

ESTABLISHING A FIRST ISLAND CHAIN BALANCE OF
POWER: COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT OF THE
QUADRILATERAL SECURITY DIALOGUE

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE
Information Advantage Scholars

by

J. BRIAN WALLACE, MAJOR, UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
B.S., United States Naval Academy, Annapolis, MD, 2008
M.A.S., University of California, San Diego, CA, 2021

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
2022

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REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			<i>Form Approved</i> <i>OMB No. 0704-0188</i>		
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) 10-06-2022		2. REPORT TYPE Master's Thesis		3. DATES COVERED (From - To) AUG 2021 – JUN 2022	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE Establishing a First Island Chain Balance of Power: Cooperative Development of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue			5a. CONTRACT NUMBER		
			5b. GRANT NUMBER		
			5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER		
6. AUTHOR(S) Maj J. Brian Wallace			5d. PROJECT NUMBER		
			5e. TASK NUMBER		
			5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER		
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) U.S. Army Command and General Staff College ATTN: ATZL-SWD-GD Fort Leavenworth, KS 66027-2301			8. PERFORMING ORG REPORT NUMBER		
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)			10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)		
			11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)		
12. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for Public Release; Distribution is Unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT The People's Republic of China's (PRC) is attempting to establish a regional hegemony within the First Island Chain through illiberal activities and coercive application of the nation-state's instruments of national power. If the PRC is successful, then the liberal international order will be altered, global prosperity and stability could be threatened, and ability of the United States (U.S.) to uphold American diplomatic and moral obligations in the region may be jeopardized. The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) represents an existing multilateral mechanism upon which the U.S., and the liberal international community at large, can build upon to establish a regional balance of power that will offset of the PRC's revisionism. Through an examination of open-source documentation and archival records, six potential strategic approaches (SA) were identified to strengthen the Quad as a credible international actor capable of counterbalancing the PRC's coercive behavior within the First Island Chain. Two evaluation frameworks were then applied to each SA to determine strategic validity and devise a flexible organizational structure. A recommended strategy was developed from the validated SAs to formalize and, eventually, institutionalize the Quad, thereby allowing the U.S. to overcome the tyranny of distance to achieve its regional objectives; uphold the current liberal, rules-based international order; and create a balance of power with the PRC's growing influence.					
15. SUBJECT TERMS Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, Quad, Balance of Power, First Island Chain, Indo-Pacific, Great Power Competition, Revisionist Power, Rules-Based International Order					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT	b. ABSTRACT	c. THIS PAGE			19b. PHONE NUMBER (include area code)
(U)	(U)	(U)	(U)	214	

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

Name of Candidate: Jonathan Brian Wallace

Thesis Title: Establishing a First Island Chain Balance of Power: Cooperative
Development of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue

Approved by:

_____, Thesis Committee Chair
John J. Modinger, Ph.D.

_____, Member
VADM Charles W. Martoglio, USN (RET), M.A.

_____, Member
LTC David C. McCaughrin, MIPP

Accepted this 10th day of June 2022 by:

_____, Assistant Dean of Academics for
Degree Programs and Research
Dale F. Spurlin, Ph.D.

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ABSTRACT

ESTABLISHING A FIRST ISLAND CHAIN BALANCE OF POWER:
COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT OF THE QUADRILATERAL SECURITY
DIALOGUE, by Maj J. Brian Wallace, 214 pages.

The People's Republic of China's (PRC) is attempting to establish a regional hegemony within the First Island Chain through illiberal activities and coercive application of the nation-state's instruments of national power. If the PRC is successful, then the liberal international order will be altered, global prosperity and stability could be threatened, and ability of the United States (U.S.) to uphold American diplomatic and moral obligations in the region may be jeopardized. As such, counterbalancing the PRC's expanding influence in the First Island Chain is a vital national interest for the U.S.

The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) represents an existing multilateral mechanism upon which the U.S., and the liberal international community at large, can build upon to establish a regional balance of power that will offset of the PRC's revisionism. Through an examination of open-source documentation and archival records, six potential strategic approaches (SA) were identified to strengthen the Quad as a credible international actor capable of counterbalancing the PRC's coercive behavior within the First Island Chain. Two evaluation frameworks were then applied to each SA to determine strategic validity and devise a flexible organizational structure. A recommended strategy was developed from the validated SAs to formalize and, eventually, institutionalize the Quad, thereby allowing the U.S. to overcome the tyranny of distance to achieve its regional objectives; uphold the current liberal, rules-based international order; and create a balance of power with the PRC's growing influence.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As I reflect upon the last nine months, I cannot express enough gratitude to everyone who provided counsel on this thesis, proofread the countless drafts, and encouraged me to not settle for “good enough.” I had no previous academic research experience but have now achieve some proficiency level of in gathering data, critically evaluating evidence and sources, and synthesizing the results. Numerous mentors and peers provided invaluable feedback that has shaped my ability to convey “what I have learned” via written and verbal communication, a skill critical to this thesis and future professional aspirations. I am not certain anyone can truly “understand” the strategic environment of the Indo-Pacific region, especially the First Island Chain, but I have a better grasp of the “right questions to ask” because of this thesis project. The coalescence of these educational and professional experiences has better prepared me for the unknown that lies ahead as a Marine, military officer, and, potentially, strategic thinker. While I will never be able to thank those involved enough, I must recognize a few key individuals and groups.

First, I am certain my thesis committee questioned if I would make it this far given the breadth of the topic, time allotted, and competing academic requirements. Each member, however, was always available to discuss the progress of this thesis and provide practical insight. Dr. John Modinger challenged many of my preconceived notions on this thesis’s focus area, shaped my perspective on academic research, and pushed me to produce a professional product with original thought. LTC David McCaughrin provided a regional perspective that I would not have found otherwise, while ensuring the written words matched the ideas I was attempting to express to the audience. Finally, and of

critical importance, VADM Charles Martoglio went above and beyond as an adjunct faculty member taking personal time to continue mentoring a junior officer despite a multitude of competing responsibilities. VADM Martoglio always pushed me to elevate my thinking to the strategic level, never allowing me to revert to my tactical comfort level in perspective or analysis. I will be forever grateful for officers, such as VADM Martoglio, who continue to develop others even after 40-years in uniform. I know I still have much to learn, but I am better prepared because of these gentlemen. Thank you.

Next, I must thank the Command and General Staff College (CGSC) Learning Resource Center personnel. Ms. Mary Noll spent multiple hours teaching writing skills to a group of us during the ten-month course. I owe Ms. Noll a great deal because her review of my core course papers directly contributed to my Information Advantage Scholars Program admission. Dr. Pam Turner reviewed and refined every chapter of this thesis. If you are reading this, you know it took a significant amount of time. Thank you.

This thesis would not be the product before you were it not for the Information Advantage Scholars Program. I spent the second half of CGSC in the program, which continually pushed my ability to think critically about topics well beyond my education and experience. While all the program's scholars contributed to my personal betterment, MAJ Kendall Gomber and MAJ Derail Young took the time to review my thesis, challenge my understanding, and improve my grammar. I would be remiss not to acknowledge the contributions of the program's director, Mr. Pete Im, and leadership instructor, Dr. Trent Lythgoe. I was skeptical of the program at first., but I truly believe I am a more well-rounded professional because of Mr. Im's hard work pulling together a diverse group of scholars that challenge the military institution's status quo. Additionally,

Mr. Im reviewed each chapter and pushed me to reach for more. Dr. Lythgoe was my Staff Group Advisor during the first half of CGSC. Dr. Lythgoe was the first instructor at CGSC to provide critical feedback on my communication skills and was a model throughout the year for my personal academic goals. Thank you.

I have spent a great deal of time thanking those from CGSC that contributed to this thesis. The person most pivotal to the completion of this thesis, continued success, and daily motivation, however, is my wife, Brittany Wallace. I cannot imagine the person or Marine officer I would be without her. I am continually thankful that we met all those years ago when I had other ideas about my future. I would not change the path we have taken despite being together for eight years and only living together for about eight months until this year. Brittany has always pushed me to “be better” and backed it up with her own actions. She read every draft, revision, and, in some cases, completely rewritten section of this thesis. I dedicate this thesis to her. Thank you my love.

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ACRONYMS

AIIB	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AUKUS	Australia, United Kingdom, and United States Trilateral Security Partnership
BDN	Blue Dot Network
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
DIME	Diplomacy, Information, Military, and Economic
ECS	East China Sea
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HADR	Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief
IOP	Instruments of National Power
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PRC	People's Republic of China
Quad	Quadrilateral Security Dialogue
RCEP	Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership
SA	Strategic Approach
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SCS	South China Sea
SCRI	Supply Chain Resilience Initiative

SEATO	Southeast Asia Treaty Organization
SOE	State-Owned Enterprise
SQ	Secondary Question
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States

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PREFACE

As a military officer at a professional military school, I chose to take a divergent path with my thesis. This thesis only touches upon nation-state institutions to illustrate a broad strategic approach (SA) to employing the instruments of national power (IOP) to achieve multilateral objectives. Of the six evaluated SAs, the military IOP can only be considered the main effort of one. The other five prioritize the diplomatic, informational, or economic IOP. Some of the SAs even deliberately state that the military IOP – the use of force, threat of the use of force, or enabling others to use force – will not be applied.

The military IOP's curtailment, however, is not synonymous with a lessening of the military institution's significance to the success of each SA. For example, one of the validated SAs is the creation of a Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief (HADR) Organization by the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue. This SA focuses on the economic IOP as the main effort with the other IOPs in active support effort roles. An understanding of this SA is important for military professionals, as the participants' military institutions will plan, coordinate, and execute HADR operations alongside civilian counterparts. Those formal engagements are the military institution's application of the diplomatic IOP. The military institution's relationship building, public visibility, and direct interaction with a local populace can be considered employment of the informational IOP. By providing security for the distribution of aid, the military institution exerts the military IOP. Finally, the military institution's organic supply chain and engineering capabilities further the affected region's economic recovery through the provision of required assistance, i.e., economic IOP.

I, like most military members, joined the military service expecting my career to predominately consist of preparing and applying the military IOP. This thesis required personal reflection on the military as an IOP versus the military as an institution. While I firmly believe that the military institution's "main effort" is the preparation for and application of the military IOP, we must also grasp our role in the government's other activities, like the SAs discussed in this thesis. This thesis has required me to think critically about the supporting role the military institution plays in the diplomatic, informational, and economic IOPs. I believe that the perspective gained from such an approach has made me a better Marine, military officer, operational planner, advisor to policymakers, and, potentially, future commander.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Prudence dictates that there be a balance of power in the [Indo]-Pacific region...this stability serves the interest of all, including that of China.

—Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, quoted
in Allison et al., *Lee Kuan Yew*

The international community consists of nation-states and non-state actors that interact via economic, political, informational, cultural, and other means. The liberal, rules-based international order conceived following World War II governs international community member relations through ordering mechanisms, such as international institutions and treaties. These ordering mechanisms have established formal standards and informal norms, which are predominately grounded in Western civilization concepts of self-determination, nation-state sovereignty, representative government, and open markets.¹

Two Great Powers – the United States (U.S.) and the People’s Republic of China (PRC) – will shape the future of international order and its use by the international community. The democratic U.S. has led the liberal, rules-based international order for more than 75 years. Comparatively within the same timeframe, the autocratic PRC has

¹ Hal Brands, *American Grand Strategy and the Liberal Order: Continuity, Change, and Options for the Future* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, October 19, 2016), 2, <https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PE209.html>; Michael J. Mazarr, Miranda Priebe, Andrew Radin, and Astrid Stuth Cevallos, *Understanding the Current International Order* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, October 19, 2016), 7-9, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1598.html.

steadily shifted from self-isolation to the international community's third most influential nation-state, behind the U.S. and the United Kingdom (UK).² The PRC exploits its growing international community influence to spread the nation-state's illiberal perspective, thereby attempting to alter the existing international order. Historically, the U.S. has been most successful in implementing a bilateral international system approach in the Indo-Pacific region to counter the PRC's activities. The decline of the U.S.'s international influence, increase in the PRC-led alternative international institutions, and the PRC's desire to establish a regional hegemony, however, require that American policymakers consider a multilateral strategy for the First Island Chain that collectively applies the participants' instruments of national power (IOPs) to create a regional balance the power.³

Reemergence of Chinese Civilization

The PRC's strategic development of its IOPs – diplomacy, information, military, and economic – has facilitated Chinese civilization's reemergence to prominence within

² “The Most Influential Countries,” *U.S. News and World Report*, accessed April 19, 2022, <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/most-influential-countries>.

³ Timothy R. Heath, Derek Grossman, and Asha Clark, *China's Quest for Global Primacy: An Analysis of Chinese International and Defense Strategies to Outcompete the United States* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, June 7, 2021), https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA447-1.html; Richard Wike, Bruce Stokes, Jacob Poushter, Laura Silver, Janell Fetterolf, and Kat Devlin, “America's International Image Continues to Suffer,” Pew Research Center, October 1, 2018, <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2018/10/01/americas-international-image-continues-to-suffer/>; Richard Wike, Janell Fetterolf, and Mara Mordecai, “U.S. Image Plummetts Internationally as Most Say Country Has Handled Coronavirus Badly,” Pew Research Center, September 15, 2020, <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/09/15/us-image-plummets-internationally-as-most-say-country-has-handled-coronavirus-badly/>.

the international community. In the 1970s, Paramount Leader Deng Xiaoping initiated the PRC's ascent by prioritizing economic development over national defense.⁴ The atypical relegation of the military institution below agriculture, industry, and science and technology "modernizations" stimulated significant growth in the PRC's information and economic IOPs. As a result, the PRC was able to strengthen domestic institutions and build external influence capabilities, while maintaining a low profile within the international order per Deng's guidance.⁵

Two demonstrations of the U.S.'s international order preeminence caused the PRC to shift focus and accelerate military modernization efforts in the 1990s.⁶ The initial catalyst was 1991's Operation Desert Storm in which the U.S. military overwhelmingly dominated Iraq's military, which was one of the world's most powerful at the time. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) early modernization progress was limited to

⁴ Bernard Z. Keo, "Crossing the River by Feeling the Stones: Deng Xiaoping in the Making of Modern China," *Education About Asia* 25, no. 2 (Fall 2020): 35-36; Tai Ming Cheung, "Disarmament and Development in China: The Relationship between National Defense and Economic Development on JSTOR," *Asian Survey* 28, no. 7 (July 1988): 759; Andrew Chuter, "30 Years: Deng Xiaoping—Enabling China's Rise," *Defense News*, October 25, 2016, <https://www.defensenews.com/30th-annivesary/2016/10/25/30-years-deng-xiaoping-enabling-chinas-rise/>.

⁵ "Deng Xiaoping's '24-Character Strategy'," GlobalSecurity, accessed September 30, 2021, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/china/24-character.htm>.

⁶ Tai Ming Cheung, *Fortifying China: The Struggle to Build a Modern Defense Economy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009); Michael Dahm, "China's Desert Storm Education," *United States Naval Institute. Proceedings* 147, no. 3 (March 2021), <http://www.proquest.com/military/docview/2519434681/FB7A223957C45A0PQ/1>; Dennis Blair, "China's Military Modernization on Land and Sea and in the Air and Space: Relevance to U.S. Policy," (Washington, DC: The Aspen Institute, 2008), <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/files/content/docs/congressional/BLAIRPaper.pdf>.

refinements in doctrine, organizational structure, and training due to a lack of funding to modernize equipment. The second, more profound, catalyst was the U.S.'s intervention in the 1996 Taiwan Strait Crisis. The U.S. interference with one of the PRC's core interests compelled the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), the nation-state's authoritarian government, to allocate more considerable resources to the PLA's modernization efforts. Consequently, the CCP introduced state-owned enterprise (SOE) reforms in 1997 to synchronize the economic and information capability gains with the military's modernization. These reforms were the start of the PRC's progression toward civil-military fusion, which facilitated the nation-state's current ability to rapidly absorb and reproduce foreign military technology and equipment. The PRC endeavored to maintain its low international community profile into the 21st Century, even growing its IOPs.

The ascension of Xi Jinping to General Secretary of the CCP in 2012 and President of the PRC in 2013 ushered in a new, more assertive era of Chinese leadership. The PRC, under President Xi's direction, has since simultaneously instituted a more authoritarian approach domestically and an increasingly aggressive foreign policy, supported by the cumulative growth in the nation-state's collective IOPs.⁷ As a result, the PRC is now perceived by the international community as a near-peer – and, in some instances, peer – competitor of the U.S. within the international order.⁸ The PRC's

⁷ Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), review of *The Third Revolution: Xi Jinping and the New Chinese State*, by Elizabeth C. Economy, accessed April 19, 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/book/third-revolution>.

⁸ The Secretary of Defense (SecDef), Memorandum, Subject: Message to the Force (Department of Defense, Washington, DC, March 4, 2021), <https://media.defense.gov/2021/Mar/04/2002593656/-1/-1/0/SECRETARY-LLOYD-J-AUSTIN-III-MESSAGE-TO-THE-FORCE.PDF>.

elevated international influence has enabled implementation of a grand strategy to become the international community's dominant leader, reshape the international order in its favor, and establish a regional hegemony within the First Island Chain.⁹

The rise of another nation-state to Great Power status does not constitute a threat to the liberal, rules-based international order in and of itself. However, the manner in which the PRC applies its increased international influence to spread its perspective and achieve its strategic objectives causes concern. For example, the PRC has become the world's second largest economy, the leading global exporter, and a top trading partner for more than 120 nation-states.¹⁰ This economic power has intertwined the PRC's alternative economic system – state capitalism – with the global economy and provided the nation-state access to other international community members.¹¹ While the PRC's state capitalism permits limited entrepreneurship driven by the public market, the CCP

⁹ Heath, Grossman, and Clark, *China's Quest for Global Primacy*; Michael J. Mazarr, Timothy R. Heath, and Astrid S. Cevallos, *China and the International Order, Building a Sustainable International Order* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2018), https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2423.html.

¹⁰ "GDP Ranked by Country," World Population Review, accessed April 20, 2022, <https://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/countries-by-gdp>; United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, "Development in Motion," United Nations, accessed April 20, 2022, <https://unctad.org/topic/trade-analysis/development-in-motion>; United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, *Key Statistics and Trends in International Trade 2021* (New York, NY: United Nations, March 10, 2022), https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/ditctab2022d3_en.pdf; "China's Booming Foreign Trade Brings Benefits to the World-China International Import Expo," China International Import Expo, March 24, 2021, <https://www.ciie.org/zbh/en/news/exhibition/news/20210324/27370.html>.

¹¹ Scott Kennedy and Jude Blanchette, *Chinese State Capitalism* (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, October 2021), <https://www.csis.org/analysis/chinese-state-capitalism>.

actively guides the nation-state's economic power development through government policies that shape industries and establish SOEs.¹² The result is an economic system that synergizes the efforts of Chinese companies with financial backing from state-owned banks under the CCP's direction. As economist Jude Blanchette has stated, the PRC's state capitalism system's ability to "buy, build, and finance on a scale and speed that is unmatched" has substantial implications for the current international order. The PRC's economic system can produce a capacity overmatch across industries within the global economy, thus weakening the ability of free-market firms to compete at scale. As a result, the SOEs expand into overseas markets providing access for follow-on activities by the PRC's other IOPs, further increasing the nation-state's international influence.

Increased economic influence over other nation-states is just one method the PRC employs to "lead the reform of the global governance system" under the direction of President Xi.¹³ The PRC is employing multiple strategic approaches (SA) to transform global governance to reflect the CCP's values and priorities, including creating standards and norms for areas outside the current global governance system and establishing more favorable alternative international institutions. As the PRC continues to increase its IOP

¹² Jude Blanchette, "Confronting the Challenge of Chinese State Capitalism," Center for Strategic and International Studies, January 22, 2021, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/confronting-challenge-chinese-state-capitalism>; Michael Hirson, "State Capitalism and the Evolution of 'China, Inc.': Key Policy Issues for the United States," (Testimony before the U.S. China Economic and Security Review Commission, Washington, DC, February 7, 2019), https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/Hirson_USCC%20Testimony_FINAL.pdf.

¹³ Tarun Chhabra, Doshi, Ryan Hass, and Emilie Kimball, *Global China: Global Governance and Norms* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, October 12, 2020), <https://www.brookings.edu/research/global-china-global-governance-and-norms/>.

capabilities and operational reach through these SAs, previously established measures for conflict avoidance, such as Permanent Court of Arbitration rulings, have eroded.¹⁴

Nation-states increasingly acquiesce to revision of the current international standards and norms by the PRC as it attempts to reshape the rules-based international order to be tolerant, if not reflective, of its own principles. As a result, tensions are escalating within the international community between liberal, democratic nation-states and illiberal, autocratic nation-states.

Liberalism Approach to the Indo-Pacific Region

As the international order restructured following World War II, nation-state strength disparities, cultural differences between regional civilizations, and the absence of an existential threat comparable to the Soviet Union drove the Indo-Pacific's international relations toward a bilateral, "hub-and-spoke" structure.¹⁵ The PRC's Great Power status, the U.S.'s decreased leadership dominance of international community, and growing perception that an existential threat to the international order is developing have caused many international community members to re-evaluate their approach to the region. As a result, the U.S. strategy has increasingly layered multilateralism with its traditionally bilateral approach. Specifically, two multilateral partnerships have become

¹⁴ "Statement of Admiral Philip S. Davidson, U.S. Navy, Commander, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command before the Senate Armed Services Committee on U.S. Indo-Pacific Command Posture," (Washington, DC: U.S. Congress, Senate, March 9, 2021), https://www.armed-services.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/Davidson_03-09-21.pdf.

¹⁵ Victor D. Cha, "Powerplay: Origins of the U.S. Alliance System in Asia," *International Security* 34, no. 3 (2009): 158–196; Yasuhiro Izumikawa, "Network Connections and the Emergence of the Hub-and-Spokes Alliance System in East Asia," *International Security* 45, no. 2 (Fall 2020): 7–50.

central to the U.S. strategy to counter PRC activities – the Australia, UK, and U.S. Trilateral Security Partnership (AUKUS) and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad). Figure 1 depicts the overlap between the “hub-and-spoke” alliances, AUKUS, and the Quad within the Indo-Pacific region. Figure 2 depicts the expanding international relations influence of the U.S., its alliances and partnerships, and the overall international community. As the U.S. acts through the expanding rings depicted in Figure 2, the ability to influence activities of other international community members grows, but so does the requirement for consensus and the potential that the U.S.’s objectives may not be achieved.

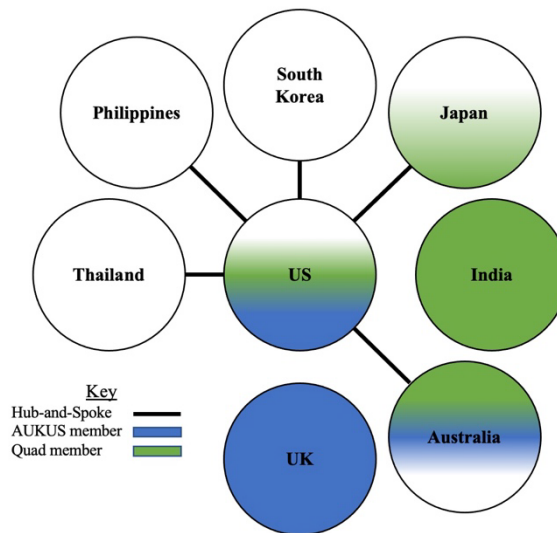


Figure 1. Current U.S. Indo-Pacific Alliances and Partnerships

Source: Created by author.

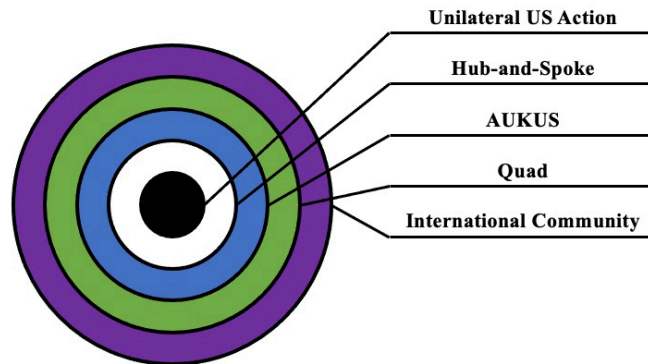


Figure 2. Expanding Influence of U.S. Indo-Pacific Alliances and Partnerships

Source: Created by author.

Since World War I, Australia, the UK, and the U.S. have been bilateral and multilateral treaty allies focused on a wide array of desired objectives. The expansion of the multilateral relationship to include a focus on countering the PRC in the Indo-Pacific region was a natural progression for relations between the nation-states. On September 15, 2021, the creation of the AUKUS was announced by its leadership.¹⁶ Shared Western civilization ideals and international order objectives represent a logical multilateral approach to the Indo-Pacific region with minimal risk of the partnership’s collapse.

The Quad is a group of four democratic nation-states – the U.S., Japan, Australia, and India – cooperating on a wide range of international issues.¹⁷ It is a partnership, not an alliance, due to the political sensitivities of its nation-state members. The Quad’s

¹⁶ The White House Briefing Room, “Joint Leaders Statement on AUKUS,” (The White House, Washington, DC, September 15, 2021), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/09/15/joint-leaders-statement-on-aukus/>.

¹⁷ Sheila A. Smith, “The Quad in the Indo-Pacific: What to Know,” Council on Foreign Relations, May 27, 2021, <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/quad-indo-pacific-what-know>.

multilateral approach represents both increased opportunity and increased risk due to its member diversity. The most significant opportunity is that the Quad establishes multilateralism through collaboration amongst three distinct civilizations, i.e., Hindu civilization in India, Japanese civilization in Japan, and Western civilization in Australia and the U.S.¹⁸ The ability of these differing civilizations to agree on common objectives increases the Quad's credibility within the international community. However, there is also significant risk with this partnership for the same reason. While Australia and the U.S. have common Western civilization-based values, the values and long-term objectives of India and Japan often differ; the relative weight of the specific differing values determines, in part, the likelihood of these civilizational disparities becoming critical friction points. The result is an increased requirement for collaboration and compromise to gain the required consensus, which may necessitate modification to the U.S.'s objectives.

Moving toward a Quadrilateral Partnership

The Quad is the most recent version of a multilateral partnership that has developed between the four core member nation-states over the last 18 years. The group's first iteration, the Tsunami Core Group, formed following the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami, which created devastation as far as 5,000 miles from the Indian Ocean epicenter and cost more than 230,000 lives.¹⁹ The Tsunami Core Group's leaders directed their diplomatic

¹⁸ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2011), 45.

¹⁹ Marc Grossman, "The Tsunami Core Group: A Step toward a Transformed Diplomacy in Asia and Beyond," *Security Challenges* 1, no. 1 (2005): 11–14; Dave Roos, "The 2004 Tsunami Wiped Away Towns With 'Mind-Boggling' Destruction," *History*,

corps to establish a temporary partnership to coordinate initial humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) throughout the region. Government officials from each nation-state synchronized their maritime-based relief efforts through a series of short video teleconferences, phone calls, and emails. The Tsunami Core Group only existed for nine days before handing over its responsibilities to the United Nations (UN) but inspired a “new kind of diplomacy” to streamline future collaboration between the four democracies.²⁰ Multilateral efforts, however, languished for the next three years in the absence of a crisis or collective threat.

The second attempt to establish a lasting multilateral partnership amongst the four nation-states, the Democratic Security Diamond, was equally short-lived.²¹ Shinzo Abe, a candidate for Japanese Prime Minister at the time, proposed the establishment of a Quad-like partnership in 2006. Abe asserted that, in addition to strong U.S.-Japan ties, Japan’s future required closer security partnerships with Australia and India based on “values-oriented diplomacy...[and emphasizing] democracy, freedom, human rights, the rule of law, and the market economy.”²² This statement, and Abe’s election as Prime Minister,

last modified September 18, 2020, <https://www.history.com/news/deadliest-tsunami-2004-indian-ocean>.

²⁰ Patrick G. Buchan and Benjamin Rimland, “Defining the Diamond: The Past, Present, and Future of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue,” (Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC, March 2020), 2, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/defining-diamond-past-present-and-future-quadrilateral-security-dialogue>.

²¹ Shinzo Abe, “Asia’s Democratic Security Diamond,” *Mint*, December 31, 2012, <https://www.livemint.com/Opinion/viqg2XC8fhRfjTUIcctk0M/Asias-democratic-security-diamond.html>.

²² Rory Mecalif, “Chinese Ghost Story,” *The Diplomat*, February 14, 2008, <https://thediplomat.com/2008/02/chinese-ghost-story/>; Taro Aso, “Speech by Mr. Taro Aso, Minister for Foreign Affairs on the Occasion of the Japan Institute of International

initiated a multitude of bilateral and trilateral diplomatic meetings over the following year.²³ In response, the PRC described the strengthening of relations amongst the four nation-states as an “axis of democracies” attempting to restrain the growing Chinese influence and reach.²⁴ Chinese officials exerted considerable diplomatic pressure with critical statements and public warnings against creating an “Asian [North Atlantic Treaty Organization]” (NATO) to prevent an official quadrilateral meeting.²⁵

Despite the PRC’s objections, the four nation-states met “informally” on 25 May 2007 during the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum in Manila.²⁶ Little is known concerning the discussions had and agreements made as neither official detailed accounts nor public statements exist, but domestic opposition in India and Australia caused leaders to distance themselves following the ASEAN forum.²⁷ India’s Prime Minister noted that the group was only meeting to “exchange views on

Affairs Seminar ‘Arc of Freedom and Prosperity: Japan’s Expanding Diplomatic Horizons’,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, November 30, 2006, <https://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/fm/aso/speech0611.html>.

²³ Buchan and Rimland, “Defining the Diamond.”

²⁴ Brahma Chellaney, “Australia-India-Japan-U.S. Quad,” *The Japan Times*, July 19, 2007, <https://chellaney.net/2007/07/19/australia-india-japan-us-quad/>.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Buchan and Rimland, “Defining the Diamond,”; “Foreign Affairs and Trade Portfolio,” Parliament of Australia, 2007, <https://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id:%22committees/estimate/10266/0001%22>; Jyotsna Mehra, “The Australia-India-Japan-U.S. Quadrilateral: Dissecting the China Factor,” (ORF Occasional Paper, New Delhi, India: Observer Research Foundation, August 2020), <https://www.orfonline.org/research/the-australia-india-japan-us-quadrilateral/>.

²⁷ “Foreign Affairs and Trade Portfolio,” Parliament of Australia.

development from our experiences as democracies” not to counter or contain the PRC.²⁸ Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade downplayed the meeting as one between participants “sharing some fundamental values and interested in growing cooperation” but with “no arrangement for a further meeting.”²⁹ Such proclamations, however, did little to dissuade the PRC’s opposition. By 2008, domestic and PRC pressures led to collapse of the second attempt at quadrilateral diplomatic relations.

Bilateral and trilateral relations across the IOPs and institutions continued to build between the four member nation-states over the next nine years.³⁰ While the first call for another quadrilateral meeting came when Abe returned as Japan’s Prime Minister in 2012, it took another five years before each nation-state’s leadership agreed to meet in Manila for a second time.³¹ Assistant secretary-level representatives from each of the four nation-states met prior to attending the East Asia Summit on November 11, 2017, establishing the partnership that has since become known as the Quad.³²

²⁸ Tanvi Madan, “The Rise, Fall, and Rebirth of the ‘Quad,’” *War on the Rocks*, November 16, 2017, <https://warontherocks.com/2017/11/rise-fall-rebirth-quad/>.

²⁹ “Foreign Affairs and Trade Portfolio,” Parliament of Australia.

³⁰ Buchan and Rimland, “Defining the Diamond.”

³¹ Abe, “Asia’s Democratic Security Diamond.”

³² Ankit Panda, “U.S., Japan, India, and Australia Hold Working-Level Quadrilateral Meeting on Regional Cooperation,” *The Diplomat*, November 13, 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/11/us-japan-india-and-australia-hold-working-level-quadrilateral-meeting-on-regional-cooperation/>.

Purpose and Significance of the Study

Domestic and foreign influences, such as increasing political polarization and a decline in international public support, have caused the U.S. to vacillate between liberalism and realism to counter the PRC's revisionist objectives.³³ The previous strategies have been moderately effective, but the PRC continues to expand its sphere of influence in an attempt to establish a regional hegemony within the First Island Chain. The purpose of this study is to analyze the activities of the PRC and explore collaborative, multilateral SAs to create a balance of power in the Indo-Pacific region. This study is specifically meant to inform leadership across the governments of the Quad's core members on the validity of potential SAs involving all IOPs, while maintaining international conflict with the PRC below the threshold of war.

This study provides planners, advisors, and policymakers an independent examination of the rising tensions in the Indo-Pacific region and presents a potential strategy for establishing a balance of power to maintain the liberal, rules-based international order. By analyzing the strategic environment and possible SAs through established frameworks, the researcher validates or invalidates the potential options for a balanced application of the Quad's collective IOPs. Ultimately, policymakers, advisors, and planners will understand and be able to articulate the capabilities and limitations of multilateralism in the Indo-Pacific region prior to making the associated strategic-level decisions.

³³ Wike et al., "America's International Image Continues to Suffer,"; Wike, Fetterolf, and Mordecai, "U.S. Image Plummet Internationally as Most Say Country Has Handled Coronavirus Badly."

Problem Statement and Research Questions

The PRC views its rise to Great Power status as a reemergence of the 5,000-year-old Chinese civilization to its rightful place in the international community. Within the current international order, actions are being conducted by the PRC across the breadth of IOPs – from predatory economics to military harassment – to reshape international standards and norms in the PRC’s favor. The liberal international order’s fundamental principles dictate that the PRC be allowed to continue active participation in the international community despite its antagonistic activities.

In contrast, the once-dominant U.S.’s influence within the international community has been in a slow decline over the last two decades.³⁴ The U.S. has increasingly balked at liberal ordering mechanisms, evidenced by such events as the failure to ratify the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership. In addition, societal polarization has caused a rise in nationalist, at times xenophobic, illiberal rhetoric throughout all levels of the U.S. government, which in turn has weakened the U.S.’s position of leadership in the international order. The cumulative effect of such actions has increased doubt within the international community concerning the U.S. commitment or ability to maintain the liberal, rules-based order.³⁵

³⁴ Wike, Fetterolf, and Mordecai, “U.S. Image Plummets Internationally as Most Say Country Has Handled Coronavirus Badly,”; Wike et al., “America’s International Image Continues to Suffer.”

