

The Role of the Quad in Southeast Asia, Reducing the M in DIME

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing this collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden to Department of Defense, Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports (0704-0188), 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to any penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number. PLEASE DO NOT RETURN YOUR FORM TO THE ABOVE ADDRESS.					
1. REPORT DATE (DD-MM-YYYY) 10-05-2022		2. REPORT TYPE FINAL		3. DATES COVERED (From - To) N/A	
The Role of the Quad in Southeast Asia, Reducing the M in DIME				5b. GRANT NUMBER N/A	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER N/A	
6. AUTHOR(S) Colonel Edmund B. Hipp				5d. PROJECT NUMBER N/A	
				5e. TASK NUMBER N/A	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER N/A	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Writing & Teaching Excellence Center Naval War College 686 Cushing Road Newport, RI 02841-1207				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER N/A	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S) N/A	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S) N/A	
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Distribution Statement A: Approved for public release; Distribution is unlimited.					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES A paper submitted to the faculty of the NWC in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the curriculum. The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the NWC or the Department of the Navy.					
14. ABSTRACT N/A					
15. SUBJECT TERMS (Key words) QUAD, DIME, South China Sea					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF: UNCLASSIFIED			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT N/A	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON Director, Writing Center
a. REPORT UNCLASSIFIED	b. ABSTRACT UNCLASSIFIED	c. THIS PAGE UNCLASSIFIED			19b. TELEPHONE NUMBER (include area code) 401-841-6499

Introduction

In March of 2017, the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) comprised of Australia, India, Japan, and the United States, reemerged as a significant actor in the Indo-Pacific. While the Quad's inception occurred in 2006 in response to a natural disaster, the organization remained inactive through 2017, lacking vision and vigor.¹ As the Quad has since regenerated to counter a growing Chinese threat in the Indo-Pacific, it has focused keenly on the military instrument of power, neglecting other essential instruments; namely diplomatic, information, and economic efforts. Military cooperation between members of the Quad has been successful, but at the same time, increased tensions with China.

The recently renewed vision of the Quad creates a unique opportunity to broaden the engagement to include multiple instruments of international power. During the Manilla ASEAN summit in November 2017, leaders from the four countries agreed to move forward to counter the growing Chinese influence and aggression in the South China Seas and Indo-Pacific, but primarily focused on the instrument of military power.² On March 12th, 2021, the Quad issued a joint statement identifying a shared vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific that is inclusive, anchored by democratic values, and unconstrained by coercion.³ The clear vision and combined power of the Quad present an opportunity to balance power and manage escalating tensions in the Indo-Pacific. At times, balancing power and managing tension may require combined and unified action from all Quad members, but in other circumstances, coordinated bilateral action from individual Quad nations with non-Quad member nations may be more successful.

¹ Mrityika Guha Sarkar, "China and Quad 2.0: Between Response and Regional Construct", *Maritime Affairs* (New Delhi, India) 16, no. 1 (2020), 111.

² "QUAD – Revisited." S.P.'s MAI, 2021a, <https://login.usnwc.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2Fmagazines%2Fquad-revisited%2Fdocview%2F2547571049%2Fse-2%3Faccountid%3D322>.

³ Quad Leaders' Joint Statement: "The Spirit of the Quad". Washington: Federal Information & News Dispatch, LLC, 2021. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/12/quad-leaders-joint-statement-the-spirit-of-the-quad/>.

The Quad can leverage diplomatic, economic, and informational instruments of power to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific with the least amount of volatility by focusing on the greater Southeast Asian region, leveraging collective economic power to counteract Chinese economic coercion, and utilizing collaborative efforts to counter Chinese soft power. First, focusing the Quad's diplomatic efforts on the greater Southeast Asia region rather than directly against China prevents unnecessary tension. Second, Quad-backed economic alternatives to Chinese Infrastructure deals and debt-trap lending will reduce the effectiveness of Chinese coercion in Southeast Asia. Finally, the Quad can facilitate their vision by seizing strategic information opportunities to counter Chinese soft power. When leveraging collective Quad diplomatic, economic, and information instruments of power, not every member must be involved in every effort and the contributions need not be equivalent. The cumulative effects of their combined effort will achieve the desired end state, a free and open Indo-Pacific.

