

INDIAN FOREIGN POLICY AND QUAD

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Abstracts:

India after independence came out of British influence and with adopting the Constitution marched towards independent foreign policy which was not inclined to any of the super power. In bipolar world we decided to go ahead with independent foreign policy but taking help from any power for the progress and development which was need indeed. This continued for years but now it seems having fluctuation having membership like Quad.

Key words:

MEA, Quad, GDP, NATO, Indo-pacific, Covid-19, Climate Change, G-8, G-20

In India Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) popularly known as Foreign Ministry is the Government agency responsible for the conduct of foreign policy of the country. Our foreign policy has always regarded the concept of neighborhood. It is based on our historical culture. We are having world's third largest military expenditure, fourth largest armed force, fifth largest economy by GDP by nominal rates and third largest economy in terms of purchased power parity. We are a prominent regional power, a nuclear power, an emerging global power and a potential superpower. We assume a growing international influence and a prominent voice in global affairs. It is always focus to ensure people's welfare and wellbeing within the framework of laws.

Foreign policy of India is versatile in nature. Being former British colony India is a member of Commonwealth of Nations. It is a founder member of Non-Alignment Movement as well as a member of BRICS. India is having membership of SAARC, BIMSTEC, ASEAN, G-20, Asian Development Bank, New Development BRICS Bank. India has ties with European Union Trading Bloc, Association of Southeast Asia nations, African Union and Arab League as well. It has played an important role in other international organizations like East Asia Summit, World Trade Organization, International Monetary Fund, G8, IBSA Dialogue Forum, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and Shanghai Cooperation Organization. It has taken part in several UN Peacekeeping Missions. Presently it has permanent seat in UN Security Council with G4 nations. Beside India continues to

have military relations with Russia and Israel. It has strong strategic partnership with United States. In present days India is focusing on wide view in foreign affairs with global perspective as it seems to be emerging superpower. The Quad can be seen on this background. The Quad means Quadrilateral Security Dialogue. It is strategic dialogues between nations there in. It is a grouping that includes the world's oldest and largest democracies and represents a combined GDP of \$34 trillion or 40 percent of the global total. This grouping is consisting of four countries United States, Australia, Japan and India. These countries want to expand global vaccinations. It is said to counter China's growing vaccination diplomacy in Southeast Asia and around the world. India is the world's biggest vaccine market. China has term it as an Asian NATO because member countries are holding joint naval exercises. The core objectives of the Quad are to secure a rules-based global order, liberal trading system and freedom of navigation. It seeks to contain a rising China and work against its predatory trade and economic policies. Besides it intends maritime security, combating the Covid-19 crisis particularly vaccine diplomacy, addressing the risks of climate change, creating an ecosystem for investment in the region and boosting technological innovation.

Quad has long history and background. The dialogue for it was initiated in 2007 by Prime Minister of Japan, Vice-president of US, Prime Minister of Australia and Prime Minister of India. This was paralleled by joint military exercises named Exercise Malabar. It was viewed as a response to increased Chinese economic and military power. China responded to the Quadrilateral dialogue by protesting its members. Further Quad was ceased because of withdrawal of Australia in between but in 2010 it found change in Australia's behavior which resumed cooperation between US and Australia. Meanwhile India, Japan and US continued joint naval exercise. Looking into earlier background it seems that in twenty-first century the strategic preoccupation of US with Iraq and Afghanistan served as a distraction from major power shifts in Asia-Pacific brought about by increased Chinese economic power that undermined American traditional role in the region. In the long term US sought soft

containment policy organizing strategic partnership with democratic periphery. US was working with Japan and Australia. After collapse of USSR, India also inclined to US. Quad phenomenon came into existence isolating China. In 1991 active US-Indian military cooperation expanded in economic liberalization era. The Traditional Strategic Dialogue was a series of trilateral meetings between US, Japan and Australia. This originally started with senior official level in 2002 and upgraded to ministerial level in 2005. US were expecting regional allies helping global strategy to fight against terrorism and nuclear proliferation. On the other hand Japan and Australia expected benefits including continued US strategic involvement and the maintenance of strategic guarantees in the region. The Quadrilateral was supposed to establish an Asian Arc of Democracy including countries in Central Asia, Mongolia, Korean peninsula and other countries in Southeast Asia. These all countries were on China's periphery. It was called as democratic challenge to China. China was favoring Shanghai Cooperation Organization and critics termed this as an Asian NATO. In 2007 Australia departed from the summit. But after taking over US presidency by Barak Obama efforts were started to improve relations with India and Australia. That time India and China were having tensions on Arunachal Pradesh issue and Chinese nuclear weapons stationed on the Tibetan Plateau. Asian Summit is also paved way for Quad. It started with US-Japan call for Free and Open Indo-Pacific strategy. Ultimately agreement came into existence. Ahead of ASEAN and East Asia Summits in November 2017 meeting of Quad countries officials was held. That included decision to discussion of China's increased prominence in the South China Sea. A need to form quadrilateral was seen. Between the years 2017-2019 five meetings were held and security structure was at top most. Quad is termed as Asian NATO by most of the scholars. The reason is specific. American secretary of state and former CIA director Mike Pompeo in 2020 had discussion with member countries converting the security arrangement into Asian NATO with shared security and geopolitical goals. Foreign secretary of Sri Lanka in October 2020 has raised concerns about the militarization of the Quad in the Indian Ocean. But Japan, US and Canada held joint naval exercise Keen Sword in same month. In 2021 Li Jimming the Chinese ambassador warned Bangladesh not to join the Quad saying this may seriously damage relations with China. Quad is

marching towards progress and expanding the scope. In March 2021 US President Joe Biden issued Interim National Security Strategic Guidance. Same way Australian counterpart reacted. On March 12 first summit meeting was held virtually. It showed commitment and implementation by launch as follows:

- A senior-level Quad Vaccine Expert Group
- The Quad Climate Working Group
- The Quad Critical and Emerging Technology Working Group

It was reported that four countries are working to develop a plan to distribute COVID-19 vaccines to Asia as a part of broader strategy to counter China's influence. Same time India has urged other three countries to invest its vaccine production capacity. The summit pledged to respond the economic and health impacts of COVID-19. The all four Quad members have played a major role in purposefully redefining the Asia Pacific as Indo-Pacific to deepen trans-regional ties between the Indian and Pacific Ocean areas. It deals more effectively with rise of China, the Middle East and Africa. The term gained strategic thinking Quad members as well as ASEAN, EU and other nations. What Quad does is a question asked. Quad began after Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004. All these countries are democratic with vibrant economies. They want to work on a far broader agenda that include tackling security, economic and health issues. As of 2021 heads of the four countries are become more aligned to cooperation in the region and willing to define constructive agenda. Now working groups are formed on Covid-19 vaccines, climate change and technological innovation and supply-chain resilience. In September 2021 the summit is held in US.

A question about the interests of member states is also asked. For US India is an important strategic partner. President Donald Trump administration had worked closely with these countries and new Biden administration is expanding Quad agenda. The Indo-Pacific spans two oceans and several continents making maritime interests. In 2019 \$1.9 trillion worth of US trade passed through the region. 42 percent of the world's exports and 38 percent of global imports are expected to pass through according to a UN report. China's growing willingness to challenge the regional status worries Washington. China is challenging democratic values. Hong King Issue can be the best example. But only Quad agenda is not about China it is sees a need for a more proactive

approach solving humanitarian and economic challenges. As far as Japan is concerned former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was a strong believer in Quad's power to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific. He has worked with US persuading for value of this coalition approach across the Indo-pacific. Japan depends heavily on open sea lanes for its trade with the world. The US and Japanese militaries already work closely across the region. Its Self-Defense Forces are slowly built relationship with other two countries Australia and India. Japan has played an important role in supporting investment in manufacturing, trade and infrastructure development across region. Japan also has concerns about China's role in the region challenging rule of law. China is threatening sovereignty of South China Sea and East China Sea. This Japanese concern is shared by Japan to other Quad nations. It is watching carefully China imposed economic conditionality on Indo-Pacific countries. It wants to offer Southeast Asia countries alternative sources of assistance and commerce to offset China's growing influence. Hence Japan has joined with US and Canberra deepening the funds available for quality infrastructure. Bolstering the resilience of Quad nations particularly for critical supply chains for goods such as semiconductors will also be a Japanese priority.

How China is looking at the scene? China's relations with each Quad member are become tense during the pandemic.

- US-China tensions are at high level.
- Australia continues to bear the brunt of Chinese economic sanctions after suggesting WHO investigation into the origin of COVID-19 last year.
- India and Japan have clashed with China over territorial disputes.
- Chinese ambassador to Tokyo has publicly criticized Japanese PM claiming new Quad diplomacy reflects Cold War mentality and that is 100 percent outdated.

How Quad can be judged and analyzed? According to the American think tank Center for a New American Security the US pursued a QSD in an effort to adapt an increasingly economically powerful China in Asia-Pacific where great power rivalry, massive military investment, social inequality and contemporary territorial disputes have made war in Asia. Establishing series of alliances among nations furthers US interests. It is because of rise of Chinese power and long term trend towards multipolarity in the international

system. Prominent US politicians from both parties are in favor of this diplomacy in Asia. Here policymakers in the Quad countries observe an advantage in this military new venture. Heads of the member states are giving emphasis on cooperation across areas of shared interest to bolster confidence in democracies' ability to counter China's assertion of regional influence. As long as tensions with China remain the Quad's agenda is likely to expand as the democracies of the Indo-Pacific seek China's growing power.

In joint statement in March 2021 The Spirit of the Quad members described a shared vision for a free and open Indo-pacific ruled-based maritime order in the East and South China Seas. Now within six months first in person Quad Summit meeting held in America on September 24, 2021. Common themes of the meeting were:

- Focus on India-Pacific
- Post-Covid recovery
- Climate Change Future
- Afghanistan Human Rights and Terrorism Concerns

The Quad gathering led to a long joint statement featuring the China-focused phrase "undaunted by coercion"-a "Quad Principles on Technology Design, Development, Governance and Use" document and a fact sheet. Among the agreements between the heads of states was an agreement to bolster supply chains of coordinators, to cooperate on post-Covid recovery plans and to coordinate on Afghanistan. Hope this will come into reality.

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