

# SPECIAL REPORT

## Southeast Asian perceptions of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue

Survey findings

A S P I

Dr Huong Le Thu

October 2018

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AUSTRALIAN  
STRATEGIC  
POLICY  
INSTITUTE

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad)—an informal security framework between Japan, the US, Australia and India—has been facing some perception challenges, including a common view that it antagonises China and challenges ASEAN, and hence would enjoy little regional support.

But there has been little empirical data to back such views. This study tested perceptions of the Quad among the Southeast Asian policy and expert communities through a quantitative survey. It collected 276 answers from staff from government agencies, militaries, academia, think tanks, businesses, media and university students from all 10 ASEAN countries.

This is the first and so far the only comprehensive study of Southeast Asian perceptions of the Quad. Using original data, it provides an accurate overview of regional sentiments and informs Southeast Asians about the existing gaps between their views. Based on the findings, this report suggests recommendations for Quad members on how to develop the Quad initiative in ways that complement regional cooperation. It also provides recommendations for the ASEAN countries on how they should further engage with the Quad for common benefit.

Southeast Asian perceptions of the Quad are diverse. There's no such thing as one 'ASEAN view'. Some findings confirm expectations; for example, Vietnamese and Filipino respondents were most supportive, while Indonesian respondents were among the most sceptical or undecided. Surprisingly, Singaporean respondents are least enthusiastic about the Quad.

Still, a majority opinion (57%) across the ASEAN respondents supports the Quad initiative as having a useful role in regional security; only 10% of respondents oppose it, while 39% indicate they would support it in future if the Quad successfully materialises.

A plurality (46%) of respondents think that the Quad complements existing ASEAN-centred regional security frameworks. Those who worry about the Quad challenging (18%) or sidelining (17%) ASEAN centrality are a minority; another 13% think that the Quad has no effect on ASEAN centrality whatsoever.

There are reservations that the 'anti-China' nature of the Quad is dangerous (19%), but more think that 'being an anti-China bulwark' is necessary (35%). In total, 54% of respondents see the Quad as an 'anti-China bulwark', 28% think that it shouldn't be perceived that way, and 15% think that, while the Quad isn't anti-China, it projects itself as anti-China.

The ambivalence of the views is visible in the nearly equal proportions of respondents who believed the Quad would, and those who thought it wouldn't, affect their country's security. Thirty-two per cent of respondents welcome the Quad and believe that their countries will be safer because of it, while 31% believe it could raise tensions in the region but won't affect their countries.

Most questions about the Quad received diverse responses, and few issues got a majority answer. An important exception, with an overwhelming positive response of 69%, was that the Quad is expected to enforce the rules-based order (for example, the 2016 Arbitral Tribunal's ruling on territorial claims in the South China Sea). This particular issue gained the highest agreement among all the respondents.

Another near-consensus was seen in the Southeast Asian attitude towards the possibility of the Quad's expansion. A median of 68% of ASEAN citizens agreed that the Quad shouldn't seek further expansion in membership beyond the US, Japan, India and Australia.

On challenges ahead for the Quad, the distribution of responses was even. The most popular answers were that:

- Quad members' interests may be too divergent for common actions (27% of respondents)
- the Quad is as yet still unclear about its own mission (24%)
- respondents are concerned that the Quad would 'provoke' Beijing (22%).

While the survey was targeted at Southeast Asians, it also collected a number of responses from Quad nations. Refreshingly, the study found that there isn't much of a gap between the respondents from ASEAN countries and the Quad countries. Hence, there's a level of 'like-mindedness'—both in support for the Quad and in ambiguity about its future.

# INTRODUCTION: THE QUAD AND BAD PR

The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue between India, the US, Japan and Australia (the Quad, sometimes referred to as the QSD) was initiated more than a decade ago, but fell apart after Australia withdrew support in 2008. The four members restarted the idea (Quad 2.0) on the sidelines of the two 2017 ASEAN summits.

Very early in its formation, Quad 2.0 is already struggling with a rather critical reception among some analysts and commentators, who assert that it's a misconceived notion aimed at containing China<sup>1</sup> and will inflame geopolitical rivalry or sideline ASEAN.<sup>2</sup> Even having a clear-headed debate has been labelled too risky. A former Australian ambassador to Beijing, Geoff Raby, has been critical, saying, 'It is a potentially dangerous response to China's ascendancy and flies in the face of more than 30 years of Australian policy engagement with China.'<sup>3</sup>

Recent commentary has been to the effect that the Quad is viewed suspiciously in the region for the following reasons:

- it's too confrontational towards China
- it challenges or sidelines the centrality of ASEAN<sup>4</sup>
- even if materialises, it should focus on non-controversial issues, such as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.

But are such negative views widely shared in the region? This report provides the most comprehensive overview to date of Southeast Asian perceptions of the Quad. Based on interviews and survey testing expert opinions across 10 ASEAN countries, the report shows that there are multiple views of the Quad among the national security communities of the regional actors. Those views are also much more nuanced; they're selectively positive and understandably cautious, but positive overall.

This report, which is the first evidence-based study of views on the Quad, finds that all the above arguments have little support among security and policy communities in the Southeast Asian region. This study tested perceptions about the Quad among Southeast Asians in order to allow Quad members to avoid or manage perceptual errors in its future policies and to provide recommendations for the further development of the Quad and communicating its messages into Southeast Asian national security communities. Unlike other commentary on this subject, it's an evidence-based study that presents views from informed professionals and a number of qualitative interviews with regional political and intellectual elites.

Because of the unsuccessful first attempt with Quad 1.0, it's critical that Quad 2.0 starts on the right footing. An adequate understanding of the region's considerations is absolutely essential for the Quad's future. For Australia in particular, given past experience—including the Rudd government's withdrawal from Quad 1.0 as well as Prime Minister Kevin Rudd's unsuccessful and unpopular attempt to establish the Asia-Pacific Community in 2008—there is an additional incentive to get the regional sentiments right.



