



Quad Grouping

For Prelims: QUAD, HADR, Indo-Pacific

For Mains: Groupings & Agreements Involving India and/or Affecting India's Interests, Bilateral Groupings & Agreements, QUAD and its Significance

Why in News?

Foreign Ministers of the [Quad \(India, the U.S., Australia, and Japan\)](#) met on the fringes of the [United Nations General Assembly \(UNGA\)](#) to sign a **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) partnership** into effect.

- Under the HADR, **the member countries will coordinate their disaster response operations** in the [Indo-Pacific region](#) with other National and International agencies, private non-governmental organizations.

What is QUAD?

- It is the grouping of four **democracies -India, Australia, the US, and Japan.**
- All four nations find a common ground of being democratic nations and also support the common interest of unhindered maritime trade and security.
- It aims to ensure and support a **“free, open and prosperous” Indo-Pacific region.**
- The idea of Quad was first mooted by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007. However, the idea couldn't move ahead with Australia pulling out of it, apparently due to Chinese pressure.
- Finally in 2017, India, Australia, the US and Japan, came together and formed this “quadrilateral” coalition.



What are the Opportunities for India Under Quad Arrangement?

▪ Countering China:

- The maritime space is a lot more **important to China than engaging in opportunistic land grab attempts** in the Himalayas.
 - A huge chunk of Chinese trade happens via the Indian oceanic routes that pass through maritime chokepoints.
 - In the event of any Chinese aggression on borders, India by cooperating with Quad countries can potentially disrupt Chinese trade.
 - Hence, unlike in the continental sphere where India seems facing a 'nutcracker like situation' due to China-Pakistan collusion, the maritime sphere is wide open to India to undertake coalition building, rule setting, and other forms of strategic exploration.

▪ Emerging as a Net Security Provider:

- There is a growing **great power interest in the maritime sphere**, especially with the arrival of the concept of 'Indo-Pacific'. For instance, many European countries have recently released their Indo-Pacific strategies.
- With India, located right at the centre of the Indo-Pacific geopolitical imagination can realise **the vision of a 'broader Asia' that can extend its influence away from geographical boundaries**.
- Moreover, India can build around **collective action in humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, monitoring shipping** for search and rescue or anti-piracy operations, infrastructure assistance to climatically vulnerable states, connectivity initiatives and similar activities.
- Further, India with **Quad countries can check imperialist policies** of China in Indian ocean region and ensure Security and growth for all in the region.

What are the Issues Related to Quad?

- **Undefined Vision:** Although there is potential for cooperation, the **Quad remains a mechanism without a defined strategic mission**.
- **Maritime Dominated:** The entire focus on the Indo-Pacific makes the **Quad a maritime, rather than a land-based grouping**, raising questions whether the cooperation extends to the Asia-Pacific and Eurasian regions.
- **India's Aversion of Alliance System:** The fact that India is the only member that is averse to a **treaty alliance system**, has slowed down the progress of building a stronger **Quadrilateral engagement**.

Way Forward

- The Quad nations need to **better explain the Indo-Pacific Vision in an overarching framework** with the objective of advancing everyone's economic and security interests.
- India has many other partners in the Indo-Pacific; therefore, **India should pitch for countries like Indonesia, Singapore** to be invited to join in the future.
- India should develop **a comprehensive vision on the Indo-Pacific** which would ideate on the current and future maritime challenges, **consolidate its military and non-military tools, engage its strategic partners**.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q. Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) is transforming itself into a trade bloc from a military alliance, in present times Discuss. **(2020)**