³⁵ Yuki Tatsumi, “Needed: Restoration of U.S. Credibility in the Indo-Pacific Region,” Stimson Center, September 18, 2020, <https://www.stimson.org/2020/needed-restoration-of-u-s-credibility-in-the-indo-pacific-region/>; Liz Sly, “Afghanistan’s Collapse Leaves Allies Questioning U.S. Resolve on Other Fronts,” *Washington Post*, August 15, 2021, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/afghanistan-

Western civilization equates conflict with the violent employment of the military IOP.³⁶ Accordingly, the U.S. – and Western civilization at large – views the relationship between the two Great Powers – the PRC and the U.S. – as competition rather than conflict, as tensions remain below the threshold of war. Conflict, however, is defined as a competition between opposing actors with incompatible ideas and interests.³⁷ This definition more appropriately aligns with the Chinese civilization’s approach toward achieving its objectives, which has resulted in less restricted employment of the PRC’s IOPs in comparison to the U.S.³⁸ The primary research question of this thesis is: Given the strategic environment circumstances, it is important the U.S. examine potential liberalist international relations approaches to strengthen the Quad as an international partnership that embodies a long-term, balanced alternative to the PRC’s coercive IOP employment intended to revise the rules-based international order and establish a regional hegemony within the First Island Chain. Three secondary questions (SQs) frame the problem, facilitate analysis, and support recommendations:

chaos-blame-us/2021/08/14/0d4e5ab2-fd3e-11eb-911c-524bc8b68f17_story.html; Ayesha Rascoe, “Biden Says ‘America’s Back.’ The World Has Some Questions,” *NPR*, September 20, 2021, <https://www.npr.org/2021/09/20/1038162867/biden-says-americas-back-the-world-has-some-questions>.

³⁶ Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), Joint Doctrine Note (JDN) 1-19, *Competition Continuum* (Washington, DC: Joint Staff, June 3, 2019), 2, https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/jdn_jg/jdn1_19.pdf.

³⁷ Merriam-Webster, Incorporated, “Conflict,” Merriam-Webster, accessed October 1, 2021, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/conflict>.

³⁸ Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui, *Unrestricted Warfare: China’s Master Plan to Destroy America* (1999; repr., Brattleboro: Echo Point Books & Media, 2015).

SQ1: What revisionism methods is the PRC employing to alter the current international order's established standards and norms?

SQ2: How have the Quad's SAs and objectives evolved as the strategic environment in the Indo-Pacific region has changed?

SQ3: Is it possible for the Quad to expand its international community collaboration with *like-minded partners* through broadening its approach to the balanced application of their collective IOPs?

Assumptions

The author made the following assumptions prior to undertaking this research:

1. Nation-states are the principal actors capable of defining the international order and influencing other members of the international community.
2. The PRC is a peer competitor of the U.S. with respect to the informational and economic IOPs. The PRC's capabilities will continue to close with the U.S. across all IOPs, and relative to overall international community influence, in accordance with the CCP's objectives.³⁹
3. While it has remained the predominant member of the international order, the ability of the U.S. to influence the international community will continue to decline from its height in the late 1990s.

³⁹ National Institute for Defense Studies, *China Security Report 2021: China's Military Strategy in the New Era* (Tokyo, Japan: Japanese Government, 2020), 69; Heath, Grossman, and Clark, *China's Quest for Global Primacy*, 54.

4. The current approaches being undertaken by the U.S. and other strategic competitors have had a minimal deterrence effect on the PRC's ability to adversely influence international community members.
5. Despite rising nationalism and political division, the U.S. will maintain a prominent leadership role in the international community.
6. Despite increasing illiberal domestic actions, India will remain democratic and a willing participant in the liberal, rules-based international order.
7. Neither the PRC nor the U.S. desire an escalation of tensions to or beyond the threshold of war.
8. The PRC has revisionist aims to create an international order that is tolerant, if not reflective, of their authoritarian government and socialist market economy.
9. The PRC interprets the U.S. actions within the First Island Chain as a direct threat to the PRC's rise as a Great Power and to its establishment of a regional hegemony.

Definition of Terms

Alliances are international relationships that result from a formal agreement between two or more nation-states for broad, long-term objectives that further the common interests of the members.⁴⁰ While predominantly formed to militarily counter

⁴⁰ Jeremy J. Ghez, *Alliances in the 21st Century: Implications for the U.S.-European Partnership* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2011), VIII-IX, https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/occasional_papers/2011/RAND_OP340.pdf; Joint Staff, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: United States Government, August 2021), 14, <https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/pubs/dictionary.pdf>.

threats, alliances can create enduring cooperation across all IOPs to produce an international order satisfactory to the participants.

Balance of power is the international relations theory that declares significant disparities in power drive weaker actors to restore international order equilibrium through buildup of individual IOPs and/or the formation of alliances and/or partnerships.⁴¹

A civilization is the highest grouping and broadest level of cultural identity defined by the subjective self-identification made by its members and common objective elements, such as language, history, religion, and customs.⁴² Sinic (Chinese), Japanese, Hindu, Islamic, Orthodox, Western, Latin American, and African are the major contemporary civilizations active in the international community.⁴³

Conflict below the threshold of war is conflict between international community members that occurs absent officially declared hostilities.⁴⁴ Comparable to the definition of “competition below armed conflict,”⁴⁵ conflict below the threshold of war is the

⁴¹ Steven E. Lobell, “Balance of Power Theory,” Oxford Bibliographies, last modified November 25, 2014, <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199743292/obo-9780199743292-0083.xml>; Meicen Sun, “Balance of Power Theory in Today’s International System,” E-International Relations, February 12, 2014, <https://www.e-ir.info/2014/02/12/balance-of-power-theory-in-todays-international-system/>.

⁴² Samuel Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations?” *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (Summer 1993): 24.

⁴³ Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, 45–47.

⁴⁴ Javier Jordan, “International Competition Below the Threshold of War: Toward a Theory of Gray Zone Conflict,” *Journal of Strategic Security* 14, no. 1 (2020): 5.

⁴⁵ JCS, JDN 1-19, 2-3.

integrated application of all IOPs by belligerents pursuing long-term objectives. These activities may include limited conventional military action without crossing into openly declared war.

Diplomatic power is the engagement of nation-states and/or non-state entities to advance interests or gain support through formal representation, negotiation, and implementation mechanisms, e.g., treaty verification activities.⁴⁶

Economic power is the ability to further or constrain others' prosperity through trade, assistance, and financial means.⁴⁷

While the U.S. and PRC versions differ slightly as depicted in Figure 3, the First Island Chain is formed by mainland Japan, Ryukyu Islands, Taiwan, Philippines, and maritime and peninsular Southeast Asia.⁴⁸ It is inclusive of the East China Sea (ECS) and South China Sea (SCS).

⁴⁶ Steven Heffington, Adam Oler, and David Tretler, eds., *A National Security Strategy Primer* (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2019), 23–25; Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), Joint Publication (JP) 1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States* (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, July 12, 2017), I-12, https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/pubs/jp1_ch1.pdf.

⁴⁷ Heffington, Oler, and Tretler, *A National Security Strategy Primer*, 30–32.

⁴⁸ Peter Kouretsos, “Tightening the Chain: Implementing a Strategy of Maritime Pressure in the Pacific,” Center for International Maritime Security, October 2, 2019, <https://cimsec.org/tag/first-island-chain/>.

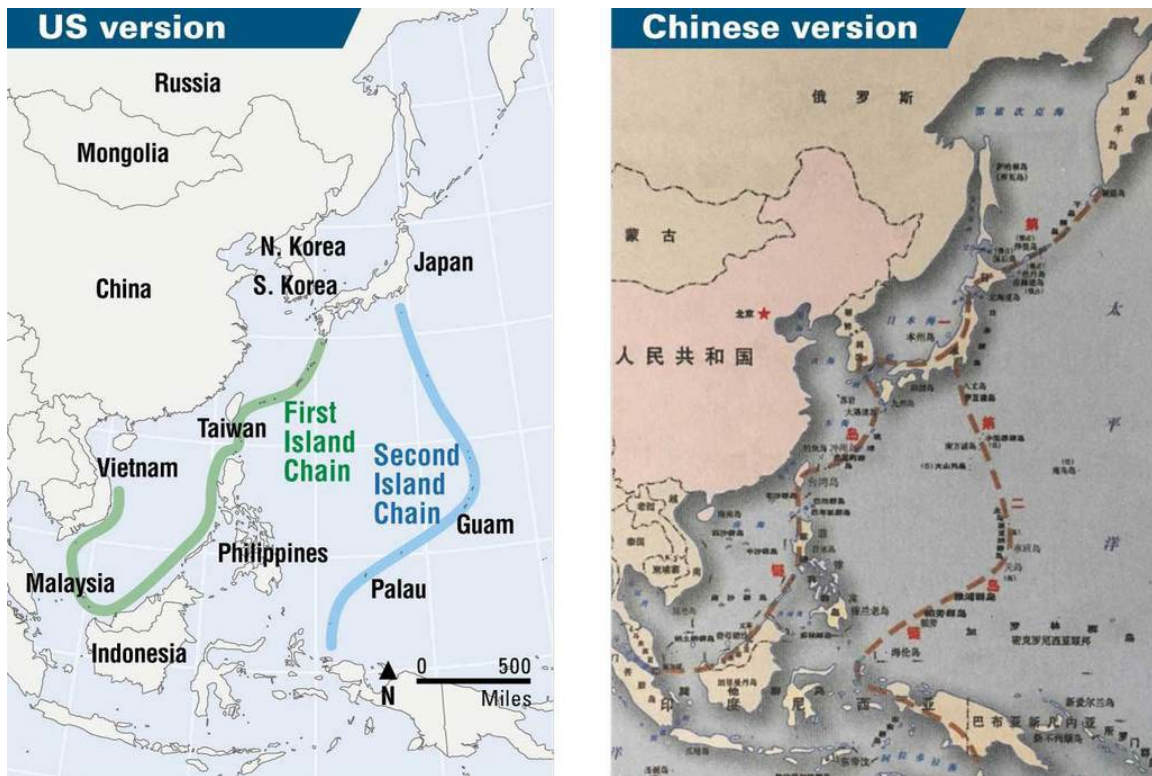


Figure 3. Pacific Island Chains

Source: Christopher P. Cavas, “Powers Jockey for Pacific Island Chain Influence,” *Defense News*, February 1, 2016, <https://www.defensenews.com/global/asia-pacific/2016/02/01/powers-jockey-for-pacific-island-chain-influence/>.

Hegemony is the ability of a single actor, typically a nation-state or political community, to decisively influence the international community through coercive or non-coercive means due to possession of overwhelming IOPs.⁴⁹

Illiberalism seeks to roll back advances made by liberalism to include independent review, individual liberties, minority rights, and the separation of

⁴⁹ Carla Norrlof, “Hegemony,” Oxford Bibliographies, last modified September 29, 2015, <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199743292/obo-9780199743292-0122.xml>.

governmental powers.⁵⁰ Illiberal members of the international community are predominately governed by authoritarian regimes concerned with the primacy and sovereignty of the nation-state.

Institutions and actors are the governmental, intergovernmental, and non-governmental organizations and individuals that employ the IOPs to achieve a strategic objective on behalf of a nation-state or other non-state actor(s).⁵¹ For example, the Departments of State and Defense are governmental institutions that employ the IOPs.

Informational power is the ability to create, exploit, and/or disrupt knowledge to inform, alter perception, or manipulate a target audience.⁵²

Instruments of national power are the strategic means available to international community members in pursuit of their objectives.⁵³ The primary IOPs are diplomatic, informational, military, and economic (known collectively as DIME or the DIME construct).⁵⁴ Additional IOPs have been proposed and employed in other research, e.g., legal and law enforcement, but this study consolidates these instruments under the DIME construct.

⁵⁰ Alina Polyakova, Torrey Taussig, Ted Reinert, Kemal Kirişci, Amanda Sloat, James Kirchick, Melissa Hooper, Norman Eisen, and Andrew Kenealy, *The Anatomy of Illiberal States: Assessing and Responding to Democratic Decline in Turkey and Central Europe* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, February 2019), 2–3, <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/illiberal-states-web.pdf>.

⁵¹ Heffington, Oler, and Tretler, *A National Security Strategy Primer*.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 25–27; Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), Joint Doctrine Note (JDN) 1-18, *Strategy* (Washington, DC: Joint Chiefs of Staff, April 25, 2018), II-6, https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/jdn_jg/jdn1_18.pdf.

⁵³ JCS, JP 1, GL-8.

⁵⁴ JCS, JDN 1-18, vii-viii.

The international community consists of all nation-states, international institutions, international actors, multinational organizations, and any other entity that participates in international relations.⁵⁵

International order is the body of international institutions, agreements amongst nation-states (standards), and common values and norms that govern relations between key players in the international community.⁵⁶

The international system is when two or more international community members have sufficient interaction to impact on one another's decisions, thus causing the members to behave as parts of a whole.⁵⁷

Liberalism is the international relations theory in which international institutions play a critical role in the international order, even though nation-states are the primary actors.⁵⁸ Interdependence, especially economically, is stressed to maintain peace

⁵⁵ Tod Lindberg, "Making Sense of the 'International Community'," (Working Paper, Council on Foreign Relations, New York, NY, January 2014), https://www.cfr.org/sites/default/files/pdf/2014/01/IIGG_WorkingPaper14_Lindberg.pdf.

⁵⁶ Brands, *American Grand Strategy and the Liberal Order*, 2; Bonnie Glaser and Khairulanwar Zaini, "China as a Selective Revisionist Power in the International Order," *Perspective* 21, no. 2019 (April 5, 2019): 2, https://www.iseas.edu.sg/images/pdf/ISEAS_Perspective_2019_21.pdf.

⁵⁷ Yannis Stivachtis, "Introducing the English School in International Relations Theory," *E-International Relations*, February 23, 2018, <https://www.e-ir.info/2018/02/23/introducing-the-english-school-in-international-relations-theory/>.

⁵⁸ Jonathan Cristol, "Liberalism," *Oxford Bibliographies*, last modified November 26, 2019, <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199743292/obo-9780199743292-0060.xml>; Brands, *American Grand Strategy and the Liberal Order*, 2; W. Julian Korab-Karpowicz, "Political Realism in International Relations," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, last modified May 24, 2017, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2018/entries/realism-intl-relations/>.

throughout the international community. The participation in and advocacy for representative government is important, as these types of institutions rarely rely upon violent conflict to settle disputes.

Like-minded partners are nation-states, international institutions, and/or other international actors with similar values, norms, and/or interests concerning the international order, relations between international community members, and the overall strategic environment.

Military power is the capability and capacity to use force, threaten the use of force, or enable others to use force across domains – land, sea, air, space, and cyber – and the information environment to further political objectives.⁵⁹ The use of the military IOP is not limited to military institutions. For example, law enforcement agencies and private corporations can employ force on the behalf of nation-states.

Partnerships are international relationships between two or more nation-states or organizations similar to alliances, but without a formal agreement.⁶⁰

Realism is the international relations theory in which the principal international community actors are nation-states primarily concerned with national interests and security.⁶¹ Realists consider the international order to be an anarchic system driven by

⁵⁹ Heffington, Oler, and Tretler, *A National Security Strategy Primer*, 28-29; JCS, JDN 1-18, II-6 to II-7.

⁶⁰ Claudette Roulo, “Alliances vs. Partnerships,” U.S. Department of Defense, last modified March 22, 2019, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Feature-Stories/Story/Article/1684641/alliances-vs-partnerships/>.

⁶¹ Korab-Karpowicz, “Political Realism in International Relations,”; Scott Burchill, ed., *Theories of International Relations*, 3rd ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 30-31.

self-interest, thus a nation-state's power determines the outcome of competition and conflict. While realists do not espouse violence, war is considered part of the human nature that creates the disorderly international order.

A revisionist power aspires to modify the current international order by changing the international community's hierarchy and status recognition, altering recognized standards and accepted norms, promoting ideological alternatives, and/or redistributing territory amongst sovereign nation-states and international actors.⁶²

Selective revisionist powers are a subset of revisionist powers. A selective revisionist power accepts the need for the rules-based international order but has a broad range of revisionist intentions to include maintaining the status quo in certain areas. These powers desire certain power structure reforms and input on emerging aspects, such as cyberspace, without wanting to overthrow the existing international order in a revolutionary manner.⁶³

Security is the preservation of the norms, rules, and values of a nation-state.⁶⁴

⁶² Jason W. Davidson, *The Origins of Revisionist and Status-Quo States* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-137-09201-4_1; Jonathan M. DiCicco and Victor M. Sanchez, "Revisionism in International Relations," Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies, March 25, 2021, <https://oxfordre.com/internationalstudies/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.001.0001/acrefore-9780190846626-e-607>.

⁶³ Glaser and Zaini, "China as a Selective Revisionist Power in the International Order,"; Evan A. Feigenbaum, "Reluctant Stakeholder: Why China's Highly Strategic Brand of Revisionism Is More Challenging Than Washington Thinks," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, April 27, 2018, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/04/27/reluctant-stakeholder-why-china-s-highly-strategic-brand-of-revisionism-is-more-challenging-than-washington-thinks-pub-76213>.

⁶⁴ Samuel M. Makinda, "Sovereignty and Global Security," *Security Dialogue* 29, no. 3 (September 1, 1998): 282.

Sphere of influence is the ability of an international community actor to exert dominant control over a specified domain.⁶⁵

Limitations, Delimitations, and Scope of Study

This thesis has two principal limitations. First, the time to conduct research, analysis, and construction of the strategy proposal was limited to the Academic Year 2021/22 U.S. Army Command and General Staff Officer Course. Second, access to national intelligence and primary sources on the topic for the U.S., PRC, and Quad is tightly controlled. Thus, research and analysis were predominately limited to open, unclassified secondary and tertiary sources to facilitate the widest dissemination of findings and generate follow-on research.

The research for this thesis was delimited and scoped in five ways. First, coordination with the U.S. Departments of Defense and State was limited to open-source information to facilitate independent analysis. Second, the gathered information was restricted to English language sources. Documents translated from a foreign language were restrained to peer-reviewed sources. Machine translation, such as Google Translate, was not used by the author. Third, the study was geographically focused on the First Island Chain as the region in which the PRC is attempting to create a regional hegemony. Fourth, the Quad was the multilateral partnership of choice for establishing a balance-of-power due to the four nation-states' considerable influence in the Indo-Pacific region and ability to resist Chinese pressure. Finally, escalating the conflict between the PRC and U.S. beyond the threshold of war was not considered due to the global implications.

⁶⁵ Van Jackson, "Understanding Spheres of Influence in International Politics," *European Journal of International Security* 5, no. 3 (October 2020): 255–273.

Summary

The PRC is conducting actions across the IOPs within the current international order to reshape international standards and norms in its favor, especially within the First Island Chain. The validity of previous deterrence methods employed within the liberal, rules-based international order has eroded, parallel to the decrease in the U.S.'s international influence. The U.S. must adapt its approach to countering the PRC's illiberal activities and growing sphere of influence. Therefore, the U.S. should adopt a multilateral strategy by using the Quad as the mechanism for creating a balance of power within the First Island Chain. It is important that the U.S. take on a collaborative leadership role within the Quad, while maintaining the conflict below the threshold of war. This will generate overwhelming international community support for the establishment of a balance of power between the Quad and PRC.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The central motivation of this study is to examine a multilateral approach that strategists for the Quad's core members can expand upon to strengthen the partnership and counterbalance the PRC's coercive behavior and international order revisionism, particularly within the First Island Chain. This chapter reviews available literature concerning the PRC's revisionist attitude toward the international order; the First Island Chain's, and greater Indo-Pacific region's, strategic environment; and the continuing evolution of the Quad; as such, this chapter addresses this thesis's SQs. News articles, scholarly journals, think tank reports, academic presentations, government documents, and official speeches were among the open-source and archival records reviewed.

The literature review principally addresses this thesis's SQs: (1) what revisionism methods is the PRC employing to alter the current international order's established standards and norms; (2) how have the Quad's SAs and objectives evolved as the strategic environment in the Indo-Pacific region has changed; and (3) is it possible for the Quad to expand its international community collaboration with like-minded partners through broadening its approach to the balanced application of their collective IOPs? A review of each of these topics lays the foundational understanding for the primary research question: Given the strategic environment circumstances, it is important the U.S. examine potential liberalist international relations approaches to strengthen the Quad as an international partnership that embodies a long-term, balanced alternative to the PRC's

coercive IOP employment intended to revise the rules-based international order and establish a regional hegemony within the First Island Chain.

The literature review process yielded noteworthy studies on each SQ by reputable scholars. The cumulative understanding gained throughout review highlighted a research gap concerning the overarching topic, however. Several studies have been conducted concerning potential counterbalancing strategies by individual Quad members and its like-minded partners, as well as the Quad's probable success as a strategic partnership. There is, however, a scarcity of research concerning the potential transition of existing bilateral, trilateral, and multilateral treaties, partnerships, and informal affiliations into collective action by the Quad that creates a balance of power in the Indo-Pacific region and counters the PRC's coercive activities within the First Island Chain.

Revisionism Mindset of the People's Republic of China

Strong countries make the rules while rising break them and exploit loopholes.
—Colonel Qiao Liang, interview in *Zhongguo Qingnian Bao*, 28 June 1999

Chinese civilization distinguishes between the international system, global governance, and international order in a manner that is critical to understanding the PRC's approach to international relations.⁶⁶ The PRC defines the international system as a complex network of multilateral institutions that govern the global commons under the principle of shared sovereignty. Global governance is the international system's execution of its roles and responsibilities as outlined by international laws and

⁶⁶ Kevin Rudd, "Xi Jinping's Vision for Global Governance," Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, July 12, 2018, <https://www.belfercenter.org/publication/xi-jinpings-vision-global-governance>.

agreements. The combination of the international system and the U.S.-based alliance system devoted to enforcing the American definition of international security creates the international order. In contrast, Western civilization takes a more direct view of the international order as the execution of global governance through a network of international institutions, nation-state agreements, and common values and norms.⁶⁷ The difference between the two viewpoints revolves around the PRC's perception of the U.S.'s centrality and undefined common values and norms. The PRC, and more importantly the CCP, view the U.S.'s predominant position within the international order as an obstacle to achieving their national objectives and a threat to their core interests, especially when combined with the U.S.'s advocacy of liberal-based values and norms.⁶⁸ As a result, Xi has asserted that there is an "impending struggle for the future structure of the international order."⁶⁹

As early as 2005, then-President Hu Jintao called for a reformation of the international order to counterbalance Western civilization's influence on global

⁶⁷ Glaser and Zaini, "China as a Selective Revisionist Power in the International Order."

⁶⁸ Nadege Rolland, *China's Vision for a New World Order: Implications for the United States* (Washington, DC: The National Bureau of Asian Research, October 2020), https://www.nbr.org/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/publications/china_vision_brief_100220.pdf.

⁶⁹ Kevin Rudd, "Xi Jinping, China and the Global Order: The Significance of China's 2018 Central Foreign Policy Work Conference," (Address to the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, Singapore, June 26, 2018), https://asiasociety.org/sites/default/files/2019-01/Xi%20Jinping_China%20and%20the%20Global%20Order.pdf.

governance by the international system.⁷⁰ The proclamations of Hu, as well as other Chinese leaders, expressed a reserved desire for the PRC to actively participate in the international system's reforms.⁷¹ Xi, however, has been more assertive with the PRC's employment of a "diplomacy of socialism with Chinese characteristics."⁷² Emboldened by the PRC's expanding IOPs and international influence, Xi declared during the 19th Party Congress, in 2017, that the CCP's socialist system offered "a new option for other countries and nations who want to speed up their development while preserving their independence; and it offers Chinese wisdom and a Chinese approach to solving the problems facing mankind."⁷³ The following year, at the 2018 Central Foreign Affairs Work Conference, Xi went further by stating that the PRC would "lead the reform of the global governance system."⁷⁴ Xi is intent on centrally positioning the Chinese civilization within the international community and tie the international system to Chinese values and norms, thus transforming the international order to favor the PRC.⁷⁵ A number of

⁷⁰ Xinhua News Agency, "Hu Makes 4-Point Proposal for Building Harmonious World," China.org.cn, September 16, 2005, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/UN/142408.htm>.

⁷¹ Liza Tobin, "Xi's Vision for Transforming Global Governance: A Strategic Challenge for Washington and Its Allies," *Texas National Security Review* 2, no. 1 (November 2018): 154-166, <https://tnsr.org/2018/11/xis-vision-for-transforming-global-governance-a-strategic-challenge-for-washington-and-its-allies/>.

⁷² Rudd, "Xi Jinping, China and the Global Order."

⁷³ "Highlights of Xi Jinping's Report," *Beijing Review*, October 26, 2017, http://www.bjreview.com/Nation/201710/t20171023_800107996.html.

⁷⁴ "China's Approach to Global Governance," Council on Foreign Relations, accessed February 3, 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/china-global-governance/>.

⁷⁵ Rolland, *China's Vision for a New World Order*.

prominent scholars, such as G. John Ikenberry and Joseph Nye, contend that such activities by the PRC are consistent with a reemerging Great Power calling for reasonable reform to increase its international order influence, but intent on maintaining the status quo.⁷⁶

According to Hans Morgenthau, however, status quo powers are intent on maintaining “the distribution of power as it exists at a particular moment in history.”⁷⁷ If the PRC were a status quo power in accordance with Morgenthau’s definition, then it would accept the existing international order it perceives as “underwriting U.S. [global] hegemony.”⁷⁸ International relations scholars Walter R. Mead and Suneel Kumar dispute the assertions of Ikenberry and Nye by declaring that the PRC is a revisionist power.⁷⁹ Mead and Kumar state that the PRC is determined to undermine “liberal values and norms of individualism, human rights, political freedom,...[and] transparency”⁸⁰ and

⁷⁶ G. John Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan: The Origins, Crisis, and Transformation of the American World Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011); Joseph Nye, “China Will Not Surpass America Any Time Soon,” *Financial Times*, February 19, 2019, <https://www.ft.com/content/7f700ab4-306d-11e9-80d2-7b637a9e1ba1>; Suneel Kumar, “China’s Revisionism Versus India’s Status Quoism: Strategies and Counter-Strategies of Rivals in Doklam Standoff,” *Jadavpur Journal of International Relations* 24, no. 1 (June 1, 2020): 73–100.

⁷⁷ Alastair Iain Johnston, “Is China a Status Quo Power?” *International Security* 27, no. 4 (April 2003): 8.

⁷⁸ Glaser and Zaini, “China as a Selective Revisionist Power in the International Order,” 1.

⁷⁹ Walter R. Mead, “The Return of Geopolitics,” *Foreign Affairs*, April 17, 2014, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2014-04-17/return-geopolitics>; Kumar, “China’s Revisionism Versus India’s Status Quoism.”

⁸⁰ Kumar, “China’s Revisionism Versus India’s Status Quoism,” 75.

place Chinese civilization at the center of the international community. According to Jason W. Davidson, revisionist powers are intent on modifying the current international order, such as altering established standards and norms, promoting ideological alternatives, and redistributing territory.⁸¹ Davidson’s definition of revisionism more appropriately describes the PRC’s declarations and activities, such as Xi’s statements on the global governance system and the CCP’s socialist system, as well as the PRC’s territorial claims within the First Island Chain. Consequently, the PRC can accurately be described as a revisionist – and not a status quo – power.

Many scholars agree the PRC has revisionist intentions, but most contend that the PRC has neither the desire nor the ability to be an existential threat to the international order.⁸² Certain revisionism proponents, such as Evan A. Feigenbaum, Feng Huiyun, and Suisheng Zhao, make the distinction that the PRC is a revisionist power, but not one set to revolutionary overthrow the international order in which it prospers.⁸³ As a result, scholars have increasingly asserted that the PRC’s strategic objectives cannot be

⁸¹ Davidson, *The Origins of Revisionist and Status-Quo States*; Oliver Turner and Nicola Nymalm, “Morality and Progress: IR Narratives on International Revisionism and the Status Quo,” *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 32, no. 4 (July 4, 2019): 407–428; DiCicco and Sanchez, “Revisionism in International Relations.”

⁸² Haseeb Bin Aziz, “Is China a Revisionist Power: An Analysis,” *Strategic Studies* 36, no. 4 (2016): 1–16; Kumar, “China’s Revisionism Versus India’s Status Quoism.”

⁸³ Feigenbaum, “Reluctant Stakeholder,”; Suisheng Zhao, “China as a Rising Power versus the U.S.-Led World Order,” *Rising Powers Quarterly* 1, no. 1 (September 2016): 13–21.

sufficiently explained by the dichotomy between status quo and revisionism.⁸⁴ Nadege Rolland concurs with the revisionist power assertions, but contends that the PRC only aspires to create a “subsystem” within the current international order. The new “subsystem” would include non-Western nation-states and place “[the PRC] at the top as well as at the center,” but not seek to overthrow existing order.⁸⁵

Bonnie Glaser contends the PRC blends the strict interpretations of status quo and revisionist powers into a new classification, referred to as selective revisionism. As a selective revisionist power, the PRC “accepts the notion of an international order and a rules-based system, [but] it does not accept all the existing rules” and the predominant position of the U.S.⁸⁶ Graeme Dobell makes a similar assertion in his description of the PRC as a “status quo–tidal power,” which is a nation-state that benefits from the current international order and the shifting “tide” from the “U.S. towards [the PRC].”⁸⁷

As is illustrated in the above discussion, international relations scholars lack consensus on the PRC’s specific categorization: status quo, revisionist, or an amalgamation of the two. The majority, however, agree that the PRC intends to incrementally change the rules-based international order in an effort to increase Chinese

⁸⁴ Lina Liu, “Beyond the Status Quo and Revisionism: An Analysis of the Role of China and the Approaches of China’s Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to the Global Order,” *Asian Journal of Political Science* 29, no. 1 (January 2, 2021): 88–109.

⁸⁵ Rolland, *China’s Vision for a New World Order*, 2.

⁸⁶ Glaser and Zaini, “China as a Selective Revisionist Power in the International Order,” 1.

⁸⁷ Graeme Dobell, “The U.S. and China: Status Quo Powers in Revisionist Times,” *The Strategist*, February 5, 2018, <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/us-china-status-quo-powers-revisionist-times/>.

influence and create favorable conditions for its reemergence as a Great Power. The PRC has employed a combination of its expansive IOPs, created parallel institutions absent liberal values, and increased authority within existing institutions to coerce agreement, or at least acquiescence, to inequitable revisions of the current international standards and norms.

The PRC's extensive, integrated employment of IOPs within the SCS is illustrative of its SAs toward establishing a regional hegemony within the First Island Chain by altering global governance and revising international standards and norms. In 2013, the PRC began creating artificial islands and expanding its sovereignty claims in the SCS. Scarborough Shoal, which the PRC seized from the Philippines the year prior, was included in the PRC's island building activities.⁸⁸ As both nation-states are signatories of the UNCLOS, the Philippines sought an arbitral tribunal for the PRC's violations of international standards and norms.⁸⁹ The arbitration focused on 15 points concerning the legal status of the maritime features because the PRC expressed reservations concerning the authority of UNCLOS to make an ownership

⁸⁸ Center for Strategic & International Studies, "China Island Tracker," Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, accessed February 20, 2022, <https://amti.csis.org/island-tracker/china/>.

⁸⁹ Ben Dolven, Susan V Lawrence, and Ronald O'Rourke, *China Primer: South China Sea Disputes*, Congressional Research Service Report for Congress (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, Congressional Research Service, February 2, 2021), <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF10607#:~:text=In%20response%20to%20U.S.%20FONOPs,to%20avoid%20%E2%80%9Cunexpected%20incidents.%E2%80%9D&text=at%20high%20tide%20but%20not%20habitable%20generate%20only%20territorial%20seas..>

determination.⁹⁰ In 2016, the tribunal made a binding ruling that the PRC's historic rights claim within the SCS lacked legal merit, its territorial claims and behaviors were not in accordance with international standards, and it had violated the sovereign rights of the Philippines.⁹¹ This was a significant failure of the PRC's ability to exert influence on the international system's global governance through its diplomatic IOP, but has become an overall success for the PRC as a revisionist power.⁹²

While the initial activities that led to the UNCLOS arbitration exemplified territorial revisionism, Bonnie Glaser stressed that the PRC's response to the tribunal's ruling and subsequent SCS activities clearly demonstrated its intent to alter the international order using all IOPs.⁹³ The PRC rejected the judgement as "nothing more than a piece of wastepaper."⁹⁴ The PLA has since expanded its facilities on a multitude of

⁹⁰ Euan Graham, "The Hague Tribunal's South China Sea Ruling: Empty Provocation or Slow-Burning Influence?" Council of Councils, Council on Foreign Relations, August 18, 2016, <https://www.cfr.org/councilofcouncils/global-memos/hague-tribunals-south-china-sea-ruling-empty-provocation-or-slow-burning-influence>.

⁹¹ Bill Hayton, "Two Years On, South China Sea Ruling Remains a Battleground for the Rules-Based Order," Chatham House, July 11, 2018, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2018/07/two-years-south-china-sea-ruling-remains-battleground-rules-based-order>; Oriana S. Mastro, "How China Is Bending the Rules in the South China Sea," *The Interpreter*, February 17, 2021, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/how-china-bending-rules-south-china-sea>.

⁹² Center for Strategic & International Studies, "Failing or Incomplete? Grading the South China Sea Arbitration," Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, July 11, 2019, <https://amti.csis.org/failing-or-incomplete-grading-the-south-china-sea-arbitration/>.

⁹³ Glaser and Zaini, "China as a Selective Revisionist Power in the International Order."

⁹⁴ Hayton, "Two Years On, South China Sea Ruling Remains a Battleground for the Rules-Based Order."

maritime features encompassed by the ruling. Chinese military, maritime militia, and commercial vessels continue to assert the PRC's sovereignty claims depicted in Figure 4, despite regional and international challenges.⁹⁵ This includes the PRC's attempts to regulate innocent passage of military vessels within 200 nautical miles of its territorial claims through the claimant's exclusive economic zone, which encompasses approximately 80% of the SCS.⁹⁶ This interpretation of the sovereignty rights associated with an exclusive economic zone by the PRC is contrary to the UNCLOS, but has support from other nation-states to include a few within the SCS. Additionally, the PRC is attempting to normalize its territorial claims through the negotiation of the SCS Code of Conduct with the ASEAN.⁹⁷ The PRC views the SCS Code of Conduct as a means of creating a regionally approved, international community agreement that constrains established international standards and norms, i.e., UNCLOS, and prohibits extraterritorial institutions and nation-states from acting within the region. Such terms would equate to a significant advancement toward the PRC's establishment of a regional

⁹⁵ The Policy Planning Staff, Office of the Secretary of State, *The Elements of the China Challenge* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of State, December 2020), <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/20-02832-Elements-of-China-Challenge-508.pdf>.

