

The Flexibility of Vietnam's Tactics in Relation with the QUAD at the End of the Term of U.S. President D.Trump



A flexibilidade das táticas do Vietnã em relação ao QUAD no final do mandato do presidente dos EUA, D.Trump

Bui Hai Dang¹
Luc Minh Tuan²
Tran Xuan Hiep³

1. Department of International Relations, VNUHCM- University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam. E-mail: haidang2508@gmail.com.

2. Department of International Relations, VNUHCM- University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Vietnam. E-mail: lucminhtuan@gmail.com.

3. Faculty of International Relations, Dong A University, Vietnam. E-mail: hieptx@donga.edu.vn.

DOI: 10.5752/P.2317-773X.2022v10n3p21-33

Recebido em: 29 de maio de 2022
Aprovado em: 03 de abril de 2023

ABSTRACT

The restoration of the Quad Allies (Quad) in 2020 shows the changes in the size and quality of the Quad in the last period of the US President Donald Trump's term. In particular, the possibility of expanding membership of this bloc (under the Quad + structure) is increasingly concerned when Vietnam is being encouraged by all four Quad member countries to enhance bilateral and multilateral interactions. This paper is to analyze the main moves in the interaction between Vietnam and the Quad in particular and within the Quad in general. Two methodologies mainly used in the article are the research of motivation (in part 1 and 2) and retracing approach (in part 2). The article will be structured in 3 parts: Part 1 focuses on clarifying the major trends of the Quad through the main move is intra-regional interactions through the Quad Foreign Ministers Meeting (October 4-6, 2020), part 2 focuses on analyzing Vietnam's tactic to reduce constraints through dynamic interactions with the Expanded Quad (Quad +), and part 3 gives recommendations for Vietnam's foreign policy towards the Quad in the near future.

Keywords: Vietnam, USA, Quad, militarization, foreign tactics

RESUMO

A restauração do Quad Allies (Quad) em 2020 mostra as mudanças no tamanho e na qualidade do Quad no último mandato do presidente dos EUA, Donald Trump. Em particular, a possibilidade de expandir a adesão deste bloco (sob a estrutura Quad +) está se tornando mais preocupante, pois os quatro países membros do Quad incentivam o Vietnã a aprimorar as interações bilaterais e multilaterais. Este artigo analisa os principais movimentos na interação entre o Vietnã e o Quad em particular, e dentro do Quad em geral. As duas principais metodologias utilizadas no artigo são a pesquisa de motiva-

ção (nas partes 1 e 2) e a abordagem de rastreamento (na parte 2). O artigo será estruturado em 3 partes: A Parte 1 se concentra em esclarecer as principais tendências do Quad por meio do principal movimento das interações intrarregionais por meio da Reunião de Ministros das Relações Exteriores do Quad (4 a 6 de outubro de 2020), A Parte 2 se concentra sobre a discussão da tática do Vietnã para reduzir as restrições por meio de interações dinâmicas com o Quad ampliado (Quad +), e a Parte 3 fornece recomendações para a política externa do Vietnã em relação ao Quad no futuro próximo.

Palavras-chave: Vietnã, EUA, Quad, militarização, táticas estrangeiras

1. The tendency increased influence in the Quad at the end of the term of US President D. Trump.....

The visit of US Secretary of State M. Pompeo to Japan (October 4-6) to attend the 2nd Foreign Ministers Meeting of the Quartet (Quad) is considered as an important milestone for the relationship between the US – Japan in particular and the process of institutionalizing the Quad in general. The visit also occurs at a favorable time for the shaping of an “Asian NATO” framework to counter security threats in the region (according to U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun said on 31/02). 8) (M. BHADRAKUMAR, 2020), in which the greatest “common denominator” is still to contain China’s assertive behaviors when this country is simultaneously escalating conflicts with Australia, Japan and India in the second half of 2020.

However, Pompeo’s active bilateral and multilateral diplomatic activities during the three working days in Japan did not bring the desired results when the Conference failed to produce a joint statement, and an “Asian NATO” framework is also not mentioned in any official press release (BHIM BHURTEL, 2020). There are three reasons for this result:

1.1. The US failed to promote the militarization of the Quad

If in the past the US government often only officially recognized that the establishment of security partnership/dialogue frameworks such as the Quad aimed at less sensitive common security goals of the region, then Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun on August 31 publicly acknowledged the progress of building a version of a military alliance like NATO in the Indo-Pacific based on the original Quad framework with small-scale and neutral foundational cooperation (U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, 2020A). This admission refutes all of the State Department’s discourses on neutrality and the previous Quad model of security dialogue that did not aim to shape military alliances against any country (US DEPARTMENT OF STATE, 2019B).

