

*Canada and Indo-Pacific cooperation: the Quadrilateral Military
Dialogue (Quad)*

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Introduction

The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (The Quad), a cooperative arrangement between Australia, India, Japan and the United States, has been reinvigorated by concerns over China's growing challenge to the international order. The Quad is not intended to be an exclusively security-oriented arrangement, nor is it explicitly directed against China. It is also not a nascent formal alliance, but rather an informal collaboration across a range of policy domains. This issue-by-issue approach to cooperation allows participants to opt out of specific initiatives and facilitates the inclusion of additional partners, such as Canada. As an internationalist middle power that is committed to upholding the international order, Canada would seem a strong addition to the Quad. This paper will assess, first, the evolution of the Quad and, second, the possibility that Canada can participate in such an agreement.

The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad)

The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (the Quad) is an agreement between Australia, India, Japan and the United States. It has its origins in the joint response to the 2004 tsunami in the Indian Ocean, was expanded in its efforts in 2007 and then stalled in 2008. It received fresh impetus in 2017 because of China's increasing challenge to global and, more specifically, Indo-Pacific regional order. However, the Quad is a conundrum because although it developed post-2017 as a response to China, its participants continue to assert that the Quad is not aimed at any one country and that it provides a basis for cooperation across a range of issues broadly defined as security. For example, just as the 2004 cooperation was essentially humanitarian, the 2021 summit agreements revolved around COVID-19 vaccine production, emerging technologies and mitigating climate change.¹ The Quad is not intended to be a formal Asian NATO, a military collective security alliance. Instead, it is an arrangement that builds on existing bilateral military agreements (including joint naval exercises) between its primary participants to promote "democracy, a rules-based order and a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific."² Beyond freedom of navigation and a norms-based international system, the Quad also has important economic aspects: for example, a commitment at the 2022 meeting to alternative debt financing for countries in the region through the Quad Debt Management Portal and a \$50 billion commitment to regional infrastructure development including supply chain diversification for critical technologies such as semiconductors.³ While the Quad is not directed specifically against containing China, or any other country, it is intended to provide an alternative vision of both global and regional order, one that allows like-minded states to promote these goals on particular issues. Quad's members seek to promote a world order that is inclusive and multilateral.

¹ Sumitha Narayanan Kutty, and Rajesh Basru, "The Quad: What It Is – And What It Is Not: The Quad is no Asian NATO. And that may be its greatest strength," *The Diplomat*, 21 March 2021, <https://thediplomat.com/2021/03/the-quad-what-it-is-and-what-it-is-not/> accessed 24 May 2022.

² Ibid.

³ "The Quad: the origins of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue." *The Week*, 25 May 2022, <https://www.theweek.co.uk/news/world-news/asia-pacific/956856/the-quad-the-origins-of-the-quadrilateral-security-dialogue>, accessed 27 May 2022; Manu Pubby, "Quad's \$50 billion, 5-year infra booster for Indo-Pacific," *The Economic Times*, 25 May 2022, <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/quads-50-billion-5-year-infra-booster-for-indo-pacific/articleshow/91776640.cms>, accessed *India Times*, 27 May 2022.

By doing so, there is scope for additional countries, such as Canada, to participate in the Quad arrangement on an issue-by-issue basis.⁴

The Evolution of the Quad

The combination of Australia, India, Japan and the United States were the four countries best able to provide rapid regional relief in response to the tsunami in December 2004. After the initial need for aid had diminished, the Japanese and Indian governments sought to build on that ad hoc cooperation to establish a longer-lasting basis for addressing issues of “mutual interest.” In early 2007, Australia and the United States expressed interest in participating in such an initiative and the first Quad meeting was held in May 2007 as an adjunct to the ASEAN summit in Manila. In September 2007, the four countries participated in a joint naval exercise, along with the Singaporean navy, in the Bay of Bengal. This first iteration of the Quad collapsed due to pressure from China, hesitation from South Korea, a potential additional participant which was fearful of having to choose between its security ties with the United States and its economic ties with China, and due to the lack consensus between the four countries on the key regional issues and how those might be best addressed.⁵ Alarmed by what it perceived to be a nascent anti-Chinese alliance, the Chinese government sent a formal protest to the four states’ governments. Given the mixed objectives of the participants, Australia, India and the United States also had reservations about maintaining the discussions. Japan was initially more enthusiastic, but the resignation of Prime Minister Abe in September 2007, the Quad’s main advocate, ended any impetus for further movement.⁶

A new version of the Quad emerged ten years later, driven by two key and interrelated factors. First, the four key countries engaged in multiple bilateral and trilateral naval and fighter exercises between 2007 and 2019 that underpinned growth in ministerial meetings, again on a bilateral and trilateral basis, to discuss common interests.

⁴ Kutty and Basru, “The Quad: What It Is – And What It Is Not.”

⁵ Patrick Gerard Buchan, and Benjamin Rimland, “Defining the Diamond: The Past, Present, and Future of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue,” CSIS Briefs, March 2020, https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/200312_BuchanRimland_QuadReport_v2%5B6%5D.pdf?fuRA6mwjWYKqROtSmJD4u5ct.vjjdkZv, accessed 14 May 2022.

⁶ *The Week*, “The Quad.”

These reinforced trust, interoperability and political connections between the four. Second, China's coercive policy towards each of the Quad countries pushed the four further towards one another for mutual reinforcement. The United States continued to see China's claims of sovereignty and expansion of influence and bases in the South China Sea as a challenge to its long-standing policy in the region. The resumption of a quadrilateral dialogue was driven by Japan and the United States, again on the fringes of an ASEAN meeting in Manila, in November 2017. Initially, the discussion focused on the denuclearization of North Korea, the promotion of a rules-based system in the Indo-Pacific, and support for a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" concept.⁷

Since 2017, the extent and breadth of quadrilateral cooperation have continued to grow. In November 2020, all four countries conducted a new joint naval exercise. The Quad arrangement reinforces existing partnerships since Australia and Japan are formal US allies and India is a key strategic partner, but it also offers a mechanism by which humanitarian, economic and security challenges might be addressed. Although the resurrection of the Quad occurred during the Trump administration, the Biden administration has sought to broaden the agenda of the agreement. This partially reflects that the Indo-Pacific is an increasingly vital region for US interests⁸ and the global movement of goods.⁹ Japan has sought to reinforce the concept of open sea lanes, vital for its trade, to promote the resilience of critical supply chains, and to support Japanese investment and development across the region as a counterweight to Chinese offers of assistance.¹⁰ The contestation over assistance and aid has become an increasingly major aspect of the wider regional race for influence¹¹ and was an explicit aspect of the meeting

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ United States Department of State, "A Free and Open Indo-Pacific: Advancing a Shared Vision," 4 November 2019, <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Free-and-Open-Indo-Pacific-4Nov2019.pdf>, accessed 24 May 2022.

⁹ United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, "Trade in Goods Outlook in Asia and the Pacific 2021/2022," 15 November 2021, <https://www.unescap.org/kp/2021/trade-goods-outlook-asia-and-pacific-20212022>, accessed 24 May 2022.

¹⁰ Sheila Smith, "The Quad in the Indo-Pacific: What to Know," Council of Foreign Relations, 27 May 2021, <https://www.cfr.org/in-brief/quad-indo-pacific-what-know>, accessed 24 May 2022.