⁹⁶ Mastro, "How China Is Bending the Rules in the South China Sea."

⁹⁷ Bill Hayton, "After 25 Years, There's Still No South China Sea Code of Conduct," *Foreign Policy*, July 21, 2021, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/07/21/south-china-sea-code-of-conduct-asean/>; Arityo R. Darmawan, "Towards a Rigorous Code of Conduct for the South China Sea," *East Asia Forum*, July 30, 2021, <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2021/07/30/towards-a-rigorous-code-of-conduct-for-the-south-china-sea/>.

hegemony, as no nation-state or institution within the SCS has the power to credibly oppose the PRC’s coercive behavior.

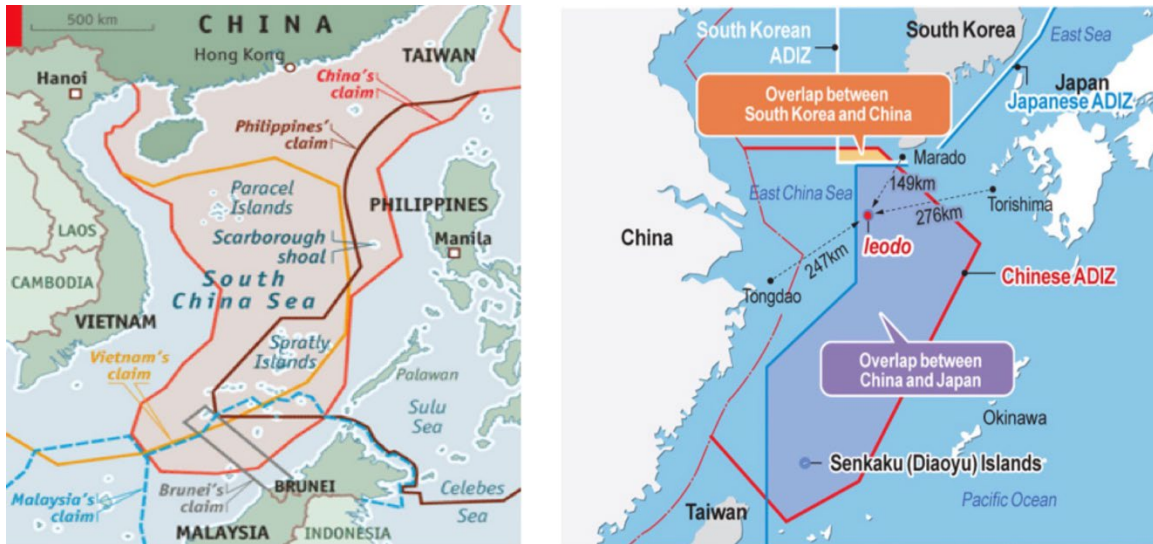


Figure 4. Competing Territorial Claims within the First Island Chain

Source: Metin Guvenir, “Maritime Disputes in South/East China Sea from Military Aspect,” *Beyond the Horizon*, December 13, 2017, <https://behorizon.org/maritime-disputes-in-south-east-china-sea/>.

The PRC’s revisionism extends beyond territorial claims. In a further attempt to establish a regional hegemony, the PRC’s integrated application of the IOPs has restricted the free flow of information, a longstanding international standard exemplified by freedom of opinion, speech, and press.⁹⁸ The current international order views freedom of information as a critical component of ensuring a representative and accountable government. The PRC, however, maintains strict domestic control of information through a multitude of mechanisms. Joshua Kurlantzick and Perry Link

⁹⁸ “Universal Declaration of Human Rights,” United Nations, accessed January 21, 2022, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>.

describe the CCP's domestic informational power as a combination of propaganda and censorship that has stoked nationalism and admiration for the party in the Chinese populace.⁹⁹ For more than a decade, international institutions and academics have warned that the PRC is attempting to reshape the international order's freedom of information standard to allow for Chinese influence over its global narrative.¹⁰⁰ The PRC uses its diplomatic, informational, and economic IOPs to export its information control techniques and technology through either aspiration or submission of the importing nation-states. Of significant concern, Jonas Gasmso found that democracies are particularly susceptible to the PRC's propaganda and censorship due to their economic integration with the Chinese market. This gradual change to the international standard has resulted in the PRC's improved international perception, while limiting criticism of its illiberal activities ranging from territorial grabs to human rights violations to the Belt and Road Initiative's (BRI) predatory economics.¹⁰¹

The BRI is the principal foreign policy mechanism through which the PRC coordinates revisionism by exerting international influence predominantly through its

⁹⁹ Joshua Kurlantzick and Perry Link, "China: Resilient, Sophisticated Authoritarianism," in *Undermining Democracy: 21st Century Authoritarians* by Freedom House, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, and Radio Free Asia (Washington, DC: Freedom House, June 2009), 13-28, <https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/china.pdf>.

¹⁰⁰ Jonas Gasmso, "Is China Exporting Media Censorship? China's Rise, Media Freedoms, and Democracy," *European Journal of International Relations* 27, no. 3 (September 2021): 858–883.

¹⁰¹ Freedom House, "China's Information Isolation, New Censorship Rules, Transnational Repression," (China Media Bulletin 151, Freedom House, New York, NY, February 2021), <https://freedomhouse.org/report/china-media-bulletin/2021/chinas-information-isolation-new-censorship-rules-transnational>.

diplomatic and economic IOPs.¹⁰² Xi first introduced the BRI in 2013; the program has since expanded to three main components: the land-based Silk Road Economic Belt, Maritime Silk Road, and Digital Silk Road.¹⁰³ These components comprise a wide-array of the PRC’s policies that guide governmental and commercial investment and development of land-, maritime-, digital-, and spatial-based infrastructure around the globe. The number of the BRI participants is confirmed to be at least 139 nation-states, although that number is speculated to be up to 145 nation-states.¹⁰⁴ This includes a significant number of nation-states within the First Island Chain, such as Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, and Vietnam. Foreign infrastructure investment by the BRI exceeded \$1 trillion over the last eight years with an estimated expenditure approaching \$8 trillion by 2049.¹⁰⁵ Thomas P. Cavanna identifies that the BRI’s “gloeconomic thrust, omni-directional engagement, and hybrid maritime-

¹⁰² Glaser and Zaini, “China as a Selective Revisionist Power in the International Order.”

¹⁰³ Bonny Lin, Michael Chase, Jonah Blank, Cortez Cooper, Derek Grossman, Scott Harold, Jennifer Moroney, Lyle J. Morris, Logan Ma, Paul Orner, Alice Shih, and Soo Kin, *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.

¹⁰⁴ David Sacks, “Countries in China’s Belt and Road Initiative: Who’s In And Who’s Out,” *Asian Unbound* (blog), *Council on Foreign Relations*, March 24, 2021, <https://www.cfr.org/blog/countries-chinas-belt-and-road-initiative-whos-and-whos-out>; Christoph Nedopil, “Countries of the Belt and Road Initiative,” *Green Finance & Development Center*, January 2022, <https://greenfdc.org/countries-of-the-belt-and-road-initiative-bri/>.

¹⁰⁵ John Hurley, Scott Morris, and Gailyn Portelance, “Examining the Debt Implications of the Belt and Road Initiative from a Policy Perspective,” *Journal of Infrastructure, Policy and Development* 3, no. 1 (June 28, 2019), <https://systems.enpress-publisher.com/index.php/jipd/article/view/1123>.

continental orientation” provide the PRC “strategic hedging” through its diplomatic, informational, and economic IOPs in the face of their adversaries’ military superiority.¹⁰⁶ While this represents a legitimate strategy to counter a perceived imbalance of power, Bonnie Glaser asserts that the PRC’s execution of BRI projects has “an increasing element of strategy” to facilitate subtle revision of international standards and norms, which is of greater significance to the current international order.¹⁰⁷

An analysis by John Hurley, Scott Morris, and Gailyn Portelance identified an overarching strategy interwoven into the BRI’s underlying programs.¹⁰⁸ Participating nation-states, especially those categorized as “developing,” are vulnerable to coercion once the PRC and Chinese companies gain access via funding and infrastructure development projects.¹⁰⁹ International development standards, e.g., transparency, accountability, and altruistic participation, were codified in the 2005 Paris Agreement on Development Effectiveness by more than 90 signatory nation-states, including the PRC.¹¹⁰ A 2019 Center for a New American Security report, however, identified seven

¹⁰⁶ Thomas P. Cavanna, “Unlocking the Gates of Eurasia: China’s Belt and Road Initiative and Its Implications for U.S. Grand Strategy,” *Texas National Security Review* 2, no. 3 (July 30, 2019): 15.

¹⁰⁷ Glaser and Zaini, “China as a Selective Revisionist Power in the International Order,” 7.

¹⁰⁸ Hurley, Morris, and Portelance, “Examining the Debt Implications of the Belt and Road Initiative from a Policy Perspective.”

¹⁰⁹ William C. Pacatte III, “Be Afraid? Be Very Afraid?—Why the United States Needs a Counterstrategy to China’s Belt and Road Initiative,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, October 19, 2018, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/be-afraid-be-very-afraid%E2%80%94why-united-states-needs-counterstrategy-chinas-belt-and-road>.

¹¹⁰ Kristen A. Cordell, “The Evolving Relationship between the International Development Architecture and China’s Belt and Road,” Brookings, October 12, 2020,

“challenges” experienced by various participants in the BRI that violate the 2005 Paris Agreement, including an erosion of national sovereignty and lack of transparency.¹¹¹ Furthermore, the PRC has taken advantage of the power imbalance written into the BRI’s agreements and between its participants to achieve strategic objectives. For example, the BRI financing agreement for Ecuador’s Coca Codo Sinclair Dam requires that more than 80% of Ecuador’s oil production be exported, at a reduced cost, to the PRC.¹¹² Sri Lanka’s Hambantota International Port exemplifies the PRC’s use of the BRI to exert control over a strategic port in Indo-Pacific region to expand the reach of the PRC’s economic and, potentially, military IOPs.¹¹³ The BRI provides economic and infrastructure benefits to the participants that are difficult to find elsewhere within the international community. These benefits, however, come at the long-term cost of domestic vulnerabilities within participant nation-states and revision of established international standards and norms.

<https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-evolving-relationship-between-the-international-development-architecture-and-chinas-belt-and-road/>.

¹¹¹ Daniel Kliman, Rush Doshi, Kristine Lee, and Zack Cooper, “Grading China’s Belt and Road,” *Center for a New American Security*, last modified April 8, 2019, <https://www.cnas.org/publications/reports/beltandroad>.

¹¹² Nicholas Casey and Clifford Krauss, “It Doesn’t Matter If Ecuador Can Afford This Dam. China Still Gets Paid,” *The New York Times*, December 24, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/24/world/americas/ecuador-china-dam.html>; Alexandra Valencia, “Ecuador Power Company Discovers More Problems at Chinese-Built Plant,” *Reuters*, July 20, 2021, <https://www.reuters.com/article/ecuador-power-china-idUSL1N2OW10MI>; Julieta Pelcastre, “China Builds Hydroelectric Plant with Cracks in Ecuador,” *Diálogo Americas*, February 15, 2019, <https://dialogo-americas.com/articles/china-builds-hydroelectric-plant-with-cracks-in-ecuador/>.

¹¹³ Pacatte, “Be Afraid? Be Very Afraid?”

The PRC has also engaged in revisionism through the establishment of parallel international institutions absent Western civilization values and norms.¹¹⁴ The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), a multilateral institution based in the PRC, consists of eight members, four observers, and six dialogue partners that have primarily focused on internal concerns.¹¹⁵ Bonnie Glaser has assessed that the SCO is unlikely to supersede other regionally focused international institutions, such as ASEAN, but it provides an alternative that omits liberal ideals and goals. The SCO's long-term, revisionist intentions are illustrated in its stated objective "to establish a democratic, fair and rational new international political and economic order."¹¹⁶

Militarily, the PRC has adhered to the principles of the Non-Aligned Movement and avoided formal establishment of bilateral and multilateral alliances.¹¹⁷ The PRC and Russia, however, have conducted increasingly complex joint military exercises since 2012 with the occasional inclusion of other nation-states, such as Iran and South Africa. In late 2021, the Sino-Russian military partnership expanded to include a joint western Pacific patrol declared as a counterbalancing effort to the behavior of the Quad members.

¹¹⁴ Glaser and Zaini, "China as a Selective Revisionist Power in the International Order."

¹¹⁵ "About SCO," The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, accessed February 21, 2022, http://eng.sectsco.org/about_sco/.

¹¹⁶ Eva Seiwert, "How China Is Expanding Beyond Western Institutions," *The Diplomat*, March 16, 2020, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/03/how-china-is-expanding-beyond-western-institutions/>.

¹¹⁷ Patricia M. Kim, "China's Search for Allies," *Foreign Affairs*, November 15, 2021, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2021-11-15/chinas-search-allies>.

This growing partnership aligns with Xi’s 2014 call for a “new regional security cooperation architecture.”¹¹⁸

The PRC has been most successful at creating parallel economic international institutions, such as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB).¹¹⁹ In line with the PRC’s objectives for the BRI, the AIIB was established in 2016 as a Chinese-led, multilateral development bank to offer financing for sustainable infrastructure.¹²⁰ The AIIB provides an alternative to the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and Asia Development Bank for its 105 international community members.¹²¹ Scholars, however, contend that the AIIB enables development-related investments absent strict adherence to international standards and norms, e.g., human rights, ethical labor practices, and environmental considerations. It is through mechanisms such as the BRI and AIIB that the PRC has been able to advance its desired revision of the current international economic order, which has been dominated by liberal international institutions since World War II.

Within existing international institutions, the PRC has been gradually expanding its ability to influence global governance. The PRC has employed a measured and

¹¹⁸ Shannon Tiezzi, “At CICA, Xi Calls for New Regional Security Architecture,” *The Diplomat*, May 22, 2014, <https://thediplomat.com/2014/05/at-cica-xi-calls-for-new-regional-security-architecture/>.

¹¹⁹ Glaser and Zaini, “China as a Selective Revisionist Power in the International Order.”

¹²⁰ “Introduction: Who We Are,” Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, accessed February 21, 2022, <https://www.aiib.org/en/about-aiib/index.html>.

¹²¹ Mazarr, Heath, and Cevallos, *China and the International Order*; Seiwert, “How China Is Expanding Beyond Western Institutions.”

deliberate strategy to transform the UN into a mechanism for its revision of global governance.¹²² In 2019, the PRC demonstrated its ability to mobilize international support within the UN to revise international standards and norms.¹²³

First, the PRC weakened human rights norms when it delivered a letter to the UN Human Rights Council with 37 signatories praising Chinese human rights achievements in response to the letter with 22 signatories criticizing mass detention in Xinjiang.¹²⁴ A few months later, the PRC and Russia shepherded a UN resolution on international cyber surveillance and censorship standards that normalized authoritarian repression and online censorship of political dissent. The PRC's formalized influence within the UN has even reached parity with the U.S. in some respects. Both nation-states hold four of the top 15 posts within the UN's specialized agencies; specifically, a representative from the PRC heads the International Telecommunication Union that oversees technical standards for communications networks.¹²⁵ The combination of the PRC's expanding informal and formal influence within existing international institutions has increased the nation-state's ability to revise the international order to align with the Chinese civilization's desired international standards and norms, depicted in Table 1.

¹²² Kristine Lee, "It's Not Just the WHO: How China Is Moving on the Whole U.N.," *Politico*, April 15, 2020, <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2020/04/15/its-not-just-the-who-how-china-is-moving-on-the-whole-un-189029>.

¹²³ Glaser and Zaini, "China as a Selective Revisionist Power in the International Order."

¹²⁴ Seiwert, "How China Is Expanding Beyond Western Institutions."

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

Table 1. Comparison of Established and the PRC's Desired International Standards and Norms		
	Established International Standards and Norms	The PRC's Desired International Standards and Norms
International Institutions		
Diplomatic: UN, G-7/8, EU, ASEAN	UN-centric with regional organizations of varying influence; U.S.-dominated	Similar with less U.S. predominance and growing Chinese influence over global institutions and hegemony over regional ones
Economic: WTO, IMF, World Bank, G-20, AIIB, RCEP	Built around Western-dominated institutions that set rules; multilateral coordination (especially in crises)	Similar with growing role for Chinese-led institutions, from AIIB to RCEP; degree of eventual regional hegemony desired in these institutions is not clear and likely unresolved
Military: Western-based alliance structure; global arms control regimes	All institutions Western-founded and dominated; alliance structure led by U.S. to preserve local balance of power	Significantly reduced U.S. presence in Asia and especially near China; unclear whether Beijing would prefer a complete cessation of U.S. security commitments; wants greater freedom of action even if against rules
International Standards		
Trade	Detailed rules set in WTO and regional agreements; progressively more specific and expansive	Less effective rule sets that allow for China's preferred approach to state support of industries, nontariff barriers
Business/Economic	Standards and rules governing firm policies and behavior; multilateral but generally conform to Western standards of corporate behavior	Similar with significant exceptions and lack of enforcement that allows China to avoid enforcement of rules
Development	Reliance by IMF, WB, others on loan, aid conditionality to boost good governance in recipient nations; ownership, transparency, accountability, and altruism	Minimal emphasis on conditionality, transparency, altruism, and ownership; China's prefers to maintain control of development projects at expense of host nation sovereignty and security
Maritime Legal	Only archipelago nation-states can treat islands as a group, i.e., doesn't apply to disputed SCS islands; territorial sea measured from legally recognized, individual feature; can only regulate economic activity within EEZ; "historic waters" have no legal basis	Considered internal waters between features; commercial transit requires PRC permission; territorial sea measured from outer perimeter of island groups; features and artificial islands can claim territorial sea; regulate military activity within EEZ; "historic waters" within nine-dash line
International Norms		
Nonaggression	Territorial integrity norm built into UN, regional charters; focus on sovereignty; UN enforcement	Similar with greater constraint on U.S. ability to bend rules, space for China to flex muscles in region as needed while remaining below threshold of major aggression if possible
Human Rights	Strong aspirations built into multiple conventions; mixed practice, some degree of U.S./Western-led pressure; Great Powers tend to skirt role of leading institutions (Rome Statute, ICC)	Significantly weakened international pressure and enforcement of norms, seen as threat to Party control; but agree with United States on limits to ICC

Source: Created by author using information from Michael J. Mazarr, Timothy R. Heath, and Astrid S. Cevallos, *China and the International Order* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2018), https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR2423.html; Oriana S. Mastro, "How China Is Bending the Rules in the South China Sea," *The Interpreter*, February 17, 2021, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/how-china-bending-rules-south-china-sea>; Daniel Kliman, Rush Doshi, Kristine Lee, and Zack Cooper, *Grading China's Belt and Road* (Washington, DC: Center for a New American Security, April 8, 2019), <https://www.cnas.org/publications/reports/beltandroad>.

Strategic Importance of the First Island Chain to the Great Powers

The future of each of our nations – and indeed the world – depends on a free and open Indo-Pacific enduring and flourishing in the decades ahead.

—President Joe Biden, Quad Leaders’ Summit, 24 September 2021

Context is necessary to understand the strategic importance of the Indo-Pacific region – specifically the First Island Chain – in Great Power competition, which provides the underlying motivations for the PRC’s revisionist activities and the U.S.’s desire to ensure a “free and open” region. Western civilization military strategist, Karl Ernst Haushofer, was the first to propose the strategic importance of *island chains* during his service as an Imperial German Army military attaché to Imperial Japan in the early 20th Century.¹²⁶ The U.S. adopted the island chains as geographic references for its containment strategy following World War II. President Eisenhower’s administration recognized that control of the chain of islands stretching from the Aleutians to the Marianas Islands, now referred to as the Second Island Chain, was of strategic importance to containing the spread of communism.¹²⁷ While this understanding guided future treaty negotiations and military deployments, the concept of successive island chains did not become a cornerstone of the U.S.’s Indo-Pacific strategy for at least another 40 years.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Andrew S. Erickson and Joel Wuthnow, “Why Islands Still Matter in Asia,” Text, *The National Interest*, February 5, 2016, <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/why-islands-still-matter-asia-15121>.

¹²⁷ Toshi Yoshihara, “China’s Vision of Its Seascape: The First Island Chain and Chinese Seapower,” *Asian Politics & Policy* 4, no. 3 (2012): 297.

¹²⁸ John Foster Dulles, “Security in the Pacific,” *Foreign Affairs*, January 1952, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/1952-01-01/security-pacific>.

In the late 1980s, the idea of island chains resurfaced in Western civilization strategic discussions due to its appropriation by the Chinese civilization.¹²⁹ Admiral Liu Huaqing, the PLA Navy's Commander-in-Chief in 1986, was the first official from the PRC to articulate an expansion of the island chain concept by clearly defining the First and Second Island Chains as depicted earlier in Figure 3. Liu aligned the two island chains to the PLA Navy's development and operational reach requirements in the coming years. By 1988, Deng Xiaoping had embraced the concept and aligned the island chains to the PRC's long-term development of maritime capabilities across all IOPs.¹³⁰ The island chains, especially the First Island Chain, have since become critical to the PRC's core interests of economic development, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and preservation of the PRC's governmental system.¹³¹ As a result, Western civilization strategists, intelligence analysts, and academic scholars have incorporated island chains in their examination and approach toward the region.

¹²⁹ Yoshihara, "China's Vision of Its Seascape," 298.

¹³⁰ C. J. Jenner, "Facing China's Sea Power: Strategic Culture & Maritime Strategy," Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative, Center for Strategic & International Studies, last modified May 29, 2019, <https://amti.csis.org/facing-chinas-sea-power-strategic-culture-maritime-strategy/>.

¹³¹ Richard Carroll, "China Has Almost Breached the First Island Containment Chain," *International Policy Digest*, March 17, 2020, <https://intpolicydigest.org/china-has-almost-breached-the-first-island-containment-chain/>; Terrence K. Kelly, James Dobbins, David A. Shlapak, David C. Gompert, Eric Heginbotham, Peter Chalk, and Lloyd Thrall, "Chinese Interests and Strategy," in *The U.S. Army in Asia, 2030–2040* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2014), 11-46, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7249/j.ctt1287mkz.10>.

Physical Geography's Role in Great Power Competition

Extending more than 4,700 nautical miles from the Kamchatka Peninsula to the Malay Archipelago, the First Island Chain predominately consists of three island nation-states – Japan, the Philippines, and Indonesia – and the self-governing island of Taiwan.¹³² These island landmasses geographically separate the ECS and SCS from the global commons and sea lines of communication provided by the Pacific and Indian Oceans.¹³³ Five principal passages support maritime transit through the First Island Chain, as depicted in Figure 5: the Strait of Malacca, Singapore Strait, Bashi Channel, Miyako Strait, and Osumi Strait. Fran-Stefan Gady, a Research Fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, asserts that control of these waterways is pivotal to exerting economic and military power within the First Island Chain, and beyond for the PRC.¹³⁴ Therefore, these five maritime chokepoints, and surrounding islands, represent key terrain critical to the future of the region and international order.

¹³² Google, “First Island Chain,” Google Earth, accessed April 24, 2022, <https://earth.google.com/web/search/singapore/@24.84695698,136.82120344,-3400.84956259a,9680202.97619105d,35y,2.61955742h,0t,0r/data=CigiJgokCbI9hEhiIzVAEbI9hEhiIzXAGcQdLh0oo0LAId3axFBvi2HA>.

¹³³ James R. Holmes, “Defend the First Island Chain,” *Proceedings* 140, no. 4 (April 1, 2014), <https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2014/april/defend-first-island-chain>.

¹³⁴ Franz-Stefan Gady, “Why China’s Military Wants to Control These 2 Waterways in East Asia,” *The Diplomat*, September 15, 2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2019/09/why-chinas-military-wants-to-control-these-2-waterways-in-east-asia/>.

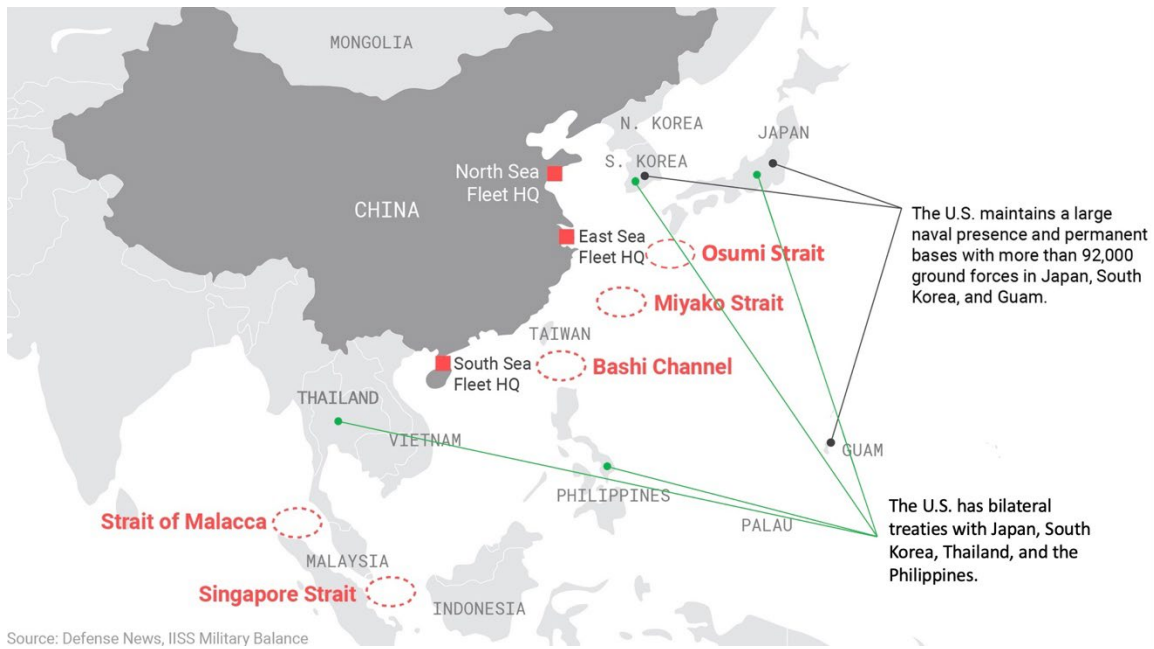


Figure 5. First Island Chain Chokepoints and Significant U.S./PRC Military Presence

Source: Mike Sweeney, “Assessing Chinese Maritime Power,” *Defense Priorities*, October 2020, <https://www.defensepriorities.org/explainers/assessing-chinese-maritime-power>.

NOTE: Author modified figure to include the Osumi Strait and U.S. bilateral treaties within the First Island Chain.

The PRC has recognized that dominance of the First Island Chain is instrumental to minimizing potential threats to domestic security, enabling power projection beyond the Asian continent, and denying adversaries access to the strategic opportunities provided by the ECS and SCS.¹³⁵ Richard Carroll, a retired U.S. government economist and regular contributor to international relations debates, contends that the PRC’s perception of the First Island Chain is driving the Great Power to establish an

¹³⁵ Holmes, “Defend the First Island Chain,”; Erickson and Wuthnow, “Why Islands Still Matter in Asia.”

internationally-recognized regional hegemony.¹³⁶ The PLA has developed anti-access/area denial capabilities to limit external interference within the First Island Chain, but the PRC still lacks the necessary physical terrain to exert full control over the region. To achieve that end, the PRC has declared territorial sovereignty over approximately 1.2 million square miles of the SCS, the ECS's Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands and Socotra Rock/Suyan Islet, and the self-governing island of Taiwan.¹³⁷ Each of these territorial claims by the PRC is disputed by at least one, if not multiple, neighboring nation-state(s) and the majority of the international community. The PRC, however, has not been dissuaded from continuing integrated activities across the IOPs, including the use of force, to realize its desired end state of a regional hegemony within the First Island Chain.

The *tyranny of distance* constrains the U.S.'s ability to physically counter the PRC's revisionism within the Indo-Pacific region.¹³⁸ The continental U.S., and majority of American power, is more than 4,000 nautical miles from the First Island Chain. Multiple treaties and partnerships, however, diplomatically connect the U.S. to nation-states and international institutions throughout the First Island Chain. For example, the U.S. has bilateral "common danger" treaties with Japan, South Korea, Thailand, and the

¹³⁶ Carroll, "China Has Almost Breached the First Island Containment Chain."

¹³⁷ Metin Guvenir, "Maritime Disputes in South/East China Sea from Military Aspect," *Beyond the Horizon*, December 13, 2017, <https://behorizon.org/maritime-disputes-in-south-east-china-sea/>.

¹³⁸ Erickson and Wuthnow, "Why Islands Still Matter in Asia."

Philippines.¹³⁹ These regional alliances, and other diplomatic agreements, have created strategic access opportunities for the U.S. within the First Island Chain, such as the military force posture illustrated earlier in Figure 5. Similar to the PRC’s anti-access/area denial capabilities, the U.S.’s regional allies, partners, and forward military basing provide influence, but not control, over the First Island Chain’s key terrain. These strategic opportunities, however, also represent potential vulnerabilities should the PRC overwhelmingly act on what it perceives as a direct threat to Chinese sovereignty. In such an event, the U.S. must expeditiously overcome the tyranny of distance to uphold its obligations.¹⁴⁰

The absence of either localized or dominant control of the First Island Chain by the U.S. or the PRC has created a “geographical pivot” point in Taiwan according to Loren Thompson, a prominent strategic studies scholar.¹⁴¹ The PRC claims sovereignty over the island based on its interpretation of the 1992 Consensus that “the two sides of the strait belong to one China and [both sides] would work together to seek national reunification.”¹⁴² The Taiwanese government, however, has a different interpretation of

¹³⁹ “U.S. Collective Defense Arrangements,” U.S. Department of State, accessed January 3, 2022, <https://2009-2017.state.gov/s/l/treaty/collectivedefense/index.htm>.

¹⁴⁰ Carroll, “China Has Almost Breached the First Island Containment Chain.”

¹⁴¹ Loren Thompson, “Why Taiwan Has Become The ‘Geographical Pivot Of History’ In The Pacific Age,” *Forbes*, September 29, 2020, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/lorenthompson/2020/09/29/why-taiwan-has-become-the-geographical-pivot-of-history-in-the-pacific-age/>.

¹⁴² Lindsay Maizland, “Why China-Taiwan Relations Are So Tense,” Council on Foreign Relations, last modified May 10, 2021, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/china-taiwan-relations-tension-us-policy>.

the discussion thirty years ago and asserts that the Republic of China, Taiwan's official name, does not fall under the sovereignty of the PRC or the CCP. While the U.S. does not recognize Taiwan as a sovereign nation-state, the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act and recent strategic documents, such as the Indo-Pacific Strategy, link the two international community partners through their IOPs.¹⁴³

It is Taiwan's complicated international community status that makes the island a geographical pivot point to the future of the international order.¹⁴⁴ Unification of Taiwan with the PRC, either peacefully or by force, would provide the Chinese civilization with the physical terrain necessary to establish a regional hegemony within the First Island Chain. Taiwan's geostrategic location would allow the PRC to control two of the First Island Chain's maritime chokepoints: the Bashi Channel and Miyako Strait. This control would assure projection of the PRC's integrated IOPs throughout the Indo-Pacific region and around the globe.¹⁴⁵ In addition, Taiwan's landmass constitutes a military basing opportunity more than 30 times the size of the U.S.'s forward military basing in Japan. This would significantly expand the PLA's anti-access/area denial capability and

¹⁴³ Joshua Espena and Chelsea Bompig, "The Taiwan Frontier and the Chinese Dominance for the Second Island Chain," Australian Institute of International Affairs, August 13, 2020, <https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/taiwan-frontier-chinese-dominance-for-second-island-chain/>; U.S. President, *Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States* (Washington, DC: The White House, February 2022), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/U.S.-Indo-Pacific-Strategy.pdf>.

¹⁴⁴ Thompson, "Why Taiwan Has Become The 'Geographical Pivot Of History' In The Pacific Age."

¹⁴⁵ Nazomu Yoshitomi, "How Japan Can Help Save Taiwan: Securing the First Island Chain," *War on the Rocks*, March 23, 2022, <https://warontherocks.com/2022/03/ukraines-lessons-for-japan-securing-the-first-island-chain/>.

represent a potential strategic overmatch. Taiwan maintaining the island's self-governing status, therefore, is essential to countering the PRC's growing illiberal international influence and maintain the current international order.

Influence on Economic Stability and Power

Since opening its economy to foreign entities in 1979, the PRC's domestic stability and economic power has become intertwined with its ability to conduct international trade.¹⁴⁶ For example, approximately 59% of the PRC's 2016 domestic oil consumption was imported from a foreign producer.¹⁴⁷ In 2019, trade exports accounted for 37% of the PRC's gross domestic product (GDP).¹⁴⁸ When such data is combined with the understanding that greater than 60% of Chinese trade relies upon maritime transport, the strategic importance of First Island Chain to the PRC becomes apparent, especially to its economic power.¹⁴⁹

The U.S. has a similar perspective to the PRC relative to the First Island Chain's strategic importance to nation-state's economy, epitomized by five of the region's

¹⁴⁶ Susan L. Shirk, "How China Opened Its Door," Brookings, October 1, 1994, <https://www.brookings.edu/book/how-china-opened-its-door/>.

¹⁴⁷ "China Oil Reserves, Production and Consumption Statistics," Worldometer, accessed January 2, 2022, <https://www.worldometers.info/oil/china-oil/>.

¹⁴⁸ Export Enterprises SA, "Chinese Foreign Trade in Figures," Santander Trade Markets, last modified May 2022, <https://santandertrade.com/en/portal/analyse-markets/china/foreign-trade-in-figures>.

¹⁴⁹ China Power Team, "How Much Trade Transits the South China Sea?," ChinaPower Project, Center for Strategic and International Studies, January 25, 2021, <https://chinapower.csis.org/much-trade-transits-south-china-sea/>.

members being amongst the U.S.'s top 15 trading partners.¹⁵⁰ The four nation-states – the PRC, Japan, South Korea, and Vietnam – and Taiwan account for more than one-quarter of the U.S.'s total international trade in value, inextricably linking the U.S.'s free market economy to international actors within the First Island Chain. Case in point, major American industries have become increasingly reliant on the region's foreign input of raw materials and intermediate parts for their final production of a good. As an example, 90% of semiconductors used to manufacture electronics and automobiles in the U.S. are supplied from Taiwan.¹⁵¹ While a diversified economic system has ensured the U.S.'s reliance does not become overdependence, the First Island Chain's strategic importance to the U.S.'s economic stability and long-term prosperity cannot be overstated.

The First Island Chain's economic influence on individual international community members is significant. However, free and open access to the region's global commons, such as the ECS and SCS, are of greater strategic importance to maintaining global economic stability and the current international order.¹⁵² It is estimated that almost half of all international goods pass through at least one of the First Island Chain's

¹⁵⁰ "Top Trading Partners – October 2021," U.S. Census Bureau, <https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/statistics/highlights/toppartners.html>.