Such a change of stance shows that the US side has regarded this to be the right time to: (i) maximize the rising “anti-China” sentiments in India, Japan and Australia into specific activities “anti-China” in many areas; (ii) push the remaining countries in the Quad into a “ready position” in the “militarization/institutionalization” of the

Quad in accordance with public opinion on the China threat that was highly amplified by the US at the previous 75th United Nations General Assembly meeting (N. HUET, 2020), and (iii) promote quadrilateral cooperation from ordinary, less sensitive, small-scale cooperation areas to areas of strategic, sensitive, large-scale cooperation. However, the reality shows that although the US has chosen the right time, it overly underestimated the ability of the remaining partners in the Quad to make independent decisions.

Specifically, Mr. Biegun's speech on August 31 immediately "activated" the defense mechanism of the remaining countries in the Quad when they did not want to become a "proxy battlefield" in the conflict affecting the US – China (this would cause these countries to suffer from unwanted and uncontrollable damage in the context that they have to directly deal with bilateral economic, military and political pressures from China). This mechanism consists of two groups of activities: (i) minimizing cooperation that directly affects China's strategic profits and (ii) promoting the process of institutionalizing the Quad in a direction beyond the capabilities of the US control.

1.2. India, Japan and Australia have actively found ways to reduce the four-way consensus that directly affects China

Two different points of view between US Secretary of State M. Pompeo and his Indian and Australian counterparts can be obviously observed in his speech on the eve of the Quad Conference (US DEPARTMENT OF STATE, 2020d): (m1) Pompeo attacked directly to China's ruling party, (m2) Pompeo mentioned a series of specific areas where China is engaged in misbehavior including the East Sea, East China Sea, Mekong River, Himalayas, Taiwan Strait ; and (m3) isolate 5G telecom infrastructure cooperation and global supply chain from China. However, at the conclusion of the Conference of the host country Japan (MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF JAPAN, 2020b): (n1) did not include any content attacking China or the ruling party, (n2) only exchanged (disagree) security views on North Korea, East China Sea and East Sea and (n3) only agreed to continue cooperation in the field of health against COVID-19, digital economy, regional structure led by ASEAN, the participation of European countries in the "free and open Indo-Pacific", quality of infrastructure, maritime security, counter-terrorism, cyber security, rescue.. and many other less sensitive areas. In particular, the fact that the announcement did not mention security issues in (n2) related to Xinjiang, Taiwan, Mekong and Himalaya in this Conference shows that the possibility of the remaining parties in the Quad has reduced highly sensitive discussions with China (while the East Sea and East China Sea issues are less sensitive).

In addition, the Japanese announcement did not mention the contents of cooperation discussions in (n3) on *5G telecommunications network infrastructure and the demand to improve the supply chain* as the content of the Quad phone call (on 25th) (US DEPARTMENT OF STATE, 2020c) also showed the high possibility that these are two

contents that do not result in general consensus in this Conference. Furthermore, among the three countries, India, Japan and Australia, there seems to be a “role casting” to both prevent the US from reaching a multilateral consensus on highly sensitive issues at the Conference, but still “satisfy the US on bilateral relations when Japan agreed to the “basic concept” of the US 5G Clean Path Initiative within the framework of communication between diplomatic offices (JAPAN’S MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, 2020b), India indicates the possibility of signing the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-Spatial Cooperation (BECA) at the US-India 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue on October 26-27 (S. GUPTA, 2020), and Australia is the only country allowed the US to mention China’s “aggressive actions” in the bilateral discussion (US DEPARTMENT OF STATE, 2020b). Thus, after the Conference, the US was still not “distrusted” even though it did not achieve the “package” goals as set out.

1.3. India, Japan and Australia strengthen their absolute influence on the internal structure of the Quad

Firstly, all three countries still implicitly expressed their support for a conditional step-by-step militarization roadmap when Japan offered to hold the Quad Defense Ministers Meeting (in exchange for desiring the US and Japan to develop together 03 sea defense bases to replace the previous Aegis Ashore system on land) (KYODO NEWS, 2020). Japan is also the side that simultaneously sent warships and submarines to anti-submarine exercises in the East Sea (ANH THU, 2020) to coordinate with US ships to carry out FONOPS in Hoang Sa (BAO DUY, 2020) right after this Quad Conference. Meanwhile, India is promoting activities to invite Australia to participate in the annual exercise Malabar (with the US and Japan participating) (S. MIGLANI – K. NEEDHAM, 2020) in order to easily reinforce the perception for the US side that progress of “militarizing” the Quad is being implicitly agreed.