¹¹ See, for example, Michael Field, "Australia and New Zealand compete with China for Tonga influence," *Nikkei Asia*, 20 January 2022, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Australia-and-New-Zealand-compete-with-China-for-Tonga-influence>, accessed 24 May 2022; Tiffanie Turnbull, "Australia defends Solomon Islands ties as the row over China escalates," *BBC News*, 5 May 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-australia-61329518>, accessed 25 May 2022.

of Quad foreign ministers in Melbourne in February 2022.¹² Likewise, Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade emphasises the broad scope of the Quad agreement and that it does not replace other regional arrangements:

"The Quad is a diplomatic network of four countries committed to supporting a free and open Indo-Pacific that is inclusive and resilient...The Quad has a positive, practical agenda to respond to the region's most pressing challenges, including COVID-19 vaccines, climate change, infrastructure, critical and emerging technology, cyber security, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, space, maritime security, countering disinformation, and counterterrorism. Quad partners are steadfast supporters of ASEAN centrality, the ASEAN-led architecture and ASEAN's Outlook on Indo-Pacific."¹³

Of the four participants, India was the most ambivalent about the Quad. As well as joining the Quad, it participated in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation along with countries such as China and Russia. It was keen that the Quad should not be seen as directed against China, sought to de-emphasise the security and defence aspects of the agreement, and strongly resisted any attempt to turn Quad into a more formal alliance. The Quad agreement has also offered India the basis for cooperation with like-minded countries beyond Quad on issues such as COVID-19 responses or supply chain resilience. Aditi Malhotra characterizes India's position as *engagement over entanglement*, pursuing a policy of multi-alignment on a range of issues that include, but are not defined by security.¹⁴

This balanced approach became increasingly difficult with China's aggressive policy on the border between the two countries and in the Indian Ocean. China opened its first naval base in the Indian Ocean in Djibouti in 2017, has been developing infrastructure projects with Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Myanmar, become a

¹² Humeyra Pamuk, and Kirsty Needham, "Quad ministers address Indo-Pacific 'coercion,' climate COVID," *Reuters*, 11 February 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/quad-ministers-convene-address-indo-pacific-coercion-climate-covid-2022-02-10/>, accessed 24 May 2022.

¹³ Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, "Regional architecture: Quad," <https://www.dfat.gov.au/international-relations/regional-architecture/quad>, accessed 24 May 2022.

¹⁴ Aditi Malhotra, "Engagement, not Entanglement: India's Relationship with the Quad," *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, 1 May 2023, <https://gjia.georgetown.edu/2023/05/01/engagement-not-entanglement-indias-relationship-with-the-quad/>, accessed 8 May 2023.

defence supplier to Pakistan and Bangladesh, and had its submarines dock in Sri Lanka. While China may be simply increasing its ability to provide security and economic goods to countries in the region, it has exacerbated India's fears of encirclement by Chinese-linked countries.¹⁵ Less ambiguously, the border clashes between India and China in 2017 (the Doklam Crisis) and 2020-2 (over Ladakh) caused the former to adjust its foreign policy and to align the Quad with its concept of Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) and Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI), both aimed at containment of China. For the same reason, India has also deepened its military ties with all three other Quad members through a series of bilateral agreements that cover joint exercises and training, information-sharing and reciprocal logistics. Further, the Quad binds the United States more closely to the Indo-Pacific region, something that reassures Indian concerns about China, even as India tries to avoid making the Quad predominantly security-focused or anti-China. India remains committed to other international organizations such as BRICS that include China, and key partners of India (such as Iran, Myanmar or Sri Lanka) are part of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and thus are susceptible to Chinese interference in response to the Quad. India is also alone amongst the Quad countries in sharing a land border with China, raising the stakes if the Quad becomes too overtly anti-China in its focus.¹⁶

The Quad summit in May 2022 in Tokyo renewed a commitment "to a free and open Indo-Pacific that is inclusive and resilient."¹⁷ An earlier meeting in March discussed

¹⁵ Darshana M. Baruah, "Maritime Competition in the Indian Ocean," Testimony before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 12 May 2022, <https://carnegieendowment.org/2022/05/12/maritime-competition-in-indian-ocean-pub-87093>, accessed 4 October 2022; Anjana Pasricha, "India Feels the Squeeze in Indian Ocean with Chinese Projects in Neighbourhood", VOA, 16 September 2021, <https://www.voanews.com/a/india-feels-the-squeeze-in-indian-ocean-with-chinese-projects-in-neighborhood-/6230845.html>, accessed 4 October 2022.

¹⁶ Harsh V. Pant, "India and the Quad: Chinese belligerence and Indian resilience," Observer Research Foundation, 20 March 2022 <https://www.orfonline.org/research/india-and-the-quad/>, accessed 24 May 2022; Christophe Jaffrelot, "Weighing Quad against SCO." *Indian Express*, 21 September 2022, <https://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/weighing-quad-against-sco-8162928/> accessed 4 October 2022; Malhotra, Aditi, "Engagement, not Entanglement: India's Relationship with the Quad," *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, 1 May 2023, <https://gjia.georgetown.edu/2023/05/01/engagement-not-entanglement-indias-relationship-with-the-quad/>, accessed 8 May 2023.

¹⁷ Prime Minister of Australia, "Quad Joint Leaders' Statement," 24 May 2022, <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/quad-joint-leaders-statement>, accessed 24 May 2022; White House, "Quad

the Russian invasion of Ukraine which served as another potential source of division for Quad because India had been reluctant to condemn the invasion in the UN or elsewhere. Russia is an important supplier of both oil and materiel to India.¹⁸ The May meeting also discussed the war in Ukraine but emphasized the importance of maintaining peace and security in the region of the Indo-Pacific and “respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states.” The meeting re-emphasized the importance of ASEAN and other international organizations, and of international law, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).¹⁹ China was not specifically named in the joint communique even though much of this language on peace and security clearly pertained to its activities. Other aspects of the joint communique related to aspects of commitments made in 2021: global health security, regional infrastructure and investment to promote economic growth, climate change, cybersecurity, and enhancing critical and emerging technologies. Some areas of cooperation were new: deeper coordination on satellite observation of Earth in support of other Quad initiatives, and enhanced mechanisms to address natural disasters in the region.²⁰

The 2023 Quad summit was to be held in Sydney in May but was cancelled as President Biden chose to return to Washington DC to address the debt ceiling crisis. Instead, the four countries’ leaders held a more limited Quad meeting as an adjunct to the G7 meeting in Hiroshima. The leaders’ joint statement again emphasized a commitment to a free, open, inclusive, and resilient Indo-Pacific, the maintenance of a rules-based regional order through means such as UNCLOS, and support for the region’s existing institutions such as ASEAN. Previous priorities, on climate change, and health security including vaccinations, infrastructure, supply chains, resilience, finance,

Joint Leaders’ Statement”, May 24, 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/05/24/quad-joint-leaders-statement/>, accessed 24 May 2022.

¹⁸ Ravi Buddhavarapu, “India is in a sweet spot, courted by the Quad, China and Russia,” *CNBC*, <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/03/24/india-is-in-a-sweet-spot-courted-by-the-quad-china-and-russia.html>, accessed 24 May 2022.

¹⁹ Prime Minister of Australia, “Quad Joint Leaders’ Statement,” 24 May 2022, <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/quad-joint-leaders-statement>, accessed 24 May 2022; White House, “Quad Joint Leaders’ Statement,” 24 May 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/05/24/quad-joint-leaders-statement/>, accessed 24 May 2022.

²⁰ Prime Minister of Australia, “Quad Joint Leaders’ Statement,” 24 May 2022, <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/quad-joint-leaders-statement>, accessed 24 May 2022; White House, “Quad Joint Leaders’ Statement”, 24 May 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/05/24/quad-joint-leaders-statement/>, accessed 24 May 2022.

technology, and cybersecurity, were restated. New initiatives included a partnership for improving the undersea cable networks in the Indo-Pacific, support for infrastructure expertise through a fellowship program, a Quad Health Security Partnership and a Quad working group on counterterrorism that was first announced at the March Quad Foreign Ministers' meeting in New Delhi as a response to attacks in India in November.²¹ The 2023 meeting was also notable for statements that were clearly directed at China's actions over the previous year, opposing China's use of economic leverage and regional military expansion. More explicitly, the statement also expressed "serious concern at the militarization of disputed feature, the dangerous use of coastguard and maritime militia vessels, and efforts to disrupt other countries' offshore resource exploitation activities."²²

The 2024 Quad summit was held on 21 September in Wilmington, Delaware. It reflected that the role of the group, while still retaining a key role in security cooperation, also continues to emphasise a range of additional functions. Maritime security continued to matter in the four leaders' discussions. For example, the Summit launched a Maritime Initiative for Training in the Indo-Pacific (MAITRI) as part of the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness (IPMDA) that was announced at the 2022 Summit. It also included plans for further coastguard cooperation between the four states. However, the 2024 summit also addressed the importance of green energy supply chains, infrastructure and training, enhancing the resilience of undersea cables and supporting measures to improve regional health. Health cooperation built on agreements made in 2023 and focused on cancer treatment, pandemic preparedness and Mpox response. The 2024 summit also restated the continued role of Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) in the four countries' joint efforts.²³

²¹ Prime Minister of Australia, "Quad Leaders' Joint Statement," 20 May 2023, <https://www.pm.gov.au/media/quad-leaders-joint-statement>, accessed 15 June 2023; SD Pradhan, "The Quad Summit 2023 in Japan: Conveys a positive message to the region," *The Times of India*, 21 May 2023, <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/blogs/ChanakyaCode/the-quad-summit-2023-in-japan-conveys-a-positive-message-to-the-region/>, accessed 15 June 2023.