¹⁵¹ Yen Nee Lee, "5 Charts Show How Much the U.S. and Chinese Economies Depend on Each Other," *CNBC*, September 28, 2020, <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/09/29/5-charts-show-how-the-us-and-chinese-economies-depend-on-each-other.html>; Saheli R. Choudhury, "Tough Road Ahead for U.S. Firms Trying to Cut Reliance on Taiwan Chipmakers," *CNBC*, April 13, 2021, <https://www.cnbc.com/2021/04/13/semiconductor-shortage-us-tech-companies-and-their-reliance-on-taiwan.html>.

¹⁵² Erickson and Wuthnow, "Why Islands Still Matter in Asia."

maritime chokepoints.¹⁵³ The principle maritime trade routes between Asia and the Americas transit the Bashi Channel, Miyako Strait, or Osumi Strait. The First Island Chain nation-state routes to and from Europe, Africa, Australia, and the remainder of Asia predominately transit the Strait of Malacca and Singapore Strait. Any disruption to the First Island Chain’s sea lines of communication would have a significant impact on the PRC’s economy, as illustrated by Figure 6, but also the U.S. and global economies.

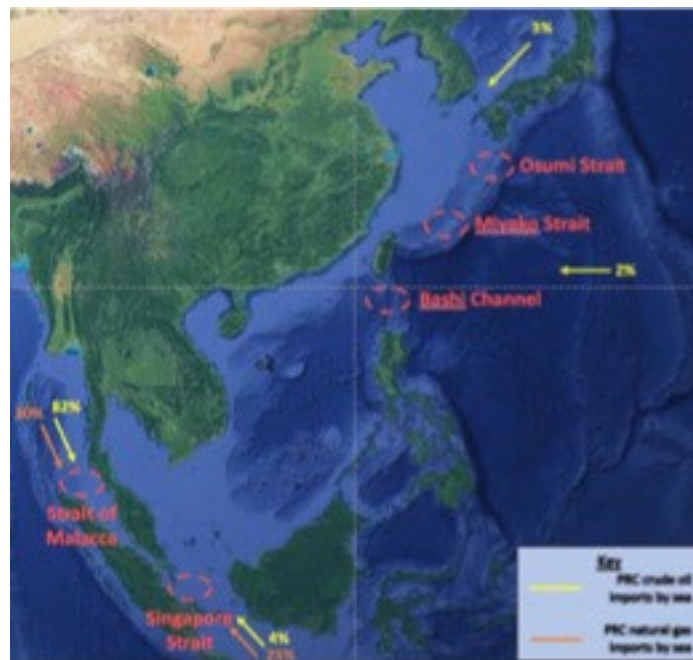


Figure 6. Chinese Maritime Import Routes and First Island Chain Chokepoints

Source: Created by author using Google, “Western Pacific Ocean,” Google Earth, accessed May 27, 2022, <https://earth.google.com/web/@14.8739181,119.87372884,-5195.73096734a,8222318.81010175d,35y,2.61955742h,0t,0r>.

¹⁵³ China Power Team, “How Much Trade Transits the South China Sea?”; “Statement of Admiral Philip S. Davidson,” U.S. Congress, Senate, 2.

For example, the Center for Strategic and International Studies' China Power Team estimates that a conflict in the SCS would cause commercial maritime traffic to reroute outside of the region, creating an estimated \$480 million to \$2.8 billion negative impact on the global economy.¹⁵⁴ The region's economic influence will only grow as international trade transiting through the First Island Chain is projected to increase to two-thirds of the global economy, in value, within the next ten years. Hence, the prevention of such a trade disruption and preservation of global economic stability underlies the U.S. advocacy for maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

Benefits of Natural Resources

The known and suspected natural resources within the First Island Chain represent significant potential to increase the region's stability and prosperity. Six nation-states and Taiwan have laid numerous overlapping territorial claims in the ECS and SCS to gain control over the economic benefits, as depicted earlier in Figure 4.¹⁵⁵ The majority of current research and analysis focuses on the prospective fossil fuel reserves under the ECS and SCS.¹⁵⁶ It is estimated that the oil and natural gas fields contain at

¹⁵⁴ China Power Team, "How Much Trade Transits the South China Sea?"

¹⁵⁵ "China's Maritime Disputes," Council on Foreign Relations, last modified May 2019, <http://www.cfr.org/chinasea>.

¹⁵⁶ Mercy A. Kuo and Angelica O. Tang, "China's Natural Resource Strategy: 'Win Without Fighting'," *The Diplomat*, November 6, 2015, <https://thediplomat.com/2015/11/chinas-natural-resource-strategy-win-without-fighting/>; Council on Foreign Relations, "Tensions in the East China Sea," Global Conflict Tracker, accessed January 2, 2022, <https://cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/tensions-east-china-sea>; Beina Xu, "South China Sea Tensions," Council on Foreign Relations, last modified May 14, 2014, <https://www.cfr.org/background/south-china-sea-tensions>; Center for Strategic & International Studies, "South China Sea Energy Exploration and Development," Asia

least 7.2 billion barrels and 900 trillion cubic feet, respectively. While this represents a small percentage of the PRC’s domestic requirement, it has the potential to generate considerable economic growth for smaller nation-states in the region, such as the Philippines. The fishing stocks within the First Island Chain are of arguably greater importance. An estimated 1.5 billion people rely on the region’s open ocean fish as a food source. Although the trade and natural resources potential for the region is significant, more research is necessary to understand the regional and global economic impact of the contested territorial claims and associated activities.

Evolution of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue

A free and open Indo-Pacific can only be achieved if we build collective capacity for a new age; common action is now a strategic necessity...we will work in flexible groupings that pool our collective strength to face up to the defining issues of our time, particularly through the Quad.

—U.S. President, *Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States*

In November 2017, the Quad’s core members held a “working-level” meeting in Manila, ahead of the East Asia Summit, to discuss the potential for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region and other opportunities to strengthen quadrilateral relations.¹⁵⁷ Each nation-state independently released detailed accounts and official statements outlining key areas in which the Quad members aligned, but variations in the documents illustrate differing priorities, as depicted in Table 2. While the first meeting of the Quad focused

Maritime Transparency Initiative, accessed January 2, 2022, <https://amti.csis.org/south-china-sea-energy-exploration-and-development/>.

¹⁵⁷ Panda, “U.S., Japan, India, and Australia Hold Working-Level Quadrilateral Meeting on Regional Cooperation,”; Madan, “The Rise, Fall, and Rebirth of the ‘Quad’.”

primarily on diplomatic- and military-related security, the most important outcome was consensus that continued discussions were necessary between the four democracies. Over the next three and a half years, the partners continued developing relationships and collaborative opportunities through senior-level leadership – the Australian and Japanese Foreign Ministers, the Indian External Affairs Minister, and the U.S. Secretary of State – conversations, staff-level working groups, and cooperation exercises across the IOPs and institutions.¹⁵⁸

The numerous lower-level meetings set the foundations for the four nation-states’ leaders to meet twice in 2021, once virtually and once in person.¹⁵⁹ The Leaders’ Summits solidified the Quad’s priorities, which were codified by the release of a joint statement following the second meeting and are included in Table 2.¹⁶⁰ The Quad

¹⁵⁸ Senior State Department Officials, “Readout of U.S.-Australia-India-Japan Ministerial (‘The Quad’),” (FPC Briefing, U.S. Department of State, New York, NY, September 26, 2019), <https://2017-2021.state.gov/readout-of-u-s-australia-india-japan-ministerial-the-quad/>; Ankit Panda, “U.S., India, Australia, Japan ‘Quad’ Holds Senior Officials Meeting in Bangkok,” *The Diplomat*, November 5, 2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2019/11/us-india-australia-japan-quad-holds-senior-officials-meeting-in-bangkok/>; Tanvi Madan, “This Week’s Quad Ministerial Meeting, in Four Charts,” *Order from Chaos* (blog), *The Brookings Institution*, October 8, 2020, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/10/08/this-weeks-quad-ministerial-meeting-in-four-charts/>.

¹⁵⁹ The White House, “Quad Leaders’ Joint Statement: ‘The Spirit of the Quad’,” (The White House, Washington, DC, March 12, 2021), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/12/quad-leaders-joint-statement-the-spirit-of-the-quad/>; The White House Briefing Room, “Fact Sheet: Quad Leaders’ Summit,” (The White House, Washington, DC, September 24, 2021), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/09/24/fact-sheet-quad-leaders-summit/>.

¹⁶⁰ The White House, “Joint Statement from Quad Leaders,” (The White House, Washington, DC, September 25, 2021), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/09/24/joint-statement-from-quad-leaders/>.

leadership expanded the partnership’s objectives beyond the individual statements made four years prior and provided a clear signal of a unified stance not seen prior to 2021.

Table 2. Comparison of Statements following 2017 and 2021 Quad Meetings					
	2017				2021
	U.S. Department of State	India Ministry of External Affairs	Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	Joint Quad Leaders Statements
Free and open Indo-Pacific	"[S]hared vision for increased prosperity and security in a free and open Indo-Pacific region"	"[A] free, open, prosperous and inclusive Indo-Pacific region serves the long-term interests of all countries in the region and of the world at large"	"[M]easures to ensure a free and open international order based on the rule of law in the Indo-Pacific"	"[A] shared vision for increased prosperity and security in the Indo-Pacific region and to work together to ensure it remains free and open"	"On this historic occasion we recommit to our partnership, and to a region that is a bedrock of our shared security and prosperity—a free and open Indo-Pacific, which is also inclusive and resilient."
Rules-based order	"[U]pholding the rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific"	"[C]ooperation based on their converging vision and values for promotion of peace"	"[D]irection for cooperation, including with countries in the region, in upholding the rules-based order and respect for international law in the Indo-Pacific"	"[U]pholding the rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific"	"[W]e recommit to promoting the free, open, rules-based order, rooted in international law and undaunted by coercion, to bolster security and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific and beyond."
Freedom of navigation and overflight	"[F]reedom of navigation and overflight"		"[E]nsuring freedom of navigation...in the Indo-Pacific"	"[F]reedom of navigation and overflight"	"We stand for the rule of law, freedom of navigation and overflight, peaceful resolution of disputes, democratic values, and territorial integrity of states."
Respect for international law, including peaceful dispute resolution and territorial sovereignty	"[R]espect for international law, and the peaceful resolution of disputes"		"[R]espect for international law in the Indo-Pacific"	"[R]espect for international law"	
Connectivity	"[I]ncreasing connectivity consistent with international law and standards, based on prudent financing"	"[S]tability and prosperity in an increasingly inter-connected region that they share with each other and with other partners"; "enhancing connectivity"		"[I]ncrease connectivity"	

Maritime security	"[C]oordinating on..maritime security efforts in the Indo-Pacific"		"[M]aritime security in the Indo-Pacific"	"[U]pholding maritime security in the Indo-Pacific"	"[W]e will continue to champion adherence to international law, particularly as reflected in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), to meet challenges to the maritime rules-based order, including in the East and South China Seas."
Cyberspace security					"[W]e begin new cooperation in cyber space and pledge to work together to combat cyber threats, promote resilience, and secure our critical infrastructure."
North Korea/ proliferation	"[F]urther cooperating to curtail the DPRK's nuclear and missile programs and unlawful acts"	"[P]roliferation linkages"	"[T]ackling proliferation threats, including North Korea's nuclear and missile issues, against which maximized pressure needs to be applied"	"[T]hreats to international peace and security posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including the DPRK's nuclear and missile programs"	"We urge North Korea to abide by its UN obligations, refrain from provocations. We also call on North Korea to engage in substantive dialogue."
Terrorism	"[C]oordinating on counterterrorism"	"[A]ddressing common challenges of terrorism"	"[C]ounterterrorism"	"[C]oordinate on efforts to address the challenges of countering terrorism"	"We denounce the use of terrorist proxies and emphasized the importance of denying any logistical, financial or military support to terrorist groups which could be used to launch or plan terror attacks"
Infrastructure					"[W]e will meet regularly to coordinate our efforts, map the region's infrastructure needs, and coordinate on regional needs and opportunities."
Technology					"We have established cooperation on critical and emerging technologies, to ensure the way in which technology is designed, developed, governed, and used is shaped by our shared values and respect for universal human rights."

Climate Change					"We have joined forces to tackle the climate crisis, which must be addressed with the urgency it demands."
Next steps	"The quadrilateral partners committed to deepening cooperation, which rest on a foundation of shared democratic values and principles, and to continue discussions to further strengthen the rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific region."		"The participants affirmed their commitment to continuing discussions and deepening cooperation based on shared values and principles."	"The participants committed to continuing quadrilateral discussions and deepening cooperation on the basis of shared values and principles."	"We will continue to build habits of cooperation; our leaders and foreign ministers will meet annually and our senior officials will meet regularly. Our working groups will continue their steady tempo to produce the cooperation necessary to build a stronger region."

Source: Created by author using information from Ankit Panda, "U.S., India, Australia, Japan 'Quad' Holds Senior Officials Meeting in Bangkok," *The Diplomat*, November 5, 2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2019/11/us-india-australia-japan-quad-holds-senior-officials-meeting-in-bangkok/>; The White House, "Quad Leaders' Joint Statement: 'The Spirit of the Quad'," (The White House, Washington, DC, March 12, 2021), https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/12/quad-leaders-joint-statement-the-spirit-of-the-quad; The White House, "Joint Statement from Quad Leaders," (The White House, Washington, DC, September 25, 2021), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/09/24/joint-statement-from-quad-leaders/>.

Legitimacy and Relevance in the International Order

The Quad members' 2017 individual statements and 2021 joint statement deliberately avoid mentioning collective security or the PRC. Critics, however, have seized on the competing objectives depicted in the individual statements as evidence that the Quad is a multilateral military alliance. Furthermore, these same critics assert that the partnership is principally guided by the U.S.'s foreign policy, is likely to antagonize the PRC, and will increase regional tensions. Rajan Menon, a notable international relations and grand strategy scholar, frames the Quad as an "anti-China military coalition" intended as "[U.S.] power with a multilateral veneer" to enable "Washington's neo-

containment strategy.”¹⁶¹ Menon’s argument is that, out of the four nation-state members, only the U.S. has the individual ability to represent a lasting challenge to the PRC across the IOPs, especially militarily. In a direct confrontation between each of the Quad’s core members and the PRC, Menon has accurately assessed the comparative advantage. This argument, however, neglects to examine the Quad’s collective strength in countering the PRC’s activities across all IOPs, especially below the threshold of war as insinuated by the public statements of the Quad’s core members. Additionally, Menon’s quantitative analysis of each member’s resources drives his conclusion that it is futile to challenge the PRC’s strength. Such an assessment by Menon disregards the numerous historical examples of smaller, less resource rich nation-states triumphing in similar situations.

Michael D. Swaine, a prominent Chinese security scholar, argues that the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” approach, central to the Quad, is likely to “[provoke] Beijing, [alarm] other Asian nations, and [drive] the region toward a highly tense, zero-sum competition.”¹⁶² Swaine focuses on individual Quad member policies and leadership statements to depict the “Free and Open Indo-Pacific” approach as confrontational and anti-Chinese. The examples given in Swaine’s analysis, primarily the 2017 U.S. National Security and the 2018 U.S. National Defense Strategies, clearly identify the PRC as a direct adversary. Swaine asserts that such statements are needlessly inflammatory toward

¹⁶¹ Rajan Menon, “The Quad Is a Delusion,” *Foreign Policy*, June 28, 2021, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/06/28/quad-delusion-china-power-containment/>.

¹⁶² Michael D. Swaine, *Creating an Unstable Asia: The U.S. ‘Free and Open Indo-Pacific’ Strategy* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, March 2, 2018), <https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/03/02/creating-unstable-asia-u.s.-free-and-open-indo-pacific-strategy-pub-75720>.

the PRC, a nation-state that Swaine declares is not committed to “replacing Washington as the global hegemon.”¹⁶³ The result, according to Swaine, will be a decrease in future cooperation between the Quad, its core members, and the PRC on areas of common interest.

Swaine counters that a continuation of the previous policies aimed at cooperation with the PRC is necessary to establish a “constructive regional approach grounded in a stable balance of power and in mutual compromise.”¹⁶⁴ A cooperative approach, however, has been taken by the core member nation-states for the last four decades with minimal influence on the PRC’s objectives; a point which Swaine even acknowledges. Furthermore, Swaine fails to acknowledge two additional key points. First, the continuation of the cooperative approach is an acquiescence to the PRC’s revisionist activities and objectives. Second, and more importantly, the individual and joint statements by the Quad, illustrated earlier in Table 2, represent an opportunity to create Swaine’s desired balance of power. As a result, Swaine missed an occasion to further develop his argument and contribute to the discussion of employment alternatives for the Quad.

Walter Lohman, a foreign policy and Asian studies scholar, concurs that “a security dilemma [is] embedded in the idea of the (Q)uad.”¹⁶⁵ Lohman, however, argues

¹⁶³ Swaine, *Creating an Unstable Asia*.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ Walter Lohman, “Responding to China’s Rise: Could a ‘Quad’ Approach Help?” The Heritage Foundation, June 26, 2015, <https://www.heritage.org/defense/commentary/responding-chinas-rise-could-quad-approach-help>.

that the absence of a multilateral approach to the PRC is analogous to the misalignment of policies and appeasement by the British, French, and Soviets toward Germany prior to World War II. Therefore, partnerships such as the Quad are necessary to discuss, coordinate, and assess regional policy in response to the PRC's reemergence in the international order and rise to Great Power status. To avoid provocation of the PRC as feared by Swaine, dialogue between the Quad and the PRC is necessary for each party to clarify objectives and concerns according to Lohman. These open discussions would create transparency of activities across the IOPs to resolve issues in a manner more likely to deescalate tensions. In the absence of such resolution, the relationship development amongst the Quad's core members would facilitate a coordinated response to the PRC across the IOPs, further reducing the possibility of repeating the consequences faced by Britain, France, and the Soviet Union leading up to World War II.

Dhruva Jaishankar, an expert in foreign policy and Indian international relations, identifies the Quad as the natural evolution of the relationships between the core member nation-states.¹⁶⁶ Jaishankar states that critics of the Quad, to include the PRC, are “missing the forest for the trees.”¹⁶⁷ Three trilateral and six bilateral partnerships existed between the four nation-states prior to the latest version of the Quad. While military engagements have steadily increased, including multinational humanitarian actions and training exercises, non-military cooperation has also increased through diplomatic dialogues, technical exchanges, and establishment of enduring working groups. For

¹⁶⁶ Dhruva Jaishankar, “The Real Significance of the Quad,” *The Strategist*, October 24, 2018, <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/the-real-significance-of-the-quad/>.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

example, two of the trilateral partnerships have established infrastructure working groups meant to improve connectivity throughout the region. These partnerships, according to Jaishankar, demonstrate “increasingly shared strategic worldviews, greater comfort levels, and growing habits of cooperation” between the four nation-states. Therefore, the establishment of a quadrilateral partnership allows the core members to collectively discuss their aligned interests and coordinate activities across all IOPs to greater effect. Despite the criticisms of competing international community members and concerned academics, the Quad represents the greatest opportunity for the creation of a balance the power within the region that could ensure free and open access for all.

Opportunities to Strengthen the Partnership and Counterbalance Revisionism

The 2021 “Joint Statement from Quad Leaders” illustrates the participant nation-states’ willingness to collaborate with like-minded partners to address a broad range of interests through the coordinated integration of the IOPs.¹⁶⁸ The historical precedents set by the Tsunami Core Group and Democratic Security Diamond provided a foundation for the reemergence of this concept in the Quad’s response to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, the PRC’s increasingly assertive, illiberal actions have caused many international community members to reconsider previous opposition, thus creating a possibility for broadening the partnership’s approach to the region. By incorporating non-member nation-states and expanding the integration of activities across the IOPs, the Quad will gain crucial insight from external perspectives, improve international community coordination, and increase support of the partnership’s objectives.

¹⁶⁸ The White House, “Joint Statement from Quad Leaders.”

The Democratic Security Diamond first demonstrated the willingness of the four nation-state partners to multilaterally expand cooperation by collectively exercising their military IOP and institutions. In September 2007, Singapore's Navy joined the four core members off India's coast during Exercise MALABAR 07-02.¹⁶⁹ The combined task force conducted surface, subsurface, and airspace maneuvers, rehearsing multi-carrier operations that could be employed to counter future maritime threats and gain sea control.¹⁷⁰ The exercise provided a common understanding amongst the participants and generated standard maritime operational procedures, thus increasing interoperability. Exercise MALABAR 07-02, however, was the last official gathering of Democratic Security Diamond representatives and other like-minded partners due to the PRC's opposition to the perceived "strategic partnership...[meant] to contain rising Chinese power."¹⁷¹

The Quad's present-day reemergence offers the participants an opportunity to resume cooperation and expand the collective employment of their military IOP and institutions, according to Stanford University National Security Affairs Fellows Jeffrey T.

¹⁶⁹ Krishn Kaushik, "Explained: The Malabar Exercise of Quad Nations, and Why It Matters to India," *The Indian Express*, August 31, 2021, <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/malabar-exercise-of-quad-nations-why-it-matters-to-india-7472058/>.

¹⁷⁰ U.S. 7th Fleet Public Affairs, "Malabar 07-02: Exercise Malabar 07-02 Kicks Off," *Bharat Rakshak*, September 7, 2007, <http://www.bharat-rakshak.com/NAVY/Galleries/Bridges/2007/Malabar0702/>.

¹⁷¹ Buchan and Rimland, "Defining the Diamond;" Brendan Nicholson, "China Warns Canberra on Security Pact," *The Age*, June 15, 2007, <https://www.theage.com.au/national/china-warns-canberra-on-security-pact-20070615-ge54v5.html>; Mahmud Ali, "New 'strategic Partnership' against China," *BBC News*, September 3, 2007, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/6968412.stm.

Vanak, Jack Souder, and Kenneth del Mazo.¹⁷² While the partnership facilitates a unity of effort for coordinated action among the core member and like-minded partner military institutions, it lacks a plan to develop such capabilities. Vanak et al. propose short-, mid-, and long-term goals to formalize a combined operations structure and establish collective capabilities. A rough implementation plan would increase military cooperation through combined exercises, development and experimentation of multinational operating concepts, and, eventually, the establishment of a regionally focused, standing maritime task force. The Quad's creation of a formal structure for military operations would further facilitate future coordination with non-member nation-states and organizations, such as South Korea and ASEAN.

James Holmes, a maritime strategist at the U.S. Naval War College, has criticized the Quad's leadership for failing to articulate their objectives regarding the PRC, which was illustrated by the 2021 joint statement.¹⁷³ Additionally, as Holmes points out, the Quad avoids addressing its ability to collectively employ the military IOP to achieve the partnership's objectives despite increasing multinational operations amongst their

¹⁷² Jeffrey T. Vanak, Jack Souders, and Kenneth del Mazo, "How to Operationalize the Quad," *The Diplomat*, March 30, 2021, <https://thediplomat.com/2021/03/how-to-operationalize-the-quad/>.

¹⁷³ James Holmes, "To Counter China, the Quad Should Own the Military Side of Containment," *The National Interest*, October 22, 2021, <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/reboot/counter-china-quad-should-own-military-side-containment-195269>; Joe Biden, Narendra Modi, Scott Morrison, and Yoshihide Suga, "Opinion: Our Four Nations Are Committed to a Free, Open, Secure and Prosperous Indo-Pacific Region," *Washington Post*, March 13, 2021, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2021/03/13/biden-modi-morrison-suga-quad-nations-indo-pacific/>; The White House, "Quad Leaders' Joint Statement,"; The White House, "Joint Statement from Quad Leaders."

military institutions. The approach proposed by Vanak et al. would provide the partnership a collective military action capability to counter the PRC's growing IOPs and influence.¹⁷⁴ The cases brought forth by Holmes and Vanak et al. represent a significant opportunity for the Quad, but risk increasing tensions with the PRC like those felt following Exercise MALABAR 07-02. To improve the partnership's effectiveness as a regional balance of power, however, the Quad must expand the military IOP focused implementation plan to include the integrated employment of a multitude of core member and non-member institutions across the IOPs.

The first collaboration among the Quad's members occurred during the humanitarian crisis following the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami. COVID-19 has created a similar humanitarian crisis on a global scale requiring coordination of international community efforts and offering justification for expanding the Vanak et al. implementation plan. In response to the global pandemic, the Quad has increased their cooperation and collaboration across multiple IOPs with non-member nation-states.¹⁷⁵ Anil Jai Singh, a retired Indian naval officer and advisor to multilateral think tanks, proposes that the humanitarian assistance requirements of COVID-19 represent a credible

¹⁷⁴ Vanak, Souders, and del Mazo, "How to Operationalize the Quad."

¹⁷⁵ Rajeswari Pillai Rajagopalan, "Towards a Quad-plus Arrangement," Observer Research Foundation, May 7, 2020, <https://www.orfonline.org/research/towards-a-quad-plus-arrangement-65674/>.

foundation upon which the Quad can build a multilateral organization, since the group has shown hesitancy to embrace the military IOP.¹⁷⁶

Along this line of effort, the Quad's core members began regular meetings in March 2020 to address countering the virus's spread, assistance for displaced citizens, and measures to mitigate the pandemic's harm to the global economy.¹⁷⁷ These regular meetings have been expanded to include the non-member nation-states of New Zealand, Vietnam, and South Korea, which have various strategic partnerships with the Quad members beyond humanitarian assistance. Singh, however, criticized the Quad for its year-long hesitation in collectively addressing the pandemic. According to Singh, the delay allowed the PRC to gain an advantage by offering "support [to vulnerable nation-states] that obviously comes with strings attached...[and] damaged the credibility of the Quad."¹⁷⁸

In a clear effort to regain both its advantage and credibility, the Quad has become transparent with its activities to combat the COVID-19 threat. The Quad established a Quad Vaccine Experts Group that has met "regularly to brief on the latest pandemic

¹⁷⁶ Anil J. Singh, "The Quad and the Pandemic: A Lost Opportunity?" *The Diplomat*, May 5, 2020, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/05/the-quad-and-the-pandemic-a-lost-opportunity/>.

¹⁷⁷ Government of India, "Foreign Secretary's Conference Call with Counterparts from Indo-Pacific Countries," Ministry of External Affairs, March 20, 2020, <https://mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/32592/Foreign+Secretarys+Conference+Call+with+counterparts+from+IndoPacific+Countries>; Indrani Bagchi, "India Joins Hands with NZ, Vietnam, S Korea to Combat Pandemic," *The Times of India* (New Dehli, March 21, 2020), <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/india-joins-hands-with-nz-vietnam-s-korea-to-combat-pandemic/articleshow/74740424.cms>.

¹⁷⁸ Singh, "The Quad and the Pandemic."

trends and coordinate [the] collective COVID-19 response across the Indo-Pacific.”¹⁷⁹ Additionally, the Quad Vaccine Partnership has delivered more than 79 million vaccines and \$894 million worth of financial support to 30 nation-states in the region with a pledge to deliver 1.2 billion vaccines globally.¹⁸⁰ To improve its perception as an effective partnership and international community partner, the Quad established a webpage to track its progress in humanitarian assistance efforts. This approach has been referred to as “vaccine diplomacy,” demonstrating the Quad is a “unique force for good in the region.”¹⁸¹

The Quad’s sustained, coordinated response to the pandemic also provides its members and like-minded partners a prolonged opportunity to share data, build interoperability across the IOPs, and foster long-term trust, according to Shreya Upadhyay, a geopolitical risk analyst.¹⁸² Indrani Bagchi, a prominent foreign policy analyst, concurs with Upadhyay’s assessment.¹⁸³ Bagchi further theorizes that the

¹⁷⁹ The White House Briefing Room, “Fact Sheet: Quad Leaders’ Summit.”

¹⁸⁰ U.S. Agency for International Development, “Vaccine Doses Delivered by Recipient,” Quad Country COVID-19 Response in Indo-Pacific Region: Beta Dashboard, accessed February 6, 2022, https://share.usaid.gov/views/QUADCountryCOVID-19ResponseDashboard/Indo-PacificRegionOverview?%3AshowAppBanner=false&%3Adisplay_count=n&%3AshowVizHome=n&%3Aorigin=viz_share_link&%3AisGuestRedirectFromVizportal=y&%3Aembed=y.

¹⁸¹ Cleo Paskal, “India’s Vaccine Diplomacy a Shot in the Arm for the Quad?” *The Sunday Guardian Live*, February 6, 2021, <https://www.sundayguardianlive.com/news/indias-vaccine-diplomacy-shot-arm-quad>.

¹⁸² Shreya Upadhyay, “Covid-19 and Quad’s ‘Soft’ Reorientation,” *Research in Globalization* 3 (December 1, 2021), <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2590051X21000344>.

¹⁸³ Bagchi, “India Joins Hands with NZ, Vietnam, S Korea to Combat Pandemic.”

expanded grouping, labeled the Quad Plus, is likely to have larger implications due to the participants' relations and potential for collective action in emergency situations. Despite historic tensions with some Quad members, South Korea and Vietnam are strategic partners of all four Quad members of increasing significance in the face of the expanding reach of the PRC's IOPs and influence.¹⁸⁴ New Zealand has previously been the most hesitant of the three non-members to join any dialogue that might be perceived as opposition to the PRC. Increasingly aggressive Chinese behavior, however, has propelled all three non-members toward aligned interest partnerships as an alternative to the PRC's coercive influence.

The Quad Plus's COVID-19 response has had the additional benefit of weakening the PRC's narratives opposing the partnership. President Xi has called for "global cooperation to tackle the pandemic and other challenges."¹⁸⁵ As such, any challenge to the humanitarian assistance provided by the Quad Plus diminishes the PRC's credibility within the international community.¹⁸⁶ Additionally, the inclusion of South Korea and Vietnam within the Quad Plus counters the PRC's assertion that the partnership is a group of nation-states external to the region attempting to contain the PRC's reemergence

¹⁸⁴ Rajagopalan, "Towards a Quad-plus Arrangement."

¹⁸⁵ Jamey Keaten, "China's Xi Rejects 'Cold War Mentality,' Pushes Cooperation," *ABC News*, January 17, 2022, <https://abcnews.go.com/Business/wireStory/chinas-xi-rejects-cold-war-mentality-pushes-cooperation-82304736>.

¹⁸⁶ Rajagopalan, "Towards a Quad-plus Arrangement."

and rise as a Great Power.¹⁸⁷ As a result, the Quad Plus represents an opportunity for the partnership to increase credibility, reduce the PRC’s “containment” narrative, produce a practical alternative to the PRC’s coercive activities, and challenge the PRC across the IOPs.

In 2021, the Quad broadened its collective action efforts beyond the pandemic into economic and technological areas of aligned interest and growing competition.¹⁸⁸ According to Sheila A. Smith, an expert on Indo-Pacific international affairs, the partnership’s core members deemed these areas critical due to the PRC’s increasingly coercive application of its economic IOP. The 2021 Leaders’ Summits resulted in an agreement relative to guidance and direction concerning the establishment of a multitude of coordinating groups. The Quad created the Infrastructure Coordination Group for the evaluation of regional infrastructure, technical assistance provision, and enhancement of local capability and capacity. To unify standards development, coordinate telecommunications deployment, identify potential opportunities, and improve supply chain management, the Quad organized the Critical and Emerging Technology Working Group. As a final example, cyber experts from each of the partnership’s core members

¹⁸⁷ Derek Grossman, “Don’t Get Too Excited, ‘Quad Plus’ Meetings Won’t Cover China,” *The Diplomat*, April 9, 2020, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/04/dont-get-too-excited-quad-plus-meetings-wont-cover-china/>.

¹⁸⁸ The White House Briefing Room, “Fact Sheet: Quad Summit,” (The White House, Washington, DC, March 12, 2021), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/03/12/fact-sheet-quad-summit/>; The White House Briefing Room, “Fact Sheet: Quad Leaders’ Summit,”; Sheila A. Smith, “What’s Next for the Quad?” Council on Foreign Relations, September 30, 2021, <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/quad-leaders-summit-indo-pacific-whats-next>.

founded the Senior Cyber Group to advance shared cyber standards, develop the workforce, and decrease cybersecurity vulnerabilities.

Carla Freeman and Vikram J. Singh, well-established international relations and foreign policy experts, concur with Smith's assessment that the Quad's economic and technological collaboration is meant to counter the PRC's overarching illiberal intentions.¹⁸⁹ Freeman and Singh, however, expand upon the potential for the Quad's coordinating groups' objectives to correlate with Chinese foreign policy endeavors without directly mentioning the PRC. For example, international relations and Chinese law scholars John Garrick and Yan C. Bennett identify loose parallels between the objectives of the Quad's Critical and Emerging Technology Working Group and the forthcoming 'China Standards 2035' plan.¹⁹⁰ Similar parallels can be drawn between the PRC's Belt and Road Initiative and the Quad's Infrastructure Coordination Group. It is through the creation of such competing stratagems that the Quad can establish itself as a credible alternative to the PRC in the region, thus fostering the necessary balance of power.

The attempt to establish a balance of power by the Quad is exemplified further by Freeman's analysis of the Quad Leaders' Summit statements in comparison to a speech

¹⁸⁹ Carla Freeman, Mirna Galic, Brian Harding, Daniel Markey, and Vikram J. Singh. "What the Quad Leaders' Summit Means for the Indo-Pacific Amid Rising Tensions with China," United States Institute of Peace, September 28, 2021, <https://www.usip.org/publications/2021/09/what-quad-leaders-summit-means-indo-pacific-amid-rising-tensions-china>; Smith, "What's Next for the Quad?"

¹⁹⁰ John Garrick and Yan C. Bennett, "Uniting against Authoritarianism: A Blueprint for the Quad," *The Strategist*, February 26, 2021, <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/uniting-against-authoritarianism-a-blueprint-for-the-quad/>.

by Xi to the UN.¹⁹¹ The Quad statements have an undertone of a community beyond the four core member nation-states, e.g., “shared security and prosperity,” “shared diplomatic principles,” “responding to challenges in shared domains,” “shared values,” and “shared futures.”¹⁹² Freeman asserts this has been done intentionally by the Quad to present an alternative to Xi’s positioning of the PRC as a leader in the global “community with a shared future for mankind.”¹⁹³

Hiroyuki Akita, a well-respected Indo-Pacific relations journalist, contends that the broader community postulated by Freeman is necessary to offset the PRC’s growing influence and maintain the current international order, but the Quad lacks the strategy to achieve such objectives.¹⁹⁴ Akita identifies three possible methodologies the partnership might employ: shared values, shared norms, and shared interests.¹⁹⁵ The shared values approach prioritizes the inclusion of partners based on liberal beliefs such as democracy and human rights, which jeopardizes the potential inclusion of non-democratic nation-states, e.g., Vietnam. A shared norms approach sacrifices the advocacy of the core members’ democratic values to advance the partnership’s preferred international

¹⁹¹ Freeman et al., “What the Quad Leaders’ Summit Means for the Indo-Pacific Amid Rising Tensions with China.”

