

Australia and the Revival of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue

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Abstract

Australia lacks capabilities required to be considered among the major powers, but it still intends to influence the regional security environment. Before “Indo-Pacific” emerged as an influential term within Australian strategic debate, the *Defence White Paper 2013* identified Australia’s region within the “Indo-Pacific strategic arc” for the first time. “The Quad” initiative, which was intended to facilitate conversation and cooperation between the US, Japan, Australia, and India (the four maritime democracies), lasted from mid-2006 to early 2008. After Kevin Rudd defeated the four-term Prime Minister John Howard in the November 2007 election, however, Australia withdrew from the summit. As the four countries’ perceptions of China’s assertiveness have aligned much more closely since then, all partners have thought about how to make the Quad resilient. This article explores the Australian security strategy and the Quad’s revival, and it will include an overview of and introduction to the “Quad’s revival,” Australia’s Indo-Pacific security strategy system, Australia-Japan-US trilateral security, and the overall outlook for the Quad.

Keywords: Quad, Indo-Pacific, Balancing China, Australia Security Strategy, Trilateral Security Dialogue

I. Introduction and Overview

In November 2017, officials from the US, India, Australia, and Japan convened on the eve of the leaders' summit of East Asian Nations in Manila. During the meeting, the four countries agreed to cooperate towards a "free, open, prosperous and inclusive Indo-Pacific region."¹ Instead of releasing a joint statement after the meeting, the four countries released separate statements. US officials also denied the move was aimed at containing China. This was the first meeting for the four-way alliance since its initiation a decade ago. Beijing warned that any maneuvers towards a security group should not target or damage a "third party's interest." Australia's former Ambassador to China chimed in with Beijing.² The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade indicated, "The participants [are] committed to continuing quadrilateral discussions and deepening cooperation on the basis of shared values and principles." Professor Rory Medcalf, the Head of the National Security College at Australian National University described the development in this way, "It first coalesced in 2007 only to dissipate after Australia's withdrawal in early 2008. Now it's back....., Quad rebirth."³

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1. Atul Aneja, "Indo-Pacific Quad May Soon Have a Gaping Hole as China Re-engages Japan," *The Hindu*, January 3, 2018, <<http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/indo-pacific-quad-may-soon-have-a-gaping-hole-as-china-re-engages-japan/article22357798.ece>>.
 2. Geoff Raby, "Why Joining the Quad Is Not in Australia's National Interest," *The Australian Financial Review*, November 6, 2017, <<http://www.afr.com/opinion/columnists/riding-a-quad-bike-away-from-our-national-interest-20171105-gzfi2n>>.
 3. Rory Medcalf, "India Locks in the Quadrilateral Dialogue to Counter China," *The Australian Financial Review*, January 25, 2018, <<http://www.afr.com/opinion/columnists/india-locks-in-the-quadrilateral-dialogue-to-counter-china-20180124-h0ng2y>>.

Termed in the media as “the quadrilateral security dialogue, or the “Quad,” analysts described it as “one of the most important geopolitical development [that] came from a low key meeting between senior foreign services from four countries.”⁴ The idea of the quadrilateral security initiative of “like-minded” democracies first was raised by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007, and the first exploratory meeting was on the sidelines of the ASEAN Regional Forum Summit in May 2007 in the Philippines.⁵ In 2007, Abe Visited New Delhi and delivered a speech to the Indian parliament, during which he pointed out that a “broader Asia” was emerging through the “dynamic coupling” of the Pacific and Indian oceans.⁶ He called for a partnership between Japan and India – and also Australia and the US – to build an “arc of freedom and prosperity.”⁷ Ten years later, on November 10, 2017, US President Donald Trump made a fiery speech at the APEC meeting in Da Nang, Vietnam, Trump introduced his “Indo-Pacific Dream.” Trump said, “we must uphold principles that have benefitted all of us, like respect for the rule of law, individual rights, and freedom of navigation and overflight, in-

4. Jiangtao Shi & Laura Zhou, “Wary China on ‘Quad’ Bloc Watch after Officials from US, Japan, India and Australia on ASEAN Sideline,” *The South China Morning Post*, November 13, 2017, <<http://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy-defence/article/2119719/wary-china-quad-bloc-watch-after-officials-us-japan>>.

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

6. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, “Confluence of the Two Seas, Speech by H. E. Mr. Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan at the Parliament of the Republic of India,” August 22, 2007, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan*, <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/pmv0708/speech-2.html>>.