# A BUMPY START AND A SHY REVIVAL

‘The origins of the Quad were entirely benign’, Ramesh Thakur reminds us in his recent post for *The Strategist*.<sup>5</sup> The four members’ first major get-together was in December 2004, when they responded to the massive Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunami in a coordinated multilateral disaster relief and humanitarian assistance operation. Following that, in 2007 the first informal meeting between the four happened on the sidelines of the ASEAN Regional Forum in Manila. Soon afterwards, the first naval exercise involving all the Quad members drew Chinese diplomatic protests,<sup>6</sup> after which Rudd pulled out and Quad 1.0 fell into lethargy. Some saw Rudd’s move as ‘getting cold feet’<sup>7</sup> because of potential risks to bilateral Australia–China relations. So, despite the benign nature of the original proposal, perceptions about the Quad played a detrimental role and contributed to the initial false start.

However, after a decade, the potential of the Quad and the concept behind it have become, if anything, simply more compelling. The strategic environment has grown more tense, and concerns about China’s actions and position in the region, as well as globally, continue to deepen. Some key factors include Beijing’s militarisation of the South China Sea, its growing intimidation of Taiwan, the important global and strategic implications of the One Belt, One Road Initiative (OBOR or BRI), and increasing concerns about the Chinese state’s political influence operations in a number of countries. China’s use of strategic and economic coercion has encouraged regional democracies to rethink the concept of the Quad. In fact, the core of Quad cooperation, as articulated first by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, was built on the fundamental commonalities between Japan, Australia, India and the US—which Abe called the ‘the diamond of democracy’.<sup>8</sup>

The renewed efforts to revive the Quad appear to continue to uphold to the principles of commonality of strategic interests and respect for democracy. In October 2017, in an interview with the *Nikkei Asian Review*, Japanese Foreign Minister Taro Kano publicly proposed the revitalisation of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue.<sup>9</sup> The first Quad meeting happened on 12 November 2017, when the four ‘like-minded’ partners discussed seven key issues: the rules-based order in Asia; freedom of navigation and overflight in the maritime commons; respect for international law; enhancing connectivity; maritime security; the North Korean threat and non-proliferation; and terrorism. That meeting started the debate on Quad 2.0.

Since then, there have been only modest developments. There’s been only one more meeting, but a number of policy documents and statements suggest that there is an appetite for Quad 2.0 to succeed. For example, under US President Donald Trump, the first National Security Strategy, published in December 2017,<sup>10</sup> made reference to the importance of cooperation between the US, Japan, Australia and India. More specifically, on the tentative revival of the Quad, the US Assistant Secretary of Defense for East Asia and the Pacific, Randall Schriver, said: ‘I detect interest (among the four nations), combined with some concern. I’m optimistic that it will come into being in some meaningful way.’<sup>11</sup>

From the Australian side, there's also been considerable interest in the revival of the Quad. Australia's 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper reconfirmed Canberra's strong commitment to trilateral dialogues with the US and Japan and, separately, with India and Japan: 'Australia is open to working with our Indo-Pacific partners in other plurilateral arrangements.'<sup>12</sup> Unlike Quad 1.0, Quad 2.0 seems to have gained bipartisan support. Labor senator Penny Wong, shadow minister for foreign affairs, and Richard Marles, shadow minister for defence, not only reaffirmed ASEAN centrality, but saw the value of the Quad to ASEAN: 'Adding the Quadrilateral [Security Dialogue] to the regional mix of dialogues and defence arrangements can only reinforce ASEAN's central structures and institutions.'<sup>13</sup> One of the more influential opinions on Quad 2.0 has been offered by a former head of Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Peter Varghese, who believes that the revitalised Quad 'should not be a military arrangement' but 'would send a signal to China about the strategic congruence' among the four democracies.<sup>14</sup>

Perhaps the hardest to read thus far is India's official line on the Quad. A number of signals have suggested that Indian commitment to the Quad may be partial. While China's rise and influence around the Indian Ocean would be a concern in Delhi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has opted for expanding several cooperation avenues, and the Quad partner nations don't appear to occupy the centre of Modi's policy orientation. As an example, in 2017, India, along with Pakistan, became a full member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation,<sup>15</sup> a regional body that since 2001 has been centred around China and Russia. Modi's informal summit with Xi Jinping in Wuhan in April 2018 signalled further warming up and efforts to improve bilateral relations after the 2017 Doklam military stand-off. Modi's keynote speech at the Shangri-La Dialogue in June 2018 emphasised the need to include China in the region. While reaffirming the rules-based order and disapproval of coercive behaviour by big countries taking advantage of smaller countries in territorial disputes, Modi, unlike the other Quad partners during the same Shangri-La Dialogue, emphasised 'growth together'.<sup>16</sup> China, in his view, remains a significant economic centre for the region's growth. These developments, to many, may indicate India's reluctance to commit further to the Quad.<sup>17</sup>

Analysts who considered the Quad a good idea from the beginning have also noted that the timing of Quad 1.0 may have determined its fate: 'If the Indo-Pacific is accepted as the new organizing principle of their foreign policies, then the four democracies coming together in the Quad as an informal grouping is a logical outcome.'<sup>18</sup> While strategic concepts seldom have second lives, as Euan Graham has pointed out,<sup>19</sup> under the new global circumstances the revival of this strategic grouping makes sense. Jeff Smith has noted that 'The Quad is more compelling now than it was a decade ago. The great irony of the first iteration of the Quad was that it dissolved precisely at the dawn of China's new, more aggressive approach to regional affairs.'<sup>20</sup> So, it's either a matter of timing and the maturation of the idea, or a deficiency in strategic ideas and hence a need to recycle old ones. Either way, there seems to be a quiet consensus that Quad cooperation—despite some of the earlier concerns remaining in place—deserves further consideration.

Kawanl Sibal framed the considerations for the Quad as follows: 'While concerns about China are central to Quad members, the diplomatic need exists to not project the Quad as an anti-China group, given that all the countries involved have extensive ties with China and are committed to a policy of engaging, not containing it.'<sup>21</sup> Engaging on areas where this is possible, of course, doesn't rule out being equally clear about where strategic differences occur.

Quad sceptics have labelled it an 'excess of form over the content', but that attribute may be part of both its power as a grouping and its attractiveness. A very tight integration of the four member states may well not be possible, but may also be counterproductive when a loose grouping allows different but complementary approaches to be taken in regional partnerships and security. Apart from the internal challenges to the Quad, its external relationships—or, more precisely, managing perceptions about them—will be central to its development, success and longevity. The Quad members must manage perceptions of it and its purposes, actions and directions positively. After all, it was hostile perceptions that challenged it in the first place: China's objections to the Quad's first joint naval exercises prompted the Rudd government to withdraw.