¹⁹² The White House, “Joint Statement from Quad Leaders.”

¹⁹³ Jinping Xi, “Work Together to Build a Community of Shared Future for Mankind” (Speech By President Xi Jinping At the United Nations Office at Geneva, January 18, 2017), <https://www.mfa.gov.cn/ce/ceiq/eng/zygx/t1432869.htm>.

¹⁹⁴ Hiroyuki Akita, “Integrating the Quad into Other Regional Organizations,” (Quad-Plus Dialogue, Sydney, Australia, February 20-21, 2019).

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

standards and norms, which increases the potential to involve non-democratic nation-states. The prioritization of shared interests elevates the importance of collective gain independent of values and the “rule of law,” which increases cooperation opportunities with the PRC similar to the approach advocated by Lohman. Akita concludes that the Quad’s most advantageous tactic would be to maintain ambiguity in its strategy through a blend of all three approaches. This would allow the Quad to expand its cooperative efforts to include non-democratic like-minded partners, minimize potential opposition by the PRC, and facilitate the founding members’ independent promotion of liberal ideals. However, while the three approaches and Akita’s recommendation have their benefits, the Quad’s continued ambiguity endangers its intention to “signal [a] unified resolve to counter China's growing assertiveness” and create a credible balance of power.¹⁹⁶

Less than two years after the Quad’s first meeting in 2017, Patrick G. Buchan and Benjamin Rimland led a study on the Quad by a Center for Strategic and International Studies research team.¹⁹⁷ The study informally surveyed a small number of non-governmental “strategic elites” from each nation-state within the partnership to “[take] the temperature” regarding the “mission of the Quad and its future activities.”¹⁹⁸ The survey results showed strong support for an annual heads of government meeting and development assistance, foreshadowing the Quad’s Leaders’ Summits and creation of coordinating groups in 2021. Two survey topics illustrated the participants’ diverging

¹⁹⁶ Grossman, “Don’t Get Too Excited, ‘Quad Plus’ Meetings Won’t Cover China.”

¹⁹⁷ Buchan and Rimland, “Defining the Diamond.”

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

perspectives: institutionalizing the partnership with a permanent secretariat and establishing a military task force under a combined joint command structure.

Buchan and Rimland identified disagreement amongst the “strategic elites” concerning the Quad’s formalization of an organizational structure through the creation of a permanent secretariat, which is depicted in Figure 7.¹⁹⁹ The negative reaction by the Indian respondents is not unexpected given India’s “historic hesitations” of non-alignment and strategic autonomy.²⁰⁰ One “strategic elite” went as far as to state that the Quad’s institutionalization was not “a worthy effort, absent a significant shift in regional security perceptions (like a limited armed clash).”²⁰¹ This is a critical statement, given the events that have occurred between the PRC and the Quad’s members in the following years.

¹⁹⁹ Buchan and Rimland, “Defining the Diamond.”

²⁰⁰ C. Raja Mohan, “India Romances the West,” *Foreign Policy*, March 19, 2021, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/03/19/india-modi-west-quad-china-biden-non-aligned/>.

²⁰¹ Buchan and Rimland, “Defining the Diamond,” 6.

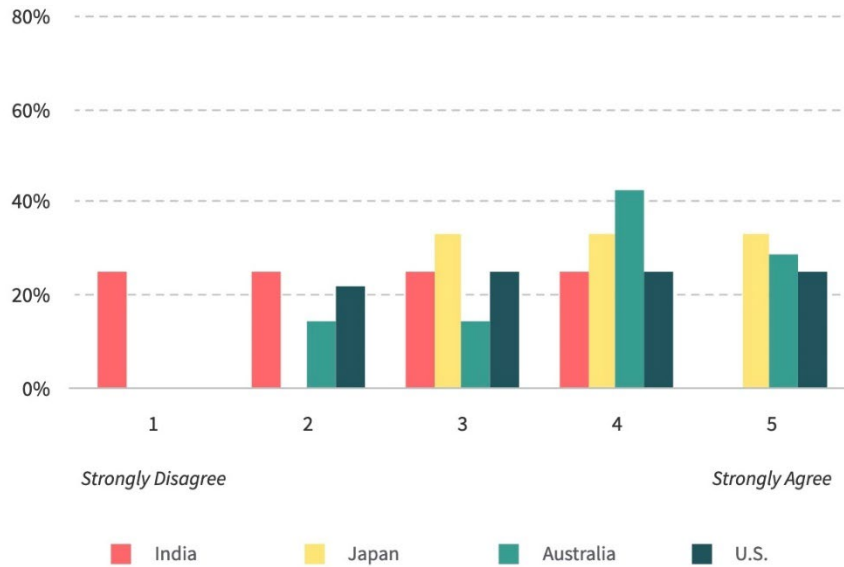


Figure 7. Support for Permanent Quad Secretariat

Source: Buchan and Rimland, “Defining the Diamond: The Past, Present, and Future of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue,” (Center for Strategic & International Studies, Washington, DC, March 2020), 6.

The second disparity observed by Buchan and Rimland, depicted in Figure 8, concerned the establishment of a standing military task force under a combined joint command structure.²⁰² The standing military task force would represent a progression in the military relationships built between the partners through a multitude of bilateral and multilateral training exercises, such as the annual execution of Exercise MALABAR. The responses from India and the U.S. diverged the most, which was anticipated by the researchers given India’s reliance on Soviet/Russian military support. Additionally, the

²⁰² Buchan and Rimland, “Defining the Diamond.”

“strategic elites” feared that the militarization of the Quad would “provoke [the PRC] into more aggression.”²⁰³

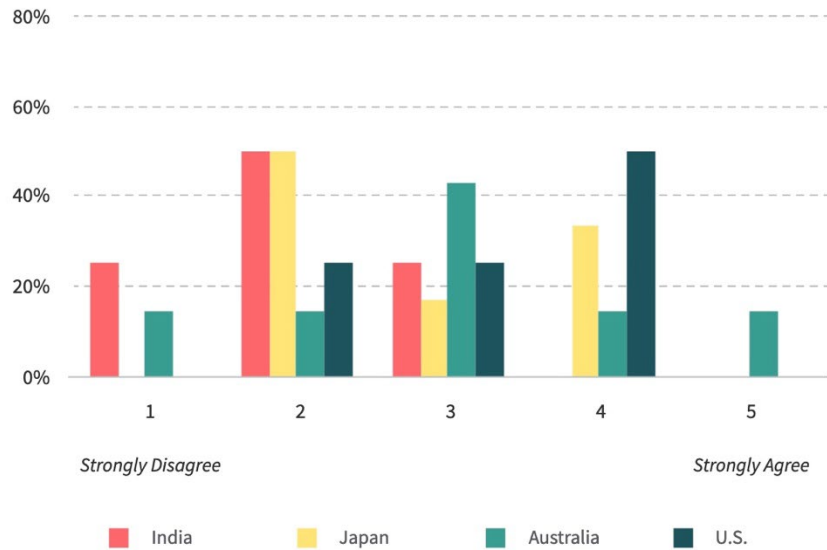


Figure 8. Support for a Standing Military Task Force

Source: Buchan and Rimland, “Defining the Diamond: The Past, Present, and Future of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue,” (Center for Strategic & International Studies, Washington, DC, March 2020), 6.

In the three years since the Buchan and Rimland survey, relationships between the Quad’s core members have tightened in response to the perceived threat from the PRC’s growing power projection capability.²⁰⁴ Tensions in the ECS and the SCS, border

²⁰³ Buchan and Rimland, “Defining the Diamond.” 6.

²⁰⁴ Andrew O’Neil and Lucy West, “Why the Quad Won’t Ever Be an Asian NATO,” in *Quad 2.0: New Perspectives for the Revived Concept: Views from The Strategist*, ed. Huong Le Thu (Canberra, Australia: Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 2019), 9-10; Tanvi Madan, “India Is Not Sitting on the Geopolitical Fence,” *War on the*

disputes between the PRC and India, and the PRC's interference in Australia's domestic affairs are some of the factors that have overshadowed previous hesitancy to strengthen the partnership and oppose the PRC's objectives. Foreign policy analyst C. Raja Mohan has pronounced that India's foreign policy has taken a decisive turn and "is no longer reluctant to work with the West in the global arena, including in the security domain."²⁰⁵ Mohan uses India's participation in a Five Eyes intelligence meeting as an example of the nation's shift in policy. This assertion is reinforced by Tanvi Madan's use of former Indian national security adviser Shivshankar Menon's statement that "India and the [U.S.] are ... moving toward a partnership that increasingly has some of the characteristics of an alliance."²⁰⁶ Jagannath Panda, a research fellow on East Asian international relations, uses the recent Japan and Australia bilateral defense treaty to similarly assert that the Quad's growing collaboration will "drive forward coordinated responses to the most pressing challenges" in the "face of [the PRC's] increasingly aggressive posture."²⁰⁷ The Australia, UK, and U.S. (AUKUS) trilateral security partnership, created in late 2021, solidifies the participants' commitment to "diplomatic, security, and defense cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region, including by working with

Rocks, October 27, 2021, <https://warontherocks.com/2021/10/india-is-not-sitting-on-the-geopolitical-fence/>.

²⁰⁵ Mohan, "India Romances the West."

²⁰⁶ Madan, "India Is Not Sitting on the Geopolitical Fence."

²⁰⁷ Jagannath Panda, "Making 'Quad Plus' a Reality," *The Diplomat*, January 13, 2022, <https://thediplomat.com/2022/01/making-quad-plus-a-reality/>.

partners, to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.”²⁰⁸ Given these recent developments, the possibility exists that if Buchan and Rimland were to repeat their survey during the next Quad Leaders’ Summit, the results depicted earlier in Figures 7 and 8 could shift toward supporting the Quad’s formalization as an international institution capable of creating a balance of power in the Indo-Pacific region. In such a case, it makes sense that the expansion of the Quad’s application of its collective IOPs and inclusion of non-members in future activities is probable.

Summary

The chapter reviewed open-source literature concerning the PRC’s revisionist approach toward the international order; the Indo-Pacific strategic environment, specifically First Island Chain; and the continuing evolution of the Quad. Four critical points were identified by this step: (1) the PRC is reemerging as a Great Power with the intent of revising the international order to align with its national interests; (2) international community members, including those within the First Island Chain, desire alternatives to the PRC’s coercive influence; (3) international institutions can represent a credible alternative given certain conditions; and (4) participants within the Quad and like-minded partners are willing to consider further development of the, currently, loose partnership.

Six potential SAs to strengthen the Quad and counter the PRC’s coercive activities emerged from the literature: (1) development of a governing charter to institutionalize the partnership, (2) creation of secretariat to oversee the partnership’s

²⁰⁸ The White House Briefing Room, “Joint Leaders Statement on AUKUS.”

activities, (3) creation of an Economic and Development Forum, (4) establishment of a HADR Organization, (5) formalization of a military alliance, and (6) shared interests' cooperation with international community competitors. Additionally, three nation-states – the Philippines, South Korea, and Vietnam – were identified as potential like-minded partners within the First Island Chain that could lend regional credibility to and increase collective action opportunities for the Quad – an expanded partnership known as Quad Plus. A research gap, however, was identified concerning the primary research question. For example, a limited amount of research has occurred regarding the potential use of existing treaties, partnerships, and informal affiliations to guide and validate the Quad's future development. This perspective will shape further examination of the strategic partnership as a possible alternative to the PRC's coercive behavior and act as a counterbalance to its revisionist activities.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study aims to answer the primary research question: Given the strategic environment circumstances, it is important the U.S. examine potential liberalist international relations approaches to strengthen the Quad as an international partnership that embodies a long-term, balanced alternative to the PRC's coercive IOP employment intended to revise the rules-based international order and establish a regional hegemony within the First Island Chain. Answers to three SQs provide an understanding of the strategic environment, enable analysis of potential strategies, and support this study's recommendations. The following chapter sets forth the research methodology applied to understanding the strategic environment and devising a potential strategy for which the U.S. can advocate through collaborative leadership of the Quad.

Method

The open-ended research questions are influenced by multiple factors in an evolving strategic environment, thus potentially altering this study's results. For example, emerging technology and COVID-19 have energized increasingly diverse cooperation amongst the Quad's core members and like-minded partners over the last 18 months. To account for such developments, a modified mixed-methods approach to an emergent design qualitative research study applying validity criteria was employed by the

author.²⁰⁹ Emergent design uses a loose initial research plan to collect data, which facilitates the researcher's refinement of the questions being asked and data being collected.²¹⁰ Validity criteria, as developed by Dr. Harry R. Yarger, determines the viability of a proposed strategy prior to implementation by assessing feasibility, acceptability, and suitability.²¹¹ The research progressed systematically through four overarching steps: 1) understanding the strategic environment, 2) strategy identification through data collection and analysis, 3) strategy validity and structural evaluation, and 4) potential strategic application. The emergent design process ensured a continual feedback loop was applied to refine the study as available data increased, understanding improved, and strategic validity was evaluated.

Understanding the Strategic Environment

Chapters 1 and 2 provided background and reviewed relevant literature, which improved understanding of the strategic environment within the First Island Chain, greater Indo-Pacific region, and relevant institutions and actors. This first step illustrated the dynamics involved in the ongoing Great Power competition and its influence within the international community through ways and means exerted by nation-states and

²⁰⁹ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 6th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2018), 63–64.

²¹⁰ John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4th ed. (Los Angeles, Calif.: SAGE, 2014), 186.

²¹¹ Harry R. Yarger, *Strategic Theory for the 21st Century: The Little Book on Big Strategy*, Letort Papers no. 12 (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2006), 70; JCS, JDN 1-18, IV-2 to IV – 3; Heffington, Oler, and Tretler, *A National Security Strategy Primer*, 45–46.

international institutions. Additionally, this step identified alternative international standards and norms desired by the PRC in comparison to the current international standards and norms.

Data Collection and Analysis

The primary, secondary, and tertiary sources in Chapter 2 highlighted current and potential SAs to strengthen the Quad as an international partnership capable of competing with the PRC's coercive, revisionist activities. Data collection concerning the identified SA possibilities focused on evidence compiled from documentation and archival records. Open-source documentation was gathered from news articles, scholarly journals, think tank reports, previous research, academic presentations, official speech transcripts, and government documents. Archival records were acquired through research conducted in the official archive systems. The use of secondary and, especially, tertiary sources in the collection of data necessitated validation of the evidence's credibility. Data that could only be collected from a single source was not used as evidence. Sampling of source citations was conducted to authenticate the source's credibility. Since the research area is continuing to evolve, additional sources and evidence were considered throughout the study.

The data was explored through the qualitative research methods of document and content analysis. Document analysis is the review and examination of data contained within printed and electronic material to "elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop

empirical knowledge.”²¹² Content analysis expands the document analysis approach beyond documents to interviews, observations, and physical artifacts to extract additional context and insight into the research questions.²¹³ To assist with the data analysis, SAs were examined through a series of filters.

1. Potential area in which coordinated efforts might strengthen the Quad as an international partnership.
2. What is the intent of the potential SA?
3. What ways and means will be employed to achieve the desired end state?
4. What strengthening effect might the SA have on the Quad core members, current partners, potential like-minded partners, and the international order?

Strategic Validity and Structural Evaluation

The proposed SAs, and, therefore, the solution to the primary research question were evaluated through the strategic validity lens of feasibility, acceptability, and suitability criteria.²¹⁴ Feasibility assesses whether a strategy can achieve the desired end state with the available or attainable resources and support. This criterion ensures the strategy’s resource requirements do not inhibit its success or the achievement of other strategic objectives. The strategy’s feasibility was evaluated by the following questions:

²¹² Glenn A. Bowen, “Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method,” *Qualitative Research Journal* 9, no. 2 (August 3, 2009): 27.

²¹³ Florian Kohlbacher, “The Use of Qualitative Content Analysis in Case Study Research,” *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 7, no. 1 (January 31, 2006): 8, <https://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/75>.

²¹⁴ Yarger, *Strategic Theory for the 21st Century*, 70; JCS, JDN 1-18, IV-2 to IV – 3; Heffington, Oler, and Tretler, *A National Security Strategy Primer*, 45–46.

1. Are the diplomatic, informational, military, and/or economic IOPs available to accomplish the strategy?
2. Are the collective means capable of being employed in a complimentary manner?

The acceptability criterion requires that the strategy is consistent with the nation-state's or institution's values, public and political support, ally and partner desired norms, legal standing, and/or shared interests of competitors within the international community. Acceptability determines if the "effects sought justify the objectives pursued, the methods used to achieve them," and domestic and international order ramifications.²¹⁵ The strategy's acceptability was evaluated by questions similar to the following examples:

1. Is the strategy acceptable to the domestic audience within the U.S., i.e., public and political audiences?
2. Is the strategy acceptable to ally and partner audiences?
3. Does the strategy align with current values and/or desired norms?
4. Is the strategy acceptable to international community competitor interests?

The final criterion of suitability examines the strategy's ability to achieve the desired end state, while avoiding adverse effects on other strategies, policies, and goals.²¹⁶ This criterion ensures the strategy's implementation is in the strategic interest of the nation-state or organization. The strategy's suitability was evaluated by questions similar to the following examples:

²¹⁵ Yarger, *Strategic Theory for the 21st Century*, 70.

²¹⁶ *Ibid.*

1. Is the strategy compatible with the current international order?
2. Will the strategy advance U.S. interests?
3. Will the strategy advance the interests of the Quad's core members?
4. Are there additional like-minded partners that can gain benefit to their interests through participation in this strategy?
5. Will the strategy counter the PRC's approach to revising international norms?

Due to the study's limitations and delimitations, the potential SAs were assumed to be feasible, acceptable, and suitable unless proven otherwise by the data and evidence. The ability to sustain each criterion's assessment for the duration of the strategy's implementation was also considered. For example, available resources for a strategy may diminish over its implementation, thus changing the strategy's feasibility. While a positive assessment of each criterion varies in intensity, a definitive negative assessment of any one criterion invalidated the SA for the assessed nation-state. If the SA was invalidated for two or more core members of the Quad, it was invalidated for the partnership. Considerations that may eventually warrant a strategic validity re-evaluation or an alternative course of action were provided for each invalidated SA.

To increase flexibility within the Quad's multilateral structure, the research study applied Hiroyuki Akita's shared values, shared norms, and shared interests framework throughout the validity evaluation.²¹⁷ Each potential SA was first assessed for validity with the Quad's core members that exhibit, share, and advocate for certain values, such

²¹⁷ Akita, "Integrating the Quad into Other Regional Organizations."

as democracy and human rights, as part of the international order. These four nation-states are considered the Quad's first tier.

If determined to be valid for the Quad's core members, the SA was then evaluated against the criteria regarding potential like-minded partners. These like-minded partners and the Quad's core members would compose the second tier of the partnership, the Quad Plus, that share preferred international standards and norms, for example, freedom of navigation. Although the like-minded partners may have values that diverge from the core members, all Quad Plus members prefer to maintain the current rules-based international order and desire the opportunities and benefits provided by the partnership.

The study focused on the Philippines, South Korea, and Vietnam as potential Quad Plus members within the First Island due to previous cooperation with the Quad, or the partnership's core members. For example, the Philippines and South Korea have alliances with the U.S. concerning "common danger." Another example is South Korea's and Vietnam's continuing cooperation with the Quad concerning the global pandemic; South Korea and Vietnam are part of a grouping that certain academics and media have already labeled as the "Quad Plus." These three nation-states are representative of the Quad's potential to increase credibility, physical presence, and counterbalancing capability within the First Island Chain. Each SA was evaluated for strategic validity with respect to the representative nation-states to determine the appeal to potential like-minded partners within the First Island Chain. If determined to be valid, then the SA is likely to expand cooperative efforts between the Quad and representative nation-states within the First Island Chain, to include membership in the Quad Plus. Additionally, the SAs

validated at this tier have the potential to raise the collaborative interest of other regional nation-states with the Quad, as either a Quad Plus member or Quad Observer.

Finally, the strategy was evaluated concerning possible shared interests with the PRC. A shared interests tier would allow the partnership to cooperate with external nation-states, institutions, and actors through a Quad Observer status; thus, increasing international community credibility of the partnership by including Quad Observers with differing perspectives on values, standards, and norms, e.g., the PRC. The mixed-method application of Yarger's and Akita's frameworks created flexibility with the potential to broaden the Quad's international community influence, appeal to potential participants, and expand de-escalation opportunities within the current international order.

Potential Strategic Application

The final step was the postulation of a strategy to strengthen the Quad as an alternative to the PRC's revisionist and coercive activities, specifically within the First Island Chain, that was informed by the collected evidence, subsequent analysis, and validated SAs.

Methodology Limitations

The study's research methodology has two noteworthy limitations. First, the information available for analysis varies in abundance and, possibly, accuracy depending upon the nation-state or institutional source. The majority of nation-states that are either members or like-minded partners of the Quad produce a significant amount of information for analysis on each nation-state's position. The volume and breadth are overwhelming for an individual researcher, which may have caused critical evidence to be missed. Collectively, however, there is a dearth of information concerning the Quad as

an international partnership. The minimal official information from the Quad makes it difficult to analyze the partnership's long-term objectives and strategy. Furthermore, the control of information from the PRC complicates the evaluation of that nation-state's perspective and potential response. Second, the qualitative method is unable to provide causal answers to the questions posed, unlike the quantitative method. This generalized analysis does provide the critical insight into the primary research question necessary to the creation of potential SAs.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

Introduction

The primary research question's intent is to offer a potential strategy for strengthening the Quad as a credible international actor capable of counterbalancing the PRC's coercive behavior, particularly within the First Island Chain. The literature review and initial document analysis identified six strategic approaches (SAs) with potential to support this objective: (1) governing charter, (2) secretariat, (3) economic and development, (4) HADR, (5) military alliance, and (6) shared interests. This chapter summarizes the results of the document and content analysis that supported the validity determination of each SA, as illustrated in Table 3. Individual sections of this chapter provide an overview of each SA through the data analysis filters described in Chapter 3, followed by a Yarger validity evaluation. Each evaluation is categorized via Akita's framework and summarized in Tables 4 through 9. The analysis presented in this chapter will then be employed as a basis to address the primary research question in Chapter 5.

Strategic Approach Validity and Structural Evaluation

Table 3. Summary of SA and Structural Evaluation		
Strategic Approach	Validity	Shared...
SA1: Governing Charter	Valid	Values and Norms
SA2: Secretariat	Invalid (Neither Feasible nor Acceptable)	N/A
SA3: Economic and Development Forum	Valid	Values and Norms
SA4: HADR Organization	Valid	Values, Norms, and Interests
SA5: Military Alliance	Invalid (Neither Acceptable nor Suitable)	N/A
SA6: Shared Interest Cooperation	Valid	Values, Norms, and Interests

Source: Created by author.

SA1: Governing Charter

Overview

Over the last two decades, the Quad evolved from an ad hoc coalition of four nation-states conducting HADR into a strategic partnership between prominent democratic nation-states within the Indo-Pacific region. The partnership’s unofficial nature has provided the participating nation-states with flexibility to address international concerns, such as reluctant domestic audiences and the PRC’s and ASEAN’s opposition. However, the Quad’s lack of official documentation in the form of a treaty, governing charter, or implementing directive has created skepticism and concern throughout the region and international community. Within the First Island Chain, for example, Vivian Balakrishnan, Singapore’s Foreign Minister, has stated that Singaporeans “want a rules-based multilateral system,” but the Quad’s objectives have not been “fleshed out [to] a sufficient level of resolution... [and Singapore] never sign[s] on to anything unless we

know exactly what it means.”²¹⁸ Indonesia’s former Minister of Foreign Affairs Marty Natalegawa went further by stating that “unless [the Quad’s] goals and purposes are clearly explained, [it] may inadvertently and mistakenly be construed as a Cold War-like containment strategy.”²¹⁹ The PRC has continued to reinforce this negative perception. Wang Yi, the PRC’s Foreign Minister, has described the Quad as “an Indo-Pacific version of NATO” that “is by no means some kind of blessing for the region, but a sinister move to disrupt regional peace and stability” by “stoking geopolitical rivalry.”²²⁰

The Quad has remained a loose partnership of like-minded nation-states even as the group is increasing collective action in response to the PRC’s coercive behavior and the global pandemic.²²¹ Member nation-states, however, have gradually codified the Quad’s importance with the partnership’s inclusion in official government documents,

²¹⁸ Charissa Yong, “Singapore Will Not Join Indo-Pacific Bloc for Now: Vivian,” *The Straits Times*, May 15, 2018, <https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/spore-will-not-join-indo-pacific-bloc-for-now-vivian>.

²¹⁹ Huong Le Thu, *Southeast Asian Perceptions of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue*, ASPI Special Report (Canberra, Australia: Australian Strategic Policy Institute, October 2018), 25, <https://s3-ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/ad-aspi/2018-10/SR%20130%20Quadrilateral%20security%20dialogue.pdf>.

²²⁰ “State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi Meets the Press,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the People’s Republic of China (MFR PRC), March 7, 2022, https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx_662805/202203/t20220308_10649559.html.

²²¹ Tang Siew Mun, Hoang Thi Ha, Anuthida Saelaow Qian, Glenn Ong, and Pham Thi Phuong Thao, *The State of Southeast Asia 2020* (Singapore: ASEAN Studies Centre, January 16, 2020), https://www.iseas.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/pdfs/TheStateofSEASurveyReport_2020.pdf; Herve Lemahieu and Alyssa Leng, *Asia Power Index 2021* (Sydney: Lowy Institute, 2021), <https://power.lowyinstitute.org/countries/>; Sharon Seah, Joanne Lin, Sithanonxay Suvannaphakdy, Melinda Martinus, Pham Thi Phuong Thao, Farah Nadine Seth, and Hoang Thi Ha, *The State of Southeast Asia 2022* (Singapore: ASEAN Studies Centre, February 16, 2022), <https://www.iseas.edu.sg/category/articles-commentaries/state-of-southeast-asia-survey/>.

e.g., national security strategies, and through public statements by government leaders, e.g., heads of state statements to the press. The changing strategic environment and domestic considerations present an opportunity for the Quad to transition from an informal international actor to a formal international institution. Formalizing the Quad through development and ratification of a governing charter could institutionalize the partnership with a binding purpose that unifies its members and like-minded partners, articulates its objectives, and defines its approach to interacting with the international community. The Charter of the UN most appropriately serves as an established model that is well-respected and founded on collective international community advancement rather than mutual assistance between members.²²² Joint press releases made by the Quad members' leadership since 2017 should provide a basis for key positions within the institution's governing charter, which could be further developed by international relations experts' observations of paralleling multilateral behavior.

The partnership's governing charter should consist of the Quad's purpose and principles, membership guidance and structure, institutional organization and decision-making, and administrative procedures, at a minimum. Table 2, presented earlier in Chapter 2, provides a foundation for the institution's purpose and principles reinforced by the recent "Joint Statement on Quad Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific" and "Joint Readout of Quad Leaders Call."²²³ To achieve a spirit of collaboration within the Quad among

²²² "United Natopms Charter," United Nations, accessed March 29, 2022, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter>; "Preparatory Years: UN Charter History," United Nations, accessed May 1, 2022, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/history-of-the-un/preparatory-years>.

²²³ Office of the Spokesperson, "Joint Statement on Quad Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific," (Media Note, U.S. Department of State, February 11, 2022),

diverse nation-states requires membership guidelines that achieve a partnership mindset but provide flexibility for diverging perspectives. The U.S.'s Indo-Pacific Economic Framework can serve as a model that allows members to sign and ratify sections and sub-sections vice the governing charter in its entirety.²²⁴

Akita's framework, ASEAN, and the Quad's ongoing multilateral activities provide a basis for a three-tiered membership structure consisting of the Quad's core members, Quad Plus members that share the partnership's desired norms, and Quad Observers that have parallel interests, e.g., HADR. The institutional organization section should comprise the preponderance of the governing charter. Using the Charter of the UN as a framework and the Quad's current efforts, the institution's structure should consist of a general assembly of all participants, representative agencies to formalize the existing working groups, and an independent administrative body. Each sub-section should define the mechanisms for collective decision-making under a rotating leadership structure, as

<https://www.state.gov/joint-statement-on-quad-cooperation-in-the-indo-pacific/>; Government of India, "Joint Statement by the Foreign Ministers of Australia, India and Japan and the Secretary of State of the United States Following the 4th Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting," Ministry of External Affairs, February 11, 2022, <https://www.mea.gov.in/bilateral-documents.htm?dtl/34854/Joint+statement+by+the+Foreign+Ministers+of+Australia+India+and+Japan+and+the+Secretary+of+State+of+the+United+States+following+the+4th+Quad+Foreign+Ministers+Meeting>; The White House, "Joint Readout of Quad Leaders Call," (The White House, Washington, DC, March 3, 2022), <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/03/03/joint-readout-of-quad-leaders-call/>.

²²⁴ Brock R. Williams, Mark E. Manyin, and Rachel F. Fefer, *Biden Administration Plans for an Indo-Pacific Economic Framework*, Congressional Research Service Insight (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, February 25, 2022), <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IN/IN11814>.

proposed by Buchan and Rimland, to ensure collaborative efforts on an equal footing.²²⁵ Finally, an administrative section should outline the procedures for convening gatherings, resolving disputes, acting on and enforcing collective decisions, and resourcing the organization, including financing. The thorough development of a governing charter for the Quad in this manner should connect the partnership's individual members to a collective vision for the region and unify their efforts.

The Quad's formalization as an international institution by adopting a governing charter, similar to the UN, is likely to increase the partnership's international community credibility and long-term organizational efficacy.²²⁶ The governing charter should clearly define the partnership's objectives and provide written guidelines for its activities, thus alleviating unallied non-member concerns that the Quad is a military alliance in disguise. An open, tiered membership structure should allow for flexibility and dissention, while still facilitating broad collaboration benefiting the regional and international community. The governing charter could also facilitate constructive dialogue with opposition and present opportunities to counter adversarial disinformation concerning the partnership. Finally, the creation of an institutional structure should clearly articulate roles and responsibilities, unify efforts through long-term continuity, and provide a level of organizational independence likely to benefit the individual participants. Ultimately, the drafting and ratification of a governing charter should strengthen the Quad, improve

²²⁵ Buchan and Rimland, "Defining the Diamond."

²²⁶ Kenneth W. Abbott and Duncan Snidal, "Why States Act through Formal International Organizations," *The Journal of Conflict Resolution* 42, no. 1 (1998): 3-32.

collective action, facilitate increased partnership beyond the four core members, and counter adversarial diplomatic and informational activities.

Validity

Table 4. Validity Evaluation of the Governing Charter SA					
Nation-states	Shared...	Feasible	Acceptable	Suitable	Evaluation
Australia	Values	Yes	Yes	Yes	Valid
India		Yes	Yes	Yes	Valid
Japan		Yes	Yes	Yes	Valid
U.S.		Yes	Yes	Yes	Valid
Philippines	Norms	Yes	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
South Korea		Yes	Yes	Yes	Valid
Vietnam		Yes	Yes	Yes	Valid

Source: Created by author.

Shared Values (Quad)

Australia, India, Japan, and the U.S. participate in numerous existing multilateral arrangements, have the expertise available to develop a new international institution, and possess the additional resources necessary for the Quad’s formalization. As such, development and ratification of a governing charter is feasible for the Quad’s core members. This SA is assessed as acceptable to the Quad’s core members based on the partnership’s considerable domestic support within each nation-state and leadership espousal of collective principles and objectives. India’s history of non-alignment was an initial concern for acceptability. However, support of influential government leaders, such as Minister of External Affairs S. Jaishankar, and increasing conflict, including fatal

border skirmishes, have caused India to “go all-in on the Quad.”²²⁷ India’s non-alignment history also jeopardized the SA’s suitability. The inclusion of flexible membership guidelines, however, allows India – and other members – to agree with the partnership on principle, but take diverging action on domestic areas of interest, e.g., the Russia-Ukraine War.²²⁸ Consequently, India’s history actually benefits to the Quad’s credibility as an inclusive international actor, which adds intensity to the partnership’s collective words and actions. Through the creation and ratification of a governing charter, the Quad can demonstrate to the entire international community that the four core members “are united by democratic values and [committed] to a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific,” as stated by India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi.²²⁹ Therefore, the development and ratification of a governing charter to formalize, and eventually institutionalize, the Quad is a valid SA for the partnership’s core members.

Shared Norms (Quad Plus)

The Philippines, South Korea, and Vietnam – nation-states representative of potential Quad Plus members within the First Island Chain – participate in existing multilateral arrangements, can provide expertise to assist with developing a governing charter, and have resources available to support the Quad’s formalization; as such, this

²²⁷ Jeff M. Smith, “How to Keep India All-In on the Quad,” *Foreign Policy*, June 25, 2021, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/06/25/india-quadrilateral-security-dialogue-us-australia-japan-china-russia/>.

²²⁸ Mujib Mashal, “Putin’s War Is Complicating India’s Middle Path Among Powers,” *The New York Times*, March 30, 2022, sec. World, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/30/world/asia/india-ukraine-russia-china.html>.

²²⁹ Smith, “How to Keep India All-In on the Quad.”

SA is feasible to the potential Quad Plus members. Domestic support for the Quad and its principles is relatively high to high within all three nation-states – 77% in Vietnam, 66% in South Korea, and 56% in the Philippines – which means establishment of a governing charter is domestically acceptable.²³⁰ Political acceptability and suitability, however, are a concern within Vietnam and South Korea, and undeterminable in the Philippines.

Vietnam’s “Three Nos” policy is a reason for pause as it clearly states that the nation-state will not establish alliances or align with another nation-state against a third nation-state.²³¹ However, the government has specified that certain circumstances and conditions allow for re-evaluation of the nation-state’s foreign policies. Vietnam has expressed interest in “maintaining a rules-based regional order and a regional security architecture free from domination by any single major power.”²³² The Quad Plus architecture achieves this objective with the added benefit of increasing Vietnam’s negotiating power concerning the nation-state’s SCS claims; therefore, the governing charter is acceptable and suitable for Vietnam.

South Korea has previously opposed the Quad’s “free and open Indo-Pacific” concept, expressed concerns that the Quad could accelerate Great Power competition, and

²³⁰ Le Thu, *Southeast Asian Perceptions of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue*.

