



QUAD - GS II MAINS

Q. QUAD is facilitated by the emergence of the Indo-Pacific region, and is propelled by a change in the global order to India. Discuss (15 marks, 250 words)

News: *Quad grouping is here to stay, grow and contribute, says External Affairs Minister Jaishankar*

What's in the news?

- Stating that the Quad grouping is here to stay, grow and to contribute, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said that it stands as a statement that in this day and age, “others cannot have a veto on our choices.”

Key takeaways:

- He said the grouping — comprising India, Australia, Japan and the United States — is facilitated by the emergence of the Indo-Pacific region, and is propelled by a change in the global order that requires more, not less, collaboration among like-minded countries.

QUAD:

- QUAD, also known as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue or simply the Quad, is a strategic forum comprising four countries: the **United States, Japan, India, and Australia.**

Aim:

- The Quad is aimed at **promoting regional security and economic cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region.**
- The four countries share a common interest in **maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific, promoting democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, and countering China's expanding influence in the region.**

Other Key takeaways:

- The Quad has held several meetings at the ministerial and leaders' level to discuss issues such as maritime security, infrastructure development, and supply chain resilience.
- The Quad is seen as a mechanism for balancing China's influence in the region, although its members have stressed that it is not a military alliance and is open to other countries who share their values and interests.



Importance of QUAD:

1. Strengthening Regional Security:

- The QUAD aims to enhance security and stability in the Indo-Pacific region by promoting a rules-based order, freedom of navigation, and respect for international law.

2. Countering China's Rise:

- The QUAD is seen as a response to China's growing assertiveness in the region.
- The member countries seek to balance China's rise and prevent it from altering the status quo in the region.

3. Promoting Economic Co-operation:

- The member countries are major economies in the region and seek to promote economic cooperation.
- In May 2022, Quad countries decided to allocate \$50 Billion for infrastructure in the Indo-Pacific region.

4. Building Maritime Security Capacity:

- The member countries have been conducting joint naval exercises and maritime patrols to enhance their maritime security capacity and interoperability.

5. Strengthening People-to-people Ties:

- The QUAD aims to promote people-to-people ties through academic and cultural exchanges and enhance disaster relief and humanitarian assistance capabilities.

6. Cooperation in Debt Management:

- Resolving debt issues under the G20 Common Framework through the 'Quad Debt Management Resource Portal'.

Significance of QUAD for India:

1. Strategic Importance:

- It is a platform to discuss and address the common challenges faced by the Indo-Pacific region, such as the rise of China and its increasing assertiveness in the region through 'String of pearls' theory.

2. Economic Significance:

- The member countries have launched several initiatives like the Asia-Africa Growth Corridor, the Blue Dot Network and the Supply Chain Resilience Initiative to promote economic development in the region.
- India is mostly at the receiving end of investments by QUAD countries.

3. Maritime Security:

- QUAD is useful for Indian maritime security by conducting joint naval exercises and coordinating on issues like freedom of navigation, piracy, and illegal fishing.

4. Regional Stability:

- QUAD is significant for India in promoting regional stability in the Indo-Pacific region.
- It is based on the principles of a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific and aims to promote a rules-based international order.



5. Post-COVID Diplomacy:

- Due to disruptions in the supply chain during the pandemic, Japan and the US want to shift their manufacturing companies out of China in order to curb their imperialistic behaviour, which could be capitalized on by India as well.

Mixed Global Response for QUAD:

1. Russian Response:

- Russian foreign minister calls it "Asian NATO". Russia had sharply criticized the Quad as part of a US-led 'persistent, aggressive and devious' policy.

2. Chinese Response:

- China has decried the grouping as an "Indo-Pacific NATO" accusing it of "trumpeting the Cold War mentality" and "stoking geopolitical rivalry."

3. Western Countries:

- They reaffirm the Quad's commitment to supporting Indo-Pacific countries' efforts to advance a free and open Indo-Pacific – a region which is inclusive and resilient, and in which states strive to protect the interests of their people, free from coercion.

Limitations of QUAD:

1. Lacks Definitive Structure:

- The QUAD grouping lacks a formal structure with a secretariat or any permanent decision-making body.

2. Difficulty in Addressing China's Concerns:

- The QUAD grouping is viewed with suspicion by China, which sees it as an attempt to contain its rise.
- This makes it challenging for the group to engage with China in a constructive manner, which may cause tension between the member countries.

3. Imbalanced Co-operation:

- The members do not have the same levels of financial resources, strategic awareness, and military capabilities in the Indian Ocean.
- This creates an imbalance in cooperation, which might create problems in the future.

4. Limited Military Capabilities:

- The QUAD members have varying levels of military capabilities, with the US being the most powerful and Australia being the least.
- This could limit the group's ability to take action if needed.

5. Domestic Politics:

- Domestic political considerations could limit the ability to cooperate with one another.
- For example, India's domestic politics could make it difficult for the country to align itself too closely with the US.

6. Geopolitical Challenges:

- The challenges such as territorial disputes, regional tensions, and non-traditional security threats, will require a coordinated and sustained effort from the QUAD members, which may be difficult.



7. Lack of Coherent Actions:

- The QUAD grouping has not taken any concrete action to address the issues in the Indo-Pacific region.
- The lack of coherent actions can undermine the group's credibility and effectiveness in addressing regional challenges.

WAY FORWARD:

1. Strengthening Commitment and Engagement:

- Holding regular meetings of leaders, officials, and working groups, Expanding engagement with other countries in the region.

2. Communicating Clear Intentions:

- Communicating clear intentions that the grouping is not directed against any particular country, Emphasizing the shared interests and benefits for all countries in the region.

3. Delivering Concrete Outcomes:

- Developing joint infrastructure projects to promote regional economic integration, Addressing common challenges such as climate change or maritime security, and Promoting connectivity and digital cooperation.

4. Building a Consultative Mechanism:

- Building a consultative mechanism with ASEAN and other regional organizations to promote coordination and cooperation, Sharing information and intelligence on shared challenges and threats.

5. Strengthening Military and Strategic Cooperation:

- Expanding cooperation in the areas of cybersecurity, space, and emerging technologies, Developing joint capabilities and defence interoperability, Strengthening military-to-military cooperation and information sharing.

6. QUAD Plus:

- In 2020, the intent for the Plus format was strengthened when the United States hosted a meeting of Quad nations, which also included Brazil, Israel, and South Korea, to discuss a global response to COVID-19.