Since then, much of the debate about the Quad has turned into explaining what it is not,<sup>22</sup> rather than what it wants to be. In their media appearances, leaders of the Quad countries—particularly Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and then Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull—have assured us that the Quad isn't going to have a military component and that it is not looking to contain China. They have so far fallen short in explaining what the Quad is and what it would do. This 'image issue' has led analysts to a conclusion that it might be best for the Quad debate to be more constrained than the real efforts behind the doors where policy decisions are made. A member of the American policy community whom I have spoken to repeatedly underlined the importance of 'actionability' over 'definitions'. The preference to talk less but 'quietly and smoothly moving forward'<sup>23</sup> is echoed also among a number of defence policy officers in Canberra whom I have spoken to.<sup>24</sup>

Other key perceptions about the Quad are, first, that the four partners are too divergent to be able to come up with a concrete agenda, and, second, that even if the Quad can overcome criticism of its alleged limited value, it needs to respond to the perception that it challenges ASEAN. Having been in the centre of multilateral regional frameworks, ASEAN was said to be uncomfortable with a new institution in the region. This (mis)perception needs to be addressed for the health of the Quad, and for the health of regional multilateralism in general. Yet, after a few warnings against sidelining ASEAN by undermining its centrality, that idea has gained in popularity through repetitive commentary.

One of the key motivations for this study was to examine the accuracy of such perceptions, particularly whether such views are prevalent among the thinkers, policymakers and key stakeholders in international security debates within Southeast Asian nations. It tested Southeast Asian perceptions of the Quad—people's expectations and concerns, as well as how they think the Quad's relationship with ASEAN would evolve. Combining qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys, this study is the most comprehensive analysis of Southeast Asian views on Quad developments to date.

While the strategic considerations for the Quad's revival have been relatively well argued,<sup>25</sup> the remaining issue is the relationship between the Quad and the Indo-Pacific concept. Quad 2.0 coincides with the promotion of the 'free and open Indo-Pacific' (FOIP) concept<sup>26</sup> also articulated (although not without differences) by the four partners, which adds to the general confusion. While the Quad shares principles that are supported by FOIP, the two are often conflated. FOIP aspires to be both a strategy and a concept, and the Quad could be a form of 'operationalisation' of the FOIP. But both FOIP and the Quad continue to suffer from a similar lack of clarity. This report hopes to contribute to clarifying the regional understanding.

# KEY FINDINGS: MODEST SUPPORT, A NECESSARY ‘EVIL’, AND LOTS OF EXPECTATIONS

## About the survey

One of the preferred methods of testing perceptions is by collecting quantitative data. This study employed a quantitative survey, but it wasn't designed to test public perceptions of the Quad. Rather, it tested experts' perceptions, by targeting specific samplings. It collected 276 responses to multiple questions from staff from government agencies, militaries, academia, think tanks, business and the media and from university students in all 10 ASEAN countries. A considerable number of responses came from ASEAN Secretariat staff as well.<sup>27</sup>

The survey was anonymous, ensuring greater honesty in opinions of the respondents. The response rate was high: 87%. More than 190 respondents declared their citizenship as an ASEAN country, while 43 were from 'Other', including those who chose not to disclose their citizenship. The origins of the collected responses were uneven. Responses from Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Vietnam and, to a lesser extent, Thailand, were in relatively large numbers, and hence are the most discussed in this report. Fewer responses were collected from Brunei, Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar (called 'BCLM' in this report), so they are not treated as representative of national perspectives and are discussed less than responses from other countries. Lower response numbers from BCLM were proportional both to their populations and to the size of the targeted survey samples. They might also partly reflect the fact that those countries are less inclined to participate in similar surveys and suggest that they, arguably, show less interest in the strategic effect of the Quad. The Quad is in the early stages of development and therefore opinions about it are still being formed. This study's purpose is to shed light on current views.

The following sections analyse the results based on three categories of perceptions about the Quad:

- overall understanding of the Quad
- views on how the Quad relates to the other regional actors (mainly China and ASEAN)
- expectations of and concerns about the future of the Quad.

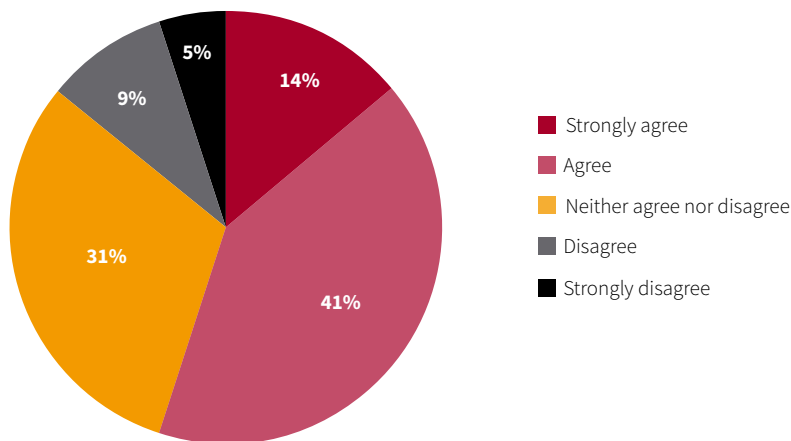
Interestingly, this report finds that there's little difference between the views of ASEAN citizens and all respondents, including non-ASEAN citizens who either reside in Southeast Asia or work on regional issues and have a sound understanding of regional matters. In most cases, there are barely noticeable differences—the median delta is between 2% and 3% between 'all responses' and 'ASEAN-only responses'. Only in a few cases—which are singled out below—was the difference more significant.