²³¹ Derek Grossman and Christopher Sharman, “How to Read Vietnam’s Latest Defense White Paper: A Message to Great Powers,” *War on the Rocks*, December 31, 2019, <https://warontherocks.com/2019/12/how-to-read-vietnams-latest-defense-white-paper-a-message-to-great-powers/>.

²³² Nguyen Huu Tuc, “Is Vietnam Open to Washington’s Indo-Pacific Strategy?” *East Asia Forum*, March 3, 2021, <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2021/03/04/is-vietnam-open-to-washingtons-indo-pacific-strategy/>.

continues to demonstrate a historic hesitancy for partnering with Japan.²³³ President-Elect Yoon Suk-Yeol, however, intends to place relations with the U.S. “at the center of South Korean foreign policy priorities,” as well as strengthening “relations with Japan and Southeast Asia and...stepping up to international leadership.”²³⁴ The combination of the President-Elect’s and general public’s domestic support make the Quad’s formalization with a governing charter both acceptable and suitable.

The political acceptability and suitability for the Philippines cannot be determined at this time due to the pending Presidential election in May 2022. This SA is neither acceptable nor suitable for the current administration, but both Presidential election frontrunners have expressed intentions to shift their foreign policies in a manner favorable to the Quad.²³⁵ The flexibility provided by the governing charter’s membership guidelines facilitates the validity of this SA despite the unknown of the Philippines.

Despite the inability to determine validity for the Philippines, the Quad’s development of a governing charter is a valid SA likely to advance the partnership’s credibility within the First Island Chain and eventually establish a regional balance of power. A governing charter should provide the region’s potential like-minded partners

²³³ Kuyoun Chung, “South Korea’s Perspective on Quad Plus and Evolving Indo-Pacific Security Architecture,” *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs* 3, no. 5 (December 22, 2020): 131–145.

²³⁴ Scott A. Snyder, “South Korean President-Elect Yoon Suk-Yeol’s Early Foreign Policy Challenges,” *Asia Inbound* and *Asia Program* (blog). *Council on Foreign Relations*, March 25, 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/blog/south-korean-president-elect-yoon-suk-yeols-early-foreign-policy-challenges>.

²³⁵ Nick Danby, “Philippine Elections Will Shape Indo-Pacific Security,” *The Strategist*, March 18, 2022, <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/philippine-elections-will-shape-indo-pacific-security/>.

with the Quad’s defined purpose, objectives, and approach to interacting with the international community. Additionally, the Quad’s public ratification of a governing charter should facilitate the proliferation of a counternarrative to the PRC’s portrayal of the partnership as “an Indo-Pacific version of NATO” that will “disrupt regional peace and stability.”²³⁶ With a single document, the Quad could potentially alleviate the First Island Chain leaders’ concerns of antagonistic intentions, provide like-minded partners with a clear path for cooperation and collective action, and thwart the PRC’s illiberal behavior.

SA2: Secretariat

Overview

Collaboration between the partnership’s core members, now known as the Quad, and like-minded partners has historically been accomplished by prioritizing “function, not form” to achieve limited objectives, e.g., HADR operations following a tsunami or during a pandemic.²³⁷ This allowed the Quad to focus on the short-term end state by identifying collaborative activities to resolve the given crisis, then disband the partnership until required again in the future. The members generally understood that their shared values, such as democracy, facilitated ad hoc coalitions without a need to maintain a permanent bureaucratic structure to build relations and coordinate activities.

²³⁶ State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi Meets the Press,” MFA PRC. “

²³⁷ Evan A. Feigenbaum and James Schwemlein, “How Biden Can Make the Quad Endure,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, March 11, 2021, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2021/03/11/how-biden-can-make-quad-endure-pub-84046>.

Additionally, this assuaged concerns throughout the Indo-Pacific region that the establishment of such a structure would overshadow existing international institutions, especially ASEAN.²³⁸ The Quad leadership's broadening of the partnership's objectives to include long-term activities across the IOPs, as illustrated earlier in Table 2, requires re-evaluation of the establishment of a secretariat to oversee multilateral coordination and collective action.

The creation of a permanent secretariat for the Quad would enable efficiency by centralizing administration and independence, thereby facilitating a degree of neutrality.²³⁹ The secretariat would centralize the partnership's mechanism for interacting with the international community and overseeing its collective activities. This should provide long-term continuity in the Quad's administrative coordination, negotiation, development, and execution of the partnership's priorities, such as infrastructure development. Centralization should optimize daily operations by reducing each member's administrative burden, including resource allocation, information management, and product production. Establishing a secretariat should also facilitate a level of autonomy beneficial to the partnership's individual participants. The non-politicized nature of a secretariat should elevate it above the politics involved with international relations between nation-states, thereby allowing the secretariat to advance positions for the betterment of the international community vice individual member interests.

²³⁸ Buchan and Rimland, "Defining the Diamond," 6; Le Thu, *Southeast Asian Perceptions of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue*.

²³⁹ Buchan and Rimland, "Defining the Diamond," 6; Abbott and Snidal, "Why States Act through Formal International Organizations," 3-32.

Centralization and independent action through a secretariat could raise the Quad's credibility as an actor within the international community and strengthen the partnership's collective means.

The UN and ASEAN secretariats and the priorities identified in the Quad Leaders' Summits provide a foundation for the Quad secretariat's development.²⁴⁰ The Quad's secretariat should be composed of executive leadership, administrative sections, and operational departments as illustrated in Figure 9. A Secretary-General assisted by a Deputy Secretary-General, from two different core member nation-states, should lead the secretariat on a rotating three-year basis.²⁴¹ Six administrative sections could oversee the daily operations and the secretariat's interactions with the international community, including multinational organizations. Six operational departments should coordinate the partnership's efforts to achieve the Quad's identified priorities, which should have the added benefit of providing a continuity for operations. The secretariat should develop administrative procedures to convene gatherings, resolve disputes, act on and enforce collective decisions, and resource the organization, including financing.

²⁴⁰ "Secretariat," United Nations, accessed March 31, 2022, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/secretariat>; "Organizational Structure of the ASEAN Secretariat," Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), accessed March 31, 2022, <https://asean.org/the-asean-secretariat-basic-mandate-functions-and-composition/organizational-structure-of-the-asean-secretariat-2/>; "Fact Sheet"; "Fact Sheet."

²⁴¹ Buchan and Rimland, "Defining the Diamond," 6; Abbott and Snidal, "Why States Act through Formal International Organizations," 3-32.

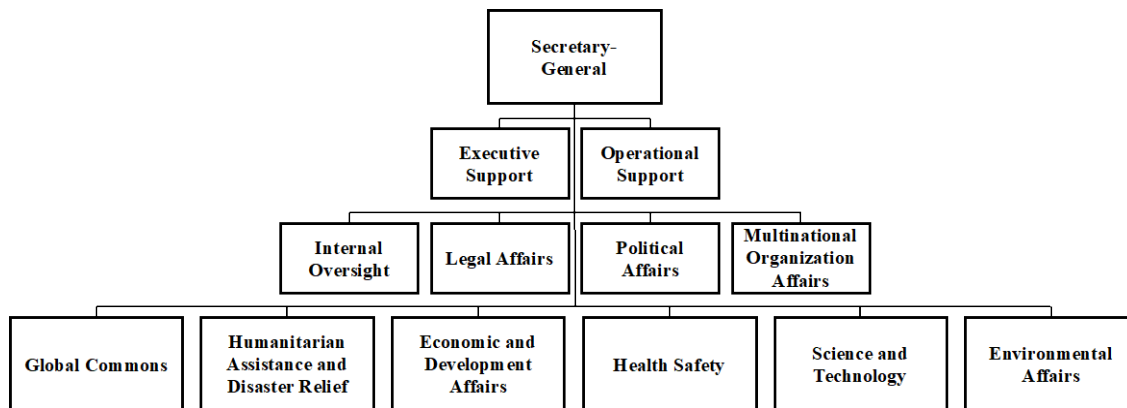


Figure 9. Secretariat Organizational Structure

Source: Created by author.

Validity

Table 5. Validity Evaluation of the Secretariat SA					
Nation-states	Shared...	Feasible	Acceptable	Suitable	Evaluation
Australia	Values	No	No	Yes	Invalid
India		No	No	Yes	Invalid
Japan		No	No	Yes	Invalid
U.S.		No	No	Yes	Invalid

Source: Created by author.

Shared Values (Quad)

The author was unable to identify an international institution secretariat without an existing treaty, governing charter, or implementing directive; thus, this SA is not feasible. The partnership’s members are meeting at a greater frequency, higher levels of leadership, and with increasing public and political support. Additionally, all four nation-states have demonstrated a willingness to participate in the formalization of multilateral

international institutions, including their administrative mechanism. The creation of a permanent secretariat could be acceptable; however, the leadership of the core members have not called for the creation of a secretariat at this time for a multitude of reasons. For example, the bureaucratization of the Quad with a secretariat is likely to overly burden the development of critical relationships and cause excessive delays in establishing the partnership's identified coordination and working groups. Therefore, a permanent secretariat is currently unacceptable. This SA is suitable for all four core members as it applies dedicated resources to achievement of the objectives identified by the joint statements and reinforced by member nation-state governmental documents and leadership statements. Despite the secretariat's suitability, this is presently an invalid SA for the Quad's core members due the infeasibility of establishing a secretariat absent guiding documentation and the probable delays to the partnership's current activities being unacceptable.

Shared Norms (Quad Plus)

Validity was not assessed for the Quad Plus tier of the partnership because this SA was determined to be invalid at the Quad core member tier.

Considerations for Re-evaluation

Considerations that may, eventually, warrant a strategic validity re-evaluation for a Quad secretariat fit into two strategic environment categories in relation to the partnership – external and internal. Externally, if there is a loss of regional confidence in ASEAN's effectiveness as an international actor within the First Island Chain or an

international relations event drastically alters the strategic environment, e.g., armed conflict in the SCS, then this SA should be re-evaluated.

Internally to the Quad, two catalysts may result in the necessity of a secretariat for the partnership. First, the Quad's formalization through the creation of a governing charter is likely to direct the partnership's institutionalization with a secretariat. Second, the oversight of specified coordination and working groups may become too cumbersome for the partnership's current oversight arrangement, thus requiring the creation of a secretariat. Academics, planners, advisors, and policymakers should continually assess each of these considerations to determine if this SA merits a strategic validity re-evaluation.

SA3: Economic and Development Forum

Overview

The economic growth disparity among nation-states in the Indo-Pacific region, illustrated by GDP in this case, has transformed the region's relative economic power hierarchy and changed the overall strategic environment.²⁴² The PRC's GDP in 2016 was \$21.4 trillion with recent GDP projections for the nation-state exceeding \$42.4 trillion by 2030. This has allowed the PRC to perform significant foreign direct investment, exceeding \$2.2 trillion since 2005; establish global economic initiatives, such as the BRI; and increase the nation-state's participation in multilateral free trade agreements, e.g., the

²⁴² Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Minister for Trade Tourism and Investment, *2017 Foreign Policy White Paper* (Canberra: Australian Government, November 2017), 25-27, <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/2017-foreign-policy-white-paper.pdf>.

Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.²⁴³ In comparison, the collective GDP of the Quad’s core members is projected to grow from \$33.7 trillion to \$52.5 trillion over the same 14-year timeframe. The relative economic power shift has been amplified by the U.S. voluntarily relinquishing leadership roles within the economic international order, e.g., withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership and condemnation of the World Trade Organization.²⁴⁴ The PRC has been able use the nation-state’s increased relative economic power to exploit the changing strategic environment and coerce regional and international community members to coincide to revisions of the existing international order.

In 2021, the Quad responded to the PRC’s coercive use of its economic IOP by establishing multiple coordination and working groups intended to research and propose economic and development opportunities for collective action.²⁴⁵ Additionally, the Quad’s core members participate in numerous international community initiatives that could serve as a foundation of or an example for the partnership’s adoption a broader economic and development SA. For example, Australia, Japan, and the U.S. proposed the Blue Dot Network (BDN) in 2019 to encourage public-private cooperative investment in

²⁴³ Derek Scissors, “China Global Investment Tracker,” American Enterprise Institute, April 3, 2022, <https://www.aei.org/china-global-investment-tracker/>.

²⁴⁴ Executive Office of the President, Office of the United States Trade Representative, Letter to TPP Depository (The White House, Washington, DC, January 30, 2017), <https://ustr.gov/sites/default/files/files/Press/Releases/1-30-17%20USTR%20Letter%20to%20TPP%20Depository.pdf>; James Randerson, “Trump’s WTO Criticism Is ‘Damaging,’ Says Trade Body’s Chief,” *Politico*, June 14, 2020, <https://www.politico.com/news/2020/06/14/trump-world-trade-organization-316683>.

²⁴⁵ The White House Briefing Room, “Fact Sheet: Quad Leaders’ Summit.”

high-quality infrastructure projects around the globe.²⁴⁶ The three nation-states have coordinated with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to generate a certification framework to assess an infrastructure project's adherence to international development standards and norms. While the BDN does not directly compete with the BRI, its certification will attract private investment that could provide an alternative to the PRC's predatory financing and lower standards.²⁴⁷ As the BDN was founded by three of the four core members of the Quad, it represents a considerable opportunity to strengthen the partnership with the inclusion of India and to counter the coercive activities being undertaken through the PRC's BRI.

The Quad's core members have collectively identified telecommunications investment and development as another area for coordinated action, specifically 5G and subsea cable diversification.²⁴⁸ The PRC, principally through Huawei, is leading the international community in the development and world-wide fielding of 5G

²⁴⁶ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), *The Blue Dot Network: A Proposal for a Global Certification Framework for Quality Infrastructure Investment* (Paris, France: OECD, March 21, 2022), <https://www.oecd.org/corporate/towards-a-global-certification-framework-for-quality-infrastructure-investment.htm>.

²⁴⁷ Kaush Arha, "A Hidden Key to the G7's Infrastructure Ambitions: Blue Dot Network," *The New Atlanticist* (blog), *Atlantic Council*, June 13, 2021, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/a-hidden-key-to-the-g7s-infrastructure-ambitions-blue-dot-network/>.

²⁴⁸ The White House Briefing Room, "Fact Sheet: Quad Leaders' Summit,"; Matthew P. Goodman and Matthew Wayland, "Securing Asia's Subsea Network: U.S. Interests and Strategic Options," (Center for Strategic & International Studies, Washington, DC, April 5, 2022), <https://www.csis.org/analysis/securing-asias-subsea-network-us-interests-and-strategic-options>.

communications networks.²⁴⁹ This state of affairs is of great concern for many international community members since the PRC's authoritarian policies require Chinese companies to provide access to government entities. In this case, 5G networks built by Huawei could be used for intelligence collection and coercive influence. The Quad's core members established a partnership with the Open RAN Policy Coalition to promote public-private collaboration on 5G's security, diversification, and neutrality, but are far behind the PRC in implementation.²⁵⁰ The Quad's cooperative efforts are in the initial stages; however, both government and industry leaders are optimistic about the initiative's prospects. Additionally, the core members of the Quad have identified the need to diversify the subsea cable network to develop resiliency in the global telecommunications and digital infrastructure. In 2020, the Trilateral Infrastructure Partnership, comprised of Australia, Japan, and the U.S., funded a second subsea cable connecting the island nation of Palau to the U.S..²⁵¹ Australia and Japan have also acted independently to provide alternative financing and development resources throughout the Indo-Pacific region to counter the increasing number of Chinese subsea cable providers.

²⁴⁹ David Sacks, "China's Huawei Is Winning the 5G Race. Here's What the United States Should Do To Respond," *Net Politics and Digital and Cyberspace Policy Program* (blog). *Council on Foreign Relations*, March 29, 2021, <https://www.cfr.org/blog/china-huawei-5g>.

²⁵⁰ "Open RAN Policy Coalition to Coordinate Quad Governments' Track 1.5 Dialogue on Open RAN," Open RAN Policy Coalition, September 27, 2021, <https://www.openranpolicy.org/open-ran-policy-coalition-to-coordinate-quad-governments-track-1-5-dialogue-on-open-ran/>.

²⁵¹ Abhijnan Rej, "Australia, Japan, U.S. Trilateral Partnership to Fund Undersea Cable for Palau," *The Diplomat*, October 31, 2020, <https://thediplomat.com/2020/10/australia-japan-us-trilateral-partnership-to-fund-undersea-cable-for-palau/>.

These telecommunications and digital infrastructure circumstances represent a significant opportunity for collective action by the Quad’s core members and like-minded partners, which could strengthen the partnership and counter the PRC’s coercive activities.

The Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI) launched by three core members of the Quad exemplifies a final opportunity for broader coordination between the Quad and potential “like-minded partners.”²⁵² In the wake of the COVID-19 supply chain difficulties, Australia, India, and Japan identified a collective security interest to reduce their nation-states’ overdependence on single source procurement of goods from the PRC.²⁵³ The nation-states’ governments created incentives, including public grants, to encourage the relocation of production facilities outside of the PRC and develop other resiliency measures within their supply chain systems.²⁵⁴ The SCRI’s objectives are to invest in the region’s vulnerable economies, build developing nation-states’ industrial and technological capabilities, and, ultimately, reduce overall economic reliance on the PRC. With the inclusion of all partnership core members, the SCRI could represent a considerable opportunity to strengthen the Quad through an existing initiative, while simultaneously providing a credible economic alternative to the PRC.

²⁵² Felix Kim, “Quad Partners Push Supply Chain Resilience,” *Indo-Pacific Defense Forum*, April 13, 2021, <https://ipdefenseforum.com/2021/04/quad-partners-push-supply-chain-resilience/>.

²⁵³ Amitendu Palit, “Resilient Supply Chain Initiative: A Political Driver to Revive Asian Regional Growth,” *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* (January 30, 2021), <https://gja.georgetown.edu/2021/01/30/resilient-supply-chain-initiative-a-political-driver-to-revive-asian-regional-growth/>.

²⁵⁴ Australian Government, “Funding for Businesses to Invest in Capabilities to Address Supply Chain Vulnerabilities,” Business, last modified February 25, 2022. <https://business.gov.au/grants-and-programs/supply-chain-resilience-initiative>.

The changing economic power within the Indo-Pacific region has created an opportunity to strengthen the Quad by providing a credible alternative to the PRC's coercive use of its economic IOP. The Quad should establish an Economic and Development Forum to conceive, coordinate, and execute the partnership's collective economic activities. Involvement in the forum could be based upon a flexible participation structure, similar to the U.S.'s Indo-Pacific Economic Framework.²⁵⁵ Members should have to agree to the partnership's overarching principles as illustrated earlier in Table 2, but individually determine their nation-state's level of participation in the forum's three components: infrastructure, supply chain, and telecommunications.

The principal component of the Economic and Development Forum should focus on operationalizing the BDN as a credible alternative to the BRI. By implementing the OECD's proposed global certification framework for the BDN, the forum could provide reassurance to private-sector investors that the identified public infrastructure projects are sustainable and align with current international development standards and norms.²⁵⁶ The telecommunications investment and development component could use Open RAN and the Trilateral Infrastructure Partnership as a basis for collective action on 5G and subsea cables. Through a collaboration of the public and private sectors, the forum could achieve diversification and dispersal of capabilities that should increase network security, improve developing nation-state access to emerging technology, and energize the region's economic development. Finally, the supply chain component should expand the

²⁵⁵ Williams, Manyin, and Fefer, *Biden Administration Plans for an Indo-Pacific Economic Framework*.

²⁵⁶ OECD, *The Blue Dot Network*.

SCRI's incentives programs to a greater number of nation-states by creating a reciprocation structure that increases funding opportunities while reducing barriers to entry for potential investors. Only active participation in a component should allow access to the associated economic incentives. With the establishment of an Economic and Development Forum to unify the partnership's economic activities, the Quad could deliver a credible alternative to the PRC's coercive economic activities in the Indo-Pacific region, especially for the developing economies within the First island Chain.

Validity

Table 6. Validity Evaluation of the Economic and Development SA					
Nation-states	Shared...	Feasible	Acceptable	Suitable	Evaluation
Australia	Value	Yes	Yes	Yes	Valid
India		Yes	Yes	Yes	Valid
Japan		Yes	Yes	Yes	Valid
U.S.		Yes	Yes	Yes	Valid
Philippines	Norms	Yes	Yes	Yes	Valid
South Korea		Yes	Yes	Yes	Valid
Vietnam		Yes	Yes	Yes	Valid

Source: Created by author.

Shared Values (Quad)

The Quad's core members presently participate in several international organizations and agreements focused on economic and infrastructure development, such as BDN, OECD, and SCRI. Additionally, these nation-states have existing mechanisms that facilitate and incentivize public-private partnerships, e.g., the Public Private

Partnership Cell in India's Department of Economic Affairs.²⁵⁷ Therefore, this SA is feasible for the Quad. Each core member nation-state has a predominately negative public opinion of the PRC's coercive behavior in applying Chinese economic power.²⁵⁸ Furthermore, the 2021 Quad Leaders' Summits established coordination and working groups to advance cooperation in each of the forum's proposed component areas. The Economic and Development Forum is strategically acceptable, as a result. India's economic freedom rating relative to the components; low quality domestic infrastructure, especially with respect to power and transportation; and poor infrastructure project performance endangered this SA's suitability.²⁵⁹ By altering the evaluation perspective from India as an investor to India as a recipient of investment, the SA becomes suitable as a mechanism to rectify the nation-state's infrastructure quality and project

²⁵⁷ Department of Economic Affairs, PPC, Infrastructure Division, "Public Private Partnerships in India," Pppinindia.gov.in, accessed April 6, 2022, <https://www.pppinindia.gov.in/>.

²⁵⁸ The White House Briefing Room, "Fact Sheet: Quad Leaders' Summit,"; William A. Galston, "A Momentous Shift in U.S. Public Attitudes toward China," *Order from Chaos* (blog), *The Brookings Institution*, March 22, 2021, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2021/03/22/a-momentous-shift-in-us-public-attitudes-toward-china/>; Laura Silver, Kat Devlin, and Christine Huang, *China's Economic Growth Welcomed in Emerging Markets, but Neighbors Wary of Its Influence* (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, December 5, 2019), <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2019/12/05/chinas-economic-growth-mostly-welcomed-in-emerging-markets-but-neighbors-wary-of-its-influence/>.

²⁵⁹ Heritage Foundation, "Indian Economy: Population, Facts, GDP, Corruption, Business, Trade, FDI," 2022 Index of Economic Freedom, accessed April 6, 2022, [//www.heritage.org/index/country/india](http://www.heritage.org/index/country/india); Abhishek Dangra, "The Missing Piece in India's Economic Growth Story: Robust Infrastructure," S&P Global, August 2, 2016, <https://www.spglobal.com/en/research-insights/articles/the-missing-piece-in-indias-economic-growth-story-robust-infrastructure>; Derek Scissors, "Indian Infrastructure Insanity," American Enterprise Institute, February 2, 2021, <https://www.aei.org/foreign-and-defense-policy/indian-infrastructure-insanity/>.

performance.²⁶⁰ This change in perspective in addition to the statements made by the Quad’s leadership support this SA being evaluated as suitable for the partnership’s core members. The establishment of an Economic and Development Forum will facilitate coordinated action of the partnership in critical areas for the region, thus strengthening the Quad’s credibility and mitigating the PRC’s coercive activities. As a result, this SA is valid for the Quad’s core members.

Shared Norms (Quad Plus)

The Philippines, South Korea, and Vietnam – nation-states representative of potential Quad Plus members within the First Island Chain – participate in multiple international community initiatives concerning economic and infrastructure development, including coordinating with the Quad concerning COVID-19 supply chain issues.²⁶¹ South Korea’s economic power and infrastructure development capabilities, especially 5G, could provide considerable means to the forum.²⁶² The Philippines and Vietnam could contribute moderate economic power, but are more likely to be recipients of

²⁶⁰ Jagannath P. Panda, “India, the Blue Dot Network, and the ‘Quad Plus’ Calculus,” *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs* 3, no. 3 (2020), <https://media.defense.gov/2020/Aug/31/2002488095/-1/-1/1/VOLUME%2003%20ISSUE%2003%20-%20FALL%202020.PDF/VOLUME%2003%20ISSUE%2003%20-%20FALL%202020.PDF>.

²⁶¹ Panda, “Making ‘Quad Plus’ a Reality.”

²⁶² Jiyoung Sohn, “What Can Consumers and Businesses Do With 5G? Take a Look at South Korea - WSJ,” *The Wall Street Journal*, March 10, 2022, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/what-consumers-business-do-5g-south-korea-success-11646854941>.

foreign direct investment.²⁶³ Overall, the SA is feasible for each nation-state in differing participation categories.

The Economic and Development Forum is acceptable and suitable for South Korea and Vietnam due to existing support of similar multilateral initiatives and increasing collaborative efforts with the Quad's core members on comparable activities. The Philippines' political acceptability and suitability are questionable due to the current administration's continued willingness to accept Chinese investment on unfavorable terms. The nation-state's leadership, however, has called for a "decisive transformation of multilateralism to address the gaps in multilateral developmental processes and the long-ignored vulnerabilities of developing countries."²⁶⁴ The proposed structure of the Economic and Development Forum should move toward achieving this objective for the Philippines government; as such, the SA is acceptable and suitable to the Philippines. Additionally, the Philippines's and Vietnam's positive acceptability and suitability evaluations are reinforced by the potential infrastructure improvements for each nation-

²⁶³ Brandirectory, "Global Soft Power Index 2022," Brand Finance, accessed April 7, 2022, <https://brandirectory.com/softpower/nation?country=83&rRegion=1&rCountry=0>; Aaron J. Rabena, "The Belt and Road Initiative and the Philippines' Post-Duterte China Challenge," Fulcrum, March 25, 2022, <https://fulcrum.sg/the-belt-and-road-initiative-and-the-philippines-post-duterte-china-challenge/>; Zachary Abuza and Phuong Vu, "Vietnam's Hidden Debts to China Expose Its Political Risks," *The Diplomat*, October 8, 2021, <https://thediplomat.com/2021/10/vietnams-hidden-debts-to-china-expose-its-political-risks/>.

²⁶⁴ Joyce Ann L. Rocamora, "PH Bats for 'New Multilateralism', Inclusive World Economy," *Philippine News Agency*, October 6, 2021, <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1155725>.

state, increase of foreign direct investment into local economies, and provision of a desired alternative to the PRC's predatory lending practices.²⁶⁵

Regional support for and participation in the Quad's Economic and Development Forum result in a valid assessment at this tier of the Quad framework. Although there are areas of concern and potential shortfalls with this SA for each potential Quad Plus member, the flexibility provided by the participation structure and anticipated regional economic benefits should strengthen the partnership as an international actor within the First Island Chain. Credible alternatives to the PRC's revisionist economic initiatives are likely to be provided by the forum's three paralleling components, thus counterbalancing the PRC's illiberal activities in the region. Ultimately, this SA is unlikely to negate the PRC's growing relative economic power, but the Quad could effectively offset the coercive economic influence of the PRC within the First Island Chain.

SA4: Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Organization

Overview

The Indo-Pacific region suffers from multiple enduring conflicts, long-term environmental crises, and unanticipated natural disasters, including the COVID-19 pandemic. More than three-quarters of the global population in need of humanitarian assistance resides within this region.²⁶⁶ Approximately 4.4 million of the region's

²⁶⁵ Silver, Devlin, and Huang, *China's Economic Growth Welcomed in Emerging Markets, but Neighbors Wary of Its Influence*.

²⁶⁶ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *Global Humanitarian Overview 2022* (New York, NY: United Nations, December 2, 2021), 79–82,

inhabitants are refugees in addition to 3.7 million internally displaced people; both of these populations reflect long-term situations in need of relief. Between 2015 and 2109, natural disasters, such as earthquakes and tsunamis, caused more than \$286 billion in economic damage. Climate change's long-term intensification of heat waves, droughts, floods, and tropical cyclones will have incalculable economic implications on region's agriculture, commercial fishing, and maritime commerce dependence. Compounding each of these concerns is the erosion of available means and the populace's resilience due to the ongoing global pandemic. To combat the Indo-Pacific region's growing humanitarian assistance needs, additional resources must be developed in conjunction with an expansion of international community accessibility and coordination.

The Quad represents a possibility for a broad range of leading international community members and smaller nation-states to collaborate on the Indo-Pacific region's HADR requirements. The genesis of the Quad was a coordinated response by the four core member nation-states to a natural disaster in the Indo-Pacific region almost two decades ago. The Quad's reemergence as an enduring partnership between like-minded partners has been propelled by the group's collective response to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Recently, the ongoing Russia-Ukraine War was a catalyst for the Quad's establishment of a "new HADR mechanism" to enable communication and coordination on "future humanitarian challenges."²⁶⁷ The Quad's history and ongoing humanitarian assistance efforts throughout the region represent an opportunity to collectively improve

<https://www.unocha.org/sites/unocha/files/Global%20Humanitarian%20Overview%202022.pdf>.

²⁶⁷ The White House, "Joint Readout of Quad Leaders Call."

the well-being of the region’s population, strengthen the Quad as an inclusive and equitable partnership, and provide an alternative to the PRC’s coercive activities.

The establishment of an HADR Organization by the Quad should facilitate centralizing strategic-level collaboration, inclusive coordination among regional community actors, and accelerating crisis response through decentralized and localized leadership.²⁶⁸ The organization could serve as the Quad’s mechanism to consolidate capabilities, standardize response procedures, cultivate sources for emergency financing and supplies, manage global communication and information, and develop localized expertise.

Instead of employing the classic cluster-based structure, the organization should approach HADR through an area-based coordination model as recommend by the Center for Global Development.²⁶⁹ Area-based coordination prioritizes engagement of regional actors and local leaders concerning anticipated needs and capacity to receive assistance during contingency planning, crisis response execution, and follow-on assessments. Additionally, area-based coordination integrates multiple technical sectors to increase

²⁶⁸ Abbott and Snidal, “Why States Act through Formal International Organizations,” 3-32; Patrick Saez, Jeremy Konyndyk, and Rose Worden. “Rethinking Humanitarian Reform: What Will It Take to Truly Change the System?” (CGD Brief, Center for Global Development, Washington, DC, September 2021), <https://www.cgdev.org/publication/rethinking-humanitarian-reform-what-will-it-take-truly-change-system>.

²⁶⁹ Jeremy Konyndyk, Patrick Saez, and Rose Worden, *Inclusive Coordination: Building an Area-Based Humanitarian Coordination Model* (Washington, DC: Center for Global Development, October 13, 2020), <https://www.cgdev.org/publication/inclusive-coordination-building-area-based-humanitarian-coordination-model>.

effectiveness, e.g., aligning the application of resources from food security and hygiene focused aid agencies, similar to U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

The permanency of the HADR Organization could serve to develop enduring relationships with the international and regional community actors. Strong, friendly relations combined with centralized capabilities should expedite the organization's ability to respond to emergency situations. Following deployment in response to an HADR situation, the organization's area-based structure should allow local leaders to guide the response enabled by the organization's on-site capabilities operating in a decentralized team construct. By prioritizing the holistic requirements of local leaders and employing a hybrid structure of centralized oversight-decentralized execution, the Quad's creation of an HADR Organization is likely to improve the partnership's credibility by acting for the region's common good, thus increasing regional appeal.

Studies by the Center for Global Development and the organizational structures of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), USAID, and World Health Organization should inform the creation of a similar capability by the Quad.²⁷⁰ The Quad's HADR Organization should consist of executive leadership and

²⁷⁰ Saez, Konyndyk, and Worden, "Rethinking Humanitarian Reform," "About Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)," United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, accessed April 10, 2022, <https://www.unocha.org/node>; "Coordination Structure," United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, accessed April 10, 2022, <http://www.ochaopt.org/coordination/coordination-structure>; "Who We Are," U.S. Agency for International Development, October 4, 2019, <https://www.usaid.gov/who-we-are>; Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance, Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, *Field Operations Guide for Disaster Assessment and Response* (Washington, DC: U.S. Agency for International Development, September 2005), https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/fog_v4_0.pdf; "USAID Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance," (Fact Sheet, U.S. Agency for International

three principal departments: administrative affairs, operations coordination, and emergency preparation and response as illustrated in Figure 10.

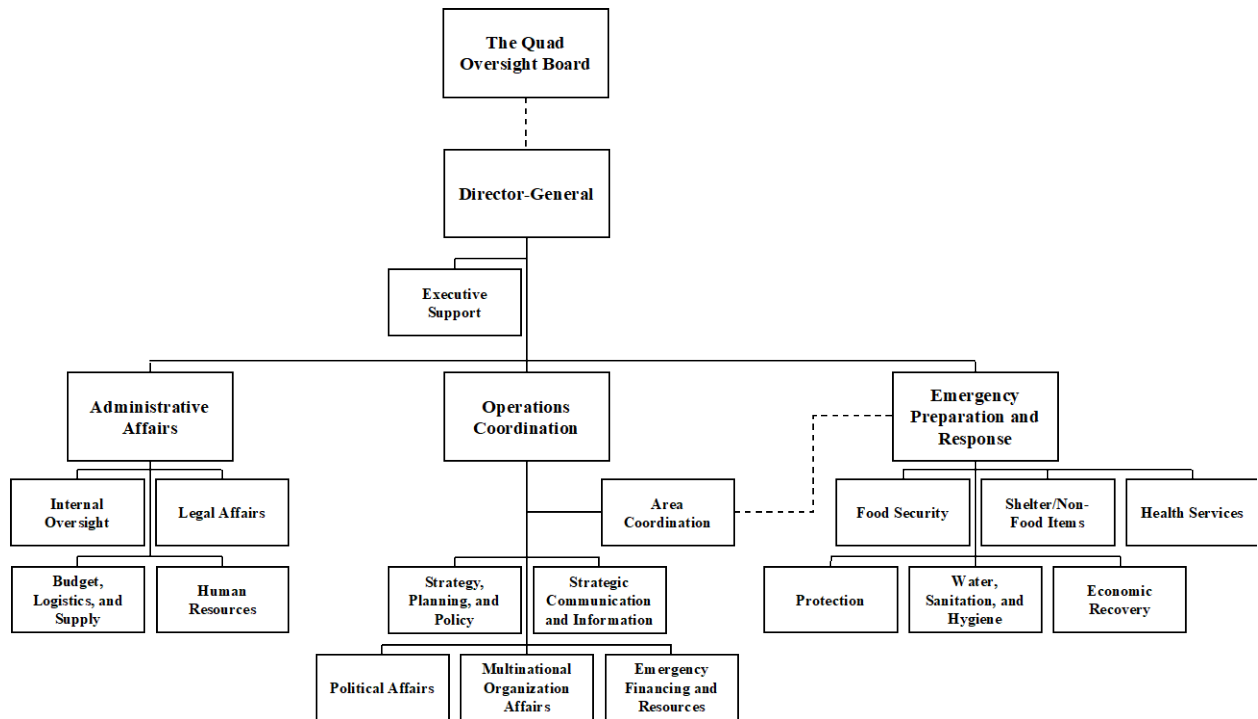


Figure 10. Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Organization’s Structure

Source: Created by author.