A Diplomatic Regional Focus

The Quad can advance a free and open Indo-Pacific without raising volatility by focusing foreign policy on the greater Southeast Asian region rather than directly on China. To reduce volatility, the Quad's focus must remain on building resiliency and partnership with Southeast Asian nations and associations to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific, not directly challenging Chinese power. Focusing narrowly on the "Great Power Competition" between the United States and China restricts the United States' most significant strategic advantage, a collection of countries with common interests.⁴ The Joint Statement issued by the Quad on March 12th, 2021 demonstrates a significant step in this direction. The statement reaffirms commitment to work with a range of partners to support the rule of law, freedom of navigation and overflight, peaceful

⁴ Zach Cooper and Adam P. Liff, "America Still Needs to Rebalance Towards Asia.", *Foreign Affairs*, Aug 11th, 2021, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/asia/2021-08-11/america-still-needs-rebalance-asia>.

resolution of disputes, democratic values, and territorial integrity.⁵ Notably, the statement does not mention China. The power of this statement is that it comes from the Quad, not the United States, and focuses on regional stability.

Diplomatic efforts from members of the Quad to support the ten-country Association of Southeast Asia Nations (ASEAN) that routinely fall under economic and military pressure from China enhance regional stability. These countries recognize that China wields more economic and strategic power in the region than the United States and would prefer not to choose sides in the ongoing power struggle.⁶ Instead of a pure U.S.-led diplomatic effort to support ASEAN and force these small nations to choose sides, the Quad can diplomatically support ASEAN initiatives, strengthening both the Association and the individual countries.

Diplomatic action from senior Quad leaders strengthens the credibility of ASEAN. The joint statement released by the Quad in March of 2021 reaffirmed the strong support for ASEAN's unity and centrality and the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific.⁷ In addition to the joint statement issued in March, maintaining ambassadors to ASEAN demonstrates diplomatic resolve for the Association. Japan, Australia, and India maintain appointed ambassadors to ASEAN demonstrating consistent support.⁸ The United States' ambassador assignment to ASEAN remains vacant, with Steven Weston filling the Chargé d'Affaires role.⁹ In order to show consistency of effort with other members of the Quad and to demonstrate authentic diplomatic support, the United States should immediately assign a credible ambassador to

⁵ Quad Leaders' Joint Statement: "The Spirit of the Quad". Washington: Federal Information & News Dispatch, LLC, 2021. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/12/quad-leaders-joint-statement-the-spirit-of-the-quad/>.

⁶ Seah, S. et al., *The State of Southeast Asia: 2021* (Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2021),

⁷ Quad Leaders' Joint Statement: "The Spirit of the Quad".

⁸ Association of Southeast Asian Nations, "Non-ASEAN Member States Ambassadors to ASEAN", <https://asean.org/our-communities/asean-political-security-community/outward-looking-community/external-relations/non-asean-member-states-ambassadors-to-asean-naaas/>.

⁹ U.S. Mission to ASEAN, "Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. Steven Weston", <https://asean.usmission.gov/our-relationship/our-ambassador/>.

ASEAN. Four credible ambassadors to ASEAN from each of the Quad nations will help to fully comprehend the regional challenges facing ASEAN and focus the lines of effort for Quad engagement. Through these simple diplomatic efforts focused on a regional association, the Quad could stabilize Southeast Asia without increasing the temperature of the relationship with China.

When appropriate, the Quad can establish individual bilateral engagements to partner with and assist individual Southeast Asian countries. While these engagements will not occur as a Quad-led initiative, leveraging individual bilateral engagements between Quad members and other nations to contribute to the Quad's shared vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific will foster stabilization and help balance power. Many of the ASEAN countries see Japan and, to a lesser extent Australia, as possible third parties to reduce tension in the SCS.¹⁰ Instead of a United States-led effort, or even a branded Quad effort, these two critical members of the Quad could take the lead on helping to support the Association on specific policy issues diplomatically. As an example, diplomatic support from Australia to persuade and assist an ASEAN power, like Indonesia, to take the lead and advance bilateral territorial disputes between smaller ASEAN nations with China could add stability to the region.¹¹ A Quad member backing up and supporting an ASEAN third-party leadership position for negotiations, specifically without U.S. involvement, could cool Sino-American relations helping to deescalate tension while advancing challenging territorial disputes. Additionally, Quad members coordinating to establish individual bilateral partnerships with Southeast Asia nations maximizes the use of limited resources.

