

# ANOTHER GROUPING: THE HINDU EDITORIAL ON AUKUS

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

In its first reaction to [AUKUS](#), the new [partnership between Australia, the U.S. and the U.K.](#), India has made it clear that it does not welcome the announcement, nor does it wish to link AUKUS to Indian interests. Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla said that AUKUS, which was launched a week before the first in-person summit of leaders of the Australia-India-Japan-U.S. Quadrilateral, [will not affect plans to strengthen the Quad](#). He called them two very different groupings, describing AUKUS as a security alliance, and indicating that security is not the Quad's main focus. Brushing aside criticism from China and Iran on the plans within the partnership for the U.S. and the U.K. to develop nuclear-propelled submarines for Australia, he said that India does not see AUKUS as nuclear proliferation. But New Delhi has noticed the protests from others, especially France, that has lost a lucrative submarine deal in the bargain, prompting Prime Minister Narendra Modi and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar to reach out to their French counterparts. [France has recalled its Ambassadors to the U.S. and Australia](#), accusing them of betrayal by negotiating their defence partnership with the U.K., and without informing European allies. The EU and ASEAN countries have been reserved in their reactions. U.S. President Joe Biden and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson have now spoken to French President Emmanuel Macron, but it remains to be seen whether the damage to ties can be reversed.

Given the different reactions and widespread impact of the AUKUS partnership, India's non-committal note is not surprising. There are two sides to it. The promising possibilities of the alliance include strengthening the Quad's agenda to keep the Indo-Pacific region free, open and inclusive. The alliance could also extend itself to bolstering the Quad's efforts on maritime exercises, security and efforts in countering COVID-19, climate change, cooperating on critical technologies, and building resilient supply chains. More broadly, the U.S.'s three-fold messaging on AUKUS seems to be in line with India's hopes: that "America is back" after four years of retrenchment from global issues; is as engaged with its Indo-Pacific flank as it is with its Transatlantic flank, and is focused on partnerships with fellow democracies in particular. But the concerns over AUKUS are considerable too: that the timing of the announcement of the deal just before the Quad leaders meet could overshadow the latter, and also signal that the U.S. is relegating the Quad to less substantive issues in the Indo-Pacific. With the sudden announcement of AUKUS, a worry for New Delhi is that the U.S. is now promoting a security partnership with its "Anglo-Saxon" treaty allies that it is excluded from, possibly upsetting the balance of power in the region, and setting off new tensions to India's east, adding to the substantial turbulence in India's west caused by the developments in Afghanistan.

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