²² "Quad countries make thinly veiled swipe at China," *Al Jazeera*, 20 May 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/5/20/quad-countries-make-thinly-veiled-swipe-at-china>, accessed 15 June 2023.

²³ Prime Minister of Australia, "2024 Quad Leaders' Summit," 24 September 2024, <https://www.pmc.gov.au/news/2024-quad-leaders-summit>, accessed 30 September 2024; The White House, "Fact Sheet: 2024 Quad Leaders' Summit," 21 September 2024,

Quad and the potential for additional members – “Quad Plus”

The overarching vision for the Quad members is that the group promote a free and open Indo-Pacific that is inclusive and resilient. That requires that the Quad expands its activities beyond the four core member states. So far, the means by which this so-called “Quad Plus” might be achieved remains under-defined. Full membership of the Quad is unlikely for additional countries because there are few obvious candidates that would add significantly to the Quad’s efforts. The Lowry Institute observed that: “Other large Indo-Pacific democracies such as the Republic of Korea or Indonesia, do not align strategically with the four Quad countries to the extent necessary to make them viable members. And expansion risks the group becoming diluted and unwieldy.”²⁴

The Quad foreign ministers, meeting in February 2022, agreed that Quad should be expanded to include *dialogue partners*, but the meaning of this and how it might be achieved remains vague. The Lowry Institute report advocated *finding friends of the Quad* because a more formal approach risks competing with the centrality of ASEAN in the region. Furthermore, a formal approach would be logistically challenging because the Quad is currently a cooperative arrangement between four partners rather than an international body with the infrastructure that would permit an inter-institutional approach.²⁵ Finally, China has been already highly critical of the Quad and participating in further institutionalization or becoming an additional formal partner risks alienating China which is an unattractive option for many states in the region.

The most likely route for *dialogue partners* to participate with Quad is on an ad hoc, issue-specific basis. This has occurred already. Early in the COVID-19 pandemic, the four Quad countries were joined by Vietnam, the Republic of Korea and New Zealand to share assessments of the situation and discuss the scope for shared efforts to counter the threat.²⁶ Regional health security remains a priority of the Quad and has the advantage

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2024/09/21/fact-sheet-2024-quad-leaders-summer/>, accessed 30 September 2024.

²⁴ Susannah Patton, “Does the Quad Plus Add up?” *The Interpreter*, 21 March 2022,

<https://www.lowryinstitute.org/the-interpreter/does-quad-plus-add>, accessed 25 May 2022.

²⁵ Patton, “Does the Quad Plus Add up?”

²⁶ Jeff M. Smith, “How America Is Leading the ‘Quad Plus’ Group of 7 Countries in Fighting the Coronavirus,” The Heritage Foundation, 1 April 2020, <https://www.heritage.org/global->

that “crisis response, humanitarian aid, and disaster relief are areas where the four democracies are highly capable, face little internal political resistance and can expand their soft power reach in the Indo-Pacific.”²⁷ However, it is also this ongoing and developing emphasis on issues other than security (narrowly defined) that offers militarily limited states, such as Canada, greater scope for cooperation with Quad initiatives. It is here, in the broader efforts of Quad, that Canada can provide the most value-added. Although bilateral cooperation on such issues would be possible, the Quad offers a framework for the coordination of regional efforts on issues that are beyond the scope of individual states to manage.

Canada and the Indo-Pacific

Canada’s potential for full participation in the Indo-Pacific is limited by the lack of an updated strategy for the region until late 2022. Canada has sought to participate only secondarily in Indo-Pacific institutions and affairs, choosing instead to focus more on its historical ties to Atlantic institutions such as NATO and to its key security and economic alliance with the United States.²⁸ Canada has also typically depended on these commitments and its fortunate geographical position to lean on allies for security. Canada made a long-standing and meaningful contribution to the US-led mission to Afghanistan and, in the twentieth century, was a leading UN peacekeeping state. However, recent calls on Canada amongst others to meet its NATO obligation to spend 2 percent of GDP on defence and the implausibility that commitment will be met is indicative of the country’s approach to security.²⁹

One of Canada’s key security commitments is with Australia and New Zealand (along with the United Kingdom and the United States) through the Five Eyes

[politics/commentary/how-america-leading-the-quad-plus-group-7-countries-fighting-the](#), accessed 25 May 2022.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Richard Kim Nossal, “The North Atlantic anchor: Canada and the Pacific Century,” *International Journal*, 73, Issue 3, (2018), <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0020702018792909?icid=int.sj-full-text.similar-articles.1> accessed 6 October 2022.

²⁹ Murray Brewster, “NATO is getting ready to twist Canada's arm on defence spending,” *CBC News*, 7 April 2023, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/nato-canada-defence-spending-1.6804733>, accessed 10 April 2023.

intelligence cooperation, but that should be seen more as a historical connection among Anglosphere powers rather than a specifically Indo-Pacific one. Canada has repeatedly pledged to deepen its ties to the Indo-Pacific, but such commitments have been undermined by reluctance to fully engage with evolving regional institutions. An example of this was Canada missing the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), announced by President Biden in June 2022. The IPEF will be not only a trade agreement, but also a framework for regional trade rules. Canada's absence from the IPEF limited the scope for Canada to affect rule-making decisions on regional trade and therefore be anything other than a rule-taker in this context. In October 2022, Canadian foreign minister Mélanie Joly announced that Canada would seek membership of the IPEF, a move welcomed by the US although there was no established process for considering new countries as members.³⁰

In June 2022, the Canadian government announced the creation of a new Indo-Pacific Advisory Committee (IPAC). The Global Affairs Canada news release echoed some of the language within the Quad discussions: "Canada is actively investing in the Indo-Pacific region to support a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific that contributes to a rules-based international order."³¹ The same news release noted that Canada's goals include "trade diversification, inclusive growth, effective action on climate change and enhanced regional security", again echoing key agenda items within Quad discussions.³² In November 2022, Prime Minister Trudeau attended the ASEAN summit in Cambodia and recommitted Canada to participate in the Indo-Pacific region. As part of the summit, ASEAN recognized Canada as a comprehensive strategic partnership, a level of non-member participation in the organization that is held also by Australia, China, India and

³⁰ Stephen Nagy, "Canada's Indo-Pacific absence leaves us on the inside looking in: China is part of the Indo-Pacific but is not the Indo-Pacific," *The Hub*, 6 June 2022, <https://thehub.ca/2022-06-06/stephen-nagy-canadas-indo-pacific-absence-leaves-us-on-the-outside-looking-in/>, accessed 6 September 2022; Zi-Ann Lum, "No-show Joe: Biden leaves Trudeau, Canada hanging," *Politico*, 29 October 2022, <https://www.politico.com/news/2022/10/29/joe-biden-justin-trudeau-canada-00064095>, accessed 24 November 2022.

³¹ Global Affairs Canada, "Minister Joly announces new Indo-Pacific Advisory Committee," 9 June 2022, <https://www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2022/06/minister-joly-announces-new-indo-pacific-advisory-committee.html>, accessed 16 September 2022.