Bilateral engagement between Vietnam and India serves as an excellent example of a Quad member building and maintaining relations with a Southeast Asian nation that can help to

¹⁰ Seah, S. et al., *The State of Southeast Asia: 2021* (Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2021), 32

¹¹ Michael McDevitt, "The South China Sea and U.S. Policy Options", *American foreign policy interests* 35, no. 4 (2013), 184.

stabilize and balance power in the region. Two traditionally non-aligned countries, Vietnam and India, share commonality through Russian military equipment that can forge continued cooperation. The equipment commonality includes fighter aircraft, anti-ship missiles, and submarines, which could play an essential role in the South China Sea (SCS) disputes.¹² Other members of the Quad have low familiarity with this Russian equipment. They would be unable to help build a lasting relationship for upgrade assistance, sustainment, and tactical employment of this equipment. In 2000, India and Vietnam signed a Defense Cooperation Agreement (DCA) where India agreed to repair and upgrade Russian-built fast attack missile craft, corvettes, and MiG-21 fighter aircraft.¹³ In 2016, the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) agreed to finance a satellite tracking facility in Ho Chi Minh City capable of enhanced imaging technology supporting military operations, specifically in the SCS.¹⁴ The commonality of equipment presented an opportunity for partnership between the two countries that would strengthen Vietnam without direct inflammatory action toward the Chinese. Through continued cooperation, like that of the ISRO and the 2000 DCA, India, as an individual member of the Quad, can build resiliency in a smaller, less powerful nation like Vietnam. Through bilateral relations, like the Vietnam and India partnership, individual Quad nations can focus effort and resources best suited to synergize the collective effort. Multiple Quad-coordinated bilateral engagements will enhance stability and help to assure a free and open Indo-Pacific.

In addition to diplomatic efforts and individual partnerships, the Quad can temporarily expand to a “Quad Plus” construct to assist with challenging maritime security situations that stabilize and benefit the region. In March of 2020, Quad countries met virtually to assist one another during the COVID-19 pandemic and included non-Quad members of New Zealand,

¹² Carlyle A. Thayer, “Force Modernization: Vietnam”, *Southeast Asian Affairs* 2018 (2018), 432-436.

¹³ Thayer, “Force Modernization”, 432.

¹⁴ Thayer, “Force Modernization”, 435.

South Korea, and Vietnam.¹⁵ When priorities align, as they did during the global pandemic, the Quad can include other nations to collaborate on challenging problems like counterterrorism, piracy, and finance while avoiding problems that directly challenge Chinese hard or soft power. These challenging situations offer an exceptional opportunity for the Quad to focus purely on the greater Southeast Asia region by temporarily pulling different nations into the security dialogue. The expanded influence of a Quad Plus dialogue would resonate throughout the Indo-Pacific region and build confidence for the Quad to tackle challenging issues in Southeast Asia.

Collective Economic Power

In addition to diplomatic power, the Quad should use collective economic strength to aid nations under the influence of Chinese financial coercion. First, the Quad should directly assist countries in resisting Chinese economic coercion. Second, Quad members can collaborate to assist Southeast Asian nations in developing infrastructure to reduce reliance on the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Finally, leveraging economic strength, the members of the Quad should provide borrowing options to combat Chinese debt-trap diplomacy.

A 2012 standoff over a contested SCS feature illustrates a potential opportunity for the Quad to use economic power to counter Chinese economic coercion. Following a standoff between China and the Philippines over the contested Scarborough Shoals on April 8th, 2012, China used financial coercion to punish the Philippines.¹⁶ Citing infestations of pests on Filipino fruit, China lengthened the inspection process that left the fruit rotting on piers, causing economic damage to the Philippines.¹⁷ This coercion stands as an excellent example where the Quad could directly assist a vulnerable nation under economic influence from China. Leveraging

¹⁵ "QUAD – Revisited." S.P.'s MAI.

¹⁶ Christina Lai, "Acting One Way and Talking Another: China's Coercive Economic Diplomacy in East Asia and Beyond", *Pacific review* 31, no. 2 (2018), 178.