7. Yuki Tatsumi, “Is Japan Ready for the Quad? Opportunities and Challenges for Tokyo in a Changing Indo-Pacific,” January 9, 2018, *War on the Rocks*, <<https://warontherocks.com/2018/01/japan-ready-quad-opportunities-challenges-tokyo-changing-indo-pacific/>>.

cluding open shipping lanes.....and these principles create stability and build trust, security, and prosperity among like-minded nations.”⁸

Beijing’s growing power and assertiveness caused the four democracies to combine their military and economic influence to counter and push back China’s efforts. For a long time, Australia has held close ties with the United States, with former US President Barack Obama hailing the “unbreakable alliance,” but China has implemented a charm offensive towards Australia in order to “weaken US Leadership in Asia.”⁹ China is Australia’s most important trading partner, but China is meddling in Australia. Australia’s Fairfax media launched a series of investigative reports, citing examples of China attempting “to buy influence in Australia.” This included “Donations from pro-Beijing businessmen and businesses to the political campaigns of Australian senators.”¹⁰ This article seeks to explore the Australian security strategy and the Quad’s revival, and it will include an introduction to and overview of the “Quad’s revival,” Australia’s Indo-Pacific security strategy system, Australia-Japan-US trilateral security, and the overall outlook for the Quad.

8. The White House, “Remarks by President Trump at APEC CEO Summit, Da Nang, Vietnam,” November 10, 2017, *The White House*, <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-apec-ceo-summit-da-nang-vietnam/>>.

9. Enrico Fels, *Shifting Power in Asia-Pacific?* (Gwerbestrasse: Springer International, 2016), p. 410.

10. John Pomfret, “China’s Meddling in Australia — and What the U.S. Should Learn from It,” *The Washington Post*, June 14, 2017, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/global-opinions/wp/2017/06/14/how-should-the-u-s-deal-with-chinas-rise-look-to-australia/?utm_term=.1085c5de4cad>.

II. Australia's Indo-Pacific Security Strategy

Since the end of World War II, three broad objectives have formed the core of a bipartisan foreign policy consensus in Australia: support for the US alliance, the development of closer relations with Asia, and integration with a rule-based international order.¹¹ For the past three decades, successive Australian Defense White Papers have placed a denial strategy as the basis of the Australia's defense policy.¹² Australia's "2013 National Security Strategy Report," 2012 *Australia in the Asian Century White Paper*, and the *Defence White Paper 2013* should be seen together as a statement reflecting the government's priority on Australia's security and economic prosperity, while maintaining a strong Australian Defense Force to meet Australia's national security challenges.¹³ After 4 years, the Australian government finally unveiled its *Foreign Policy White Paper* in November 2017, in which the government states, "the Government recognizes there is greater debate and uncertainty in the United States about the costs and benefits of its leadership in parts in the international system."¹⁴ This white paper warned of a US retreat, and it said, "without sustained US support, the effectiveness and liberal character of the rules-based order will decline."

11. Nick Bisley, "'An Ally for All the Years to Come': Why Australia Is Not a Conflicted US Ally?" *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 67, Issue 4, June 2013, pp. 403-418.

12. Adam Lockyer & Michael D. Cohen, "Denial Strategy in Australian Strategic Thought," *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 71, Issue 4, January 2017, pp. 423-439.

13. Australian Government, *Defence White Paper 2013* (Canberra: Department of Defence, 2013), p. 1.

14. Australian Government, *Opportunity, Security, Strength: The 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper* (Canberra: Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade, 2017), p. 7.

Before “Indo-Pacific” emerged as an influential term within Australian strategic debate, the Australian *Defence White Paper 2013* identified Australia’s region within the “Indo-Pacific strategic arc” for the first time.¹⁵ A 2016 white paper accentuated, “this Defense White Paper is based on a comprehensive review of Australia’s strategic environment, including the changes underway in the Indo-Pacific region, encompassing the Indian Ocean to the Pacific Ocean.”¹⁶ Rory Medcalf believed that the new term Indo-Pacific is “a valid and objective description of the greater regional system in which Australia now finds itself.”¹⁷ Australian Ambassador to Washington Kim Beazley agrees and maintains that the Indo-Pacific region presents “a practical, strategic reality that has to be addressed.”¹⁸

