

# QUADRILATERAL QUEASINESS: THE HINDU EDITORIAL ON INDIA'S STANCE IN RUSSIA-UKRAINE CRISIS

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed & developing countries on India's interests

At [a snap virtual meeting of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue or Quad](#), comprising India, the U.S., Australia and Japan, leaders discussed the crisis of Russia's invasion of Ukraine along with more traditional topics of interest for the Dialogue, including territorial and maritime security across the Indo-Pacific. In the joint statement, issued after the summit, the four nations reaffirmed their commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific, "in which the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all states is respected and countries are free from military, economic, and political coercion". The latest Quad meeting was in part likely motivated by the concern of the U.S., Australia, and Japan that India, in not explicitly condemning Russian President Vladimir Putin's decision to launch a ground offensive across the Russia-Ukraine border and to bomb Ukrainian infrastructure, might not be on the same page as the other Quad members *vis-à-vis* this conflict. They have not only condemned Russia's aggression but have also slapped Kremlin elites and organisations linked to them with crippling sanctions. India, contrarily, has abstained from three UN resolutions condemning Russia. There is also a considerable difference on the Russia-Ukraine issue in terms of the individual readouts of the Quad members. While the U.S., Australia and Japan directly called out Russia's attempt to unilaterally force changes to the status quo in Ukraine and vowed not to let such action occur anywhere in the Indo-Pacific, India's readout only referenced Ukraine in passing, in the context of establishing a new humanitarian assistance and disaster relief mechanism for this cause.

Russia's action has obviously posed complex questions for India's strategic calculus, even as New Delhi continues to be guided by the 21st century variant of its non-alignment paradigm, and by its need to remain close to Moscow, a major defence supplier. South Block is already well versed at playing hardball with the mandarins at the U.S. State Department over getting a CAATSA waiver for India's purchase of \$5.43 billion worth of the Russian Triumf missile defence system. While the discussions on the Ukraine crisis will continue at the Quad and across other plurilateral platforms where India and the U.S. work together for the greater good of the rules-based international order, the idea that NATO countries or even Russia can force sovereign nations with a proud history of non-alignment to pick a side in a complex geopolitical conflict is quite passé and eminently unviable in today's interdependent global arena. The Quad, for example, cannot afford to alienate India, a critical partner in the global-strategic plan to balance the rise of China as a potential Asian hegemon. Yet, India may find its resolve and patience with Russia tested should Russian occupying forces begin committing war crimes and human rights violations in contravention of the Geneva Convention, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other applicable global treaties.

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