## Key perceptions and understandings

### How is the Quad viewed?

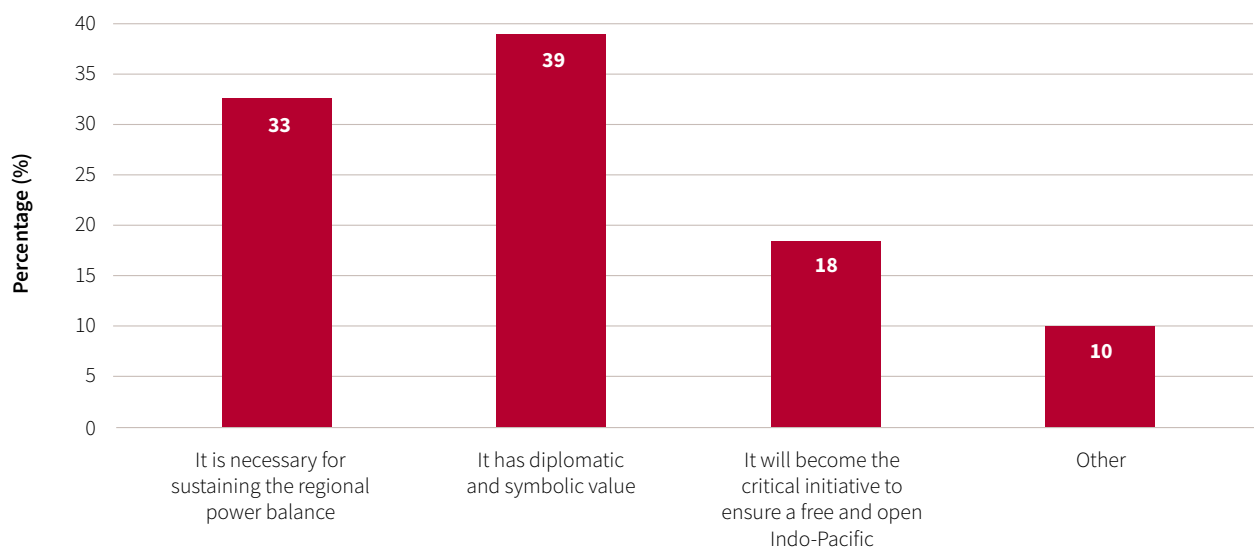
Generally, respondents were enthusiastic about the Quad. Fifty-five percent of all respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that the Quad would contribute to the peace and stability of the Indo-Pacific region, 31% were on the fence, and 14% either disagreed or strongly disagreed (Figure 1). This presents a sharp contrast with the frequently disseminated view that Southeast Asians are predominantly negative about the Quad.

Figure 1: The Quad will contribute to stability and peace of the Indo-Pacific region



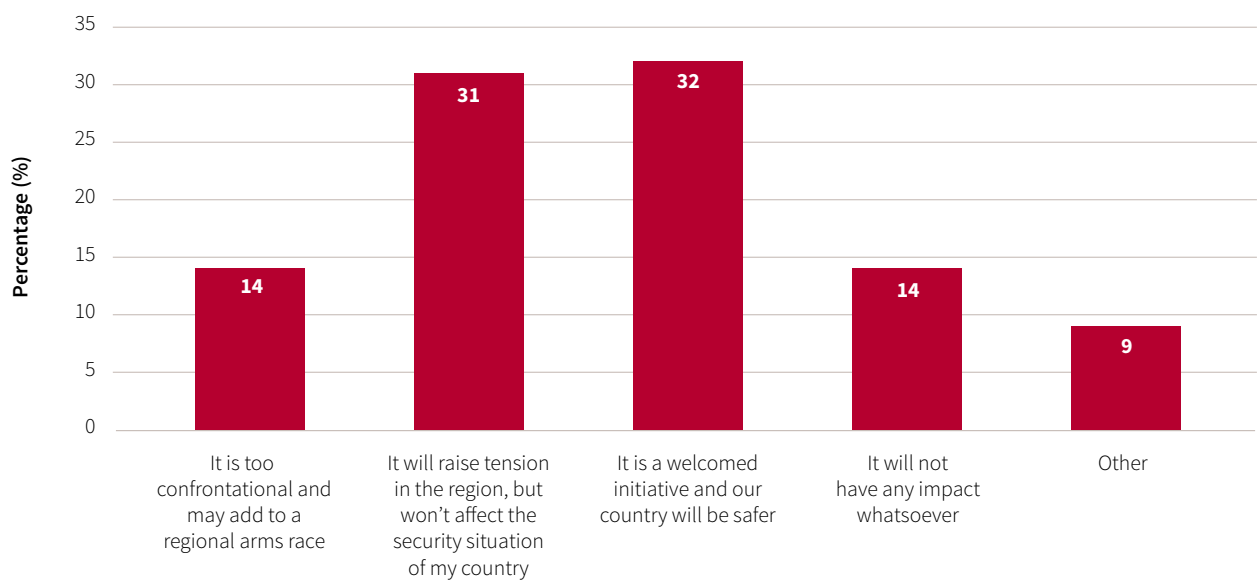
In assessing the value of the Quad for the Indo-Pacific (Figure 2), the predominant view was that it carries diplomatic and symbolic value (nearly 40%). Thirty-three per cent thought that the Quad is necessary for sustaining the regional power balance. Less than 20% believed that the Quad would be critical to ensuring a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

Figure 2: How important is the Quad for security and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific region?



Views about the role of the Quad (Figure 3) were divided between ‘it will raise tension but won’t affect my country’ (31%) and ‘it will make my country safer’ (32%). A similar distribution was found between more polarised views: both ‘too confrontational and may add to regional arms race’ and ‘won’t have any impact whatsoever’ scored 14%.

Figure 3: How do you think the Quad could affect your country’s security environment?