¹⁷ Lai, "Acting One Way", 178.

collective economic strength, the Quad could help to establish new trade and opportunities to export Filipino fruit. Assisting the Philippines in this situation builds resiliency in the Filipino economy, strengthens the ties between the Philippines and the members of the Quad, and weakens the effects of Chinese economic coercive efforts.

Wielding their collective economic strength, Quad nations can leverage coordinated bilateral engagements to provide financial alternatives to Indo-Pacific nations considering joining the destabilizing Chinese BRI. Quad-coordinated bilateral efforts can expand regional infrastructure and limit developing countries' dependence on China, reducing Chinese influence and strategic gains in the region. Without lending and construction alternatives, developing countries remain weak and susceptible to Chinese financial lending. For instance, Sri Lanka accepted a BRI initiative and an eight-billion-dollar loan to build the Hambantota port.¹⁸ When Sri Lanka defaulted on the loan, China negotiated a 99-year lease on the port and developed plans to use it as a forward staging area for the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN).¹⁹ Without alternatives to the Chinese BRI, developing countries will continue to fall victim to Chinese debt-trap diplomacy that will expand Chinese strategic opportunities for forward basing of its armed forces. The continued advance of Chinese economic coercion and strategic influence destabilizes Southeast Asia and counters the Quad strategic vision.

Through specific engagement, members of the Quad can support infrastructure development as an alternative to BRI within the region to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific. In contrast to the Hambantota port, India and Japan teamed up to develop the Colombo Port in Sri Lanka. Following construction, Sri Lanka will retain a 51% share of the Terminal Operations Company.²⁰ Examples of these types of cooperation lessen the susceptibility to Chinese

¹⁸ “Combatting the Belt and Road Initiative Beyond 2019”, *Orbis (Philadelphia)* 63, no. 4 (2019), 510.

¹⁹ “Combatting The Belt and Road”, 510.

²⁰ “Combatting The Belt and Road”, 519.

predatory lending and reliance on Chinese firms to provide critical infrastructure. Preventing countries' susceptibility to BRI and strategic Chinese influence reduces tension, favorably influencing the stability of the Indo-Pacific.

To counter Chinese economic influence and power, Quad members Japan, and the United States, realized they must present a viable alternative for borrowing. Under Chairman Xi's guidance, China launched two new lending institutions to support the BRI, the New Development Bank and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.²¹ To counter these Chinese efforts, Japan's Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe, initiated the *Partnership for Quality Infrastructure* and the follow-on *High-Quality Infrastructure Export Expansion Initiative* as an option to the BRI, focusing on quality construction.²² In 2018, The United States passed the Better Utilization of Investment Leading to Development (BUILD) act and created the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (USIDFC) to support and invest in low- and middle-income countries.²³ Options like these will play a vital role in countering Chinese debt-trap diplomacy offered through the Chinese institutions. While no nation within the Quad can counter China's economic weight alone, by collaborating to support countries through existing economic programs within the individual countries of the Quad, they can collectively prevent Chinese debt-trap diplomacy in the Indo-Pacific region and help to maintain a free and open region.

Strategic Information Opportunities

Like the previously discussed diplomatic and economic efforts, the Quad can use information operations to promote stability and a free and open Indo-Pacific region by

²¹ Jude Blanchette, "Xi's Gamble. The Race to Consolidate Power and Stave Off Disaster", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 100 No. 4, (July/August 2021), 13.

²² Tobias Harris, "Quality Infrastructure': Japan's Robust Challenge to China's Belt and Road", *War on the Rocks*, (Apr 9th, 2019), <https://warontherocks.com/2019/04/quality-infrastructure-japans-robust-challenge-to-chinas-belt-and-road/>.

²³ Daniel F. Runde and Romina Bandura, "The BUILD Act has passed: What's Next?", *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, (Oct 12th, 2018), <https://www.csis.org/analysis/build-act-has-passed-whats-next>.

collaborating on strategic opportunities to counter Chinese soft power. First, the COVID-19 pandemic represents a unique opportunity for the Quad to advance partnerships in Southeast Asia to combat the disease and build credible partnerships and goodwill with Southeast Asian countries. Second, the Quad can directly support Southeast Asian countries with internet infrastructure development to enable a free and open internet to counter Chinese information operations. Finally, the Quad should maintain consistent information operations to support international law, specifically the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), to ensure freedom of trade, navigation, and international overflight.