³² *Ibid.*

the United States.³³ Canada's newly announced commitment would include a Canada-ASEAN Strategic Partnership and an Indo-Pacific Engagement Initiative (IPEI) to promote greater Canadian civil society links with the region. The Prime Minister also announced a series of specific measures totalling \$333 million over five years to promote Canadian trade and investment, educational exchanges, gender inclusion and equality, peace, and sustainable development including money for the Shared Ocean Fund. Finally, the Prime Minister offered both money and Canadian expertise to assist demining efforts in Laos and Cambodia.³⁴ At the following G20 Summit in Bali, the Prime Minister pledged \$750 million to promote sustainable infrastructure in the Indo-Pacific region, and smaller amounts dedicated towards environmental and climate change initiatives and agreed to trade and security commitments with Indonesia.³⁵ The Prime Minister then continued on to the APEC summit in Thailand, looking to strengthen trade links with the 21 members of that group. APEC is focused on the technical aspects of trade relations, so Trudeau's attendance was as much an effort to reinforce Canada's new commitment to the Indo-Pacific region as an attempt to make tangible short-term trade gains.³⁶ At APEC, the Prime Minister also pledged deeper military ties between Canada and allies in the region and committed a further \$183 million in new funding to strengthen Canada's diplomatic, trade and agricultural representation in the Indo-Pacific.³⁷

³³ Dylan Robertson, "Trudeau puts cash behind Indo-Pacific pledges during visit to Southeast Asia summit", *CBC News*, 12 November 2022, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/trudeau-asean-trip-1.6649885>, accessed 14 November 2022.

³⁴ Prime Minister of Canada, "Prime Minister strengthens ties with ASEAN and expands partnerships in the Indo-Pacific," 13 November 2022, <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2022/11/13/prime-minister-strengthens-ties-asean-and-expands-partnerships-indo>, accessed 14 November 2022.

³⁵ Prime Minister of Canada, "Canadian investments in the Indo-Pacific and G20 priorities," 16 November 2022, [https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/backgrounders/2022/11/16/canadian-investments-indo-pacific-and-g20-priorities#:~:text=Infrastructure%20Support%20\(Indo%2DPacific%20Strategy\)&text=Canada's%20contribution%20will%20help%20reduce,and%20communities%20to%20benefit%20everyone](https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/backgrounders/2022/11/16/canadian-investments-indo-pacific-and-g20-priorities#:~:text=Infrastructure%20Support%20(Indo%2DPacific%20Strategy)&text=Canada's%20contribution%20will%20help%20reduce,and%20communities%20to%20benefit%20everyone), accessed 16 November 2022.

³⁶ Dylan Robertson, "Trudeau's Indo-Pacific tour stops in Thailand with trade focus," *Canadian Press*, 17 November 2022, <https://www.cp24.com/news/trudeau-s-indo-pacific-tour-stops-in-thailand-with-trade-focus-1.6156765>, accessed 17 November 2022.

³⁷ "Canadian Armed Forces to enhance engagement with Indo-Pacific, Trudeau says," *Canadian Press*, 18 November 2022, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/trudeau-caf-into-pacific-diplomatic-jobs-1.6656115>, accessed 18 November 2022.

On 27 November, the Canadian government launched its Indo-Pacific strategy, entailing a commitment of \$2.3 billion in new initiatives over the first five years and an intention to refresh the plan for 2027-32. The strategy was much more forthright than many previous government statements about the challenge posed by China, *an increasingly disruptive global power*. The strategy emphasized building Canada's relationships with other regional states to promote Canada's interests and counterbalance China's impact on Canada through investment in five areas: 1) peace, resilience and security, 2) trade, investment and supply chain resilience, 3) invest in and connect people, 4) building a sustainable and green future, 5) Canada as an active and engaged partner to the Indo-Pacific. The strategy particularly noted Japan, South Korea and India as countries with which Canada had an interest in deepening relations, although it also promised assistance to smaller regional states to enhance their military capabilities. The strategy also identified the Arctic as a future area of contestation in which Canada had particular interest and noted Taiwan as an area of future tension and possible Chinese unilateral action. In both cases, Canada would promote its national interest, not only opposing such unilateral actions but also safeguarding its sovereignty.³⁸ In spite of this apparent flood of new initiatives to enhance Canadian engagement with the region, the Indo-Pacific Strategy remains light on firm details and represents a modest new financial commitment to the region, particularly since the \$2.3 billion is spread over five years. Other scholars have made a similar point: Hernandez-Roy, Rigby and Ziemer calculated that the defence aspect of the Indo-Pacific strategy, pledging participation in additional joint military exercises and one further Canadian ship to engage in joint patrols in the region, represents a commitment of \$500 million, again, spread over five years.³⁹ At the 2023 Shangri-La Dialogue, Canadian Defence Minister Anand restated this commitment,

³⁸ Murray Brewster, "Trudeau government unveils long-awaited plan to confront an 'increasingly disruptive' China", *CBC News*, 27 November 2022, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canada-china-trudeau-xi-taiwan-1.6664854>, accessed 28 November 2022; Global Affairs Canada, "Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy: New initiatives and resources", <https://www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2022/11/canadas-indo-pacific-strategy-new-initiatives-and-resources.html>, accessed 28 November 2022; Global Affairs Canada, "Canada's Indo-Pacific Strategy," <https://www.international.gc.ca/transparence-transparence/assets/pdfs/indo-pacific-indo-pacifique/indo-pacific-indo-pacifique-en.pdf>, accessed 18 November 2022.

³⁹ Christopher Hernandez-Roy, Vincent Rigby and Henry Ziemer, "Canadian Membership in AUKUS: A Time for Action," Center for Strategic and International Studies, 9 May 2023, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/canadian-membership-aukus-time-action>, accessed 10 May 2023.

adding that Operation Horizon will replace Operation Projection and that Canada remains committed to preserving a free and open Indo-Pacific.⁴⁰ By comparison, between early 2022 and 2024, Canada directed \$4 billion of military assistance and \$7.4 billion of financial assistance to Ukraine as part of a wider \$13.3 billion commitment.⁴¹ The funds directed to the Indo-Pacific by the Canadian government do not, therefore, seem indicative of a strategic pivot away from older alliance obligations.

Canada's renewed commitment to ASEAN partners, as part of the Indo-Pacific Strategy, is also problematic. Many states and commentators welcomed Canada's new focus.⁴² However, Canada's position as a close ally of the US is at odds with many ASEAN countries' approach to hedging with regard to major powers in the region.⁴³ Canada's position risks being understood simply as the *West against the rest*, even though the reality is more complex.⁴⁴ Tang describes Canada's evolving position as *friend-shoring*, engaging primarily with like-minded states for trade, and argues that this is at odds with ASEAN states preference for a more balanced and less values-based approach to partnership.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ "Canada to 'significantly' enhance military presence in Indo-Pacific region: Anand," *Canadian Press*, 3 June 2023, <https://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/canada-to-significantly-enhance-military-presence-in-indo-pacific-region-anand-1.6426084>, accessed 12 June 2023.

⁴¹ Prime Minister of Canada, "Prime Minister visits Kyiv and announces additional support for Ukraine," 14 February 2024, <https://www.pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2024/02/24/prime-minister-visits-kyiv-and-announces-additional-support-ukraine#:~:text=Since%20the%20beginning%20of%202022,in%20funding%20to%20support%20Ukraine>, accessed 30 September 2024.

⁴² See, for example, Phillip Calvert, "Canadian Diplomacy in Southeast Asia: challenges for the coming Decades," *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 29, 2 (2023): pp. 99, 131-143.

⁴³ Jennifer Mustapha, "Rethinking Canada's security interests in Southeast Asia: from "Asia-Pacific" to "Indo-Pacific," *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 29 (2023): pp. 175-188.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/11926422.2023.2203936>; Evans, P. "Canada and Southeast Asia: entering through a different door," *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 29, 2 (2023): pp. 202-206.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/11926422.2023.2225201>; Shaun Narine, "How Canada's Indo-Pacific strategy conflicts with ASEAN's outlook on the Indo-Pacific," *International Journal* (Toronto) 78, 1-2, (2023): pp. 172-192. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00207020231175876>.

⁴⁴ Robert Hanlon, "Canada and the Indo-Pacific Strategic Environment," *Canadian Political Science Review* 17, 1 (2023): pp. 1-9,. Thompson Rivers University. Retrieved from:

<https://ojs.unbc.ca/index.php/cpsr/article/view/1917/1456>

⁴⁵ Bijuan Tang, "Potential friend-shoring in the Indo-Pacific: why a value-based approach to trade will set Canada back on its Indo-Pacific strategy," *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 29, 1 (2023): pp. 110-113,. <https://doi.org/10.1080/11926422.2023.2199457>.