Since 1972, Australia has maintained a consistent policy towards China based on “strategic ambiguity.” The idea of navigating between the big fish or major powers came about when Prime Minister of Australia Malcolm Turnbull, answered a question from a senior colonel in China’s military, stating that “As China rises in power – and its growth has been one of the most extraordinary phenomena in human history – it is vital that China and all other powers respect the rights of others, the big fish respect the little fish and the shrimps.”¹⁹ On February 25, 2018, a US carrier strike group sailed

15. Australian Government, *Defence White Paper 2013*, p. 7.

16. Australian Government, *2016 Defence White Paper* (Canberra: Department of Defence, 2016), p. 13.

17. Rory Medcalf, “Pivoting the Map: Australia’s Indo-Pacific System,” *The Centre of Gravity Series*, No. 1, November 2012, p. 3, *ETH Zürich*, <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/175987/COG1_Medcalf_Indo-Pacific.pdf>.

18. Beazley Kim, “Australia in the Indo-Pacific Century,” *Policy: A Journal of Public Policy and Ideas*, Vol. 28, Issue 3, Spring 2012, p. 50.

19. International Institute for Strategic Studies, “Keynote Address 16th IISS Asia Security Summit, Shangri-La Dialogue,” June 2, 2017, *Prime Minister of*

through contested waters in the South China Sea and was in the Spratlys Archipelago. US naval officials said there was nothing unusual about the strike group's presence in the region. When President Trump advocated once again the decade-old concept of the Indo-Pacific region, Mark J. Valencia raised the question of "Quad" cooperation in the South China Sea.²⁰ During Turnbull's visit to Washington D.C., he told reporters "Australia, as you know, defends the right of freedom of navigation and overflight throughout the world but we do not want to speculate on operational matters." After the revival of the Quad in late 2017, Australia's security strategy *vis-à-vis* China and the United States remains in a delicate balance.

While Australia lacks capabilities to be considered among the major powers, it still intends to influence the regional security environment. When China overtook Japan as the second largest economy in the world, Hugh White indicated, "John Howard quickly learned that in order to trade with China we would have to acknowledge its growing power. Behind his overt fealty to Washington, he increasingly acknowledged China's growing strategic weight, blithely assuring Australians that they need not choose between America and China, while in reality he was already starting to do so. Kevin Rudd certainly understood the issue clearly, and seemed well equipped to address it, but he did little but appeal to xenophobia by conjuring alarming images of a China threat, and propose the Asia Pacific Community as forum to talk about it."²¹ Kevin Rudd was Australia's 26th Prime

Australia, <<https://www.pm.gov.au/media/keynote-address-16th-iiss-asia-security-summit-shangri-la-dialogue>>.

²⁰ Mark J. Valencia, "'Quad' Cooperation in the South China Sea?" *The Japan Times*, December 14, 2017, <<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2017/12/14/commentary/japan-commentary/quad-cooperation-south-china-sea/#.WqXyzWdG2DY>>.

Minister from 2007 to 2010, was Foreign Minister from 2010 to 2012, and was a driving force in expanding the East Asia Summit to include both the US and Russia in 2010. After Kevin Rudd defeated the four-term Prime Minister John Howard in the November 2007 election, however, Australia withdrew from the Summit.²² Rudd was hoping to maintain Canberra's balancing act between the two powers.

Since the turn of the new millennium, Australia and Japan have developed a remarkably strong strategic security partnership. Co-operative military deployments to Iraq and Sudan, increasing numbers of joint military exercises, and the signing of bilateral cross-servicing and intelligence-sharing agreements are some of the outward signs of an increasingly close security relationship.²³ In early 2006, the George W. Bush administration made an initiative to assign Japan, Australia, and other democracies formal status within NATO.²⁴ Forming a trilateral security framework that linked Australia and Japan as two spokes with the US as hub, the three-way dialogue was elevated from official-level talk in the early 2000s to ministerial-level from 2005.

21. Hugh White, "Power Shift: Rethinking Australia's Place in the Asian Century," *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 65, No. 1, February 2011, pp. 82-83.

22. Allan Gyngell, "Ambition: The Emerging Foreign Policy of the Rudd Government," December 2008, p. 9, *Lowy Institute*, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/pubfiles/Gyngell%2C_Ambition_web_1.pdf>.

23. Group Captain Lindley Ghee, OAM, *The Australia-Japan Security Relationship: Valuable Partnership or Much Ado about Nothing Much?* (Canberra: Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies, Australian Defense College, 2015), p. 1.