A Director-General assisted by a Deputy Director-General, from two different member nation-states, should lead the organization on rotating three-year basis.²⁷¹ The Director-

Development, Washington, DC), accessed April 11, 2022, https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/OFDA_Fact_Sheet.pdf; “About WHO,” World Health Organization, accessed April 10, 2022, <https://www.who.int/about>.

²⁷¹ Buchan and Rimland, “Defining the Diamond,” 6; Abbott and Snidal, “Why States Act through Formal International Organizations,” 3-32.

General should be responsible for developing procedures to convene and govern organizational meetings, provide overarching guidance during emergencies, and supervise resourcing for the organization, including financing. The administrative affairs department should oversee daily operations, including the organization's internal personnel and logistical requirements. The organization's long-term planning, international community relations, and strategic level coordination for emergency responses, including with other aid agencies and multinational corporations, should be led by the operations coordination department. Area coordinators within the operations coordination department should focus on building relationships with regional organizations and communities to increase localized leadership of crisis situations. The emergency preparation and response department should serve as the deployable mechanism of the organization. Multilateral training events and on-scene coordination in response to an international emergency, similar to USAID's disaster assistance response teams, should be actioned by the emergency preparation and response department personnel in conjunction with the area coordinators. An oversight board should be established by the Quad with participation from all interested parties, including non-members. The oversight board should ensure that all potential client nation-states receive equitable input into the organization's mission, priorities, and effectiveness assessments.

Validity

Table 7. Validity Evaluation of the HADR Organization SA					
Nation-states	Shared...	Feasible	Acceptable	Suitable	Evaluation
Australia	Values	Yes	Yes	Yes	Valid
India		Yes	Yes	Yes	Valid
Japan		Yes	Yes	Yes	Valid
U.S.		Yes	Yes	Yes	Valid
Philippines	Norms	Yes	Yes	Yes	Valid
South Korea		Yes	Yes	Yes	Valid
Vietnam		Yes	Yes	Yes	Valid

Source: Created by author.

Shared Values (Quad)

The Quad’s core member nation-states have a long history of participating in unilateral and multilateral HADR activities as aid donors and recipients, such as USAID’s 2020 assistance during Australia’s widespread wildfires or India’s delivery of COVID-19 vaccines to Afghanistan earlier this year.²⁷² Therefore, this SA is feasible for each of the four nation-states. The rise of nationalism, especially in India and the U.S., and the tendency of donor nation-states to focus domestically appeared to jeopardize this SA’s acceptability at first.²⁷³ Upon further research and analysis, however, the

²⁷² “Australia,” U.S. Agency for International Development, last modified June 16, 2020, <https://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/australia>; Government of India. “India Supplies next Batch of Humanitarian Assistance to Afghanistan.” Ministry of External Affairs, January 1, 2022. <https://mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/34737/India+supplies+next+batch+of+humanitarian+assistance+to+Afghanistan>.

²⁷³ Manjari C. Miller and Vidhu P. Mukundan, “The Politics of Foreign Aid in India,” *Hindustan Times*, June 20, 2021, <https://www.hindustantimes.com/opinion/the-politics-of-foreign-aid-in-india-101624200153853.html>; Steven Kull, “American Public

international community's collective response to the COVID-19 pandemic is illustrative of the political and public support for HADR activities despite domestic views, which is supported by polling.²⁷⁴ Thus, the Quad's creation of an HADR Organization is acceptable. Finally, the increasingly complex HADR needs of the Indo-Pacific region require the Quad's core members to build a broad, multilateral network of nation-states capable of responding to a future crisis, especially as the cost of resources continues to grow.²⁷⁵ The Quad has already prioritized the creation of a "new HADR mechanism," which is likely to advance each nation-state's independent interests in this area.²⁷⁶

Support for Foreign Aid in the Age of Trump" (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, July 31, 2017), <https://www.brookings.edu/research/american-public-support-for-foreign-aid-in-the-age-of-trump/>; Yoshiharu Kobayashi, Tobias Heinrich, and Kristin A. Bryant, "Public Support for Development Aid during the COVID-19 Pandemic," *World Development* 138 (February 2021), <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7577681/>.

²⁷⁴ Dina Smeltz, Ivo H. Daalder, Karl Friedhoff, Craig Kafura, and Brendan Helm, *Divided We Stand: Democrats and Republicans Diverge on U.S. Foreign Policy*, Results of the 2020 Chicago Council Survey of American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy (Chicago, IL: The Chicago Council on Global Affairs, September 17, 2020), <https://www.thechicagocouncil.org/research/public-opinion-survey/2020-chicago-council-survey>; "POLL: Ahead of UNGA, Americans Want UN to Provide Humanitarian Support in Afghanistan, Lead the Global COVID-19 Response," Better World Campaign, September 17, 2021, <https://betterworldcampaign.org/press-release/poll-unga-humanitarian-support-afghanistan-covid>.

²⁷⁵ Teagan Westendorf, "Turbulent Times Ahead for Australian Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief," *The Strategist*, October 27, 2021, <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/turbulent-times-ahead-for-australian-humanitarian-assistance-and-disaster-relief/>.

²⁷⁶ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), "Japan's Fragility, Crises and Humanitarian Assistance," in *OECD Development Co-operation Peer Reviews: Japan 2020* (Paris, France: OECD, October 12, 2020), 91-103, https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/development/oecd-development-co-operation-peer-reviews-japan-2020_2e5938a6-en; Vanessa Newby, "ANZUS Cooperation in Humanitarian Assistance And Disaster Response in The Asia-Pacific: Ships in The Night?," Australian Institute of International Affairs, February 5, 2020,

Additionally, research shows that active engagement by the HADR Organization in the Indo-Pacific region will increase the Quad's positive perception, thereby improving the Quad's credibility and overall strength as an international community actor.²⁷⁷ Due to the alignment with core member interests and ability to strengthen the group's ability to collectively act during a crisis, the establishment of an HADR Organization by the Quad is suitable. Collectively, the formation of a standing HADR Organization by the Quad, similar to the UN's OCHA and USAID, is a valid SA for the core members of the partnership.

Shared Norms (Quad Plus)

The three potential Quad Plus members within the First Island Chain – the Philippines, South Korea, and Vietnam – have previously participated in bilateral and multilateral HADR activities as aid donors, recipients, and distributors. The Philippines and Vietnam are primarily recipients and distributors of foreign aid, e.g., the 2022 international response to Super Typhoon Rai in the Philippines and Vietnam's record floods in 2020.²⁷⁸ However, the two nation-states routinely conduct multilateral HADR

<https://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/anzus-cooperation-in-humanitarian-assistance-and-disaster-response-in-the-asia-pacific-ships-in-the-night/>; Saneet Chakradeo, *Neighbourhood First Responder: India's Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief* (New Delhi: Brookings Institution India Center, August 18, 2020), <https://www.brookings.edu/research/neighbourhood-first-responder-indias-humanitarian-assistance-and-disaster-relief/>.

²⁷⁷ Richard Wike, "Does Humanitarian Aid Improve America's Image?" Pew Research Center, March 6, 2012, <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2012/03/06/does-humanitarian-aid-improve-americas-image/>.

²⁷⁸ "Philippines: Humanitarian Assistance," U.S. Agency for International Development, January 6, 2020, <https://www.usaid.gov/philippines/humanitarian-assistance>; "The Philippines," United Nations Office for the Coordination of

exercises with core members of the Quad that represent an opportunity to contribute to the First Island Chain's overall readiness for future crises²⁷⁹ South Korea, in comparison, is a significant donor of foreign aid. In 2019, South Korea donated \$2 billion in global development assistance with \$1 billion going to nation-states in Asia and more than \$500 million going to the African continent.²⁸⁰ In response to the Russia-Ukraine War, South Korea recently pledged \$10 million in emergency relief to the growing refugee crisis.²⁸¹ Therefore, this SA is feasible for all three of the potential Quad Plus members.

Humanitarian Affairs, last modified March 18, 2022, <https://www.unocha.org/philippines>; "Vietnam," U.S. Agency for International Development, last modified August 13, 2021, <https://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/vietnam>; United Nations, "Launch of Viet Nam Response Plan Calling for U.S.\$40 Million to Provide Humanitarian Aid Following Historic Floods in Central Provinces," United Nations Viet Nam, November 4, 2020, <https://vietnam.un.org/en/98959-launch-viet-nam-response-plan-calling-us40-million-provide-humanitarian-aid-following>, <https://vietnam.un.org/en/98959-launch-viet-nam-response-plan-calling-us40-million-provide-humanitarian-aid-following>.

²⁷⁹ "India, Vietnam Conclude Two-Day Naval Exercise in South China Sea," *The Economic Times*, December 27, 2020, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/india-vietnam-concludes-two-day-naval-exercise-in-south-china-sea/articleshow/79978759.cms?from=mdr>; Priam Nepomuceno, "PH, Japan Hold 5-Day Joint Disaster Response Exercises," *Philippine News Agency*, November 16, 2021, <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1159868>; "U.S., Philippines Kick off Their Largest-Ever Military Drills," *Al Jazeera*, March 28, 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/28/us-philippines-kick-off-their-largest-ever-war-games>.

²⁸⁰ John Egan and Santhosh Persaud, "From Emerging Donor to Global Development Partner," Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, October 25, 2021, <https://www.oecd.org/country/korea/thematic-focus/from-emerging-donor-to-global-development-partner-66044045/>.

²⁸¹ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Korea to Provide Humanitarian Assistance to People of Ukraine," ReliefWeb, February 28, 2022, <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/korea-provide-humanitarian-assistance-people-ukraine>.

International community cooperation on HADR activities has domestic support in all three representative nation-states. In South Korea, the nation-state's previous reliance on foreign aid has cultivated a strong desire within the populace to provide similar assistance to other, less prosperous regional and international community members; thus, participation in the Quad's HADR is acceptable to South Korea.²⁸² The Philippines and Vietnam have a regular need for foreign assistance due to their economic development and environmental factors. As a result, both nation-states have a high level of domestic support for the Quad strengthening its partnership via HADR activities, such as COVID-19 vaccine security.²⁸³ Although the three nation-states have different perspectives on HADR due to their economic power and environmental threats, the Quad's creation of an HADR Organization is acceptable.

South Korea and Vietnam have created high-level government offices – South Korea's Office for International Development Cooperation and the Vietnam Disaster Management Authority – to coordinate their respective nation-state's foreign and domestic HADR activities. Additionally, the two nation-states were involved in the Quad Plus meetings held earlier this year concerning the global COVID-19 response.²⁸⁴ The Philippines' extensive domestic requirements for foreign-supported HADR operations compel the nation-state to align its long-term interests with an inclusive and equitable

²⁸² Eunju Kim and KyungWoo Kim, "Public Perception of Foreign Aid in South Korea: The Effects of Policy Efficacy in an Emerging Donor," *Development Policy Review* 40, no. 3 (July 15, 2021), <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/dpr.12580>.

²⁸³ Seah et al., *The State of Southeast Asia 2022*.

²⁸⁴ Panda, "Making 'Quad Plus' a Reality."

organization, such as the proposed SA. Therefore, the proposed HADR Organization is suitable for the long-term interests of the Philippines, South Korea, and Vietnam.

Participation with the Quad's HADR Organization is a valid SA for the Philippines, South Korea, and Vietnam, thus serves as an opportunity to increase the cooperation and collaboration between the Quad and nation-states within the First Island Chain. The region's need for international community provided HADR is extensive. Beyond the positive impact of helping the region's inhabitants in need, the Quad will directly benefit by altering the perspective within the First Island Chain concerning the partnership's regional intentions. As a result, the regional nation-states could be more likely to align interests with the Quad and, potentially, petition for Quad Plus membership. The establishment of a HADR Organization has the significant potential to strengthen the Quad's appeal and physical presence within the First Island Chain, which could indirectly result in the creation of a regional balance of power that prevents the PRC's regional hegemony.

SA5: Military Alliance

Overview

The PRC's military power projection capabilities have been steadily expanding for more than two decades.²⁸⁵ Conventionally, the PLA has become one of the largest,

²⁸⁵ U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, *2020 Report to Congress of the U.S. China Economic and Security Review Commission*. 116th Cong., 2nd sess, (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Publishing Office, December 2020), 386–387, <https://www.uscc.gov/annual-report/2020-annual-report-congress>.

most technologically advanced military institutions in the international order.²⁸⁶ The PRC has also developed less conventional means of military power projection under the PLA's relaxed control, such as an armed fishing militia known as the People's Armed Force Maritime Militia.²⁸⁷ The PRC's military power projection capabilities are currently strongest within the First Island Chain, which aligns with the CCP's short-term intentions of reinforcing the nation-state's coercive regional influence through force, as required, and dissuading third-party intervention. The CCP's longer-term intentions are for the PLA to be capable of projecting power globally to protect the PRC's "overseas development interests," such as projects associated with the BRI, which was codified in the 2020 revision of the PRC's National Defense Law.

Proponents and opponents alike have increasingly described the Quad's core members as moving toward the creation of a military alliance, a possible "Asian NATO," that could counterbalance the PRC's aggressive use of the nation-state's growing military capabilities.²⁸⁸ The Indo-Pacific region once had an alliance structurally similar to NATO

²⁸⁶ Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China: Annual Report to Congress* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Defense, November 3, 2021), III–XII, <https://media.defense.gov/2021/Nov/03/2002885874/-1/-1/0/2021-CMPR-FINAL.PDF>.

²⁸⁷ Derek Grossman and Logan Ma, "A Short History of China's Fishing Militia and What It May Tell Us," *The RAND Blog* (blog). *Rand Corporation*, April 6, 2020, <https://www.rand.org/blog/2020/04/a-short-history-of-chinas-fishing-militia-and-what.html>.

²⁸⁸ Yun Zhang, "Quad: A Regional Military Alliance to Contain China Will Not Work," *ThinkChina*, March 25, 2021, <http://www.thinkchina.sg/quad-regional-military-alliance-contain-china-will-not-work>; Dominique Varier, "The Quad: An 'Asian NATO?'" *Foreign Affairs Review*, June 23, 2021, <https://jhufar.com/2021/06/23/the-quad-an-asian-nato/>; Stew Magnuson, "The Quad's Potential to Stand Against China," *National Defense*, June 29, 2021, <https://www.nationaldefensemagazine.org/articles/2021/6/29/the-quads-potential-to-stand-against-china>; Matt Geraci, "The Quad Is Not an

in the mid-20th Century called the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO). SEATO was established in 1954 to prevent the spread of communism but lacked a credible existential threat, like the Soviet Union, to drive the member nation-states together for their collective well-being. As a result, SEATO collapsed after 23 years due to deliberately vague commitments and cultural differences between the member nation-states.²⁸⁹

The strategic environment of the Indo-Pacific has significantly changed since SEATO's dissolution, especially within the First Island Chain. Due to the PRC's willingness to use force as a mechanism to coercively influence other international community members, a growing number of nation-states have acquired or are acquiring the means to forcibly resist.²⁹⁰ For example, the Indonesian government has increased the nation-state's defense spending by 20% in each of the last two years.²⁹¹ Additionally, other regional powers are becoming more overt in their willingness to oppose potential

Asian NATO, but Could It Be?," Institute for China-America Studies, May 12, 2021, <https://chinaus-icas.org/research/the-quad-is-not-an-asian-nato-but-could-it-be/>; Vanak, Souders, and del Mazo, "How to Operationalize the Quad."

²⁸⁹ U.S. Department of State, "Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), 1954," Office of the Historian, Foreign Service Institute, accessed September 6, 2021, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/seato>; Ellen Bork, "The Long History of the 'NATO for Asia' Idea," *American Purpose*, October 9, 2020, <https://www.americanpurpose.com/articles/the-long-history-of-the-nato-for-asia-idea/>.

²⁹⁰ Kathrin Hille, "China's Bellicose Behaviour Is the Driver of Tensions in Asian Waters," *Financial Times*, October 12, 2021, <https://www.ft.com/content/fc2d5463-b5bb-4dde-a1ab-f4a4ff04de05>.

²⁹¹ Michael Beckley and Hal Brands, "The End of China's Rise," *Foreign Affairs*, December 9, 2021, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2021-10-01/end-chinas-rise>.

PLA operations, such as Japan conducting military exercises to deter Chinese aggression against Taiwan.²⁹² These activities demonstrate that multiple nation-states are beginning to, if not already do, view the PRC as an existential threat to a “free and open Indo-Pacific region,” thus creating favorable conditions for a military alliance.

The establishment of a military alliance by the Quad is a potential SA. Existing military cooperation amongst the Quad’s core members, such as Exercise MALABAR, provides a credible basis for expansion, or evolution according to Dhruva Jaishankar, into a military alliance focused on the Indo-Pacific region.²⁹³ As the international order’s most credible military alliance, NATO’s establishing treaty and organizational structure could be modeled by the Quad.²⁹⁴ Similar to the North Atlantic Treaty, peaceful resolution of conflict in accordance with the existing international order, such as mediation by the ASEAN, should be prioritized over the use of force.²⁹⁵ The Indo-Pacific treaty, however, should establish mechanisms to ensure the collective defense of the signatories to include a provision similar to the North Atlantic Treaty’s Article 5. The Quad should create a dual political-military organizational structure to oversee the implementation of the alliance. An Indo-Pacific Council, composed of civilian

²⁹² “Japan Making Moves to Deter Chinese Aggression, Panel Says,” *USNI News*, October 5, 2021, <https://news.usni.org/2021/10/05/japan-making-moves-to-deter-chinese-aggression-panel-says>.

²⁹³ Kaushik, “Explained,”; Jaishankar, “The Real Significance of the Quad.”

²⁹⁴ “What Is NATO?” North Atlantic Treaty Organization, accessed April 18, 2022, <https://www.nato.int/nato-welcome/index.html>.

²⁹⁵ “The North Atlantic Treaty,” North Atlantic Treaty Organization, last modified April 10, 2019, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_17120.htm.

representative from the member-states and chaired by a Secretary-General, should be the political decision-making body of the alliance. A standing, integrated military command structure should be established with representatives from all member nation-states to develop cooperation and interoperability procedures. While operational forces should not be permanently maintained, the military command structure should oversee the alliance’s execution of collective defense operations as required. This military alliance architecture should strengthen the Quad’s ability to respond the PRC’s growing military power and represent a credible alternative that regional community members can rely upon as tensions within the First Island Chain increase.

Validity

Table 8. Validity Evaluation of the Military Alliance SA					
Nation-states	Shared...	Feasible	Acceptable	Suitable	Evaluation
Australia	Values	Yes	Yes	No	Invalid
India		Yes	No	No	Invalid
Japan		Yes	Yes	No	Invalid
U.S.		Yes	Yes	No	Invalid

Source: Created by author.

Shared Values (Quad)

Australia, India, Japan, and the U.S. have considerable IOPs that have led to the Quad’s core members ranking as some of the most powerful nation-states in the world.²⁹⁶

²⁹⁶ “The Most Powerful Countries in the World,” *U.S. News and World Report*, accessed April 20, 2022, <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-countries/rankings/power/>; “The ISA 2022 Country Power Rankings,” *International Strategic Analysis*, January 10,

The four nation-states have existing bilateral and multilateral military partnerships to improve cooperation and interoperability that could provide the foundation for the potential alliance or future coalition, as required. Examples include Japan and Australia recently signing the Reciprocal Access Agreement, India and the U.S. agreeing to increase space- and cyberspace-related information sharing in March 2022, and annual participation of all core member militaries in Exercise MALABAR.²⁹⁷ Of potential concern is Japan’s constitutional prohibition of offensive military actions. The Japanese government, however, took steps in 2014 and 2015 to establish the nation-state’s ability to participate in collective self-defense by lifting a self-imposed ban and revising the Armed Attack and Existential Crisis Situations Act.²⁹⁸ Therefore, the Quad’s core members possess the means to develop a military alliance, which makes this SA feasible.

The acceptability of this SA is difficult to assess due to the complexities involved attaining and maintaining domestic support for military activities in each of the core member nation-states. Eighty-nine percent of Americans consider the PRC a competitor

2022, https://www.isa-world.com/news/?tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=595&cHash=d37d2e848d6b79811749a619c74abebc.

²⁹⁷ Tan Ming Hui, “Japan and Australia Ties Blossom,” *The Interpreter*, January 11, 2022, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/japan-and-australia-ties-blossom>; Jim Garamone, “U.S., India Take Steps to Increase Cooperation, Ties Between 2 Largest Democracies,” U.S. Department of Defense, April 11, 2022, <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/2996395/us-india-take-steps-to-increase-cooperation-ties-between-2-largest-democracies/>; Kaushik, “Explained.”

²⁹⁸ Masahiro Kurosaki, “Japan’s Evolving Position on the Use of Force in Collective Self-Defense,” *Lawfare* (blog), August 23, 2018, <https://www.lawfareblog.com/japans-evolving-position-use-force-collective-self-defense>.

or enemy with 67% seeing the PLA as a critical threat to U.S. vital interests.²⁹⁹ The U.S. government has prioritized strengthening the nation-state's deterrence of the pacing threat presented by the PRC, especially through ally and partner nation-state integration.³⁰⁰ Therefore, establishing an Indo-Pacific region military alliance is acceptable to the U.S.

Polling data for Australia raises potential concerns for domestic support of a military alliance. For example, only 41% of Australians support upholding the nation-state's current "common danger" military alliance with the U.S. should war occur with the PRC.³⁰¹ However, 84% of Australians believe the PRC acts irresponsibly as a member of the international community with 63% viewing the PRC as a security threat. Additionally, 88% of Australians support the use of the Quad to ensure peace and security in the Indo-Pacific region; thus, the establishment of a military alliance is acceptable to Australia.

In Japan, the PRC is viewed as a threat by 80% of the population with 74% support the nation-state's commitment to maintaining regional security.³⁰² The Japanese

²⁹⁹ Laura Silver, Kat Devlin, and Christine Huang, *Most Americans Support Tough Stance Toward China on Human Rights, Economic Issues* (Washington, DC: Pew Research Center, March 4, 2021), <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2021/03/04/most-americans-support-tough-stance-toward-china-on-human-rights-economic-issues/>; Jeffrey M. Jones, "Terrorism, Nuclear Weapons, China Viewed as Top U.S. Threats," Gallup, Inc., March 7, 2022, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/390494/terrorism-nuclear-weapons-china-viewed-top-threats.aspx>.

³⁰⁰ U.S. Department of Defense, "Fact Sheet: 2022 National Defense Strategy," (Washington, DC, March 28, 2022), <https://media.defense.gov/2022/Mar/28/2002964702/-1/-1/1/NDS-FACT-SHEET.PDF>.

³⁰¹ Lowy Institute, "Security and Defence," Lowy Institute Poll 2021, accessed April 18, 2022, <https://poll.lowyinstitute.org/themes/security-and-defence>.

³⁰² Yoichi Kato, "How Should Taiwan, Japan, and the United States Cooperate Better on Defense of Taiwan?" *Order from Chaos* (blog), *The Brookings Institution*,

government is actively taking actions to strengthen the nation-state's military cooperation throughout the Indo-Pacific, e.g., the Reciprocal Access Agreement with Australia and ongoing negotiations with the Philippines for a similar treaty.³⁰³ As a result, a Quad military alliance is acceptable to Japan.

India's rising international community presence, shift from non-alignment to strategic autonomy, and border clashes with the PRC have permitted increased support for cooperation with foreign militaries.³⁰⁴ However, the desire to maintain strategic autonomy coupled with the perception of NATO's withdrawal from Afghanistan cause this SA to be unacceptable for India.³⁰⁵

The Quad's core members have developed alternative military cooperation agreements and partnerships that achieve objectives similar, but not equal, to a quadrilateral military alliance. The Quad has deliberately focused the partnership on employing their collective diplomatic and economic power, while avoiding mention of

October 27, 2021, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2021/10/27/how-should-taiwan-japan-and-the-united-states-cooperate-better-on-defense-of-taiwan/>.

³⁰³ Hui, "Japan and Australia Ties Blossom,"; "Japan, Philippines to Aim for New Defense Cooperation Pact," *Nikkei Asia*, April 9, 2022, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Indo-Pacific/Japan-Philippines-to-aim-for-new-defense-cooperation-pact>.

³⁰⁴ Sanjay Pulipaka and Mohit Mussaddi, "India and the Quad: Moving beyond Rhetoric," *Asia Times*, October 15, 2021, <https://asiatimes.com/2021/10/india-and-the-quad-moving-beyond-rhetoric/>; Jeff M. Smith, "Strategic Autonomy and U.S.-Indian Relations," *War on the Rocks*, November 6, 2020, <http://warontherocks.com/2020/11/strategic-autonomy-and-u-s-indian-relations/>.

³⁰⁵ "What the Taliban Takeover of Afghanistan Means for India and Pakistan," *The Economist*, August 21, 2021, <https://www.economist.com/asia/2021/08/21/what-the-taliban-takeover-of-afghanistan-means-for-india-and-pakistan>.

the group's collective military capabilities. This has been reinforced by high-ranking U.S. Department of State and Indian Ministry of External Affairs officials publicly stating that the Quad's creation of a military alliance does not align with the strategic interests of the core members.³⁰⁶ By separating the core member's collective military IOP from the Quad, the four nation-states increase the partnership's direct and indirect mechanisms to influence the international community and mitigate the PRC's containment narrative. The establishment of a military alliance by the Quad is not suitable and, therefore, an invalid SA despite the expanding bilateral and multilateral military cooperation between the core member nation-states.

Shared Norms (Quad Plus)

Due to this SA being determined as invalid for the core members, validity was not assessed for the Quad Plus tier of the partnership.

Alternative Course of Action and Considerations for Re-evaluation

Regardless of the Quad's efforts to avoid portrayal of the partnership as a military alliance, the PRC will continue to identify the Quad as an "Asian NATO" designed to contain Chinese civilization's reemergence within the international community.³⁰⁷ The

³⁰⁶ Sriram Lakshman, "The Quad Is Not a Security Alliance: U.S. State Department," *The Hindu*, February 9, 2022, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/the-quad-is-not-a-security-alliance-us-state-department/article38403799.ece>; Dipanjan Roy Chaudhury, "To Smoothen Ruffled Feathers in Asia, India Terms QUAD a Non-Military Alliance," *The Economic Times*, September 22, 2021, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/to-smoothen-ruffled-feathers-in-asia-india-terms-quad-a-non-military-alliance/articleshow/86415597.cms?from=mdr>.

³⁰⁷ Varier, "The Quad."

Quad, however, can continue to gain credibility with multiple First Island Chain nation-states, and throughout the Indo-Pacific region, by maintaining the partnership's separation from the core members' expanding military cooperation. As previously stated, the current bilateral and multilateral military partnerships, to include regular training exercises, are improving the group's cooperation, interoperability, and capability to act collectively should an ad hoc coalition be required. The core members should continue to build cooperation among the nation-states' military institutions, while increasing the involvement of additional First Island Chain nation-states. This approach will increase the group's credibility to collectively combat the PRC's growing military power, if necessary.

The future strategic environment may allow, if not necessitate, the Quad's integration of a collective military IOP. Three changes in the strategic environment may indicate that the Quad should re-evaluate the strategic validity of a military alliance. First, the PLA's occupation of Taiwan, either peacefully or by force, necessitates a re-evaluation as the PRC's will control key terrain along the First Island Chain. Second, a re-evaluation should be considered if the PRC imitates Russia's revisionist actions by attempting to forcefully redefine the territorial sovereignty of a neighboring nation-state within the First Island Chain. Finally, a change in India's reliance on Russian military support may warrant a re-evaluation of the military alliance SA. Military planners and advisors should continually assess each of these considerations to determine if this SA merits a strategic validity re-evaluation.

SA6: Shared Interest Cooperation with the Quad (Observer)

Overview

When the Quad partnership reemerged in 2017, the PRC's Foreign Minister Wang Yi stated that “[the Quad is] like the sea foam in the Pacific or Indian Ocean: they get some attention but will soon dissipate,”³⁰⁸ the PRC's tone regarding the Quad has since changed. In October 2020, Wang implied that the Quad desired “to trumpet the Cold War mentality and to stir up confrontation among different groups and blocs and to stoke geopolitical competition.”³⁰⁹ Xi made a similar allusion in May 2021 by denouncing “multilateralism as a pretext to form small cliques or stir up ideological confrontation.”³¹⁰ The PRC's current perspective is that the Quad is an exclusive “alliance to contain China” and prevent the Chinese civilization's reemergence as a Great Power within the international community.³¹¹ This narrative exploits regional community members' aversion to being positioned between the competing powers.³¹²

³⁰⁸ Kevin Rudd, “Why the Quad Alarms China,” *Foreign Affairs*, August 6, 2021, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-08-06/why-quad-alarms-china>.

³⁰⁹ Gilbert Rozman, “The Quad: Contrasting Chinese and U.S. Perceptions,” *The Asan Forum* (June 11, 2021), <https://theasanforum.org/the-quad-contrasting-chinese-and-us-perceptions/>.

³¹⁰ Rudd, “Why the Quad Alarms China.”

³¹¹ “Jaishankar Dismisses China's Opposition to Quad; Says It Will Do ‘Positive Things’, Contribute to Prosperity and Stability of Indo-Pacific,” *The Economic Times*, February 14, 2022, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/jaishankar-dismisses-chinas-opposition-to-quad-says-it-will-do-positive-things-contribute-to-prosperity-and-stability-of-indo-pacific/articleshow/89519811.cms?from=mdr>.

³¹² Le Thu, *Southeast Asian Perceptions of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue*.

The Quad’s leadership have avoided mentioning the PRC in joint statements and official documents to mitigate the appearance of the partnership being “anti-China.”³¹³ However, it is necessary for the Quad to employ a more deliberate SA to counter the PRC’s narrative and appeal to opposing perspectives within the First Island Chain, thus increasing the partnership’s strength through inclusiveness. By embracing Lohman’s dialogue approach and applying Akita’s flexible organizational structure, the Quad and the PRC could maintain an open conversational pathway concerning shared interests with the intention of reducing tension due to miscommunication and misunderstanding.³¹⁴ This SA should directly counter the “exclusive,” “anti-China,” and “escalatory” messaging by offering the PRC “a seat in the boardroom” with the intent of identifying “concrete ways to work together.”³¹⁵

The establishment of an observer status as part of the Quad’s organizational structure could allow external international community actors to participate in discussions concerning the partnership’s objectives and coordinate activities in areas of shared interest. Observers should not be allowed to put forth proposals for collective action, unless invited to do so, and should not be allowed to vote on the partnership’s initiatives. The UN, ASEAN, and WTO have similar categorizations for non-members that could

³¹³ Derek Grossman, “The Quad Is Poised to Become Openly Anti-China Soon,” *The RAND Blog* (blog), *Rand Corporation*, July 28, 2020, <https://www.rand.org/blog/2020/07/the-quad-is-poised-to-become-openly-anti-china-soon.html>.

³¹⁴ Akita, “Integrating the Quad into Other Regional Organizations.”

³¹⁵ Graham Allison, Robert D. Blackwill, and Ali Wyne, *Lee Kuan Yew: The Grand Master’s Insights on China, the United States, and the World* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2013), 43–45.

provide the basis for the Quad’s integration of observers.³¹⁶ The inclusion of outside observers should strengthen the Quad’s international community credibility, counter the PRC’s current narrative, and provide an alternative forum for dialogue concerning competing activities with the First Island Chain.

Validity

Shared Values (Quad)

Australia, India, Japan, and the U.S. have functional – though strained – relations with the PRC; thus, this SA is feasible. The four nation-states and the PRC coordinate with the ASEAN as dialogue partners in a similar manner as a Quad Observer could with the Quad, therefore this SA is acceptable. Finally, maintaining an open pathway for collective communication and action within the First Island Chain aligns with each nation-state’s desired interests to maintain regional engagement below the threshold of war. Thus, providing an opportunity for non-members to participate in a dialogue and activities with a Quad Observer designation is a valid SA for the partnership’s core members.

³¹⁶ “Rules of Procedure for Sessions of the Ministerial Conference and Meetings of the General Council,” World Trade Organization, July 25, 1996, 14–17, <https://docs.wto.org/dol2fe/Pages/SS/directdoc.aspx?filename=q:/WT/L/161.pdf&Open=True>; “External Relations,” Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), last modified 2020, <https://asean.org/our-communities/asean-political-security-community/outward-looking-community/external-relations/>; United Nations, *Delegates Handbook: Seventy-Sixth Session of the United Nations General Assembly* (New York, NY: United Nations, 2021), 111–112.

Shared Norms (Quad Plus)

Validity was not assessed for the Quad Plus tier of the partnership due to the focus of this SA being on the relationship between the Quad core members and the PRC.

Shared Interests (Quad Observer)

Inclusion of non-member observers is an overall valid SA for the Quad and international community, but additional validity evaluations were required concerning the PRC's potential to participate as a Quad Observer and constructively contribute to each of validated SAs. Validity evaluations were not conducted for the invalidated SAs. Based on previous actions and current capabilities, the PRC's participation as an observer is feasible for all SAs that have been validated. Despite the PRC's desire for the Quad to fail as a partnership, the nation-state has demonstrated that it is both acceptable and suitable to establish and maintain an open dialogue with international institutions that have diverging interests from its own, such as ASEAN. Therefore, designation as a Quad Observer following the Quad's institutionalization is a valid SA for the PRC. The PRC, however, should not be admitted as an observer until after the Quad has become a credible international institution. Additionally, the PRC should only be allowed to observe the Quad's general assembly.

The PRC's involvement with the Quad's HADR Organization is acceptable and suitable. The nation-state maintains a narrative of being a positive international community contributor and has conducted multiple previous HADR activities, such as COVID-19 vaccine distribution. As a result, the HADR Organization SA is valid for the PRC's Quad Observer status. The PRC should be excluded from leadership roles in the

HADR Organization due to the nation-state’s intentions to revise international institutions to align with the PRC’s interests.

The inclusion of the PRC as an observer of the Economic and Development Forum is not acceptable as it would undermine the SA’s appeal as a regional alternative to the PRC’s coercive economic activities. Additionally, the forum’s intent of providing an alternative to the BRI does not align with the PRC’s interests. The inclusion of the PRC as a Quad Observer within the Economic and Development Forum is not a valid SA.

