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Analyzing the Effects of the Defense of Japan White Paper 2020 on the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue

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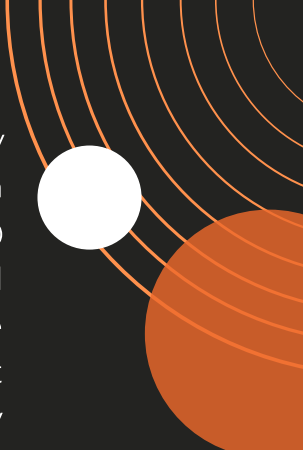


Analyzing the Effects of the Defense of Japan White Paper 2020 on the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue

Introduction and Brief History of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue

The Defense of Japan White Paper 2020, was released on 14th July 2020. It has addressed several issues that have arisen due to China's activity after the outbreak of the coronavirus disease and around the Senkaku Islands. It has also gone forward with addressing other aspects related to Japan's defense related interest. Indirect references to strengthening of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue have also been made in the Defense White Paper (Singh, 2020). In order to understand the present and upcoming situation well, it is necessary to keep certain historical aspects and development of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue in mind since both of them are inextricable and interdependent to each other in the Asia- Pacific region.

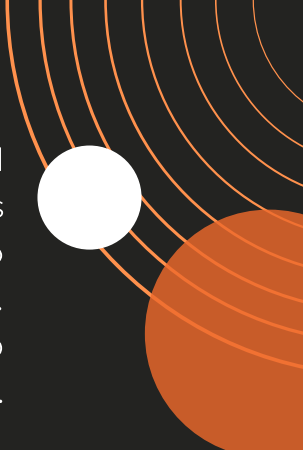
The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue popularly referred to as the "QUAD" is an informal strategic dialogue between Japan, India, United States of America and Australia to promote the concept of a free, prosperous and open Asia- Pacific region in conformity with international law (Drishti, 2019). Traces of initiation of efforts for the strategic dialogue can be traced to the year 2007 which collapsed due to Australia pulling out of the effort. Subsequently, the strategic dialogue was revived in the year 2017 after which the nations involved started convening on a bimonthly basis (Buchan & Rimland, 2020). Needless to say, the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue was founded due to the rising influence of China in the region which led to the opening of Pandora's box as several security, trade- related and development threats were beginning to surface in the region (Drishti, 2019). Some of the prominent and well- known threats in the region include China's increasing dominance over countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and its territorial claims over the South China Sea (Drishti, 2019).



Blocs around the world have characterized the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue in various forms where some believe that it could transform into the Asian version of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the rest believe that it is a failed attempt of a common vision based strategic unity (Buchan & Rimland, 2020). However, it would not be wrong to assume that the strategic dialogue does have a significant amount of unexplored and fruit-bearing potential. This is mainly because of China's coercive and influential post-2015 activities that led to the development of mini-lateral networks within the dialogue nations (Buchan & Rimland, 2020). Evidence of this can be witnessed in the trilateral relationships that developed between India, United States of America and Japan (Ministry of External Affairs, 2018) and Australia, India and Japan respectively (Pubby, 2018). Unfortunately, considering the present state of things, it seems to be clear that the strategic efforts have not even hit the tip of the iceberg yet, let alone formulating efficacious strategies for addressing the issues in entirety.

The Senkaku Saga, Pandemic and the Defense White Paper


Japan's Defense White Paper 2020 addresses multifarious issues such as China's interference with Senkaku Islands, China's involvement in clandestine agendas during relief work after the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, Russia and North Korea's activities affecting the borders of Japan and other developments which are capable of compromising and hampering Japan's defense (Ministry of Defense, 2020). The dispute between China and Japan on the Senkaku Islands is not a recent phenomenon. China has claimed that the Senkaku Islands were discovered by them in the 15th Century and has been a part of their territory since the 16th Century. However, at the same time Japan has claimed that the islands were discovered by them in the 1800s and the island was not inhabited at that time (Chaudhury, 2016). Records show that the Senkaku Islands were incorporated in Japanese territory after its victory in the First Sino-Japanese War, came under American occupation after World War II and was returned to Japan in the year 1972 (Chaudhury, 2016). It is interesting to note that China had not made any claims over the island up till 1971, after which it has always claimed that the United States of America and Japan's occupation over the island has been illegal (Chaudhury, 2016).