The COVID-19 pandemic serves as an excellent opportunity for the Quad to demonstrate its collective power to curtail the spread of the virus through support to Southeast Asian nations. During the March 2021 summit-level talks, the Quad agreed to embark on a plan to enhance vaccine manufacturing capacity to one billion dollars for international support to Southeast Asian countries.²⁴ At the same time, the State of Southeast Asia Survey indicated that the top concern (76%) amongst the ten countries of ASEAN is the threat to health from COVID-19.²⁵ The convergence of this concern with the Quad's combined vaccine manufacturing and distribution capability marks a strategic opportunity. The Quad's support to Southeast Asian nations without internal vaccine manufacturing capability will demonstrate commitment to the region and the people of Southeast Asia. Vaccine distribution, clearly articulated and supported by information operations, to these nations during the pandemic will help build partnerships and trust carrying well into the future. Current efforts by the Quad to combat COVID-19 will help build the foundation to counter future pandemics and advance the Quad's positive influence in the region.

²⁴ Lt. General Dushyant Singh, "QUAD 3.0: Window of Opportunity for India", *S.P.'s MAI*, New Delhi (Mar 15th, 2021), <https://www-proquest-com.usnwc.idm.oclc.org/docview/2501494359?accountid=322>.

²⁵ Seah, *The State of Southeast Asia*, 7.

Quad support to Indo-Pacific countries constructing internet and communications infrastructure could help to enable a limitless global exchange of information and to degrade Chinese Information Operations in the region. Several ASEAN nations curb access to the internet and social media sites limiting the free flow of information. China has enabled this trend by exporting surveillance technology, training foreign officials, and helping to implement cybersecurity restrictions in these nations.²⁶ However, the Quad can prioritize support to the nations that value internet freedom like the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Cambodia.²⁷ The technologically advanced members of the Quad are uniquely qualified to help build open communications infrastructure in developing Southeast Asian countries to compete with the potentially compromised Huawei 5G option aggressively marketed by China. Through this alternative infrastructure, the Quad nations can help create an uncompromised Southeast Asian internet that guarantees access to information, reducing the effectiveness of Chinese Information Operations. By degrading Chinese access and censorship, the Quad can more effectively conduct Information Operations that promote its shared vision. An open internet will also reveal the coercive and restrictive Chinese efforts to control information in Southeast Asia. Ultimately, the freedom of information in the region will enable the greater goal of a free and open Indo-Pacific.

The Quad can also use information operations to reinforce its shared vision through the support of international laws, including UNCLOS and freedom of navigation. Many of the smaller Southeast Asian nations have a limited capability to counter Chinese efforts to undermine international laws and rulings. Through diplomatic and informational efforts surrounding Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPs), Quad members can maintain

²⁶ Bonny Lin et al., “Regional Responses to U.S.-China Competition in the Indo-Pacific: Study Overview and Conclusions”, Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2020, 16.

²⁷ Lin, “Regional Responses”, 16.

adherence to international norms and undermine Chinese gray zone tactics to reorder the status quo in the SCS. In 2016, the International Tribunal for Law of the Sea (ITLOS) ruled favoring the Philippines, stating that the Chinese SCS claims violated UNCLOS.²⁸ Unfortunately, China blatantly disregarded this ruling and continued its extensive efforts in the SCS. Using collective information operations to reiterate the 2016 ITLOS ruling and to show support to countries using internationally accepted avenues to resolve disputes, the Quad can reinforce its vision. Consistent Quad-backed information operations applied across a wide range of circumstances will help to enable a free and open Indo-Pacific and reduce the region's tension.

More Military Power

Some may argue that due to the ineffectiveness of the Quad's diplomatic, economic, and informational efforts to counter China's expansive power in the Indo-Pacific, the Quad should conduct more frequent quadrilateral military exercises as a demonstration of military hard power. Indo-Pacific military engagements, like Exercise Malabar, conducted between India, Japan, and the United States demonstrates the collective and sufficient strength to deter China. Without showing the willingness of these countries' militaries to work together, the Quad will not deter China.