Canada's past limited participation in the region's governance infrastructure is compounded by its continued relative lack of regional capacity.⁴⁶ Arguably, Canada was not included in the September 2021 AUKUS agreement, aimed at containing Chinese policy in the Western Pacific, because it had little to contribute to the agreement between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States.⁴⁷ Such a harsh assessment might be true in the immediate sense since the AUKUS deal focused initially on nuclear submarines (which also ensured New Zealand was excluded as the agreement would have violated its long-standing antinuclear policy), which Canada does not possess. Nonetheless, Canada is a Pacific country with close historical, cultural, security and intelligence (through the Five Eyes) ties to the three AUKUS countries.⁴⁸ Another potential reason for the exclusion was the AUKUS agreement also focused on cybersecurity which was problematic for Canada as it chose to defer its decision on excluding Chinese companies from its 5G network until May 2022, significantly later than Australia, the UK or the US had made their equivalent decisions.⁴⁹ When Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States met in March 2023 to further develop details on the AUKUS agreement, Canada continued to be sidelined from the discussions. The focus of discussion remained nuclear submarines, of which Canada has none, but the wider significance was that Canada's closest allies are increasingly focused on tangible measures to counter China's influence in the Indo-Pacific, rather than on symbolic membership of like-minded groups. Canada has still not decided how fully committed it

⁴⁶ Jesse Snyder, "Neglect of the Indo-Pacific hinders Canada's support of Taiwan, experts say," *National Post*, 6 October 2021 <https://nationalpost.com/news/politics/neglect-of-indo-pacific-region-hinders-canadas-support-of-taiwan-amid-growing-chinese-aggression-experts>, accessed 15 May 2022.

⁴⁷ See, for example, Stephanie Carvin and Thomas Juneau, "Why AUKUS and not CAUKUS? It's a Potluck, not a Party," *International Journal* 78, 3 (2023): pp. 359-374. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00207020231195109>, accessed 2 April 2024.

⁴⁸ Adrian Morrow, "Canada left out as U.S., U.K. Australia strike deal to counter China," *The Globe and Mail*, 15 September 2021, <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/world/us-politics/article-canada-left-out-as-us-uk-australia-strike-deal-to-counter-china/>, accessed 25 May 2022.

⁴⁹ Catharine Tunney, and Richard Raycroft, "Canada bans Chinese tech giant Huawei from 5G network," *CBC*, 19 May 2022 <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/huawei-5g-decision-1.6310839>, accessed 25 May 2022; Matthew Bondy, "Excluded from AUKUS? Canada Should Seek to Invite Itself Aboard," Centre for International Governance Innovation, 30 September 2021, <https://www.cigionline.org/articles/excluded-from-aucus-canada-should-invite-itself-aboard/>, accessed 25 May 2022.

is willing to be within the region and how fully it is willing to confront China.⁵⁰ Given this focus on tangible measures, rather than on having the AUKUS serve as a club, it seems unlikely that Canada will be invited to join an AUKUS+ arrangement unless it alters its position.⁵¹ The AUKUS agreement, beyond the immediate focus on nuclear-powered submarines, also seeks to “strengthen and make more resilient [the participating countries’] supply chains, enhancing the industrial bases in all...nations” and “enhance the ability of our...nations to deter aggression and contribute to stability in the Indo-Pacific, and globally.”⁵² In May 2023, Defence Minister Anita Anand specifically identified that “Canada is highly interested in furthering cooperation on AI, quantum computing and other advanced technologies with a defence nexus with our closest allies.”⁵³ It is this non-nuclear facet of AUKUS that encompasses not only technology but also, potentially, intelligence cooperation that most concerns Canada and which may result in the country being left behind in the evolving cooperation within the Indo-Pacific.⁵⁴ However, it is also this facet of AUKUS that offers scope for Canada to make a contribution outside the formal parameters of the agreement.

Canada’s Evolving Security Posture in the Indo-Pacific

The slowness of the 5G decision, combined with Canada’s links to China, its second-largest trading partner, led some commentators particularly in India and Australia to question whether Canada would be a positive addition to the Quad process. Although

⁵⁰ Lee Berthiaume, “Canada on sidelines as U.S., Britain, Australia move ahead on new security deal,” *CBC News*, 13 March 2023, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/aukus-national-defence-britain-australia-1.6777498>, accessed 14 March 2023.

⁵¹ Spencer Van Dyk, “No plans to invite Canada to join AUKUS: White House,” *CTV News*, 11 June 2023, <https://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/no-plans-to-invite-canada-to-join-aukus-white-house-1.6436328>, accessed 2 April 2024.

⁵² The White House, “Fact Sheet: Trilateral Australia-UK-US Partnership on Nuclear-Powered Submarines,” 13 March 2023, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/03/13/fact-sheet-trilateral-australia-uk-us-partnership-on-nuclear-powered-submarines/> accessed 14 March 2023.

⁵³ Leyland Cecco, “Canada hopes to join Aukus defence pact, says report,” *The Guardian*, 8 May 2023, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/may/08/canada-aukus-defence-pact>, accessed 2 April 2024.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*; Stephanie Carvin, & Thomas Juneau, “Why AUKUS and not CAUKUS? It’s a Potluck, not a Party,” *International Journal* 78, 3 (2023): pp. 359-374. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00207020231195109>, accessed 2 April 2024.

the Quad is not aimed directly at any one country, would Canada share the four-member states' understanding of the geopolitical challenges in the Indo-Pacific? Canada's position on China has continued to evolve, reflecting the complexity of its need to balance economic considerations with maintaining strong connections to security partners such as the United States and Australia. In October 2020, Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister François-Phillipe Champagne said "The use of coercive diplomacy causes Canada to re-examine its approach, with a focus on multilateral cooperation. As we build a new framework for relations with China, Canada will work with partners to hold the Chinese government accountable to its international obligations." However, in May 2022, Champagne's successor, Mélanie Joly, said "We want to make sure that we have a relationship with China...My goal is to make sure that we reestablish ties."⁵⁵ In June 2023, Canada's ambassador to China, Jennifer May, emphasized the importance of continuing bilateral efforts on areas of mutual interest to Canada and China. While acknowledging the difficulties of trust in an atmosphere tainted by allegations of Chinese interference in Canadian politics, May identified climate change, trade, and promoting clean growth as areas of such ongoing cooperation.⁵⁶ In July 2024, Minister Joly met with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. Global Affairs Canada's statement at the meeting emphasized "pragmatic engagement with China and the development of sound and stable bilateral relations."⁵⁷

Few scholars in the recent literature have argued for an all-or-nothing Canadian approach to relations with China and to the Indo-Pacific more generally. Kawasaki has suggested that Canada should embrace the ambiguity within its relationship with China, and adopt a strategic policy of "hedging," a pragmatic and issue-by-issue approach to China that

⁵⁵ Andy Blatchford, "Joly: Canada is working to rekindle relations with Beijing," *Politico*, 19 May 2022 <https://www.politico.com/news/2022/05/19/canada-looking-to-rekindle-relations-with-beijing-00033798> accessed 4 October 2022.

⁵⁶ Jessica Mundie, "Canada's ambassador to China says nations must co-operate despite strained relationship," *CBC News*, 18 June 2023, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canada-china-ambassador-relations-1.6880301>, accessed 15 September, 2023.

⁵⁷ Philip Ling, and Peter Zimonjic, "Canada, China pledge to mend relations after foreign affairs ministers meet in Beijing: Tibet, Hong Kong, Taiwan and the Uyghurs' plight are 'internal affairs,' China says," *CBC News*, 19 July 2024, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/joly-meets-wang-beijing-canada-china-1.7269380>, accessed 30 September 2024.

avoids the extremes of engagement or confrontation as the dominant strategy.⁵⁸ Fortier and Massie, however, find that Canada has moved away from hedging in the Indo-Pacific and towards bandwagoning with the United States.⁵⁹ Although Lim agrees with several of the factors that have created tensions in Canada's relationship with China: growing domestic unease in Canada towards China and a more aggressive Chinese foreign policy under President Xi, Lim still proposes engaging with China on an issue-by-issue basis.⁶⁰ Rashchupkina explains that Canada's attempts to develop trade agreements with China have been hampered by concerns over labour, the environment and human rights. She also thinks that such ongoing problems might signal a shift in Canadian trade policy towards India.⁶¹ Reeves argues for Canadian governments to pursue a policy of "equidistance" between China and the United States in the region. This entails a policy that differentiates between the Indo-Pacific as a strategic reality and specific US-led policies such as FOIP. Instead, Canada should pursue a regional framework that is "diverse", "inclusive" and *stable* through middle-power diplomacy and promoting values of multilateralism and the rule of law.⁶² Holland frames the importance of Canada's evolving policy towards China and the Indo-Pacific, notes that Canada's internationalist preferences align with the United States' attempts to contain China's norm-changing approach to international relations, and argues that Canada could mitigate the United States' pursuit of FOIP.⁶³ Pence sees a successful United States policy towards China involves Canada, but notes that Canada is skeptical of following the US

⁵⁸ Tsuyoshi Kawasaki, "Hedging against China: formulating Canada's new strategy in the era of power politics" *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 27, 2 (2021): pp. 175-193.