Second, strengthen the bilateral cooperation axes in the direction of self-reliance (not dependent on the US) between India – Japan, India – Australia and Japan – Australia: in which the Indo-Japan axis plays a key role with the number of cooperation pillars (have established a common vision for the Indo-Pacific Initiative – IPOI and cooperation pillars on high-quality infrastructure, finance, health, maritime security, especially cooperation in digital technologies such as 5G network, artificial intelligence – AI, Internet of things – IoT) (A. BHAUMIK, 2020) is much better than the US – Japan axis (only 3 pillars of energy, digital economy and cooperation between the US – Japan – Mekong sub-region), while the India – Australia and Japan – Australia axes continue to be improved (without the participation of the US). Specifically, India and Australia recently signed a Defense Agreement to upgrade their bilateral relationship to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP), a Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA) with agreements on defense science and technology. Meanwhile, the

Japanese Foreign Minister met with the Australian Foreign Minister on the sidelines of this Quad Conference to strengthen the potential strategic relations between the two countries and the possibility of cooperation in the South Pacific island chains.

Third, all three countries are building outward “relationship triangles” to gradually “multilateralize” the Quad structure out of the orbit of the US influence: in which (i) to the central structure of the Quad: India's continuous refusal to establish the US-India-Australia triangle since 2011 (R. PANDIT, 2011) and the birth of the Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI) (RP. RAJAGOPALAN, 2020) at the Indo-Japan strategic dialogue on October 7, has made Japan currently the only country in the remaining three “triangles” of the Quad: the Japan- US- India triangle in terms of connectivity infrastructure, the Japan – US – Australia triangle also in terms of infrastructure (P. MCCAWLEY, 2019), and the Japan – India – Australia triangle in the New Supply Chain Initiative (INDIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, 2020a); (ii) for external “triangle” structures related to the Quad, India has also established two partnership triangles India – Australia – Indonesia (AUSTRALIAN DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE, 2019) and India – Australia – France (INDIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, 2020b) to strengthen the Indo-Australia axis to counterbalance instead of letting the Quad structure leans towards the US – Japan axis (with two partnership triangles US – Japan – Korea and the US – Japan – Mongolia) (US DEPARTMENT OF STATE, 2017) and (iii) all three countries India, Japan and Australia all support the content of non-military cooperation (in the mentioned n3 content group) in which the construction of the Japan – India – Australia triangle on the supply chain is the first step for the trend of promoting “demilitarization” or “softening” of the Quad.

Thus, through this Conference, it can be clearly seen that the active efforts of all three countries including India, Japan and Australia in transforming the Quad's structure in the direction of “centrifugation” away from the coordination of the US. Although India, Japan and Australia are all taking turns to cooperate with the US on each of the small goals in the Quad, they tend to delay the process of “militarizing” the Quad in general. The US side also seems to have an alternative when it has built a series of “strategic triangles” based on the US – Japan axis (such as the US – Japan – India, the US – Japan – Australia, the US – Japan – Korea, The US – Japan – Mongolia) to “replace the framework” for the Quad when seeing the delay in the progress of this block's institutionalization, however, both India – Australia and India – Japan axes have also built “strategic triangles” which has a counterbalancing nature (such as the Indo-Australia-Japan triangle, India-Australia-France, India-Australia-Indonesia) and is likely to shape the Indo-Japan-Russia triangle in the near future (S. PARASHAR, 2020). Therefore, no matter how the US builds the framework of the “Asian NATO”, the three countries India, Japan and Australia also have solutions to counterbalance and reduce dependence on US coordination as well as reduce the possibility of intense

escalation to shape military blocs rivaling China. Consequently, Vietnam's flexible behavior in interacting with the previous Quad+ cooperation mechanism on Covid-19 is completely consistent with the centrifugal trend in the internal structure of this block.

2. Flexible response of Viet Nam in the expansion of Quad.....

The news that Viet Nam was invited to join Expanded Quad is currently grasping the attention of regional and international public opinion, focusing on three small points: (1) the US is "politicizing" multi-field cooperation institutions to utilize the third wave of "Chinese escape" within the framework of the Quad's functional cooperation, and (2) China's reaction to "politicizing" activities. The wave of "Chinese escape" of Quad+ led by the US and (3) Vietnam agreed to participate Quad+ at the active invitation of the US.