Previously, several obstacles existed to prevent military cooperation between the four countries. First, India traditionally maintained a position of non-alignment and sought to avoid antagonizing China. However, after the 2020 skirmish on the Sino-Indian border resulted in the death of 20 Indian soldiers, India reassessed its strategic priorities to balance against China.²⁹ Second, Australia typically worried about undermining economically beneficial ties with China

²⁸ Frederick Kliem, "Why Quasi-Alliances Will Persist in the Indo-Pacific? The Fall and Rise of the Quad", *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs*, 7, no. 3 (2020), 276.

²⁹ Kevin Rudd, "Why the Quad Alarms China. Its Success Poses a Major Threat to Beijing's Ambitions", *Foreign Affairs*, Aug 6th, 2021, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-08-06/why-quad-alarms-china>.

through the quadrilateral exercises. However, watching the growth of Chinese soft power and in the wake of the Huawei 5G ban, Australia also reassessed its strategic position.³⁰ As a result, India invited Australia to participate in Exercise Malabar, and Australia accepted.³¹ The willingness of these Quad members to openly work with one another demonstrates a strategic shift in thinking and the opportunity to utilize military power to counter Chinese influence.

China's fiery diplomatic reaction to the first Quadrilateral Exercise Malabar that included Australia demonstrated the significance and effectiveness of increasing military operations to counter Chinese power. First, a senior Chinese foreign minister accused the United States of constructing an "Asian NATO" and called the strategy "a big underlying security risk."³² The Chinese reaction represented a significant shift in Chinese response, which typically referred to the Quad as "seafoam" and a "headline-grabbing stunt."³³ The change in rhetoric and increase in Chinese attention showcases the value of Exercise Malabar. Following the exercise, China attempted to punish Australia to warn Japan and India by implementing aggressive import controls on Australian coal, meat, cotton, and other products.³⁴ China's aggressive political rhetoric and economic action that attempted to divide and attack the Quad illustrate Beijing's perceived threat from the quadrilateral security dialogue. By adding additional military exercises or demonstrations of Quad military coordination, the Quad can further balance against China to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific.

Arguably, the showcase of military power by the Quad resulted in the most potent effect on China. To continue to counter China, the Quad should increase the frequency and size of these exercises and consider expanding them to include additional countries from time to time. Without these demonstrations of military power, diplomatic, economic, and informational efforts

³⁰ Rudd, "Why the Quad".

³¹ Rudd, "Why the Quad".

³² Rudd, "Why the Quad".

³³ Rudd, "Why the Quad".

³⁴ Rudd, "Why the Quad".

will do little to deter China from aggressively possessing Taiwan and other contested SCS features. Demonstrating the ability to balance against China with military power remains the best way to provide stability in the Indo-Pacific. It should be the backbone of the Quad's effort in Southeast Asia.

Military Power Fans the Flames of War

While the Quadrilateral Exercise Malabar showcased a capability to balance against China and generated a significant Chinese diplomatic response, this exercise directly antagonized China, increased tension, and decreased stability in the SCS. Adding additional quadrilateral exercises will only further provoke China and destabilize the Indo-Pacific. The Quad should maintain the status quo of Exercise Malabar, ensuring it is a state-of-the-art and effective exercise but refrain from conducting additional military exercises in the region. The Quad's use of military power by increased exercises and deployments fans the flames of war, potentially leading the United States, and maybe even the Quad, into the Thucydides Trap and eventual open warfare with China.³⁵ The Quad cannot neglect all military exercises and coordination, however; it must prioritize diplomatic, economic, and informational efforts.

Instead of relying on military power to specifically balance against China, the Quad should focus on its stated vision; to promote a free and open Indo-Pacific anchored by democratic values and unconstrained by coercion. This vision is best supported through diplomatic, economic, and informational lines of effort. By maintaining consistent policy focused on the greater Southeast Asia region, not directly at China, the Quad can reduce regional tension. Through collective diplomatic, economic, informational efforts, the Quad should engage either as a whole or through coordinated bilateral efforts to support Southeast Asian nations. By

³⁵ Graham Allison, "The Thucydides Trap: Are the U.S. and China Headed for War?", *The Atlantic*, Sept 24, 2015, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/09/united-states-china-war-thucydides-trap/406756/>.

