

QUAD TO COUNTER AFGHAN-ORIGIN TERROR

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: QUAD and India

Bringing back: Prime Minister Narendra Modi inspecting artefacts which were handed over to him by the U.S. ANI

From detailing commitments on COVID-19 vaccines and climate to launching a new infrastructure partnership, the Quad Leaders Summit, which met in person for the first time, announced a wide range of deliverables.

The group, comprising Prime Minister Narendra Modi, U.S. President Joe Biden and Prime Ministers Scott Morrison of Australia and Yoshihide Suga of Japan, also declared new joint positions in the region, such as coordinating diplomatically in Afghanistan.

In their joint statement, Quad leaders declared they would closely coordinate their “diplomatic, economic and human rights policies” towards Afghanistan and deepen their counter-terrorism and humanitarian cooperation there in accordance with United Nations Security Council 2593 (a resolution passed on August 30, when India held the presidency of the Council). The resolution seeks a negotiated settlement in Afghanistan and calls for the country not to be used as a base to nurture terrorism.

“We reaffirm that Afghan territory should not be used to threaten or attack any country or to shelter or train terrorists, or to plan or to finance terrorist acts, and reiterate the importance of combating terrorism in Afghanistan,” the Quad statement said.

‘Terrorist proxies’

“We denounce the use of terrorist proxies and emphasise the importance of denying any logistical, financial or military support to terrorist groups which could be used to launch or plan terror attacks, including cross-border attacks,” it said, making a thinly veiled reference to Pakistan.

The four leaders and their delegations met in the East Room of the White House. The meeting lasted a little over two hours. Both Mr. Morrison and Mr. Suga engaged with the press on Friday.

In terms of new positions, the Quad also declared its support for the European Union’s September 2021 Indo-Pacific Strategy. The announcement earlier this month of a Australia-U.K.-U.S. security partnership in the Indo-Pacific (AUKUS) had gone down badly with France, a key EU nation. *Reuters* reported that Mr. Suga had welcomed, during the Quad meeting, the announcement on AUKUS.

he Quad called on North Korea to engage in substantive dialogue and for “an end to the violence in Myanmar”. It declared its support for early restoration of democracy in Myanmar and the release of all political detainees, including foreigners.

On climate, the Quad countries intend to “update or communicate ambitious NDCs (Nationally Defined Contributions, i.e., climate action targets) “before COP26, the UN climate conference in Glasgow a little over a month from now. It says countries will work with the “intent” to get to net zero emissions “preferably” by 2050 “taking into account national circumstances”. India has not yet made formal commitments for COP26 or committed to achieving net zero by 2050.

Vaccine supply

In terms of vaccines, Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla said that India would begin supplying Johnson & Johnson/Janssen COVID-19 vaccines, with 8 million doses being made available by the end of October from (Telengana-based) pharma company Biological E Ltd.

The Quad also “welcomed” India’s resumption of vaccine exports, as per the joint statement. The group plans to produce at least 1 billion India manufactured vaccines by the end of 2022 in addition to pledging more than 1.2 billion vaccines globally (the U.S. accounts for about 1.1 billion of these).

The group will also prepare for future pandemics – and conduct at least one preparedness tabletop or exercise in 2022.

The Quad also launched a new infrastructure partnership – which would involve mapping the region’s infrastructure needs and providing technical assistance and evaluation tools for projects. This, the statement said, would work with the Blue Dot Network – a U.S. , Australia and Japan’s private sector-led infrastructure effort in the region to counter China’s Belt and Road Initiative. Other initiatives include cooperation on ‘transparent 5G and beyond-5G networks’, cyberspace and space.

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