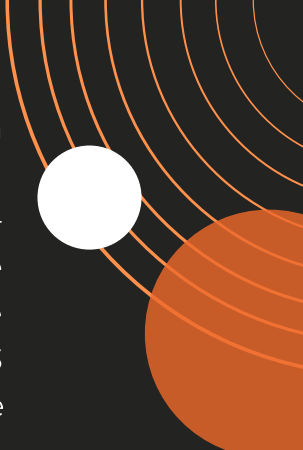


Recent events post- 2010 have witnessed that China has slowly and gradually breached the geographical boundaries of the Senkaku Islands by sending military and fishing vessels and ships that has led to escalation of tension between Japan and China (Chaudhury, 2016). Moreover, an Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) has also been set up by China as a move to showcase territorial claims (Chaudhury, 2016). Japan's Defense White Paper 2020 has addressed this issue by raising concerns over the incessant navy and air force activities and looming threats by China around the Senkaku Islands (Ministry of Defense, 2020). The White Paper has gone forward and even addressed China's island chain strategy, increased activity for capacity and operational building and militarisation of the South China Sea (Ministry of Defense, 2020). China's island chain strategy is a naval strategic policy which is directed towards breaching three island chains in order to enhance expansion towards the islands in the Pacific Ocean (Caroll, 2020). One of the main reasons for Japan's concerns is due to the fact that the Japanese archipelago is located in the first island chain (Caroll, 2020).

Another pivotal issue which the Japanese Defense White Paper 2020 addresses is the response of nations after the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, especially China (Ministry of Defense, 2020), if seen in context with the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue. The White Paper states that China has indulged in clandestine propaganda while dispatching medical supplies and expertise to other countries. This is mainly because the transmission of medical expertise and supplies has been coupled with creating disinformation and confusion which is capable of affecting supply chains, local economies and illicitly shifting the international order in favour of China (Ministry of Defense, 2020).

The White Paper explicitly states that in order to tackle these issues, Japan aims to improve production of naval assets and military weaponry and also focus on improving its "Three Pillars for Japan's Defense" which includes strategic promotion of multi- layered and multi- faceted defense cooperation, responses in domains of space, cyberspace, electromagnetic spectrum and response to large scale disasters (Singh, 2020). This would include a wide host of developments and improvements in air power, maritime power, missile defense, maritime shipping lanes, technological capacity and military infrastructure (Singh, 2020). Japan's strategy in response to tackling its issues is not a meagre and ineffective declaration, but is strongly backed by adequate defense deals and pursuits. This is evident by the fact that even after the outbreak of the pandemic, Mitsubishi Electric Corporation (Japanese company) was awarded a contract to develop Philippines' air surveillance radar system and Japan launched its Space Operations Squadron which resulted in Mitsui Engineering & Shipbuilding to launch the third Hibiki class ocean surveillance ship (Singh, 2020).





Moreover, Japan's 2020 defense budget is a humongous 7.38 Billion Japanese Yen (699.2 Million US Dollars) out of which, 4.84 Billion Japanese Yen (459.2 US Dollars) has been dedicated to develop space-related projects such as the Space Situational Awareness Satellite (Space-based Optical Telescope) and enhancement of satellite communication systems and 2.53 billion Japanese Yen (240 Million US Dollars) has been dedicated to enhance cyber security by the improvement and development of cyber information gathering through artificial intelligence systems aimed at reacting to cyber warfare (Singh, 2020).

Defense White Papers are usually released by countries across the world either because their domestic legislation mandates it, in order for such White Paper to act as a watchdog over the defense related activities of that particular country or because such countries wish to use it as a strategic communication tool to shape and influence public perception and deliver messages to other nations. Japan's first Defense White Paper was released in the year 1970 and since then, its purpose has evolved over time (Bosack, 2020). Simply, on even a bare reading of Japan's Defense White Paper, 2020, it can easily be inferred that its purpose was different from its predecessors and the current White Paper contained various concomitants of a strategic communication tool that was aimed at delivering a message to not only China for its recent activities, but also to Russia and North Korea as well (Ministry of Defense, 2020). High chances exist that these nations may be compelled to respond to Japan's Defense White Paper 2020 with either military posturing or diplomatic rhetoric (Bosack, 2020).

Impact of Japan's Defense White Paper on United States of America, Australia and India

It is indeed undeniable that Japan's Defense White Paper, 2020 will affect the near future of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue albeit the fact that the White Paper does not mention it specifically. This is because the issues addressed and goals set in the White Paper and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue are in conjunction with each other. Thus, it is important to understand the separate relations of the United States of America, Australia and India with China in order to determine the effect of the Japanese Defense White Paper 2020 on the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue as a whole and individual member countries as well.