These implications have implicitly created public opinion "politicizing" the event Viet Nam participates in the activities of the expanded Quad, triggers inferences that Viet Nam currently has to take sides in the upcoming "Cold War 2.0" – an outdated argument foundation which is common in the 90s but will cause misunderstandings, misperception and miscalculation. This is especially sensitive to Vietnam-China relations in particular and Vietnam's "non-aligned" foreign identity/reputation in general, even affecting Vietnam's "multilateralization" strategy towards other countries. Therefore, the use of the traceability method to clearly analyze the implications in order to understand the positions of each side and propose solutions for Vietnam is an urgent research work.

2.1. Analysing the origin of the event

Initially, the origin of the point (1) bases on the context that US is promoting simultaneously 3 trends that are greatly affecting international politics in the first half of 2020: (i) "politicizing" the areas of bilateral strategic competition with China in terms of trade (from June 2018) (P.ANH, 2018) and technology (from May 2019) (T.HANG, 2019); (ii) "institutionalizing" new waves of "Chinese escape" at the multilateral level of the India-Pacific region in the field of infrastructure (from November 2019) (J. LYN, 2020); and (iii) "unipolarizing" global leadership efforts to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic on the part of the US government (issued from April 2020).

In which, trend (i) not only plays the role of reducing the interdependence between the US and China but also accelerates the wave of "Chinese escape" (ii). The trend (ii) is the process of expanding the cooperation function of the Quad (or "softening" the fundamental security cooperation function of the Quad) and restructuring the Quad block towards an open but dependent on the agenda from the superstructure (similar to the ASEAN Expansion cooperation or ASEAN+). And trend (iii) represents an effort to make the Quad become the sole representative in the current essential field of cooperation is

the prevention of Covid-19, as a pilot to make the Quad become a key leadership axis the process of global “Chinese escape”. Therefore, all three trends, shaping the point (1) has created a clear perception of the process of establishing a comprehensive (multi-sectoral) strategic threat platform from the Quad (not just limited to security or infrastructure as before) from the outlook of the Chinese government.

Secondly, the origin of the point (2) derives from 3 trends: (i) the recognition of the campaign to attribute unilateral responsibility from the US and its allies for the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic to China (GLOBAL TIMES, 2020), (ii) the multilateral support of Quad members (J.MALHOTRA, 2020) requires China to transparently explain its responsibility for the Covid-19 pandemic and (iii) a harsh response from China to any US activities related to taking advantage of Covid- 19 to fight China (GLOBAL TIMES, 2020). These three trends have created China's perception of the US integrating more global co-operation initiatives on Covid-19 into the Quad to carry out activities to restrain China, requiring China to respond quickly and drastically.

Thirdly, the origin of the point (3) is quoted by the public (N. DANG, 2020) from the 03 following outstanding information: (i) reported by the Times of India (India) The first phone call (March 20) (I. BAGCHI, 2020a) and the second (March 28) (I. BAGCHI, 2020b) conducted by US Deputy Secretary of State Steve Biegun with high-ranking representatives from the Quad and three external representatives (Vietnam, New Zealand, South Korea) which self-referred to as the “Quad Plus” to discuss the prevention of Covid-19; (ii) published by Reuters (May 4) (H. PAMUK – A.SHALAL, 2020) on the confirmation of US Secretary of State M. Pompeo (speech on April 29) that the US, Japan, India, Australia and three countries Vietnam, New Zealand and South Korea are discussing about restructuring the global supply chain with the initiative “Economic Prosperity Network (EPN)”; and (iii) the confirmation (May 14) (N. NHAM, 2020) from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam about participating in unofficial phone calls with 6 countries (USA, Japan, Korea, India, Australia, New Zealand) to discuss the Covid-19 pandemic situation and post-pandemic economic recovery measures.

These three pieces of information not only highlight Vietnam's participation in activities that tend to contain China coordinated by the US, but also highlight the ability to access the superstructure of the Quad - the focus of the direction of the US, making it easier for the point (3) to create the implication that Vietnam actually agreed to initially join the US initiatives to contain China as a country advising the superstructure of the Quad block, complete the logic circuit from (1) to (2) and (3).