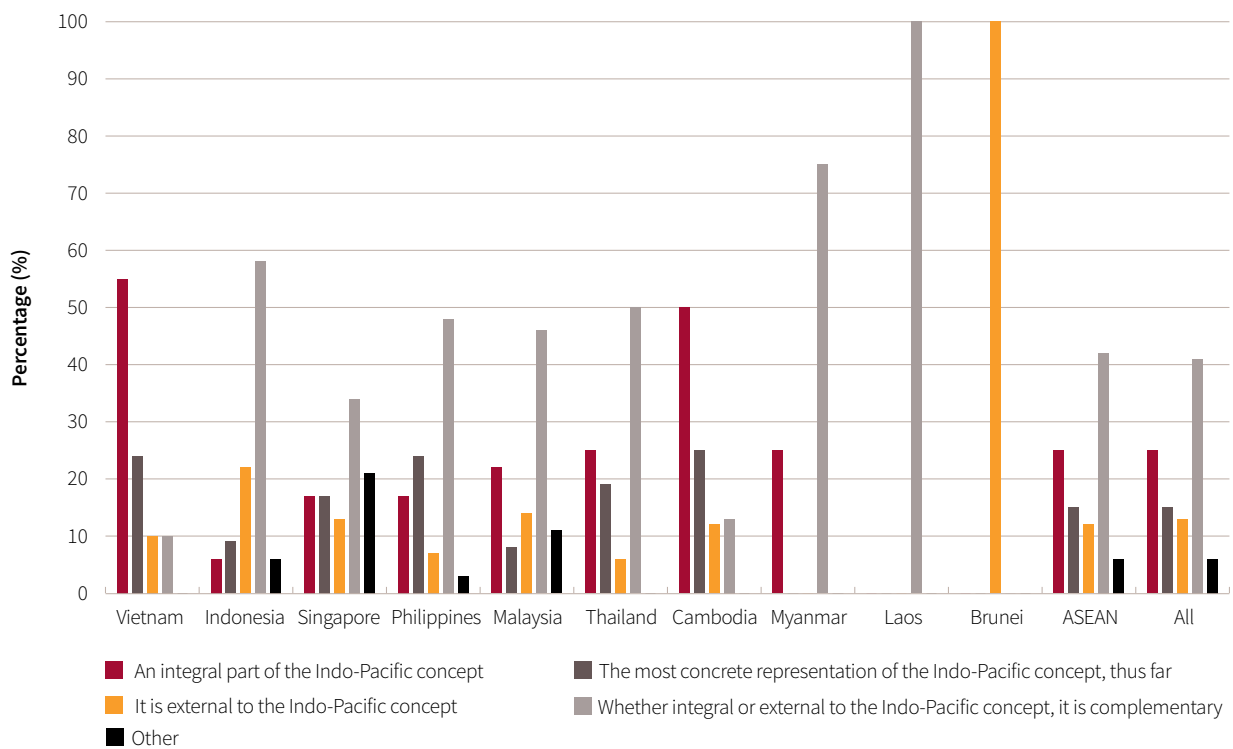




## Understanding about the Quad

The Quad's relationship to the evolving concept/construct/strategy of the 'free and open Indo-Pacific' (FOIP)<sup>28</sup> is a fundamental one. One prevalent conflation (Figure 4) was that the Quad and FOIP are the same. By asking about the relationship between the Quad and the Indo-Pacific, I intended to test respondents' understanding of the Quad's position in the broader Indo-Pacific context. Over 40% of all respondents chose the answer 'whether integral or external of the Indo-Pacific concept, it is complementary'. Respondents from Vietnam had the firmest understanding of the Quad: 55% were confident that the Quad is an integral part of the Indo-Pacific.

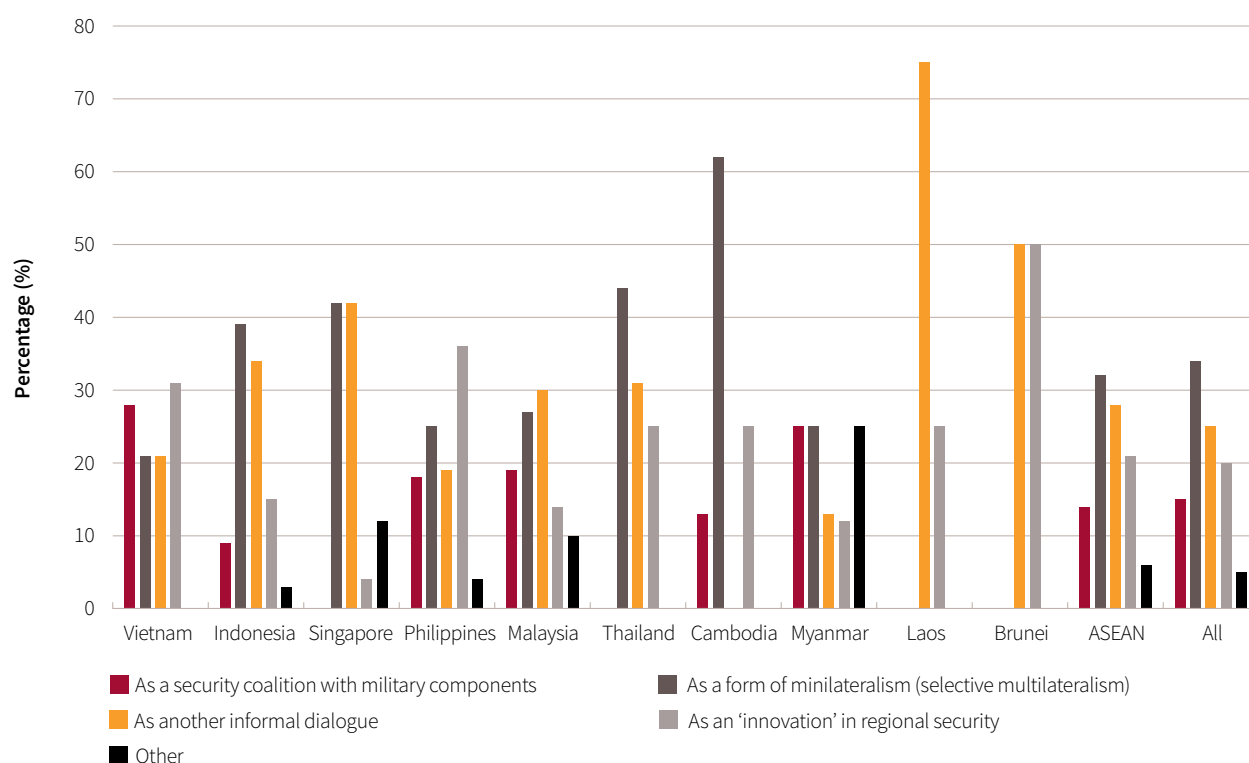
Figure 4: What is the Quad's relationship with the concept of a free and open Indo-Pacific?



