



## Challenges to the Quadrilateral Alliance

### What is the issue?

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While an anti-Chinese alliance is taking shape in the Indo-Pacific, it is not easy to sustain it in the prevailing circumstances.

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### What is the international context?

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  - U.S. President Trump believes in a world governed by self-interest, with little room for shared responsibility.
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  - In contrast, Chinese President Xi is taking the high road, is projecting himself as a firm believer in globalisation and free trade.
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  - Notably, the former confronts major opposition to his policies within the U.S, while the latter's grip on China is almost total.
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  - Against this backdrop, a coalition of all those willing to align with the U.S. against China's expanding ambitions is shaping up.

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### What are the recent developments?

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  - Official level talks were held recently, between the U.S., Japan, Australia & India for establishing the "Quadrilateral Alliance".
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  - This marks a major shift in India's foreign policy, as it is an active alignment

to an emergent power block.

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- As China's expansionist attitudes intensify, more countries are expected to align with the Quadrilateral group.

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- Notably, this is the first time that India has indicated a resolve to align openly with the U.S. to tackle issues specific to Indo-Pacific.

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- This enhances the Indo-US cooperation as major defence partners.

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## What is China's Position?

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- **Political** - China too seems eager to fight the challenges of a counter-alliance.

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- The Communist Party Congress emphasised on a strong military, signalling little willingness for compromise.

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- It also reinforced Mr. Xi's paramount leadership and clearly elaborated on China's ambitions for global leadership.

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- Notably, Mr. Xi adopted a hard line on many contentious issues in the region and beyond, reiterating an aggressive foreign policy.

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- **Economic Might** - China is positioned most advantageously as far as economic aspects are concerned.

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- It is the most important trading partner for over 90 countries and a massive economic power house.

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- Although the economic benefits of its Belt & Road Initiative (BRI) are disputed, it has definitely got a favoured reception by most countries.

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## What are the challenges for the alliance?

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- Most Asian nations don't actually have an unfavourable opinion on China despite its reckless foreign policy.
- China has embarked on a charm offensive to win the support of Asian nations through lavish aid offers.
- Even Mr.Trump, seemed to have softened his criticism of China, after China produced some attractive mega deals.
- Only India, Japan & Vietnam have shown some willing to build an opposition to China's designs.
- Also, nations in the quadrilateral alliance haven't stated a clear vision and gave separate press releases that were vastly divergent.
- The opinions varied form 'joint security patrol' to 'funding mechanism to counter BRI'.

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### **How does the future look?**

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- The Quadrilateral idea is likely to further irk China.
- As developments become clearer with the formal setting up of the Quadrilateral, China is certain to counter it proactively.
- This will pave the way for a new round of turmoil and China would use both force and inducements to win more countries to its side.
- The consequences of this could be quite significant for peace and stability in the Asian region.

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**Source: The Hindu**

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