⁵⁹ Maxandre Fortier and Justin Massie, "Strategic hedgers? Australia and Canada's defence adaptation to the global power transition," *International Journal* 78, 3 (2023): pp. 463-478. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00207020231195633>.

⁶⁰ Preston Lim, "Sino-Canadian Relations in the Age of Justin Trudeau," *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 26, no. 1 (2019): pp. 25-40. <https://doi.org/10.1080/11926422.2019.1641118>.

⁶¹ Yuliya Rashchupkina, "Canadian Foreign Politics: Is There Any Chance of Making Headway in Preserving the Liberal International Order?" *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 28, no. 2 (2022): pp. 180-90. <https://doi.org/10.1080/11926422.2022.2033286>.

⁶² Jeffrey Reeves, "Canada and the Indo-Pacific: 'Diverse' and 'inclusive', not 'free' and 'open'", Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, 22 September 2020. <https://www.asiapacific.ca/sites/default/files/publication-pdf/CANADA%20AND%20THE%20INDO-PACIFIC%20%281%29.pdf> accessed 4 October 2022.

⁶³ Kenneth Holland, "Canada and the Indo-Pacific Strategy," *Canadian Foreign Policy Journal* 27, 2 (2021): pp. 228-250.

lead and wants to create its own China policy.⁶⁴ MacDonald and Vance considered four possible directions that Canada could take in its Indo-Pacific policy: *minimal engagement*, US-aligned confrontation, regional multilateralism, and selective multilateralism. In each case, MacDonald and Vance identified problems with the approach and avoided advocating one direction over the others. They identified Canada joining a Quad-Plus arrangement with a US-aligned confrontation approach which had the disadvantages of limiting Canada's freedom of action in the region, undermining its relationship with China, jeopardizing its existing economic and other interests, and complicating its relationship on non-security issues with other states in the region.⁶⁵

The Canadian government's evolving terminology around the Indo-Pacific region suggests that its understanding has become increasingly aligned with that of the Quad. The significance of the shift from "Asia-Pacific" to "Indo-Pacific" is discussed by Benjamin who characterises the Asia-Pacific version of Canadian policy as *non-confrontational, semi-detached and economically-oriented* while the Indo-Pacific version is more aligned to the policies of friendly states, is more involved in the region and more concerned with security in Asia.⁶⁶ He attributes this change to the Canadian government's response to Chinese foreign policy but also argues that Canada's primary security focus will remain on more traditional regions of interest and partners than those in the Indo-Pacific.⁶⁷ The Indo-Pacific is an important area for Canadian interests because so much Canadian trade passes through the region. Canadian grains, minerals, and energy resources are exported to Asia and manufactured goods are imported from Asia to Canada. The Indo-Pacific is an important area for Canadian interests because Canada-Indo-Pacific two-way trade is valued at \$226 billion annually, two-way service trade has grown by 80% since 2010 and the value of two-way foreign direct investment has doubled over the same period. Two-way capital investment was valued at \$64B between 2020 and 2022. The Indo-Pacific region is Canada's second-largest regional export and trading

⁶⁴ Eliot Pence, "Road Kill in a Game of Chicken': China, Canada, and the United States," Council on Foreign Relations. Council on Foreign Relations, 5 January 2021. <https://www.cfr.org/blog/road-kill-game-chicken-china-canada-and-united-states>.

⁶⁵ Adam MacDonald, and Carter Vance, "Developing a Canadian Indo-Pacific geopolitical orientation," *International Journal*, 76, 4, (2021): pp. 564-93.

⁶⁶ Jacob Benjamin, "Canada's cross-pacific relations: From Asia-Pacific to Indo-Pacific," *International Journal* 77, 1 (2022): pp. 89-111.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

market after the United States and as well as major economies such as India, China and Japan, also include key trading partners such as South Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam.⁶⁸ Canada therefore has a significant interest in protecting freedom of trade, of navigation, and of a rules-based maritime system in the Pacific.

Concerns about Canadian participation undermining Quad coherence are overstated. The current shape of the Quad, as a loose agreement of core countries with a broadly similar idea of preferred regional norms, rules, values and standards, is precisely because the four members do not share an identical approach, particularly with respect to China. All four worry about China's intentions, but the four also have different geographic and strategic realities in their relationship with China.⁶⁹ It is for this reason that additional full members of the Quad make less sense than piecemeal participation by additional countries through Quad Plus. For example, Canada is heavily committed to cybersecurity and to a rules-based international order.

An arrangement, such as the Quad, that addresses security broadly in the Indo-Pacific is a better fit for Canada than a narrowly focused version that exclusively emphasizes military affairs. Nonetheless, Canada has recently participated in military exercises in the region, such as the biennial RIMPAC, led by the United States, and the biennial Exercise *Talisman Sabre*, led by Australia.⁷⁰ In 2020, *HMCS Winnipeg* participated in *Keen Sword 21*, a US-Japanese-led military drill focused on developing warfighting capacity and interoperability.⁷¹ In January 2021, Canada participated in the exercise *Sea Dragon*, led by the United States. This was significant because the exercise involved the four Quad members, plus Canada, conducting joint antisubmarine warfare (ASW) training off

⁶⁸ Global Affairs Canada, "Canada launches Indo-Pacific Strategy to support long-term growth, prosperity, and security for Canadians," 27 November 2022, <https://www.canada.ca/en/global-affairs/news/2022/11/canada-launches-indo-pacific-strategy-to-support-long-term-growth-prosperity-and-security-for-canadians.html>, accessed 11 May 2023.

⁶⁹ Emma, K, Chalett-Avery, Alan Kronstadt, and Bruce Vaughn, "The 'Quad': Security Cooperation Among the United States, Japan, India, and Australia," Congressional Research Service, 16 May 2022, <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/row/IF11678.pdf>, accessed 25 May 2022.

⁷⁰ Steve Raaymakers, "Why Is Canada Missing From the Indo-Pacific?" *The Diplomat*, 25 October 2021, <https://thediplomat.com/2021/10/why-is-canada-missing-from-the-indo-pacific/> accessed 25 May 2022.

⁷¹ Chelsea Dubeau "Staying Sharp on Exercise KEEN SWORD," <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/maple-leaf/defence/2020/12/staying-sharp-ex-keen-sword.html>, accessed 25 May 2022.

Guam.⁷² The same five countries, plus South Korea, participated in the 2022 exercise Sea Dragon 22, also focused on ASW⁷³ and *Sea Dragon 23*, also focused on ASW, involved the navies of the United States, Japan, India, South Korea and Canada.⁷⁴ In June 2023, *HMCS Montreal* took part in *Noble Raven 23*, an ASW exercise with the navies of Japan and the United States.⁷⁵ This was a repeat of the exercise in September 2022, again focused on enhancing cooperation and preserving a “free and open Indo-Pacific.”⁷⁶ In August 2023, Canada sent the frigates *HMCS Ottawa* and *Vancouver*, plus a support vessel, *MV Asterix*, to the Indo-Pacific for a four-month mission. There, they participated in a series of exercises and operations with Canada’s regional partners, as well as participated in the monitoring of UNSC sanctions on North Korea through *Op NEON*. Sending two frigates permits Canada to engage simultaneously with partners in both Southeast Asia (*Ottawa*) and Northeast Asia (*Vancouver*).⁷⁷ *HMCS Ottawa*’s deployment included a joint exercise with Japanese and US vessels in which the Canadian ship had three close encounters with Chinese military ships and planes in the East China Sea.⁷⁸ In 2024, Minister of National Defence, Bill Blair announced that Canada would again be participating in RIMPAC. *HMCS Vancouver*, *HMCS Max Bernays*, *MV Asterix* and 300 members of the Canadian

⁷² Abhijnan Rej, “Quad Plus Canada Participate in Anti-Sub War Exercise,” *The Diplomat*, 22 January 2021, <https://thediplomat.com/2021/01/quad-plus-canada-participate-in-anti-sub-war-exercise/>, accessed 25 May 2022.