2.2. Vietnam's flexible foreign affair strategy in interacting with the Quad +

Firstly, Vietnam has not yet officially participated in the activities of the Quad Expansion. Obviously, Vietnam only sent senior officials to attend the unofficial phone call of the US Deputy Secretary of State

on March 20 and March 28 to share experiences in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic, but when it came to the official meeting of Foreign Ministers on post-Covid-19 economic recovery activities conducted by the Quad +, the Foreign Minister of Vietnam (and New Zealand) did not attend, instead the representatives of Brazil and Israel (JAPANESE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, 2020a). Only Korean representatives attended fully the Covid-19 cooperation activities within the framework of the Quad Expansion. A spokesperson for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam on May 14 also confirmed that Vietnam's participation only stopped at "unofficial" phone calls. Therefore, it can be seen that Vietnam is still steadfast in its neutral position in international cooperation, and has realized the political nature within the structure of the new Quad (using essential multi-field cooperation networks to draw small countries into the traditional and non-traditional security orbit generally coordinated by the Quad) should stop at information sharing and limit operations to the framework of "cooperation mechanisms, exchange, and phone call in a constructive and responsible spirit" (THANH HA, 2020). Therefore, point (3) is an incorrect inference of international and regional public opinion, although point (1) and (2) are two highly persuasive cognitive foundations.

Second, the frameworks of "contain China" built and advocated by the US are only superficial to attract public opinion, but have yet created an effective threat to China on a pragmatic basis. The US is in the pilot phase of creating a series of institutions such as the Blue Dot Network among the US - Japan - Australia (officially announced in November 2019 to compete with China's BRI) (J. LYN, 2020), as well as the idea of advocating for cooperation in infrastructure connecting the US - India - Japan (JAI) since 2018 has not yet produced results because of many differences in India's calculations (J. PANDA, 2019). Even the EPN initiatives are still in the early stages of advocating (despite having a financial background from US-based funds), while the concept of the Quad+ has many precedents since 2013 (N. DANG, 2020) but completely lacks the institutional framework and agenda, now limited to working only within the framework of phone calls. Many viewpoints also believe that the idea of the Quad Expansion is still at a rudimentary level, even just helping to supplement the "communication corridor" for India's relations with Vietnam, South Korea, Brazil, Israel, but does not have much impact on the overall strategy of the Indians (J. PANDA, 2020), and simultaneously promotes the process of "demilitarization" or "softening" the Quad that the US actually does not want (RAJESWARI PILLAI RAJAGOPALAN, 2020). This causes the argument point (1) to be reduced seriously.

Third, China has not actually had an official response to Quad+ by the time the bloc holds an official ministerial-level phone call (May 2020). All official statements of the Chinese side at this time only repeats the harsh response to the countries participating in the media campaign attributing the responsibility for the Covid-19 pandemic to China, unintentionally including the US, Japan, India and Australia

(x5 trend) and international media have arbitrarily grouped into information that China opposes the Quad + block. Chinese media at May 2020 have many indications that they know how to distinguish disadvantageous interactions in the Covid-19 issue at the bilateral level (with each country in the Quad) and multilaterally (the whole Quad). Even an editorial criticizing the US's multilateral initiatives from China International Television's news site - CGTN (May 4) had to borrow the words of a Russian author to accuse the US of utilizing the shell of Covid-19 to create an EPN to promote supply chain changes toward China's disadvantage (NHAT DANG, 2020). Therefore, the point (2) is just an inference based on information inflated by international media on the basis of real trends.

These three statements have clarified: (i) Vietnam's initiatives in identifying the true nature of the Quad+ as well as the steps demonstrating clearly the country's friendly neutral foreign policy, (ii) The US really intends to use Covid-19 to entice countries to participate in the Quad + but has not had any considerable results and (iii) China actually keeps a cautious attitude toward responding to moves relating to the Quad+ to reduce "miscalculation" with countries whose geostrategic position is important to them (like Vietnam).

3. Several suggestions for Vietnam's foreign defense strategy in interacting with the Quad in the coming time.....

Firstly, the trend of "Chinese escape" is still happening without the US push (mainly the first wave with additional impact from the second and third wave), so Vietnam does not need to join the new supply chain mechanism coordinated by the US or the Quad (always with civil society conditions and priority for private corporations, as well as terms of "contain China"), but only need to prepare supporting industrial and high-tech ecological platforms to catch the shift.

Secondly, due to the supply chain segment that countries in the Quad (as well as the EU) are campaigning to move with many different points, at a time when all businesses are facing financial difficulties with Covid-19 so the fact that the campaign to move the supply chain during the Covid-19 period has had very limited effectiveness (despite being heavily promoted by the Western media due to the fact that it captures the general sentiment of public discontent with China). Therefore, Vietnam needs to counter-delineate between information of practical value and information that only has the value of disturbing public opinion (used by the parties to overwhelm the other party's mentality but when carefully studied, there is no or have little practical value).

Third, Vietnam may consider mobilizing parties to participate in functional activities of the Quad (Quad +) to promote the trend of "softening" the Quad to the point of no return. The existence of a multi-field cooperation mechanism coordinated by the US in addition to the mechanisms in which China has influence in the region will help shape a balance-to-balance order in non-traditional security fields.