utilizing these instruments of power to seize available strategic opportunities to counter Chinese soft power, the Quad can achieve and maintain its goal of a free and open Indo-Pacific with the least amount of volatility.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Allison, Graham. "The Thucydides Trap: Are the U.S. and China Headed for War?", *The Atlantic*. 24 September 2015.
<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/09/united-states-china-war-thucydides-trap/406756/>
- Association of Southeast Asian Nations. "Non-ASEAN Member States Ambassadors to ASEAN." <https://asean.org/our-communities/asean-political-security-community/outward-looking-community/external-relations/non-asean-member-states-ambassadors-to-asean-naaas/>.
- Blanchette, Jude. "Xi's Gamble. The Race to Consolidate Power and Stave off Disaster." *Foreign Affairs*. Vol. 100 No. 4, (July/August 2021), pp. 10-19.
- "Combatting the Belt and Road Initiative Beyond 2019." *Orbis* (Philadelphia) 63, no. 4 (2019): 505-519. doi:10.1016/j.orbis.2019.08.008.
- Cooper, Zach and Adam P. Liff. "America Still Needs to Rebalance Towards Asia." *Foreign Affairs*. 11 August 2021. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/asia/2021-08-11/america-still-needs-rebalance-asia>.
- Harris, Tobias. "Quality Infrastructure': Japan's Robust Challenge to China's Belt and Road." *War on the Rocks*. (April 9, 2019). <https://warontherocks.com/2019/04/quality-infrastructure-japans-robust-challenge-to-chinas-belt-and-road/>.
- Kliem, Frederick. "Why Quasi-Alliances Will Persist in the Indo-Pacific? the Fall and Rise of the Quad." *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs* 7, no. 3 (2020): 271-304. doi:10.1177/2347797020962620.
- Lai, Christina. "Acting One Way and Talking another: China's Coercive Economic Diplomacy in East Asia and Beyond." *Pacific Review* 31, no. 2 (2018): 169-187. doi:10.1080/09512748.2017.1357652.
- Lin, Bonny, Michael S. Chase, Jonah Blank, Cortez A. Cooper III, Derek Grossman, Scott W. Harold, Jennifer D. P. Moroney, Lyle J. Morris, Logan Ma, Paul Orner, Alice Shih, and Soo Kim, Regional Responses to U.S.-China Competition in the Indo-Pacific: Study Overview and Conclusions. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2020.
https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR4412.html.
- McDevitt, Michael. "The South China Sea and U.S. Policy Options." *American Foreign Policy Interests* 35, no. 4 (2013): 175-187. doi:10.1080/10803920.2013.817923.
- Quad Leaders' Joint Statement: "The Spirit of the Quad"*. Washington: Federal Information & News Dispatch, LLC, 2021.
- "QUAD – Revisited." SP's MAI, 2021a,
<https://login.usnwc.idm.oclc.org/login?qurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.proquest.com%2F>

magazines%2Fquad-revisited%2Fdocview%2F2547571049%2Fse-
2%3Faccountid%3D322.

Rudd, Kevin. "Why the Quad Alarms China. Its Success Poses a Major Threat to Beijing's Ambitions." *Foreign Affairs*, 6 August 2021.
<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-08-06/why-quad-alarms-china>.

Runde, Daniel F. and Romina Bandura. "The BUILD Act has passed: What's Next?" *Center for Strategic and International Studies*. (Oct 12th, 2018).
<https://www.csis.org/analysis/build-act-has-passed-whats-next>.

Sarkar, Mrityika Guha. "CHINA AND QUAD 2.0: Between Response and Regional Construct." *Maritime Affairs (New Delhi, India)* 16, no. 1 (2020): 110-130.
doi:10.1080/09733159.2020.1794526.

Seah, S. et al., *The State of Southeast Asia: 2021* (Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, 2021)

Singh, Lt. General Dushyant. "QUAD 3.0: Window of Opportunity for India.", *SP's MAI*, New Delhi (Mar 15, 2021). <https://www-proquest-com.usnwc.idm.oclc.org/docview/2501494359?accountid=322>.

Thayer, Carlyle A. "Force Modernization: Vietnam." *Southeast Asian Affairs* 2018, (2018): 429-444.

U.S. Mission to ASEAN. "Chargé d'Affaires, a.i. Steven Weston."
<https://asean.usmission.gov/our-relationship/our-ambassdor>.