⁷³ United States Navy, “Six Indo-Pacific Nations begin Exercise Sea Dragon,” 5 January 2022, <https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/Article/2889948/six-indo-pacific-nations-begin-exercise-sea-dragon/>, accessed 25 May 2022.

⁷⁴ United States Navy, “Canada, India, Japan, Korea, and the U.S. Complete Multilateral Guam-Based Exercise Sea Dragon 2023,” 6 April 2023, <https://www.navy.mil/Press-Office/News-Stories/Article/3354063/canada-india-japan-korea-and-the-us-complete-multilateral-guam-based-exercise-s/>, accessed 15 June 2023.

⁷⁵ Maple Leaf Navy, “Japan-U.S.-Canada Multilateral Exercise Noble Raven 23,” 20 June 2023, <https://www.mapleleafnavy.com/index.php/2023/06/20/japan-u-s-canada-multilateral-exercise-noble-raven-23/> accessed 31 July 2023.

⁷⁶ “Japan-U.S.-Canada Multilateral Exercise NOBLE RAVEN 22-2,” *Sea Waves*, 3 October 2022, <https://seawaves.com/2022/10/03/japan-u-s-canada-multilateral-exercise-noble-raven-22-2/> accessed 31 July 2023.

⁷⁷ Government of Canada, “Royal Canadian Navy ships deploy to Indo-Pacific Region,” 14 August 2023, <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/news/2023/08/royal-canadian-navy-ships-deploy-to-indo-pacific-region.html>, accessed 15 September 2023.

⁷⁸ David Common, “A Canadian warship has at least 3 encounters with Chinese ships as it patrols contested waters,” *CBC News*, 7 September 2023, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/hmcs-ottawa-east-china-sea-1.6959012>, accessed 15 September 2023.

Armed Forces will participate in *RIMPAC 2024*. *HMCS Vancouver* will then join *HMCS Montreal* as part of *Operation Horizon* in support of Canada's commitment to the Indo-Pacific. *HMCS Ottawa* is expected to join the two other frigates in the fall. In May 2024, Canada also sent a long-range patrol aircraft to Japan under *Operation NEON* to support UN sanctions against North Korea. Minister Blair said of the 2024 deployment:

“As a Pacific nation, the security and stability of the Indo-Pacific region is vital to Canada's future. It is the world's fastest-growing region and home to several of our top trading partners. This Canadian naval deployment demonstrates that Canada is a partner for peace, stability and prosperity in the region – and that we are committed to promoting a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific.”⁷⁹

Encounters between Canadian forces and those of China continued through the 2023 deployment. For example, on 29 October, a helicopter from *HMCS Ottawa* was twice intercepted by Chinese navy fighters. The first time, the fighters flew close to the helicopter and, the second time, fired flares close to the helicopter. China blamed Canada for the situation, saying that Canada was carrying out “malicious and provocative” actions in the South China Sea.⁸⁰ Such challenges have pushed Canada towards friendly countries in the region: in August 2024, Canada and Australia agreed that they would pursue greater force inter-operability and operational cooperation in response to China's position in the region.⁸¹ Canada has also worked with the New Zealand Defense Force in developing a program (CANZEX) to promote “inter-operability in training, operations, and human resources” and with multiple Asian militaries to improve peace support operations and staff training through the Military Training and Cooperation Program. In each case, however, these joint efforts are not supported by participation in a formal Indo-

⁷⁹ Government of Canada, “Minister Blair announces deployment of Royal Canadian Navy ships to the Indo-Pacific Region,” 2 June 2024, <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-national-defence/news/2024/06/minister-blair-announces-deployment-of-royal-canadian-navy-ships-to-the-indo-pacific-region.html>, accessed 30 September 2024.

⁸⁰ Nectar Gan, and Brad Lennon, “China blames Canada for ‘malicious, provocative’ moves after close midair intercepts over South China Sea,” *CNN*, 6 November 2023, <https://www.cnn.com/2023/11/06/china/china-blames-canada-close-intercepts-scs-intl-hnk/index.html>, accessed 15 November 2023

⁸¹ “Canada and Australia, eyeing China, signal more military cooperation,” *CTV News*, 8 August 2024, <https://www.ctvnews.ca/politics/canada-and-australia-eyeing-china-signal-more-military-cooperation-1.6994004>, accessed 30 September 2024.

Pacific security alliance, but rather are ad hoc and operational, with a focus on technical support rather than long-standing commitments.⁸² Despite this increased participation in joint military activities, an Indo-Pacific military alliance is less likely to be attractive, or a good use of Canada's contribution, than a more broad-based approach.

This ad hoc approach also aligns with Canada's current preference to avoid formal security alliance commitments in the Indo-Pacific. The Quad and Canada share many common perspectives on international governance within the region. The precise shape of future Canadian cooperation with Quad initiatives depends on the future direction of Quad itself. As noted already, while Canada is able to participate in bilateral or trilateral military exercises and training, it is limited in its capacity to extend to more long-term military commitments to the Indo-Pacific region.⁸³ Canada is already perceived by some of its allies as a weak link or even a "freeloader" in defence spending. Projecting from 2024-5 to 2029-30, neither the Department of National Defence nor the Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer anticipates that Canada will meet the two percent of GDP commitment that NATO members agreed to in 2014.⁸⁴ Canada struggles to adequately meet its current defence commitments with this funding level and therefore is unlikely to willingly or credibly add further obligations.

Although likely reluctant to add long-standing defence obligations of its own, Canada has a potential contribution to make in other areas that entail cooperation with Quad members and other regional partners without directing that effort specifically against China. Beyond defence, Nagy suggests that bilateral cooperation with Quad member states could successfully leverage Canada's expertise and capacity in areas such as "development, the diversification of global supply chains, infrastructure and connectivity, and non-traditional security cooperation such as antipiracy, antipoaching,

⁸² Steve Raaymakers, "Why Is Canada Missing From the Indo-Pacific?" *The Diplomat*, 25 October 2021, <https://thediplomat.com/2021/10/why-is-canada-missing-from-the-indo-pacific/> accessed 25 May 2022.

⁸³ Stephen Nagy, "Quad Plus? Carving Out Canada's Middle-Power Role," *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs*, Special Issue 2020, <https://media.defense.gov/2021/Mar/12/2002599869/-1/-1/0/11-NAGY.PDF/TOC.pdf>, pp. 186-7 accessed 26 May 2022.

⁸⁴ Mark Creighton, and Albert Kho, "Update of Canada's Military Expenditure and the NATO 2% Spending Target," Office of the Parliamentary Budget Officer, 8 July 2024, <https://www.pbo-dpb.ca/en/additional-analyses--analyses-complementaires/BLOG-2425-005-S--update-canada-military-expenditure-nato-2-spending-target--mise-jour-depenses-militaires-canada-objectif-depenses-2-otan>, accessed 30 September 2024.

illegal immigration, and food security.” Canada obviously already has deep and broad links across a range of policy areas with both Australia and the United States. Boosting supply chain resilience and diversification as a bulwark against economic shocks would enhance economic security across the region. It would also reduce the scope for economic interference in countries’ economies without needing to directly confront the most likely source of such interference, China.⁸⁵ Canada plans to move its own reliance away from China by diversifying trade and supporting investment and development initiatives that counterbalance the BRI.⁸⁶

In 2023, Canada proposed a Quad 2.0, comprising Canada, the United States, Japan and South Korea. However, the difficulties associated with including South Korea in such a plan is precisely why it was not considered a full partner in the first iteration of Quad. South Korea’s key security concern remains North Korea and full membership of the Quad risks shifting the focus onto a broader range of regional security issues. Although the United States is a critical partner for South Korea in addressing the challenge of North Korea, including the agendas and preferences of Australia, India and, to a lesser extent, Japan in the discussion offers few benefits and considerable hazards for South Korea. China is a vital interlocutor in dealing with North Korea and, to the extent that the Quad can be perceived as an instrument for containing China, South Korean participation in the Quad complicates that dependency for South Korea’s major security objective. South Korea has a complicated relationship with China and membership in the Quad would undermine its efforts to balance between China and the United States. South Korea also has a complex relationship with Japan, both for historical reasons and because Japan’s concept of a Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) has been supported by the Quad but not by South Korea. Given these challenges, a more fruitful direction for Canada’s increased regional participation would be as a Quad Plus country in the Australia, India, Japan, and United States versions.