(unlikely to turn into a “hard collision”) is also a suitable direction for Vietnam’s strategy of “multilateralization” and balancing the parties.

Fourth, in the context that the US - China institutions are balancing - counterbalancing, it will create empty space and time for ASEAN to perfect the functional cooperation mechanisms coordinated by this Association. The remaining 6 months of the “double year” is a good opportunity for Vietnam to link the bridge the US-China mechanisms with ASEAN (or “step-by-step ASEANization”). That is, instead of asking questions whether joining or not participating in the Quad+ in the field of Covid-19, within Southeast Asia, the countries participating in the Quad+ will have to ask the opposite question whether to participate in Covid-19 cooperation with ASEAN or not?

Fifth, Vietnam and ASEAN should understand the trend of “demilitarization” and “de-Americanization” of the Quad that are being carried out by India, Japan and Australia to gradually coordinate with these trends to promote the “centrifugation” in the Quad out of the original orbit controlled by the US.

Sixth, Vietnam as a country with a lot of experience in effective COVID-19 prevention and one of the rare safe destinations of the supply chain during the post-pandemic recovery period of the world economy (with impressive economic growth) can share experiences in order to participate in supply chain initiatives (SCRIs) of the Indo-Japan axis (or other initiatives that India-Japan or India - Australia is the main axis) with ASEAN countries, or participate more in the non-military cooperation mechanisms of the Quad + to gradually “soften” and “ASEANize” the Quad in the direction that the US cannot be irreversible.

Seventh, Vietnam should be well aware that despite trying to delay efforts to “militarize” the Quad, the three countries India, Japan and Australia still have to support/participate individually in upcoming US military activities in the East Sea (although they will keep these activities from having all four parties), so they should not react strongly or make disadvantageous diplomatic statements for India, Japan and Australia in FONOPS or an expanded military exercise of Quad members in the East Sea (usually the West Philippine Sea) in the near future.

Eighth, Vietnam needs to pay close attention to the “strategic triangles” that the US is creating in the region to serve as the foundation for the “Asian NATO” (whether Biden or Trump is elected, the strategy to build the US’s Asian alliance system is still in progress) to replace the Quad in the future to take appropriate precautions, while avoiding participation in these triangles in the early stages.

Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article.

