

MP-IDSA *Commentary*

Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting: Key Takeaways

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S*ummary*

The New Delhi Quad Foreign Ministers' meeting reinforced the framework's practical mechanisms for shaping the Indo-Pacific's political and economic architecture.

The Quad Foreign Ministers’ meeting was held in New Delhi, India, on 26 May 2026. It marked a significant development in the framework's evolution, bringing together India, the United States, Japan and Australia amid increasing geopolitical uncertainty in the Indo-Pacific.¹ The meeting reflected a significant expansion in the framework’s strategic scope, regional relevance and institutionalisation.

The New Delhi Foreign Ministers’ meeting demonstrated that the framework is evolving into a practical mechanism for shaping the political and economic architecture of the Indo-Pacific. This meeting is the first to be held in India since 2023, and it follows a period of uncertainty about the Quad’s momentum, as the much-anticipated Quad Leaders’ Summit during India’s Chairmanship in 2025 did not materialise.

The meeting was hosted by the External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar. It included the US Secretary of State, Marco Rubio, Japan’s Foreign Minister, Toshimitsu Motegi, and Australia’s Foreign Minister, Penny Wong. One of the central themes of the meeting was reaffirming Quad’s strategic identity as a key pillar of the Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) vision. Some of the key takeaways from the meeting are highlighted below.

Port Development Initiative in Fiji

One of the noteworthy outcomes of the meeting was the announcement of the Quad’s first joint infrastructure project, a port development initiative in Fiji.² This marks a turning point in the Quad’s evolution towards a provider of regional public goods. The Pacific Islands region has emerged as a major area of geopolitical competition in recent times. China’s expanding engagement through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) has increased Beijing’s influence across the Pacific. Chinese investments in roads, ports and infrastructure have raised concerns about strategic dependence.

Against this backdrop, the Fiji port initiative is of both economic and geopolitical significance. It seeks to improve regional connectivity, facilitating trade and disaster-response capabilities for Pacific Island countries. The initiative shows that the Quad is moving ahead with competitive infrastructure diplomacy rather than criticising China’s BRI. Japan, a Quad member, previously pushed to expand

¹ [“Quad Foreign Ministers’ Meeting Joint Statement \(May 26, 2026\)”](#), Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Government of India, 26 May 2026.

² [“Is Quad the Asian NATO or Ocean Foam? What Delhi Meet Reveals”](#), *ET Online*, 26 May 2026.

multilayered connectivity across Pacific Island regions as part of its new FOIP vision under former Japanese PM Fumio Kishida in 2023.³

The Quad as a framework aims to prevent smaller states from becoming increasingly dependent on Beijing. Such infrastructure development helps project the Quad as a development-oriented framework, which is essential for maintaining legitimacy among smaller Indo-Pacific countries seeking economic partnerships.

Maritime Security

Maritime security has always been at the very core of the Quad’s agenda, and the Foreign Ministers’ meeting also discussed maritime security at length. Around 60 per cent of global trade passes through the waters of the Indo-Pacific, making maritime stability vital to both regional and global economies.⁴ The Quad Foreign Ministers reiterated their commitment to safeguarding freedom of navigation and adherence to international law. The meeting also reflected anxieties regarding China’s expanding naval activities and maritime behaviour, which includes the militarisation of artificial islands in the South China Sea.

During the meeting, India announced the operationalisation of the Indian Ocean element of the Indo-Pacific Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) initiative, an effort to provide commercial satellite data to smaller countries across the Indo-Pacific. The Quad announced the Indo-Pacific Maritime Surveillance Collaboration (IPMSC) to share real-time information and conduct regular exercises.⁵ India also announced it would host the next Quad at Sea Ship Observer Mission, the previous edition of which was held last year between Palau and Guam.

Critical Minerals and Energy Security

Another key outcome of the meeting was the launch of a new Quad Framework for Cooperation on Critical Minerals, which reflects the growing recognition that economic security is gaining prominence. In addition, amid shifts in the energy landscape, the Quad has launched an initiative on Indo-Pacific Energy Security to stabilise energy markets further and build resilient energy supply chains.

³ [“New Plan for a ‘Free and Open Indo-Pacific’: Policy Speech by PM Kishida”](#), *Japan Gov*, 19 May 2023.

⁴ Sohini Bose and Anasua Basu Ray Chaudhury, [“India and a Stable Indo-Pacific: Managing Maritime Security Challenges in the Bay of Bengal”](#), Occasional Paper, Observer Research Foundation, 27 March 2024.

⁵ [“Quad Foreign Ministers’ Meeting Joint Statement \(May 26, 2026\)”](#), no. 1.

Critical minerals like lithium and cobalt are vital for modern industries, including semiconductors and advanced defence technologies and control over these supply chains determines technological and strategic competitiveness. China dominates a large segment of the critical-minerals ecosystem, creating vulnerabilities for countries dependent on Chinese supply chains.

The Quad member countries view critical minerals as strategic assets. Disruptions in supply chains could affect national security and economic growth. India seeks to position itself as a manufacturing hub through initiatives such as ‘Make in India’. Securing critical minerals has become essential for India’s renewable energy ambitions and defence modernisation. The Quad’s critical minerals initiative represents the growing prominence of geo-economic factors in the Indo-Pacific. It also indicates that the Quad is broadening its agenda towards technological resilience.

Regarding critical and emerging technologies, the Quad welcomed Pax Silica. Pax Silica is a US-led strategic technology alliance launched in December 2025 to create a resilient supply chain for semiconductors, AI infrastructure, and advanced technologies among like-minded countries.⁶ Apart from these main outcomes of the meeting, the Quad also reaffirmed its commitment to further advance its cooperation on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations in the Indo-Pacific region.

Significance and Relevance

The Quad continues not to call itself a military alliance and emphasises flexible cooperation, strategic coordination and issue-based partnerships. This approach aligns well with India’s preference for strategic autonomy while also enabling deeper collaboration with like-minded countries. For India, the Indo-Pacific is central to its national security and economic interests and hosting the meeting further reinforced India’s role as a leading Indo-Pacific power. The Quad’s agenda has expanded increasingly over time to encompass maritime security, critical and emerging technologies, health security and disaster relief cooperation.

The timing of the meeting immediately after the Trump–Xi Summit is significant, as it signals that while the US may engage with China diplomatically, it will also strengthen strategic coordination with Indo-Pacific partners. For countries like Japan and Australia, which are concerned about China’s expansionist behaviour,

⁶ “[Pax Silica Initiative](#)”, US Mission to ASEAN, 12 December 2025.

the Foreign Ministers’ meeting served as a platform to reassure them of America’s strategic commitment in the region.

Several challenges remain. Despite the US commitment, US burden-sharing debates under Trump’s administration have made the US policy quite sceptical and ambiguous. The Quad still lacks a formal institutional structure and treaty-based commitments, which may hinder long-term coherence. Moreover, Southeast Asian countries remain quite cautious regarding great-power rivalry. The Quad must therefore continue to emphasise inclusivity and regional cooperation to maintain legitimacy.

The Quad foreign ministers’ meeting is an effort to restore momentum and reassure the regional partners that the framework remains active. The importance of the Quad lies more in its ability to intertwine strategic coordination with practical cooperation. The relevance of the Quad framework also extends to cooperation in areas such as infrastructure development and critical technologies, as the Quad seeks to shape the Indo-Pacific’s strategic architecture. The Quad also serves as a balancing mechanism to preserve stability and a rules-based international order.

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