24. William T. Tow, "'Contingent Trilateralism': Application for the Trilateral Security Dialogue," in William T. Tow, Mark J. Thomson, Yoshinobu Yamamoto, & Satu P. Limaye, eds., *Asia-Pacific Security: US, Australia and Japan and the New Security Triangle* (London & New York: Routledge, 2007), p. 24.

III. Evolution of the US-Japan-Australia Trilateral Security Relations

Post 9/11, Australian and Japanese leaders have aligned their nations more closely with the US. International developments since 9/11 also have prompted security concerns shared by the conservative national governments of Australia and Japan. The official-level dialogues were upgraded to ministerial-level in 2005. In 2007, Prime Minister of Japan Shinzo Abe and Prime Minister of Australia John Howard signed the Japan-Australia Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation (JADSC) in Tokyo. The agreement was seen as a new phase in East Asia regional security whereby the ‘hub and spokes’ mechanisms of the old order were being overlaid with ‘webs’ of security relations across the spokes as the states of the region have constructed new links atop the old foundations.

Now, China may be able to destroy US ships, aircraft, and bases within 500 miles of China’s territory and disrupt the satellite and computer networks that underpin US military power throughout East Asia. Many American researchers fear that China could use these anti-access/area-denial capabilities to hold the US Military at bay.²⁵ On August 6, 2017, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia, Julie Bishop; the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, Taro Kono; and the former Secretary of State of the United States, Rex Tillerson, met in Manila on August 7, 2017, for the seventh ministerial meeting of the Trilateral Strategic Dialogue. The ministers reaffirmed the importance of the trilateral strategic partnership among these three countries to ensure a free, open, peaceful, stable, democratic, and prosperous Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean region and world, based on the rule

²⁵ Michael Beckley, “The Emerging Military Balance in East Asia: How China’s Neighbors Can Check Chinese Naval Expansion?” *International Security*, Vol. 42, Issue 2, Fall 2017, p. 78.

of law, and they reiterated their enduring commitment to further deepening coordination and cooperation to achieve this goal.

After the 2007 *Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation*, several subsequent agreements between Australia and Japan in security cooperation ties have showed rapid growth and formal recognition of common interests.²⁶ Nevertheless, David S. G. Goodman has pointed out there are two major challenges to further growth in security cooperation between the two nations, namely the so-called “China gap” and Japan’s ongoing “capability gap.” The security cooperation between Australia and Japan has grown in spite of the differences in the two countries’ strategies in response to China and its intentions.²⁷ The Abe government has fought bravely for his security reforms against constitutional constraints and the domestic political opposition’s resistance towards Japan’s Self-Defense Forces engaging in collective self-defense. Moreover, those in Australia who oppose developing bilateral security ties insist that deepening security engagement with Japan, either bilaterally or even trilaterally with the USA, is very likely to create problems for Australia’s trade and political relations with China, contribute to security tensions in the region, and possibly draw Australia into military conflict with its largest trading partner at some point.

Nevertheless, when Japanese Prime Minister Abe and Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull met in Tokyo for the annual Japan-Australia summit meeting in January 2018, the two leaders reaffirmed

26. Tomohiko Satake, “Australia-Japan Security Cooperation,” February 18, 2016, *Australian Institute of International Affairs*, <<http://www.internationalaffairs.org.au/australianoutlook/australia-japan-security-cooperation/>>.

27. David S. G. Goodman, “Australia and the China Threat: Managing Ambiguity,” *The Pacific Review*, Vol. 30, Issue 5, June 2017, pp. 769-782.

their determination to strengthen the Japan-Australia Special Strategic Partnership, which is founded on common values and strategic interests. In particular, the two leaders affirmed their commitment to cooperating to ensure a free, open, stable, and prosperous Indo-Pacific region founded on the international rules-based order. Turnbull and Abe also announced the first joint exercise involving Japanese and Royal Australian Air Force fighter jets would be held in Japan this year. Moreover, the “visiting force agreement” in the works in late January 2018 is the latest step in the deepening of Japanese and Australian diplomatic and military relations.²⁸

The Quad meeting was, in part, a natural result of the Trump administration’s effort to promote the concept of “a free and open Indo-Pacific.” On the eve of his first trip to South Asia, former Secretary of the State Tillerson said, “China’s provocative actions in the South China Sea directly challenge international law and norms that the United States and India both stand for.”²⁹ During Australian Prime Minister Turnbull’s visit to the United States in February 2018, an unnamed US official said that Australia, the United States, India, and Japan are talking about establishing a joint regional infrastructure scheme as an alternative to China’s multibillion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative to counter Beijing’s spreading influence.³⁰

28. Jamie Smyth, “Australia and Japan Eye Military Co-operation Pact,” *The Financial Times*, January 17, 2018, <<https://www.ft.com/content/ec00b39e-fb0e-11e7-9b32-d7d59aace167>>.