References

- ANH THU. 2020. “**Nh t t p tr n ch ng tàu ng m B i n Đông**” [Japan conducts anti-submarine drills in the East Sea]. Young Newspaper. Available from: <<https://tuoitre.vn/nha-t-tap-tran-chong-tau-ngam-o-bien-dong-20201010132057249.htm>>. Access on: 15 Aug. 2021.
- ANIRBAN BHAUMIK. 2020. “**India, Japan finalise pact for cooperation in 5G tech, AI and critical information infra**”. Deccanherald. Available from: <<https://www.deccanherald.com/national/india-japan-finalise-pact-for-cooperation-in-5g-tech-ai-and-critical-information-infra-898622.html>>. Access on: 15 Aug. 2021.
- AUSTRALIAN DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE. 2019. **Third India-Australia-Indonesia Trilateral Senior Officials’ Dialogue**. Available from: <<https://www.dfat.gov.au/news/media/Pages/third-india-australia-indonesia-trilateral-senior-officials-dialogue>>. Access on: 23 Aug. 2021.
- BAO DUY. 2020. “**Tàu khu tr c M thách th c Trung Qu c Hoàng Sa**” [US destroyer challenges China in Paracels]. Young Newspaper. Available from: <<https://tuoitre.vn/tau-khu-truc-my-thach-thuc-trung-quoc-o-hoang-sa-20201009223708657.htm>>. Access on: 16 Aug. 2021.
- BHIM BHURTEL. 2020. “**Asian NATO’ plan stillborn at Tokyo Quad meet**”. Asia Times. Available from: <<https://asiatimes.com/2020/10/asian-nato-plan-stillborn-at-tokyo-quad-meet/>>. Access on: 15 Aug. 2021.
- GLOBAL TIMES. 2020. **US COVID-19 accountability act against China irresponsible and immoral: FM**. Available from: <<https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/1188265.shtml>>. Access on: 15 Sept. 2021.
- HUMEYRA PAMUK - ANDREA SHALAL. 2020. **Trump administration pushing to rip global supply chains from China: officials**. Reuters. Available from: <<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-usa-china/trump-administration-pushing-to-rip-global-supply-chains-from-china-officials-idUSKBN22G0BZ>>. Access on: 23 Aug. 2021.
- INDRANI BAGCHI. 2020a. **India joins hands with NZ, Vietnam, S Korea to combat pandemic**. Times of India. Available from: <<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/india-joins-hands-with-nz-vietnam-s-korea-to-combat-pandemic/articleshow/74740424.cms>>. Access on: 27 Aug. 2021.
- INDRANI BAGCHI. 2020b. **India, Quad-Plus countries discuss Covid-19 battle, economic resurgence**. Times of India. Available from: <<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/india-quad-plus-countries-discuss-covid-19-battle-economic-resurgence/articleshow/74861792.cms>>. Access on: 27 Aug. 2021.
- JAGANNATH PANDA. 2019. **‘JAI’, the Quad and China: Understanding the Undercurrents**. German Institute for International and Security Affairs. Available from: <https://www.swpberlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/projekt_papiere/BCAS_2019_Panda_Quad_and_China.pdf>. Access on: 4 Sept. 2021.
- JAGANNATH PANDA. 2020. **India and the ‘Quad Plus’ Dialogue**. RUSI. Available from: <<https://rusi.org/commentary/india-strategic-quad>>. Access on: 4 Sept. 2021.
- JENNIFER LYN. 2020. **US Blue Dot Network to counter China’s BRI**. Asia Times. Available from: <<https://asiatimes.com/2020/05/us-blue-dot-network-to-counter-chinas-bri/>>. Access on: 4 Sept. 2021.
- JYOTI MALHOTRA. 2020. **China is feeling the heat over Covid-19 — from Japan to Australia. But India’s hands are full**. The Print. Available from: <<https://theprint.in/opinion/global-print/china-is-feeling-the-heat-over-covid-19-from-japan-to-australia-but-indias-hands-are-full/401126/>>. Access on: 4 Sept. 2021.
- KYODO NEWS. 2020. **Japan, U.S. agree to work on alternative to Aegis Ashore plan**. Available from: <<https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2020/10/159accfe7c2b-japan-us-agree-to-work-on-alternative-to-aegis-ashore-plan.html>>. Access on: 27 Aug. 2021.
- MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF INDIA. 2020a. **13th India-Japan Foreign Ministers’ Strategic Dialogue**. Available from: <<https://www.mea.gov.in/pressreleases.htm?dtl/33100/13th+IndiaJapan+Foreign+Ministers+Strategic+Dialogue>>. Access on: 16 Aug. 2021.
- MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF INDIA. 2020b. **1st Senior Officials’ India-France-Australia Trilateral Dialogue**. MEA. Available from: <<https://www.mea.gov.in/press-releases.htm?dtl/32950/1st+Senior+Officials+IndiaFranceAustralia+Trilateral+Dialogue>>. Access on: 16 Aug. 2021.

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF JAPAN. 2020a. **Meeting on the Novel Coronavirus Disease among Foreign Ministers of Interested Countries Hosted by the United States**. Available from: <https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e_002806.html>. Access on: 17 Aug. 2021.

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF JAPAN. 2020b. **Japan-U.S. Foreign Ministers' Meeting**. Available from: <https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/press4e_002926.html>. Access on: 17 Aug. 2021.

MK BHADRAKUMAR. 2020. **India gains nothing from an 'Asian NATO'**. Times of India. <<https://asiatimes.com/2020/09/india-gains-nothing-from-an-asian-nato/>>. Access on: 6 Sept. 2021.

NATALIE HUET. 2020. **"UN chief warns over threat of new Cold War between US and China"**. Euro News. Available from: <<https://www.euronews.com/2020/09/22/un-chief-warns-over-threat-of-new-cold-war-between-us-and-china>>. Access on: 6 Sept. 2021.

NGUYEN NHAM. 2020. **Tham gia "B t m r ng" có là c h i cho Vi t Nam? [Is joining the "Expanded Quartet" an opportunity for Vietnam?]**. Communist Party of Vietnam Online Newspaper. Available from: <<https://dangcongsan.vn/cung-ban-luan/tham-gia-bo-tu-mo-rong-co-la-co-hoi-cho-viet-nam-555568.html>>. Access on: 10 Sept. 2021.

NHAT DANG. 2020. **M tái c u trúc chu i cung ng ? [The US restructures the supply chain?]**. Young Newspaper. Available from: <<https://tuoitre.vn/my-tai-cau-truc-chuoi-cung-ung-20200506085535756.htm>>. Access on: 10 Sept. 2021.

PETER MCCAWLEY. 2019. **Connecting the dots on the Blue Dot Network**. The Interpreter. Available from: <<https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/connecting-dots-blue-dot-network>>. Access on: 10 Sept. 2021.

