitor fishing activities and illicit trafficking, and to deter and respond to armed robbery at sea.⁵⁰ African and European mutual concern to address the impact of climate change, reduce cybercrime and enhance vaccine delivery are also aligned with Quad objectives. Consequently, linking these existing European priorities to Quad activities could bring about more logical and sustainable partnerships that address local needs for infrastructure investment, transitions to renewable energy, and the diversification of food, energy and commodity supply chains.

⁴⁴ G7 Germany, "Progress towards an equitable world", G7 Presidency Programme, 2022, <https://www.g7germany.de/g7-en/g7-summit/g7-presidency-programme#:~:text=As%20a%20pioneer%20and%20based,accelerate%20the%20global%20energy%20transition.>

⁴⁵ Charles Millon, "France's Strategy in the Indo-Pacific", *GIS: Security*, 21 February 2022, <https://www.gisreportsonline.com/r/frances-strategy-in-the-indo-pacific/>.

⁴⁶ Jocelinn Kang, "Enhancing cyber capabilities through AUKUS", *ASPI: The Strategist*, 16 September 2022, <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/enhancing-cyber-capabilities-through-aukus/>.

⁴⁷ Exercise Kakadu is a biennial naval and air exercise hosted by the Australian Navy. See Australian Government, "Exercise Kakadu begins

in Darwin", *Media Releases*, Department of Defence, 10 September 2022, <https://www.defence.gov.au/news-events/releases/2022-09-10/exercise-kakadu-begins-darwin.>

⁴⁸ RIMPAC is the world's largest annual international maritime exercise hosted by the US' Indo-Pacific Command, See United States Pacific Fleet, *RIMPAC*, US Navy, 2022, <https://www.cpf.navy.mil/rimpac/>.

⁴⁹ Stephan Frühling, "Multilateralizing Maritime Security in the Indo-Pacific: How Europe can contribute to regional deterrence", *Guarding the Commons in the Indo-Pacific* (The Hague Centre for Strategic Studies, 23 March 2022), 8.

⁵⁰ European Union External Action, "EU Naval Force – Somalia: Mission", EUNAVFOR, 2022, <https://eunavfor.eu/mission.>



This would also reduce regional concerns that European interest in the Quad might be focused on building an anti-China coalition and fits the broader vision of the Quad to deliver public goods for the Indo-Pacific.

Recommendations

Despite this heightened interest, differences in priorities mean that there are only limited prospects that European countries and the EU might work with the Quad in a “Quad Plus” arrangement. The EU’s main interests in the Indo-Pacific will continue to be securing trade and investment links and ensuring market access. The EU’s Indo-Pacific strategy states that intensifying geopolitical competition in the Indo-Pacific is “creating significant strains on trade and supply chains”, particularly as “around 40% of the EU’s foreign trade passes through the South China Sea”.⁵¹ For the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance (NATO), Russia will continue to be “the most significant and direct threat to Allies’ security and to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area”.⁵² Since NATO is a transatlantic military alliance, it would be highly unlikely that NATO would form partnerships with the Quad. Finally, the approaches of individual European states to the Indo-Pacific vary. France, Germany, and the Netherlands have distinctive commitments to the Indo-Pacific, the UK’s “Indo-Pacific tilt” aims to advance its “Global Britain” objectives while the interest of Central and Eastern European countries in the Indo-Pacific is in countering China’s economic statecraft and its support for Russia’s destabilising activities close to home.

Moreover, Quad initiatives will continue to preference working with partners in the region – such as South Korea, the ASEAN

member-states, or members of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) – to deliver on regional outcomes. The Quad’s initiatives, such as vaccine delivery and infrastructure investment partnerships, were a response to the failure of existing alliances or multilateral forums to deliver results. Turning to European partners for potential cooperation, including on niche areas such as cybersecurity, green shipping, and technical standards, would only complicate the ability of the Quad to deliver on niche and local priorities. First and foremost, differing strategic and economic interests between potential European partners and Quad members would raise concerns about the reliability of European commitments of resources to the Indo-Pacific. In addition, with the US as a member, the Quad’s economic, supply chain and technological initiatives are likely to prioritise the US market and trade conditions over European ones. Thus, it remains unclear to the Quad what the EU or individual European countries could offer.

However, if the EU or individual European countries did desire to collaborate with the Quad, it should be based on a shared vision of connecting with like-minded Indo-Pacific countries. The format would have to suit the Quad’s flexible and ad hoc methods of addressing local goals, such as developing local maritime law enforcement capabilities, responding to current and future pandemics, and providing high-quality infrastructure investments that capitalise on emerging and critical technology. Such an agenda would address potential criticism that a Quad Plus Europe partnership would simply be about elevating European concerns about China as opposed to addressing regional security and development needs. Should the EU or individual European countries commit

⁵¹ European Union External Action Service, “EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific”.

⁵² NATO, “Relations with Russia”, North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, 14 July 2022,

https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_50090.htm.



tangible resources to existing Indo-Pacific Quad objectives, these could have meaningful influence not just on the Quad's agenda, but also on Australia's, India's, Japan's, and the US' core security work in the region.

Consequently, a potential Quad Plus arrangement with the EU or individual European countries might:

- *Build on the “positive partner of choice” image of the Quad:* European partners should work with Quad members to address development assistance gaps in the Indo-Pacific. However, such a task would require the EU and individual European donors to understand local conditions and preferences, in particular that many Indo-Pacific governments are semi-authoritarian regimes with little interest in governance best practice.
- *Build on overlapping Indian Ocean initiatives:* A potential partnership between European countries, Quad members and Indian Ocean Rim countries could strengthen freedom of overflight and navigation in the Indian Ocean. The maritime constabulary capabilities of India and certain African countries to ensure secure and stable sea lines of communication (SLOC) are of interest in both the Euro-Atlantic and

the Indo-Pacific. Such a task would require greater information-sharing and contribution of European capabilities, such as the EU's Indo-Pacific Regional Information Sharing (IORIS) platform, to the Quad's IPMDA and vice versa.

- *Develop meaningful European partner and Quad member initiatives in Africa to address the energy and food crises that have been exacerbated by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.* This comes with the added benefit of countering Russian narratives that western countries are responsible for Africa's shortages. Such initiatives could capitalise on existing US, British, EU, French, German, Japanese and UAE assistance, as well as India-Japan partnerships. Any potential arrangement could also contribute to public health initiatives and transitions to renewable energy.

Any potential partnership with the Quad would have to address why Europe would be the partner of choice over countries with similar capabilities and less geographic distance such as Canada, South Korea or New Zealand. Individual European countries could utilise European strengths in civil defence, digital infrastructure and green technologies to assist smaller Indo-Pacific countries to develop in these niche areas.



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