Relations of the United States of America with China has evolved from tense standoffs to a combination of intensified diplomacy, international rivalry and intertwined economies (Council on Foreign Relations, 2020). The earliest stages of conflict between the United States of America and China can be traced to June 1950 during the Korean War followed by disturbances during the First Taiwan Strait Crisis in 1954, Tibetan Uprising in 1959, Tiananmen Square Massacre in 1989, Belgrade Embassy Bombing in 1999, U.S- Sino Spy Plane Standoff in 2001 coupled with incessant and recurrent trade tensions between the two (Council on Foreign Relations, 2020). Interference of the United States of America in the South China Sea issue after 2015, and post- 2018 U.S. trade war with China has led to continuous escalation and disturbances between the two nations. The outbreak of the coronavirus disease and the United States of America's move to oppose the national security law of Hong Kong led to further deterioration of relations since the United States passed an executive order that ended preferential trade status and enacted legislation to sanction businesses and officials undermining freedom and autonomy of Hong Kong (Council on Foreign Relations, 2020). Undeniably, the United States of America joined the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue to sever the rising influence of China in the Asia-Pacific region since that was directly compromising the interests of the United States in the Asia- Pacific region. The release of Japan's Defense White Paper 2020 could mean improvement in relations between Japan and the United States with rising cooperation in defense deals which will enable capacity building for Japan to hold its position and defeat China's unguided maritime claims and also increase cooperation in infrastructure projects that will help in creating a more sustainable and transparent alternative than China's One Belt and Road Initiative for Asian nations (Johnston, 2020).

Diplomatic relations between Australia and China were established in 1972 after which, a healthy relationship prevailed among them for a long duration of time which extended over to trade in mineral resources, strategic dialogue, human rights, climate change, disarmament and regional security (Smith, 2009). However, the current state of things pristinely showcases that relations between the countries are not as healthy as they once used to be. Out of the colossal driving factors for a straining and deteriorating relationship, Australia's decision to ban Huawei (Chinese company) from taking part in 5G rollout, Australia's move asking for an independent inquiry to be conducted in China to trace the true origin of the coronavirus pandemic, China's 80% trade tariff on Australian barley, China's import ban on red meat from Australian abattoirs and Australia's partnership with United Kingdom and Canada against China on the Hong Kong issue could be identified as the major driving factors for such tensed relations (Maasdorp, 2020).

After the release of Australia's Defense White Paper 2016, relations between Japan and Australia have deepened quickly (Bisley, 2016). Therefore, it would not be surprising if Japan and Australia further strengthened their relationship to curb the rising influence of China after the release of Japan's Defense White Paper 2020.

Indian and Chinese diplomatic relations began in the 1950s with the formulation of the Five Principles of Coexistence (The Hindu, 2020). The Five Principles of Coexistence, also referred to as the Panchsheel Agreement, included mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non- aggression, mutual non- interference, equality and mutual benefit and peaceful co- existence (Ministry of External Affairs, 2004). However, subsequent events have shown the redundancy of the Panchsheel Agreement. Although India and China had managed to remain large trading partners until recently, seventy years of relations has been filled with conflict and turmoil, majorly fueled by territorial disputes. This is evident from the Indo- China War in 1962, Second Indo- China War in 1967, rise in tension between the two in 2017 after China started building a road into Bhutan and the Galwan Valley Clash in 2020 (Duhalde, 2020). Considering the fact that regular clashes have led to an outrage amongst the Indian population against China (Web Desk, 2020), various Chinese apps have been banned and trade barriers have been created by the Indian Government in respect of trade and commercial activities with China (Srivastava, 2020). In consideration of the fact that the Indian market has always been flooded with products manufactured in China, affordability of products will be affected and economic losses due to the sudden trade barriers and outrage in India against Chinese products will occur (Misra, 2020). Thus, after the release of the Japanese Defense White Paper 2020, it is important that collaboration between India and Japan is not only limited to the traditional defense sector, but also extended over to enhancement of the technological defense sector that are accompanied with lower costs, more flexible procedures and willingness to take risks to explore new possibilities so that the negative effects of sudden severance of trade relations between India and China can be compensated. Such improved relations with Japan will also help in creating a partnership on an economic model which is unique in terms of the value chain (Singh, 2020). It is also vital that Australia, the United States of America, India and Japan work together to form trade relations which are free of economic sanctions in order to avoid the allied security issues involved so that all parties can benefit and simultaneously ensure decentralisation of China's power and influence in the region.

Conclusions

An indispensable factor of a healthy and resilient international community is the decentralisation of power as it leads to better internal sovereignty, prevention of conflict, responsible and accountable behaviour in the international sphere, increased ability to uphold international law and enhancement of social learning for individual nations (Faguet, 2014). Various reforms are required in the approach of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue such as the creation of a robust regional consultation mechanism (Drishti, 2019), agreeing upon a clearer objective, effectively counter non- traditional transnational threats (Singh, 2020), establish working groups on infrastructure and defense on an Asia- Pacific level and encourage joint operational commands (Buchan, 2020) which will further the goals of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue and the various Defense White Papers released by member nations, and in the natural course of things, lead to an open, free and prosperous Asia- Pacific Region.

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