29. Gardiner Harris, “Tillerson Hails Ties with India, but Criticizes China and Pakistan,” *The New York Times*, October 18, 2017, <<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/18/us/politics/tillerson-india-china-pakistan.html>>.

30. Phillip Coorey, “Australia Mulls Rival to China’s ‘belt and road’ with US, Japan, India,” *Financial Review*, February 18, 2018, <<http://www.afr.com/news/australia-mulls-rival-to-chinas-belt-and-road-with-us-japan-india-20180216-h0w7k5>>.

IV. Regional Outlook: Australia Joining Malabar Exercises and the Potential Development of Quad Plus

The 2017 Quad Manila meeting convened as the US sought to shift strategic focus after US President Donald Trump used the term “Indo-Pacific” to define the region during his first trip to Asia. The term underlies Washington’s diplomatic and security commitment to a broader region than the Asia-Pacific region and highlights the importance of India in the face of a stronger, assertive China. In fact, before his first trip to South Asia, former US Secretary of State Tillerson described the Indian and Pacific Oceans as a “single strategic arena” and “India and the United States as strategic bookends.” He further said, “We are already capturing the benefits of our important trilateral engagement between the US, India, and Japan. As we look ahead, there is room to invite others, including Australia.” “In concrete terms, it will lead to great coordination between the Indian, Japanese and American militaries including maritime domain awareness, anti-submarine warfare, amphibious warfare, and humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, and search and rescue.”³¹ On March 2, 2016, US Pacific Command Admiral Harry Harris spoke during the New Delhi Raisina Dialogue and suggested that the US-India-Japan trilateral dialogue be expanded to include Australia. All four countries, Harris said, are “united in supporting the international rules-based order.”³²

The revival of the Asian “Quad” must overcome lingering mistrust in New Delhi towards its allies, which hampers genuine

31. Phillip Coorey, “Australia Mulls Rival to China’s ‘belt and road’ with US, Japan, India.”

32. Harry B. Harris, Jr., “Raisina Dialogue Remarks — ‘Let’s Be Ambitious Together,’” March 2, 2016, *U.S. Pacific Command*, <<http://www.pacom.mil/Media/Speeches-Testimony/Article/683842/raisina-dialogue-remarks-lets-be-ambitious-together/>>.

military cooperation. On the other hand, the navies of the United States, Japan, and Australia easily operate together – based on common US-designed combat systems and data links. India is the outlier, as there is no satellite link that would allow the Japanese and Indian navies to access information and share monitor displays in on-board command centers. India has rebuffed Australia’s effort to join the 2017 Trilateral Malabar drills in the Indian Ocean, held with the United States and Japan.³³ The United States says the Communication and Information Security Memorandum of Agreement (CIS-MOA) would allow it to supply India with encrypted communications equipment and systems. India, however, is concerned that agreeing to the CISMOA would open up its military communications to the United States, and even allow the US to listen in on operations where Indian and US interests may not coincide – such as against arch-rival Pakistan.

In 1992, the Malabar drills were first held between the United States and India. Scrapped in 1998 after India’s nuclear tests, the exercises resumed in 2002, and, in 2015, Japan became a permanent partner. Last year, the exercise ran for eight days with a heavy anti-submarine warfare force.³⁴ The maritime exercises came weeks after President Trump declared that ties between Washington and New Delhi had “never been stronger” as he held his first talks with India’s Prime Minister Narendra Modi on June 27, 2017.³⁵ It also

³³ Andrew Greene, “India Blocks Australian Bid to Join Exercise Malabar Naval War Games,” *ABC News*, June 1, 2017, <<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-05-31/india-rejects-australian-request-to-join-naval-war-games/8577664>>.