The understanding of what the Quad is, and what it isn't, remains the key question for not only Southeast Asians but also, arguably, for the Quad parties. On average, asked how the Quad should be perceived, most respondents (32%) thought the answer was as a form of minilateralism (Figure 5). 'Another informal dialogue' was the second most popular choice on average, scoring 28% median across ASEAN.

An interesting disparity in perception between Vietnamese and Singaporean respondents was revealed: the largest number of respondents thinking that the Quad is a 'security coalition with military components' were from Vietnam (28%), whereas none were from Singapore.

Figure 5: How should the Quad be best perceived?



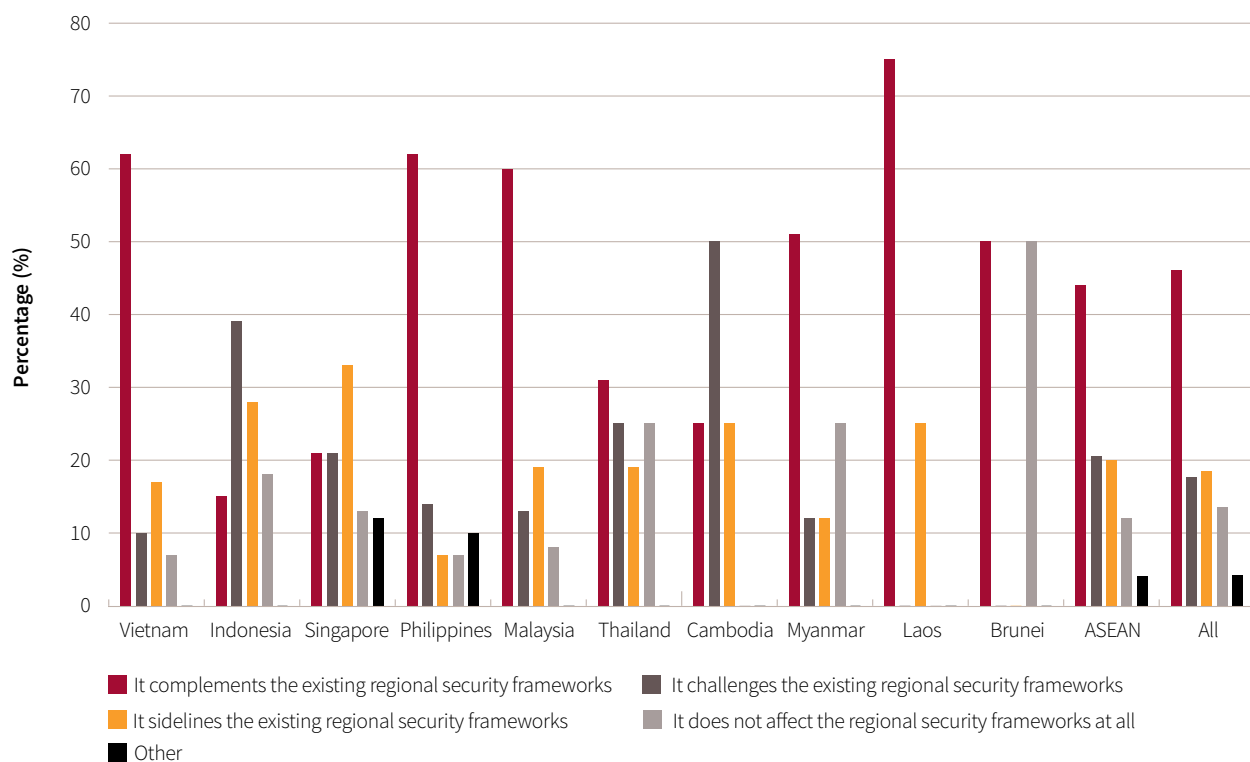
# THE QUAD'S RELATIONS WITH OTHER REGIONAL ENTITIES

## The Quad and the ASEAN-centred regional security framework

A commonly disseminated view is that ASEAN member states view the Quad 'with concern, as they fear the informal body could eclipse the bloc's leading role in regional affairs'.<sup>29</sup> One commentator has said, 'However, as tempting as this Quad-plus may look, it will mean further deterioration of an ASEAN-centred institutionalized system in Asia.'<sup>30</sup> Interestingly, the majority of those who emphasise the Quad's challenge to ASEAN and ASEAN-centred architecture are often citizens of non-ASEAN states.