⁸⁵ Nagy, “Quad Plus?” pp. 187-91.

⁸⁶ Robert Fife, and Steven Chase, “Ottawa eyes Indo-Pacific plan to shift trade away from China,” *The Globe and Mail*, 12 January 2022 https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-trudeau-government-advised-to-spend-big-to-diversify-trade-away-from/?utm_medium=Referrer:+Social+Network+Media&utm_campaign=Shared+Web+Article+Links, accessed 26 May 2022.

Canada's posture in the Indo-Pacific is obviously also tied to its foreign relations more broadly. Canada's security and economic ties to the United States have been discussed already, but Canada's current approach is complicated by two contraveiling features, both impinging on Canadian sovereignty. First, although CSIS has warned successive Canadian governments about foreign interference in Canadian politics and elections for 30 years, the issue has become increasingly salient within Canadian domestic politics, sparking a review and dedicated money within the 2023 Budget for the RCMP and Public Safety Canada to counter such interference.⁸⁷ The country most involved in such interference has been China. However, second, in June 2023, a Sikh community leader and Canadian citizen, Hardeep Singh Nijjar, was killed in Surry BC, allegedly by agents of the Indian government. Nijjar was a prominent advocate for a separate Sikh homeland within India.⁸⁸ The murder led to the mutual expulsion of diplomats in September, the withdrawal by Canada of additional diplomats to India in October, and the suspension of negotiations over a bilateral trade treaty.⁸⁹ Although both sides sought to contain the scope of the row, the damage in relations makes further cooperation on Indo-Pacific policy between India and Canada much less likely in the short term. The Indo-Pacific dispute had a further significant element because, although they called on India to cooperate with the Canadian investigation, Canada's Five Eyes partners, including Australia and the United States, stopped short of condemning India for the killing.⁹⁰ This is especially notable since some of the intelligence on India's involvement came to Canada

⁸⁷ Peter Zimonjic, "Former CSIS officials say decades of China warnings went unheeded," *CBC News*, 31 March 2023, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/former-csis-officials-committee-china-1.6797803>, accessed 15 November 2023.

⁸⁸ Ryan Tumilty and Bryan Passifiume, "Trudeau says intelligence links Indian government to B.C. Sikh leader's murder," *National Post*, 18 September 2023, <https://nationalpost.com/news/politics/trudeau-says-indian-government-linked-to-murder-of-sikh-leader-in-b-c>, accessed 25 November 2023.

⁸⁹ Rhea Mogul and Paula Newton, "India expels Canadian diplomat in the tit-for-tat move as the row over assassinated Sikh activist deepens," *CNN*, 19 September 2023, <https://www.cnn.com/2023/09/18/americas/canada-hardeep-singh-nijjar-india-intl/index.html>, accessed 15 November 2023. Neha Arora, and Nikunj Ohri, "Simmering tensions between India and Canada not to imperil trade, investments, sources say," *Reuters*, 20 October 2023, <https://www.reuters.com/world/simmering-tensions-between-india-canada-not-imperil-trade-investments-sources-2023-10-20/> accessed 15 November 2023.

⁹⁰ "Why Canada lacks allies' support on claim India killed Hardeep Singh Nijjar," *Al Jazeera*, 21 September 2023, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/9/21/why-canada-lacks-allies-support-on-claim-india-killed-hardeep-singh-nijjar>, accessed 15 November 2023.

from the United States.⁹¹ However, such a development seems unlikely to diminish Canada's desire to participate in Indo-Pacific affairs on its own terms and it is even unlikely to damage Canada's long-term cooperation with India. Canada's strategic interests with the United States, Australia and India mitigate towards a pragmatic rather than principled approach.

As an internationalist middle power, Canada has links and existing relationships that could provide resources for efforts within the Indo-Pacific. Although deeper institutionalized intelligence cooperation is unlikely, due to issues such as trust concerns and differences in languages, procedures, databases, training, and capabilities, intelligence-sharing on an ad hoc and transactional basis is possible and would utilize Canada's membership of the Five Eyes. Although Australia and the United States, members of both the Quad and Five Eyes, have greater intelligence capacity in the Indo-Pacific, Canada could contribute signals intelligence and analytical resources. Intelligence sharing serves as an information function in uncertain environments and a friendship function in competitive environments.⁹² Canada could also provide resources in terms of intelligence training for regional partners, a role that would not interfere with its Five Eyes membership. In terms of promoting regional economic development, unlike on the security side, Canada is already a participant in key institutions and frameworks: the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) as a dialogue partner, and as a supporter of the Asian Development Bank (ADB).⁹³ One of the criticisms of the Quad within ASEAN was that it was doing poorly in addressing its infrastructure needs. With its links and commitment to development assistance, Canada could be a strong partner in addressing such requirements through a Quad Plus arrangement.

Conclusion

⁹¹ Julian E. Barnes and Ian Austen, "U.S. Provided Canada With Intelligence on Killing of Sikh Leader," *New York Times*, 23 September 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/09/23/us/politics/canada-sikh-leader-killing-intelligence.html>, accessed 15 November 2023.

⁹² , James Igoe Walsh, "Intelligence Sharing," in *Routledge Companion to Intelligence Studies*, edited by Robert Dover, (London: Taylor and Francis, 2013): pp. 290-1; Jonathan, N. Brown, and Alex Farrington. "Democracy and the depth of intelligence sharing: why regime type hardly matters," *Intelligence and National Security* 32, 1 (2017): pp.68-84

⁹³ Nagy, "Quad Plus?" pp, 185-6.

Until recently, Canada has been a bit-player in the Indo-Pacific region, choosing instead to focus on its North American and transatlantic commitments and on a global rather than a regional perspective. The Indo-Pacific has become an increasingly important area for Canada's economy but has also become the location of an increasingly significant challenge to Canada's goal of a rule-based international system and freedom of navigation. As such, Canada's reluctance to fully engage in the region is increasingly hard to sustain. Canada has tried to balance its economic interests in the region with its security and alliance goals, not only with traditional partners such as the United States or Australia but also with regional partners where there is scope to deepen a relationship. Canada's desire to balance these obligations has been compounded by the lack of tangible commitment of resources to the region. However, as China has pursued a more strident regional and global policy, some of Canada's partners have sought to move ahead with deepening ties, such as AUKUS, that threaten to leave Canada behind. The Indo-Pacific Strategy, announced by the Canadian government in the fall of 2022, attempted to address this evolving situation but remains under-operationalized.

One solution to this dilemma might be the Quad, a cooperative agreement between Australia, India, Japan and the United States. Canada is unlikely to become a fifth member of the Quad, but the light institutionalization of the Quad means that ad hoc participation in its activities is not only possible but also the likely route forward for the organization as a whole. Such an approach permits Canada to avoid formal security alliance commitments, with the challenges that would impose on its overstretched defence resources, but to participate with like-minded countries in military efforts to enhance capacity and build inter-operability through training and joint exercises. Beyond "hard" security, Canada has a great deal to offer the region in terms of expertise and resources. The Quad offers a framework for coordinating Canada's efforts in such areas of mutual interest. Participating as part of a "coalition of the willing" within Quad also would allow Canada to draw on its links to other countries and organizations, to promote economic security through development and infrastructure support, and to encourage a version of global governance that is both Canada's normative preference and in its interests. Such an approach has a low political cost while magnifying the potential impact of Canada's efforts in the Indo-Pacific and therefore offers a valuable framework for Canada's engagement with the region.

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