³⁴ Ankit Panda, “India-Japan-US Malabar 2017 Naval Exercises Kick Off with Anti-Submarine Warfare in Focus,” *The Diplomat*, July 10, 2017, <<https://thediplomat.com/2017/07/india-japan-us-malabar-2017-naval-exercises-kick-off-with-anti-submarine-warfare-in-focus/>>.

coincided with Indian and Chinese troops facing off in a remote and strategically sensitive part of the Himalayas area. It was also the fourth consecutive year that Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force participated in the Malabar Exercise. In March 2018, Australian Navy warships will join the Multinational Milan-2018 drills, where about 30 warships have arrived in the area of India's Andaman and Nicobar Island to take part eight-day long naval exercise. In total, there are 28 warships from India and 11 others from Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.³⁶

During Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull's visit to Washington D.C., Trump said he would "love for Australia" to join the US in conducting a South China Sea Freedom of Navigation Operation later this year, but Turnbull did not respond to President Trump's invitation. Will Australia join after Britain and France? The final answer may lie in Beijing and not Canberra. Usually, Australia sees itself in a tricky position: the United States is their strongest military ally, while China is biggest trading partner, and both relationships are crucial. Australian international affairs experts are concerned "it is much more of a concern for us to antagonize China than it is for the US."

After the 2017 East Asia Summit, Canberra released its *2017 Foreign Policy White Paper*, which stressed Canberra emphasizes

³⁵ The White House, "Remarks by President Trump and Prime Minister Modi of India in Joint Press Statement," June 26, 2017, *The White House*, <<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/remarks-president-trump-prime-minister-modi-india-joint-press-statement/>>.

³⁶ "Multinational Milan-2018 Naval Drills Kick Off in Indian Ocean-Report," *Sputnik*, March 7, 2018, <<https://sputniknews.com/military/201803071062302302-milan-drills-india-ocean/>>.

“Australia remains strongly committed to our trilateral dialogues with the United States and Japan and, separately, with India and Japan. Australia is open to working with our Indo-Pacific partners in other plurilateral arrangements.”³⁷ China’s inexorable rise has powered Australia’s economy for two decades. Nevertheless, it is also a source of deep anxiety for Australia’s foreign policy establishment. *The 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper* also pointed out “Australia is committed to advancing our Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with China.” Canberra’s relationship with China soured early 2018 after Australia’s Minister for International Development and the Pacific, Concetta Fierravanti-Wells, said Beijing was constructing “useless buildings” and “roads that do not go anywhere” in the Pacific. Early in March 2018, Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull said, “We welcome this investment from any source, any nation, any development bank, on the basis that it is going to provide real value, supports good governance, has got a robust business plan and so forth.” Certainly, there is a risk that China would misinterpret any activities of Australia with Japan, India, or the United States.

In January 2018 the Australian navy chief joined admirals hailing from the US, Japan, and India on stage at the Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi. In spite of potential controversies, Trump nominated Harry Harris from the Pacific Command to be the next Ambassador to Australia. Nevertheless, China remains skeptical that tough-talking Harris will be able to bite his tongue as Ambassador. In the near future, members of ASEAN may partake in the “Quad plus Dialogue,” as the Southeast Asian nations remain cautious about their role in the region.³⁸ Nevertheless, Japan, the US, India, and Australia will

37. Australian Government, *Opportunity, Security, Strength: The 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper*, p. v.

38. Emanuele Scimia, “New Alliance Could Emerge in Indo-Pacific,” *The Asia*

each host a summit with Southeast Asian leaders. In March 2018, Australia will invite ASEAN leaders to Sydney for a historic ASEAN-Australia Special Summit.

Whether or not there will be a revived Quad or a Quad 2.0 highlights the growing suspicion and unease felt in diplomatic relations between the four democracies regarding China's military and economic assertive rise. Will Canberra help the Quad reemerge? Usually, Beijing's behavior will shape the extent of an alliance between the US and its partners. China would use their sharp power in both security and trade in an attempt to deter Australia from joining. In the issues of South China Sea and security cooperation, will the Turnbull government be freed from their difficult position caused by Trump asking them to stand together with United States? Canberra also needs to recognize the reality of whether Australia's withdrawal from the first iteration of Quad in 2008 was foreshadowed by any change in China's behavior. While trying to balance to its value towards rule-of-law and freedom of navigation with its indispensable economic interests, Australia may be moving beyond the caution of the Rudd government's approach to China toward becoming more assertive in defense of its values.

Times, March 4, 2018, <<http://www.atimes.com/new-naval-alliance-emerge-indo-pacific/>>.

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