PHUONG ANH. 2018. **M tuyên b áp thu 25% v i 50 t USD hàng hóa Trung Qu c [The US announced to impose 25% tariffs on \$50 billion of Chinese goods]**. VOV. Available from: <<https://vov.vn/the-gioi/my-tuyen-bo-ap-thue-25-voi-50-ty-usd-hang-hoa-trung-g-quoc-775206.vov>>. Access on: 11 Sept. 2021.

RAJAT PANDIT. (2011). **India snubs trilateral security pact with Australia, US to check China**. The Economic Times. Available from: <<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/india-snubs-trilateral-security-pact-with-australia-us-to-check-china/articleshow/10954852.cms>>. Access on: 11 Sept. 2021.

RAJESWARI PILLAI RAJAGOPALAN. 2020. **Australia-Japan-India Trilateral Sets Sights on Supply Chain Resilience**. The Diplomat. Available from: <<https://thediplomat.com/2020/10/australia-japan-india-trilateral-sets-sights-on-supply-chain-resilience/>>. Access on: 11 Sept. 2021.

SACHIN PARASHAR. 2020. **India hopes Russia will join Indo-Pacific with Japan trilateral**. The Times of India. Available from: <<https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/india-hopes-russia-will-join-indo-pacific-with-japan-trilateral/articleshow/77450048.cms>>. Access on: 12 Sept. 2021.

SANJEEV MIGLANI - KIRSTY NEEDHAM. 2020. **Australia will join naval drills involving India, U.S., Japan**. Reuters. Available from: <<https://www.reuters.com/article/india-military-exercises-idUSKBN2741J1>>. Access on: 12 Sept. 2021.

SHISHIR GUPTA. 2020. **India-US 2 plus 2 on Oct 26-27, geospatial pact BECA to be signed**. The Hindustan Times. Available from: <<https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/third-india-us-2-2-talks-likely-on-october-26-27-pact-on-geo/story-fSBiUWocOWIZ-9wfgzw8d4K.html>>. Access on: 12 Sept. 2021.

THANH HA. 2020. **"Vi t Nam thông tin v i c tham gia i n àm "B t kim c ng m r ng" [Vietnam's information about participating in the phone call "The Diamond Quad"]**. Lao Dong Newspaper. Available from: <<https://laodong.vn/the-gioi/viet-nam-thong-tin-ve-viec-tham-gia-dien-dam-bo-tu-kim-cuong-mo-rong-805419.lao>>. Access on: 16 Aug. 2021.

THU HANG. 2019. **Chi n tranh công nghệ : Trung Qu c thì t tr c m t, M thua ng dài [Technology war: China loses in the short term, the US loses in the long run]**. News. Available from: <<https://baotintuc.vn/phan-tich-nhan-dinh/chien-tranh-cong-nghe-trung-quoc-thiet-truoc-mat-my-thua-duong-dai-20191221084757337.htm>>. Access on: 12 Sept. 2021.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE. 2017. **Joint Statement: U.S.-Japan-Mongolia Trilateral Meeting**. Available from: <<https://2017-2021.state.gov/joint-statement-on-the-u-s-japan-mongolia-trilateral-meeting/index.html>>. Access on: 17 Aug. 2021.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE. 2019b. **Readout of U.S.-Australia-India-Japan Ministerial**. Available from: <<https://2017-2021.state.gov/readout-of-u-s-australia-india-japan-ministerial-the-quad/index.html>>. Access on: 17 Aug. 2021.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE. 2020a. **Deputy Secretary Biegun Remarks at the U.S.-India Strategic Partnership Forum**. Available from: <<https://2017-2021.state.gov/deputy-secretary-biegun-remarks-at-the-u-s-india-strategic-partnership-forum/index.html>>. Access on: 17 Aug. 2021.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE. 2020b. **Secretary Pompeo's Meeting with Australian Foreign Minister Payne**. Available from: <<https://2017-2021.state.gov/secretary-pompeos-meeting-with-australian-foreign-minister-payne-3/index.html>>. Access on: 19 Aug. 2021.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE. 2020c. **U.S.-Australia-India-Japan Consultations** ("The Quad"). Available from: <<https://2017-2021.state.gov/u-s-australia-india-japan-consultations-the-quad-3/index.html>>. Access on: 19 Aug. 2021.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE. 2020d. **Secretary Michael R. Pompeo Opening Remarks at Quad Ministerial**. Available from: <https://2017-2021.state.gov/secretary-michael-r-pompeo-opening-remarks-at-quad-ministerial/index.html>. Access on: 19 Aug. 2021.