



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on September 30, 2020

Pompeo to Join Counterparts From “Quad” Nations at Tokyo Meeting

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Secretary of State Mike Pompeo will join his counterparts from the four so-called Quad group of nations on October 6 in Tokyo. The other top diplomats attending will be Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne, Indian Minister of External Affairs Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, and Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi.



AP Images

“It is the right time for these like-minded foreign ministers to gather in Tokyo for face-to-face talks, to exchange views about how to deal with issues that have emerged from the spread of the coronavirus, along with regional affairs,” Motegi described the upcoming meeting to reporters during a briefing.

Officially known as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, the Quad is an informal strategic forum among the four nations that is maintained by semi-regular summits, information exchanges, and military drills between member countries. The forum was originally initiated in 2007 by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan, with the support of Vice President Dick Cheney, Prime Minister John Howard of Australia, and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India. Though not conducted under the auspices of the Quad, a parallel joint naval exercise called Exercise Malabar was begun in 1992 as a bilateral exercise between India and the United States, with Japan becoming a permanent partner in 2015. The joint exercise was widely viewed as a response to increased Chinese economic and military power, and the Chinese government responded to the participants by issuing formal diplomatic protests to its members.

During an online seminar on the sidelines of the annual U.S.-India Strategic Partnership Forum on August 31, Deputy Secretary of State Stephen Biegun said that Washington was aiming to “formalize” growing strategic ties with India, Japan, and Australia in the Quad — a move many Asia observers say is implicitly designed to counter China in the Indo-Pacific region.

“It is a reality that the Indo-Pacific region is actually lacking in strong multilateral structures. They don’t have anything of the fortitude of NATO, or the European Union,” Biegun said.

“There is certainly an invitation there at some point to formalize a structure like this,” Biegun tellingly added — a statement likely to cause concern to American non-interventionists worried that alliances such as NATO and the now-defunct SEATO (Southeast Asia Treaty Organization) have involved the United States in overseas wars. U.S. membership in SEATO provided a rationale for a large-scale U.S. military intervention in Southeast Asia during the Vietnam War.

Speaking to the Atlantic Council back on August 28, National Security Adviser Robert O’Brien said he expected to meet his counterparts from India, Australia, and Japan in September and October, while



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Pompeo would meet his counterparts from those nations at the Quad meeting.

O'Brien said the Quad relationship, which has been denounced by China, was likely to pay large dividends.

"We're seeing a very assertive, a very aggressive China and the United States is not going to back down from its long-held principles that the world's ocean ways and international waters should be free for navigation, and the same with space and with air rights and international airspace," O'Brien said.



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