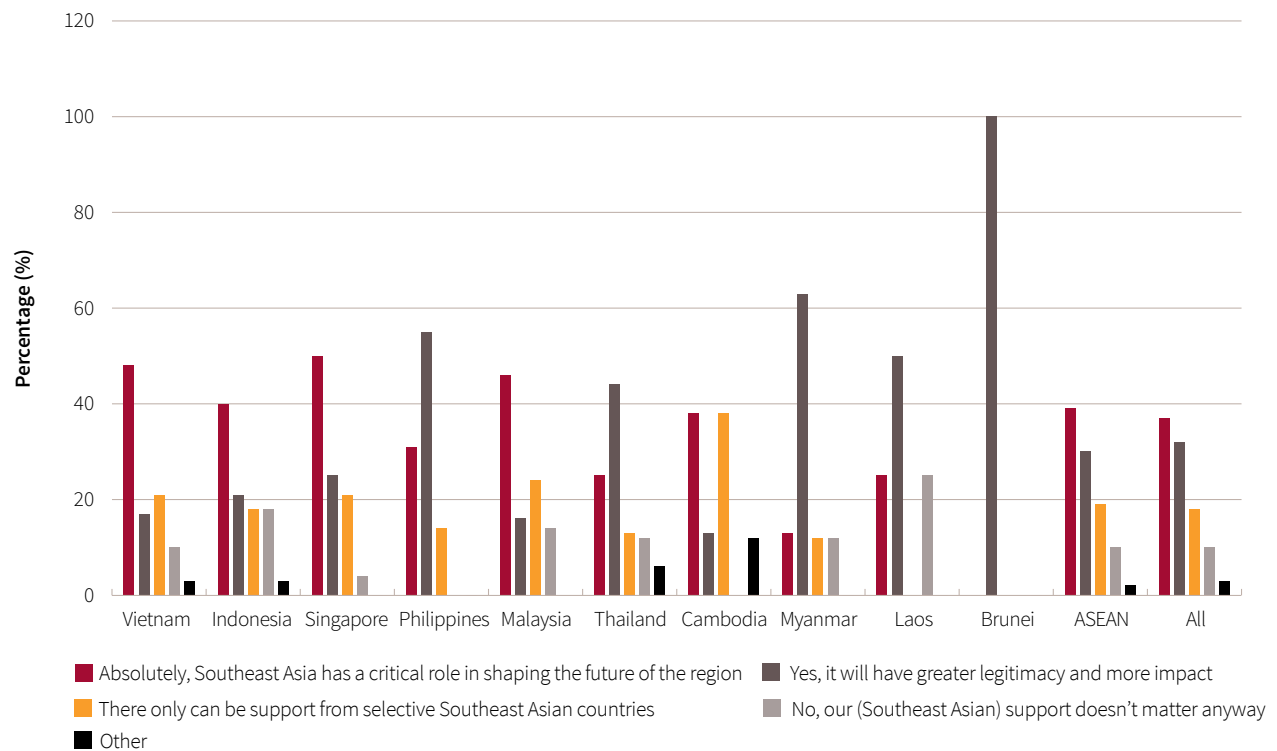
That the Quad would challenge or sideline ASEAN is one possible view, but the survey showed that it isn't the only view, and certainly isn't the prevalent one (Figure 6). The largest proportion of respondents (44%) thought that the Quad complements existing regional security frameworks, and there was only a 3 percentage point difference between all respondents and the ASEAN-only respondents. Similar response rate was found (below 20%) of those who thought that it challenges the framework and those who thought it sidelines the framework, and 12% thought that it doesn't affect the framework at all. The opinion that the Quad complements ASEAN was strongest among Vietnamese, Filipinos and Malaysians (above 60%), while the lowest score was among Indonesians, Singaporeans and Cambodians (around 20%). Indonesians and Cambodians were most concerned about the Quad challenging ASEAN centrality, while Singaporeans (currently playing the role of the chair of ASEAN) were most concerned about it sidelining the ASEAN architecture.

Figure 6: How does the Quad affect the existing regional security frameworks (e.g. ASEAN, ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting etc.)?



But do Southeast Asians think that their perceptions will affect the way the Quad develops and operates? I asked this question to see how ‘centrality’ is manifested in answer to the question of how important they consider their support to be for the success the Quad (Figure 7). A great majority considered Southeast Asian support to be critical (just under 40%) or highly beneficial (median 30%). Interestingly, the respondents least confident about Southeast Asians’ impact come from Indonesia, of whom 18% thought that ‘Our (Southeast Asian) support doesn’t matter anyway.’

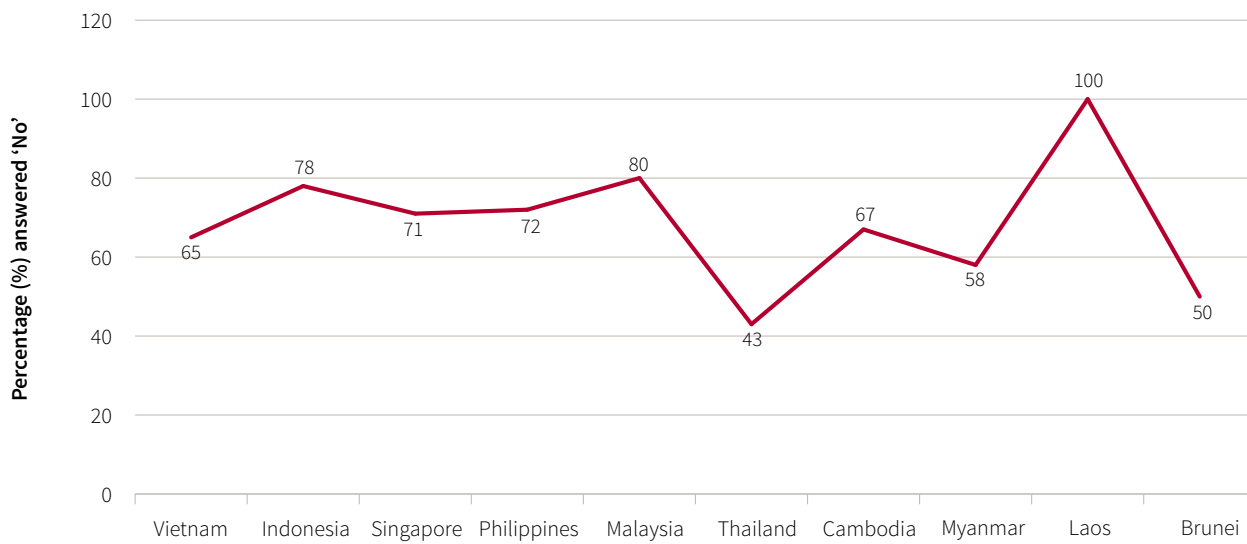
Figure 7: Does it matter if the Quad receives support from Southeast Asia?



A decisive majority was shown in the view about the Quad’s future expansion: a median of 68% across all ASEAN think that the Quad shouldn’t be further expanded (Figure 8). In a follow-up question, 30% of all respondents said that expansion should be considered case by case. In an expansion of the question, the respondents had an opportunity to suggest which countries they considered should join the Quad. Most of those who supported the idea of expansion suggested Indonesia (a total of 22 votes, both with Indonesia singled out and with it mentioned in conjunction with other countries). The suggestion to include all ASEAN gained 21 votes. The Republic of Korea gained 17 votes, while Vietnam and Singapore gained 15 each. Interestingly, China as a prospective member had nine mentions, while Malaysia, Philippines and New Zealand received seven each.

In sum, the idea of expanding the Quad is highly unpopular. The appetite for a much-discussed ‘Quad Plus’ is low in the region. Among the main justifications for not expanding the Quad was the avoidance of challenges in many multilateral efforts that have too many and too diverse members. A number of respondents even explicitly pointed to the need ‘to avoid another ASEAN’.

Figure 8: Should the Quad be expanded?