Table 9. SA Validity Evaluations for the PRC’s Observer Status				
SA	Feasible	Acceptable	Suitable	Observer Evaluation
SA1: Governing Charter	Yes	No	No	Invalid
SA3: Economic and Development Forum	Yes	No	No	Invalid
SA4: HADR Organization	Yes	Yes	Yes	Valid

Source: Created by author.

Additional Quad Observers

No other international community members were evaluated as potential Quad Observers. However, the shared interests construct for this tier of the partnership implies that the participation of numerous nation-states external to the region should be considered. International institutions with a reasonable interest in the region also have justification for participation, especially ASEAN. Therefore, Quad Observer status should be encouraged for like-minded partners external to the First Island Chain and

Indo-Pacific region to increase the partnership's cooperation and collective action. This approach could significantly strengthen the Quad as a credible international actor capable of countering the PRC's illiberal activities and establish a balance of power within the First Island Chain.

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION

Review of Key Findings

A Revisionist Power Intent on Creating a Regional Hegemony

The PRC is a revisionist power by definition, albeit a selective one. Over the last 40-plus years, the PRC has steadily climbed the international community's hierarchy to become the third most influential nation-state across the globe and a Great Power within the international order. Diplomacy, information, and economic power are the principal means through which the PRC exerts influence over other members of the international community. However, the PRC is not hesitant to employ the PLA's growing military power to either support the other IOPs or directly achieve the nation-state's objectives. The PRC is strategically employing the nation-state's IOPs to revise the current international order by creating alternative diplomatic, military, and economic international institutions; reshaping or establishing new international standards to govern trade, international development, and the global commons in a manner favorable the nation-state's perspective; and redefining existing international norms regarding a nation-state's use of the IOPs and indelible human rights. Thus, the PRC is a selective revisionist power within the recognized international order.

By revising the existing international order, the PRC has been and will be able to expand its sphere of influence within the Indo-Pacific region to establish a regional hegemony within the First Island Chain. Notably, the U.S. wields the most nation-state influence in the Indo-Pacific region, but the PRC and the U.S. are perceived as peers

competing for positioning atop the regional hierarchy within the First Island Chain.³¹⁷ If able to firmly supplant the U.S. within the First Island Chain, the PRC will solidify its sphere of influence in the region. The creation of a First Island Chain regional hegemony will enable the PRC to support the nation-state's domestic consumption of natural resources; maintain, and gradually increase, access to and influence of the global economy; and generate strategic security advantages.

Significance to the United States

The PRC's attempts to establish a regional hegemony within the First Island Chain through illiberal activities and coercive application of the nation-state's IOPs could alter internationally recognized standards and accepted norms, threaten global prosperity and stability, and jeopardize the U.S.'s ability to uphold American diplomatic and moral obligations. The U.S.'s security, prosperity, and credibility are intertwined with the existing liberal, rules-based international order. If the PRC successfully creates a regional hegemony, the existing international order will be irreversibly altered by the coexistence of liberal and illiberal spheres of influence. Free and open access to the First Island Chain's global commons and constricted waterways are critical to global economic stability, regional prosperity, and local food security. If the PRC is able to exert dominance over the First Island Chain, a single nation-state would be capable of manipulating international commerce, redistributing the contained natural resources, and endangering the lives of the region's less influential inhabitants. Finally, the U.S.'s ability to uphold established regional alliances and other diplomatic agreements would, at a

³¹⁷ Seah et al., *The State of Southeast Asia 2022*.

minimum, be severely complicated, if not impossible to maintain in some cases, were the PRC to control external access to the First Island Chain and the region's international community members. Therefore, the U.S. has a vital national interest in countering the PRC's attempts to establish a regional hegemony within the First Island Chain and revise the international order in an illiberal manner favorable to autocratic governments.

Although the U.S. remains the nation-state with the most overall influence within the First Island Chain, the PRC has surpassed the U.S.'s regional economic influence and risen to near-peer status in other areas, such as diplomatic and military power.³¹⁸ Due to the PRC's relative regional strength, competing global priorities, and domestic circumstances, the U.S. cannot unilaterally counter the PRC without incurring excessive risk and cost. A multilateral approach to countering the PRC would provide policymakers, advisors, and planners additional options and opportunities within the First Island Chain. The U.S. has a foundation for such an approach with the numerous overlapping bilateral and trilateral agreements throughout the Indo-Pacific region. The existing relationships can reinforce the U.S.'s prioritization of the Quad as a preferred multilateral approach because of the partnership's diverse participation, increasing capabilities, and expanding influence within the First Island Chain. Through the Quad, the U.S. could overcome the tyranny of distance to achieve the nation-state's regional objectives and uphold the current liberal, rules-based international order through a balance of power with the PRC.

³¹⁸ Mun et al., *The State of Southeast Asia 2020*; Lemahieu and Leng, *Asia Power Index 2021*; Seah et al., *The State of Southeast Asia 2022*.

A Multilateral Mechanism to Establish a Balance of Power

Following World War II, democratic nation-states across Europe and the North Atlantic region viewed the Soviet Union an existential threat. A regional balance of power was developed with NATO's creation as a multilateral mechanism to promote international order stability and ensure the collective security of member nation-states. The Indo-Pacific region has lacked a similar existential threat to the liberal, rules-based international order until the PRC's ascendance to Great Power status. The international community's continuation of previous policies has done little to influence the PRC's illiberalism and, in some cases, has equated to acquiescence to revised international standards and norms. The Quad, however, represents an alternative approach to countering the PRC's illiberal activities through a natural evolution of the region's existing international relationships into an expanded multilateral mechanism and, possibly, regional balance of power.

The partnership between Australia, India, Japan, and the U.S. reemerged as the Quad in 2017. Since the first Quad meeting in Manila, the partnership's core members have met numerous times to define priorities, discuss cooperation opportunities, coordinate collective action, and open a group dialogue with potential "like-minded partners." The leaders of the Quad have clearly defined the partnership's principles and objectives, while implying its purpose. The Quad is focused on developing the partnership's ability to collectively apply the core members' and like-minded partners' diplomatic, informational, and economic IOPs to compete with the PRC's principal international influence mechanisms. For example, parallels can be easily identified between the Quad's coordination/working groups and the PRC's principal foreign policy

initiatives, such as the Quad's Infrastructure Coordination Group and the PRC's BRI. The Quad has taken a more subtle approach to the partnership's collective military IOP in comparison with the PRC. While the Quad has not formally acknowledged the group's military IOP, military institutions from each of the partnership's participants, and other regional allies and partners, are expanding cooperation and interoperability through large-scale exercises, bilateral and trilateral agreements, and personnel exchanges. Although it has not been directly stated as an objective, the Quad is evolving into a multilateral mechanism that could create a regional balance of power with the PRC.

While the Quad's international influence is growing, additional opportunities exist to strengthen the partnership's multilateral credibility within the region, build capabilities for collective action, and counter illiberal activities by the PRC. By developing a governing charter, the Quad could address the partnership's ambiguity and institutionalize the cooperative efforts of the core members and like-minded partners. The creation of a secretariat could facilitate the coordinated oversight of the Quad's collective actions to ensure alignment and, ultimately, achieve the partnership's objectives. Establishment of an Economic and Development Forum could unify the Quad's application of the participant's collective economic power and serve as a credible alternative to the PRC's coercive economic practices. The development of a HADR organization could facilitate continuous collaboration, increase involvement of middle and minor power nation-states in operations, and expedite emergency response times. A military alliance could provide a credible counterbalance to the PLA's growing military power, thus reducing the PRC's ability to coercively influence neighboring nation-states within the First Island Chain. Finally, the inclusion of the PRC as an observer and

dialogue participant could reduce miscommunication of intentions, reduce regional tensions, and counter the PRC's antagonistic narrative concerning the partnership.

The nation-states and global commons with the First Island Chain are significant to the prosperity, security, and stability of the Quad's core members. The perception of the Quad within the First Island Chain has gradually shifted from a partnership antagonistic toward the PRC to a partnership capable of constructively and inclusively ensuring the region's stability and security.³¹⁹ This change has occurred because multiple nation-states within the First Island Chain desire the ability to counter the PRC's aggressive actions, attempts to exert dominance over the region, and revisions of the existing international order. These nation-states, however, lack the ability to independently, or collectively through regional institutions such as ASEAN, counter the PRC's overwhelming IOPs. The Quad's core members can use this as an opportunity to expand the partnership's regional credibility, capability, and capacity to counter the PRC's illiberal activities and regional hegemony intentions. A tiered partnership structure built around shared values, norms, and interests combined with flexible participation in the Quad's activities could appeal to a large number of the region's nation-states and institutions, especially the Philippines, South Korea, and Vietnam. Such an approach has already been effective in response to COVID-19. To be successful in creating a balance

³¹⁹ Seah et al., *The State of Southeast Asia 2022*; Lowy Institute, "Quadrilateral Security Dialogue," Lowy Institute Poll 2021, accessed March 30, 2022, <https://poll.lowyinstitute.org/charts/quadrilateral-security-dialogue/>; Lavina Lee, "Assessing the Quad: Prospects and Limitations of Quadrilateral Cooperation for Advancing Australia's Interests," Lowy Institute, May 19, 2020, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/assessing-quad-prospects-and-limitations-quadrilateral-cooperation-advancing-australia>.

of power to prevent the PRC from establishing a regional hegemony within the First Island Chain that would irrevocably alter the international order, the Quad must appeal to, coordinate with, and collectively act with regional “like-minded partners.

Recommendation

The Quad has maintained strategic ambiguity through broad, overarching objectives and loosely defined collaboration methods. This strategic ambiguity has allowed the Quad’s participants – core members and like-minded partners – to engage in open, constructive dialogue and cooperation in converging areas of interest while avoiding controversial topics. As a result, the Quad has been able to enhance core member relationships, increase regional influence, and improve appeal to more like-minded partners within the First Island Chain. The evolving strategic environment, however, presents the Quad with an opportunity to cast aside deliberate ambiguity to formalize, and eventually institutionalize, as a regional balance of power capable of providing credible alternatives to the PRC’s coercive IOPs, which is the principal recommendation of this thesis.

The foundation for formalizing the Quad has already been prepared with the joint statements following each of the Quad Leaders’ Summits in 2021, as illustrated earlier in Table 2 and discussed in Chapter 4’s analysis of a governing charter. The joint statements contain recurrently principles and objectives that have been mutually agreed upon by the partnership’s leaders. These statements, however, lack the weight brought by an official document with the signatures of each core members’ head of state. Consequently, the first step in the Quad’s formalization process should be the release of an initiating directive by the Quad’s leadership that provides guidance on a governing charter’s

collaborative drafting to codify the partnership's purpose, principles, objectives, and structure, which was validated as a SA to strengthen the Quad in Chapter 4.

A signed initiating directive should provide representatives from each of the Quad's core members the required authority to sponsor a conference of like-minded international community members to develop a governing charter. Since the prevention of the PRC's regional hegemony goal within the First Island Chain is likely to be an implied objective, direct appeals to nation-states within that specific region should occur to ensure the conference comprises diverse regional perspectives. This approach is likely to increase the Quad's credibility as an inclusive international actor within the First Island Chain. Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, and Vietnam favor participation with and strengthening of the Quad through practical cooperation; invitations to these nation-states should be prioritized.³²⁰ The PRC's desire to revise the existing international order and routinely harmful messaging about the Quad, as discussed earlier in Chapter 2 and the shared interest SA analysis in Chapter 4, necessitates the nation-state's exclusion from the governing charter conference.

As discussed in Chapter 4, the governing charter should consist of, at a minimum, the Quad's purpose and principles, membership guidance and structure, institutional organization and decision-making, and administrative procedures. The 1945 San Francisco Conference should serve as a framework for the Quad conference's required committees and sub-committees that will be responsible for drafting each section of the

³²⁰ Mun et al., *The State of Southeast Asia 2020*; Seah et al., *The State of Southeast Asia 2022*.

partnership's governing charter.³²¹ Representatives focusing on the Quad's purpose and principles should use the initiating directive as the source document with additional input from the Quad's previously published records, partnership's cooperative activities, and existing agreements between conference participants. The membership guidance and structure committee and sub-committees should incorporate a tiered membership structure, guided by Akita's methodology, to facilitate broad cooperation while maintaining flexibility for the diverse participants' potentially divergent perspectives and objectives, influenced by the U.S.'s Indo-Pacific Economic Framework.

The bulk of the participants' efforts should focus on addressing the Quad's organization and decision-making processes. The Quad should be configured around a general assembly of all participants with an operationally focused secretariat similar to the one discussed earlier in Chapter 4 and illustrated by Figure 9. Although the secretariat SA was initially invalidated in this thesis's analysis in Chapter 4, the creation of a governing charter rectifies the causes of invalidation, thereby converting the SA to valid in the Quad's institutionalization. The secretariat should include departments to assume the responsibilities of the Quad's existing coordination and working groups, as discussed previously in Chapter 4. The Economic and Development Forum and HADR Organization SAs, which were validated in Chapter 4's analysis, should be included as two of the secretariat's operational departments. Finally, the conference participants should identify procedures for convening gatherings, resolving disputes, acting on and enforcing decisions, and resourcing the organization, including financing, in a group

³²¹ "History of the United Nations," United Nations, accessed May 1, 2022, <https://www.un.org/en/about-us/history-of-the-un>.

forum following the committee and sub-committee requirements. These procedures should constitute the administrative section of the governing charter.

Administrative Process

The drafting of the governing charter is likely to take months, if not longer. Most of the discussions, negotiations, and document revisions by the committees and sub-committees can occur remotely. The representatives, however, should meet at the onset of the drafting to receive guidance from the Quad's leadership, build cohesive working relationships, and coordinate follow-on assignments and collaborative activities. The Quad should continue to meet separately at the higher levels of nation-state leadership to provide additional guidance, as required, and coordinate ongoing activities in the evolving strategic environment. Furthermore, the Quad's coordination and working groups should continue to operate until the secretariat is established and capable of assuming all roles and responsibilities. This will facilitate the constant international community presence of the Quad's collective actions, thus continuing to expand the partnership's regional influence and credibility.

The PRC's Participation

The transition first from loose to formalized partnership, then to institutionalized organization could take the Quad years to accomplish. Once the Quad has become a credible international institution, the PRC should be invited to serve as a Quad Observer within the institution's general assembly. This should facilitate an open pathway for dialogue and cooperation, minimize the possibility of a miscommunication escalating

regional tensions, and counter the PRC's provocative narrative about the Quad's intentions.

Taiwan's Participation

Similar to the PRC, the Quad should give consideration to allowing Taiwan's participation in open dialogue with the partnership's general assembly. The inclusion of Taiwan, in any fashion, is likely to raise tensions between the Quad and the PRC, therefore reducing the partnership's appeal within the First Island Chain. Only fourteen international community members formally recognize Taiwan; of which, none are members of the Quad or nation-states residing within the First Island Chain.³²² Each of the Quad's core members, however, maintain unofficial relations. Therefore, it is recommended that the partnership not invite Taiwan to participate as a Quad Observer and maintain an ambiguous stance toward the self-governing island. This approach will facilitate the continuation of unofficial relations between Taiwan and the Quad's participants. Frequent assessment of the evolving strategic environment is necessary to identify if conditions allow for or necessitate the Quad's re-evaluation of the partnership's position on Taiwan. For example, if the PRC sets the conditions for an imminent military invasion of the self-governing island.

³²² "Countries That Recognize Taiwan," World Population Review, accessed April 24, 2022, <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/countries-that-recognize-taiwan>.

Additional Quad Observers

The shared interests tier of the Quad facilitates participation of numerous nation-states and international actors external to the prescribed physical- and purpose-based boundaries of the international partnership. This categorization aligns with the previously identified Quad Observer status from Chapter 4's analysis and validation of the shared interest SA. Therefore, the Quad should encourage cooperation and collective action among like-minded partners within the First Island Chain, Indo-Pacific region, and beyond through the designation of such nation-states and institutions as Quad Observers. When the Quad becomes a credible international institution, the partnership should extend invitations to a reasonable number of international community members, including but not limited to ASEAN, the European Union, France, Germany, and the UK.

Separation of the Military IOP

Finally, the Quad has deliberately maintained the nation-states' collective military IOP isolated from the expanding partnership. The Quad gains credibility through this approach with multiple nation-states within the First Island Chain, and throughout the Indo-Pacific region, that wish to avoid increasing tensions with the PRC. While the creation of a military alliance is not a valid SA for the Quad, as discussed in Chapter 4's analysis, the participants have and should continue to develop the group's military cooperation and interoperability in case an ad hoc coalition is necessary in the future. Essentially, the Quad can achieve the same short-term goals through this approach without the substantial domestic risk, e.g., political confrontations concerning ratification, and escalatory perceptions associated with a military alliance. No matter the framing, the participants' continuation of large-scale multilateral exercises, bilateral and trilateral

military cooperation agreements, and military personnel exchanges must continue, but will remain a point of contention with the PRC. The future strategic environment may allow, if not necessitate, the Quad's integration of a collective military IOP. In such a case, the combination of an institutionalized Quad and separately development military institution relationships are likely to facilitate an easy amendment of the governing charter to include a military command and control mechanism within the partnership.

Implications of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine War

The PRC's creation of a "new democratic world order" with Chinese civilization at "the center of the world stage" assumed that the necessary international community support to achieve the nation-state's goals would come from Russia.³²³ On February 24, 2022, the global – not just European – strategic environment was substantially altered by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.³²⁴ For example, the U.S.'s rapid information sharing with the international community, and Ukraine's operational forces, has been "revolutionary" in "pre-bunking" illiberal disinformation and delivering real-time, actionable intelligence to a non-allied nation-state.³²⁵ Additionally, the international economic sanctions

³²³ Craig Singleton, "Why Xi Is Trapped in Ukraine," *Foreign Policy*, April 26, 2022, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/04/26/why-xi-is-trapped-in-ukraine/>; Elizabeth Economy, "Xi Jinping's New World Order," *Foreign Affairs*, February 17, 2022, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2021-12-09/xi-jinpings-new-world-order>.

³²⁴ "Ukraine Conflict Updates," Institute for the Study of War, April 16, 2022, <http://dev-isw.bivings.com/>; Anne-Marie Slaughter, Kishore Mahbubani, Stephen M. Walt, Toshihiro Nakayama, Shannon K. O'Neil, C. Raja Mohan, and Robin Niblett, "U.S. Grand Strategy After Ukraine," *Foreign Policy*, March 21, 2022, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/03/21/us-geopolitics-security-strategy-war-russia-ukraine-china-indo-pacific-europe/>.

³²⁵ John Grady, "Intel Sharing Between U.S. and Ukraine 'Revolutionary' Says DIA Director," *USNI News*, March 18, 2022, <https://news.usni.org/2022/03/18/intel->

imposed on Russia have already resulted in the nation-state's inflation rate reaching 17.3% and a projected 20% contraction of the Russian economy by year's end.³²⁶ These collective actions in support of Ukraine by the current international order has allowed the nation-state to successfully resist Russia's aggressive, illiberal actions. The implications, positive and negative, of the changing global strategic environment are significant for the Indo-Pacific region, e.g., validating and expanding multilateralism's influence within the rules-based, liberal international order; underscoring the need for flexibility within international community partnerships; and complicating other revisionist powers' attempts to reshape the international order.

Russia has repeatedly demanded that NATO cease "any further enlargement" of the conflict—substantially restrict the international deployment of military forces by nation-state members and reduce support of former Soviet nation-states.³²⁷ This is a clear

sharing-between-u-s-and-ukraine-revolutionary-says-dia-director; Greg Myre, "As Russia Threatens Ukraine, the U.S. 'pre-Bunks' Russian Propaganda," *NPR*, February 8, 2022, <https://www.npr.org/2022/02/08/1079213726/as-russia-threatens-ukraine-the-u-s-pre-bunks-russian-propaganda>; Ken Dilanian, Courtney Kube, Carol E. Lee, and Dan De Luce, "U.S. Intel Helped Ukraine Protect Air Defenses, Shoot down Russian Plane Carrying Hundreds of Troops," *NBC News*, April 26, 2022, <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/national-security/us-intel-helped-ukraine-protect-air-defenses-shoot-russian-plane-carry-rcna26015>.

³²⁶ Irina Ivanova, "Western Sanctions Are Pummeling Russia's Economy," *CBS News*, April 6, 2022, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/sanctions-russia-economy-effect/>; Charles Maynes, "Russians Are Feeling the Impact of Sanctions, but the Worst Is Still yet to Come," *NPR*, April 22, 2022, <https://www.npr.org/2022/04/22/1094390348/russians-are-feeling-the-impact-of-sanctions-but-the-worst-is-still-yet-to-come>; Euronews and AP, "Russian Economy Suffers Sanctions Blow despite Kremlin's Denial," *Euronews*, April 23, 2022, <https://www.euronews.com/2022/04/23/russian-economy-feels-consequences-of-sanctions-despite-kremlin-s-denial>.

³²⁷ Jonathan Masters, "Why NATO Has Become a Flash Point With Russia in Ukraine," Council on Foreign Relations, last modified January 20, 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/background/why-nato-has-become-flash-point-russia-ukraine>;

attempt by Russia to damage NATO's credibility as an international institution without resorting to conventional warfare, which would greatly undermine the current liberal international order.

With the invasion of Ukraine, Russia has demonstrated to the international community that revisionist powers are willing to “[resort] to political and military aggression to subvert and shock the liberal international order.”³²⁸ The unintended consequence of Russia's aggression has been increased NATO membership interest from European nation-states that have long espoused neutrality.³²⁹ A similar effect has also been observed in the Indo-Pacific region. Nation-states once hesitant to participant in multilateral alliances and partnerships for fear of angering the PRC are now reconsidering their position in the international order. The fear of the PRC remains, but is morphing into a fear that the PRC's revisionism might mirror Russia, thus representing an existential threat.³³⁰ The Russia-Ukraine War, therefore, has the potential to inadvertently

Jonathan Masters, “Ukraine: Conflict at the Crossroads of Europe and Russia,” Council on Foreign Relations, last modified April 1, 2022, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/ukraine-conflict-crossroads-europe-and-russia>.

³²⁸ Singleton, “Why Xi Is Trapped in Ukraine.”

³²⁹ Carl Bildt, “NATO's Nordic Expansion,” *Foreign Affairs*, April 28, 2022, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/europe/2022-04-26/natos-nordic-expansion>; Anna Kaplan, “Finland And Sweden May Decide On Joining NATO Together—But Finnish Minister Clarifies Timeline,” *Forbes*, April 26, 2022, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/annakaplan/2022/04/26/finland-and-sweden-may-decide-on-joining-nato-together---but-finnish-minister-clarifies-timeline/>.

³³⁰ Slaughter, Kishore Mahbubani, Stephen M. Walt, Toshihiro Nakayama, Shannon K. O'Neil, C. Raja Mohan, and Robin Niblett, “U.S. Grand Strategy After Ukraine;” James J. Carafano, “The Future of the West's Global Security Strategy,” Geopolitical Intelligence Services, April 27, 2022, <https://www.gisreportsonline.com/r/ukraine-taiwan-security-strategies/>.

strengthen the Quad as a multilateral international actor capable of countering the PRC's illiberal activities through the creation a First Island Chain balance of power.

Actions by the Indian government since the start of the Russia-Ukraine War, however, have highlighted the necessity of flexibility within the construct of international community alliances and partnerships. Russia and India have maintained open relations despite international community concerns, which has increased doubts about the world's largest democracy's commitment to the liberal international order and the Quad's other core members.³³¹ During the first 60 days following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, India abstained from 11 condemnation and sanction votes at various international institutions and continued to purchase large quantities of Russian oil.³³² India has asserted "strategic autonomy" as justification for the nation-state's divergence from the liberal international order's response to Russia's aggression.

³³¹ Rintaro Tobita and Rieko Miki, "Quad Urges India to Condemn Russia over Ukraine," *Nikkei Asia*, March 4, 2022, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Indo-Pacific/Quad-urges-India-to-condemn-Russia-over-Ukraine>; Abigail Ng, "India Is 'caught in a Trap' given Its Deep Ties with Russia, Political Analyst Says," *CNBC*, March 10, 2022, <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/03/10/india-is-caught-in-a-trap-given-its-deep-ties-with-russia-analyst.html>; Ravi Buddhavarapu, "India Is in a Sweet Spot, Courted by the Quad, China and Russia," *CNBC*, March 24, 2022, <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/03/24/india-is-in-a-sweet-spot-courted-by-the-quad-china-and-russia.html>; "Biden Tells Modi More Russian Oil Imports Not in India's Interest," *Al Jazeera*, April 11, 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/11/russia-looms-large-before-biden-modi-virtual-meet>.

³³² Niranjani Marjani, "India's Subtle Shifts Toward the West and Away From Russia," *The Diplomat*, April 23, 2022, <https://thediplomat.com/2022/04/indias-subtle-shifts-toward-the-west-and-away-from-russia/>; Shurti Menon, "Ukraine Crisis: Why India Is Buying More Russian Oil," *BBC News*, April 26, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-60783874>.

India is in a precarious position because the strategic environment in which the nation-state resides necessitates continued relations with Russia despite the appearance of a weakening partnership with the other core members of the Quad.³³³ For example, northern border disputes with Pakistan and the PRC have repeatedly turned into violent and deadly clashes between each nation-state's military forces. This information is pertinent because India has relied on Russia, and previously the Soviet Union, to supply 85% of the nation-state's military equipment since gaining independence in 1947.³³⁴ Russia remains India's largest foreign arms supplier, but the importation of new Russian military equipment has dropped to 46% in recent years. India's improved trade relations, including arms deals, with Western civilization nation-states has facilitated a projected reduction of the nation-state's reliance on Russia supplies to a negligible amount by 2028. Until that time, India's commitment to the shared values of the Quad's core members will remain in question. The Quad, therefore, must maintain flexibility within the partnership's structure, similar to the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework, to mitigate potential risk to the establishment of a balance of power within the First Island Chain, and the larger Indo-Pacific region.

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the PRC abstained from the UN Security Council vote to condemn Russia and voted against removing Russia from the UN Human

³³³ Buddhavarapu, "India Is in a Sweet Spot, Courted by the Quad, China and Russia,"; Ng, "India Is 'caught in a Trap' given Its Deep Ties with Russia, Political Analyst Says,"

³³⁴ Marjani, "India's Subtle Shifts Toward the West and Away From Russia."

Rights Council.³³⁵ The PRC, as a fellow revisionist power, has maintained loose support of Russia despite the situation negatively influencing the PRC's ability and approach to reshaping the international order.³³⁶ The failure of the PRC to alter Russia's actions or the international community's response has revealed that limitations exist to the PRC's ability – or desire – to influence the current international order. Additionally, Russia's aggressive revisionism has created increased concerns within the First Island Chain that the PRC will take similar actions to settle outstanding disputes over territorial sovereignty, which has enhanced the appeal of liberal multilateralism throughout the region.³³⁷

The international community response, especially the liberal nation-states and institutions, has also demonstrated to the PRC the ease with which the multilateral application of economic power can influence a nation-state's economy. While the PRC's economy is unlikely to be “decoupled” from the current international economic order, the nation-state is likely to expedite development of alternative international economic institutions and mechanisms, such the PRC's Cross-Border Interbank Payment System, to

³³⁵ Singleton, “Why Xi Is Trapped in Ukraine;” Amanda Macias, “UN Votes to Remove Russia from Human Rights Council,” *CNBC*, April 7, 2022, <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/04/07/un-votes-to-remove-russia-from-human-rights-council.html>.

³³⁶ Diana Choyleva, “China Is Reassessing Western Financial Power After Ukraine,” *Foreign Policy*, April 15, 2022, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/04/15/china-western-financial-power-ukraine/>; Slaughter et al., “U.S. Grand Strategy After Ukraine.”

³³⁷ “Majority of Japanese Worry China May Invade Taiwan, Poll Shows,” *The Japan Times*, March 20, 2022, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/03/20/national/japan-ukraine-taiwan-poll/>.

facilitate transactions in Chinese currency.³³⁸ The Indo-Pacific regional implications, especially within the First Island Chain, will only increase the longer the Russia-Ukraine War lasts, thus requiring additional observation and further research.

Areas for Future Research

The broad scope of this thesis analyzed an extensive volume of data concerning the current, and possible future, strategic environment in the Indo-Pacific region, specifically the First Island Chain. The complexity of studying a region projected to accommodate two-thirds of the world's population within a decade, current international events, and the thesis's limitations and delimitations combine to provide an infinite number of opportunities for future research.³³⁹ Potential areas of future study include, but are not limited to, the following recommendations:

1. The SA validity and structural evaluations were limited in depth of analysis. A detailed examination of each SA is necessary prior to enacting the overarching strategy.
2. A seventh SA – creation of a maritime law enforcement task force – was identified during the analysis of the military alliance SA. By limiting the SA's use of force to law enforcement institutions, such as each nation-state's coast guard, the Quad can work collectively to maintain the established international standards in the First Island Chain's global commons. This SA

³³⁸ Kevin Rudd, "Defining the Great Global Decoupling," (Robert F. Ellsworth Memorial Lecture, University of California San Diego, November 4, 2019), https://china.ucsd.edu/_files/11042019_ellsworth-lecture-speech.pdf.

³³⁹ "Statement of Admiral Philip S. Davidson," U.S. Congress, Senate.

has the potential to simultaneously strengthen the Quad’s partnership, appeal to potential like-minded partners, and counter the PRC’s revisionism through actions supported by the current international order.

3. As the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework develops, an analysis is necessary concerning its impact on the strategic economic environment in the Indo-Pacific region and the flexibility provided by the framework.³⁴⁰ If successful, the framework’s flexible structure represents a significant opportunity for the international community to strengthen the liberal, rules-based international order, while allowing participants to address their divergent domestic considerations.
4. The previous section concerning the implications of the ongoing Russia-Ukraine War on the Quad and Indo-Pacific region provides a multitude of future research possibilities. One of the most promising areas of study for the Quad is the impact that Russia’s aggressive actions will have on the region’s approach toward establishing a balance of power to counter the PRC, especially through alignments, partnerships, and alliances. An interesting parallel in Europe is the previously unthinkable possibility that Finland and Sweden are considering NATO membership.³⁴¹

³⁴⁰ Williams, Manyin, and Fefer, *Biden Administration Plans for an Indo-Pacific Economic Framework*.

³⁴¹ Bildt, “NATO’s Nordic Expansion,”; Kaplan, “Finland And Sweden May Decide On Joining NATO Together—But Finnish Minister Clarifies Timeline.”

5. India's actions concerning the ongoing Russia-Ukraine War have caused some commentators to question how successful the nation-state can be at building relations with the Quad's core members, while maintaining long-standing relations with Russia.³⁴² Additional study of India's position within the partnership is necessary to determine the validity of the assumption that the core members have shared values.
6. The PRC's desire to lead a "new democratic world order" conflicts with strengthening the Quad to establish a balance-of-power in the Indo-Pacific region.³⁴³ Analysis of the PRC's potential reaction is required to determine counteractions the Quad can take to minimize a possible recurrence of the fate suffered by the Tsunami Core Group and Democratic Security Diamond.
7. An assumption of this thesis was the preeminence of nation-states as the international actors most capable of defining or redefining the international order and influencing other international community members. Multinational corporations, however, have become increasingly important to international community affairs, e.g., influence on a nation-state's foreign policy.³⁴⁴ The

³⁴² Sudha Ramachandran, "India's 'Neutrality' on the Ukraine Conflict Could Hurt It in the Long Run," *The Diplomat*, February 25, 2022, <https://thediplomat.com/2022/02/indias-neutrality-on-the-ukraine-conflict-could-hurt-it-in-the-long-run/>; Simran Sodhi, "Has Ukraine Tested the Quad?" Observer Research Foundation, March 28, 2022, <https://www.orfonline.org/expert-speak/has-ukraine-tested-the-quad/>.

³⁴³ Singleton, "Why Xi Is Trapped in Ukraine."

³⁴⁴ In Song Kim and Helen V Milner, *Multinational Corporations and Their Influence Through Lobbying on Foreign Policy* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, December 2, 2019), https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Kim_Milner_manuscript.pdf.

significance of multinational corporations to the international order, including potential membership in international institutions, should be explored further.

Summary

This chapter summarized the key findings of this thesis by answering three SQs: (1) what revisionism methods is the PRC employing to alter the current international order's established standards and norms; (2) how have the Quad's SAs and objectives evolved as the strategic environment in the Indo-Pacific region has changed; and (3) is it possible for the Quad to expand its international community collaboration with like-minded partners through broadening its approach to the balanced application of their collective IOPs? Based on the insight gleaned from the SQs and analysis of potential SAs, a broad strategy was proposed to answer the primary research question: Given the strategic environment circumstances, it is important the U.S. examine potential liberalist international relations approaches to strengthen the Quad as an international partnership that embodies a long-term, balanced alternative to the PRC's coercive IOP employment intended to revise the rules-based international order and establish a regional hegemony within the First Island Chain.

The ongoing Russia-Ukraine War, however, has forever transformed the global strategic environment in a manner that increases the potential risk and opportunity for competing powers within the First Island Chain. In an effort to seize the opportunities presented by the evolving strategic environment, this thesis concludes that the Quad must leave behind the ambiguity the partnership has embraced to appear non-confrontational to the international community, especially the PRC. By formalizing, and eventually institutionalizing, the Quad will capitalize on the partnership's increasing appeal within

the First Island Chain to create a regional balance of power capable of providing credible alternatives to the PRC's coercive IOPs, prevent the establishment of a regional hegemony, and avert irreversible revision of the existing liberal, rules-based international order.

Final Thoughts

The author – as a military officer, planner, and advisor – grappled with three philosophical questions throughout this study in an attempt to shape a whole-of-government, if not whole-of-society, strategy for a vital national interest to the U.S.. First, can a Western civilization researcher/planner truly grasp how Chinese civilization perceives the world, let alone understand how to alter the PRC's behavior? A simple military example illustrates this question. Western civilization militaries' view "blue forces" as friendly and "red forces" as the enemy. In planning, military planners from these nation-states routinely struggle to "turn the map around" and imagine the enemy's, or "red force's" intentions. For the PLA, however, this is the everyday perspective of the world as "red forces" are friendly and "blue forces" are the enemy.

With this difficulty in shared perception between the two civilizations, the second question is if Samuel P. Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations" or Graham T. Allison's "Thucydides Trap" inevitable?³⁴⁵ The author pondered this question not because of the implied power struggle between Western and Chinese civilizations, but rather because of

³⁴⁵ Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*; Graham Allison, *Destined for War: Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017).

the potential for misinterpreting each other's intentions that could, potentially, escalate tensions beyond the threshold of war.

Finally, is a true liberalist approach to international relations even possible given the previous questions? The author continues to consider these questions in an attempt to increase critical thought, improve personal perspective, and work toward advocacy of cooperation and collaboration, while being prepared for the opposite.

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