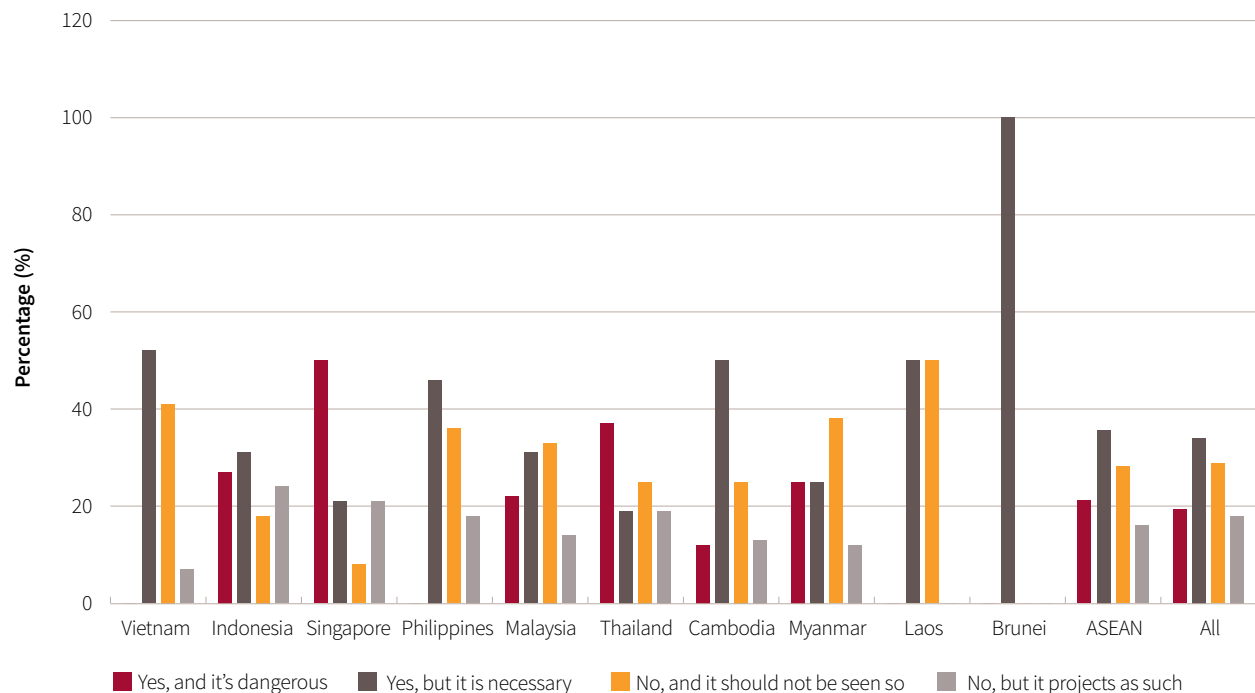


## The Quad and China

China—the key relationship for the Quad—is often pointed to as the main obstacle to the Quad’s success. Southeast Asian responses suggest otherwise. Thirty-six per cent of ASEAN citizens thought that the Quad is an ‘anti-China bulwark’ but that it’s necessary, while 21% thought it was dangerous (Figure 9). Cumulatively, 57% of respondents associated the Quad with the need to balance China. Twenty-eight per cent thought that it shouldn’t be seen that way, and 15% thought that the Quad isn’t an ‘anti-China bulwark’ but that it projects as such.

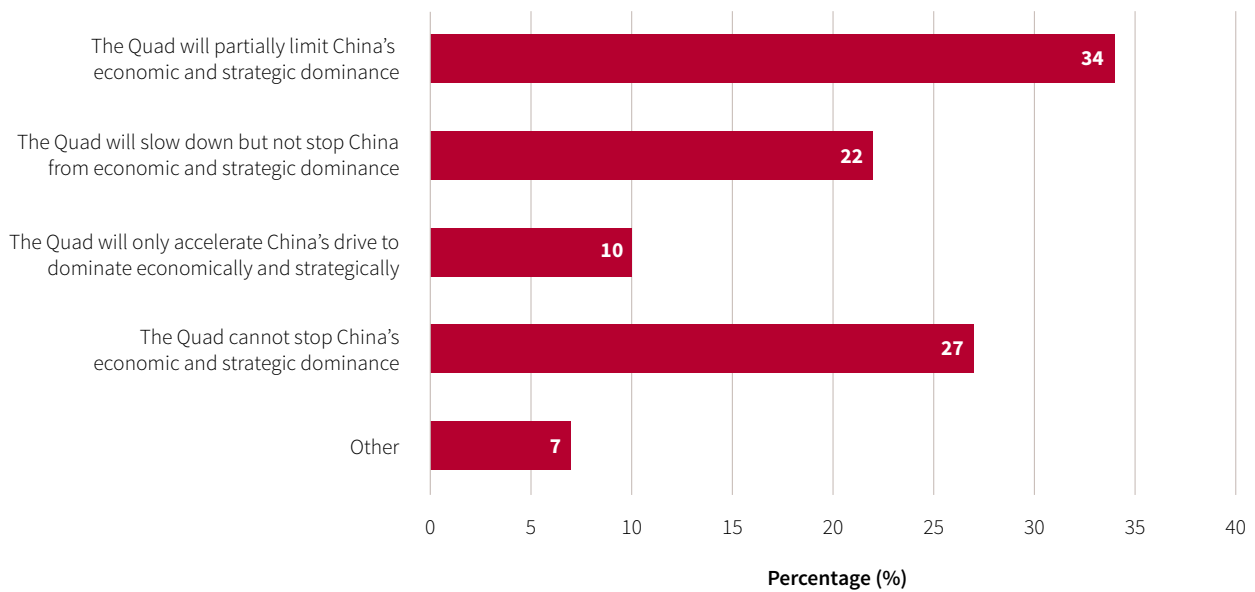
What’s interesting is the distribution among respondents. None of the Vietnamese and Filipino respondents thought that the Quad being an ‘anti-China bulwark’ was dangerous, and they were also the ones with the highest response that ‘it is necessary’. The most worried about the danger of an ‘anti-China bulwark’ turn out to be Singaporean (50%), Thai (37%) and Indonesian (27%) respondents.

Figure 9: Do you think the Quad is ‘an anti-China bulwark’?



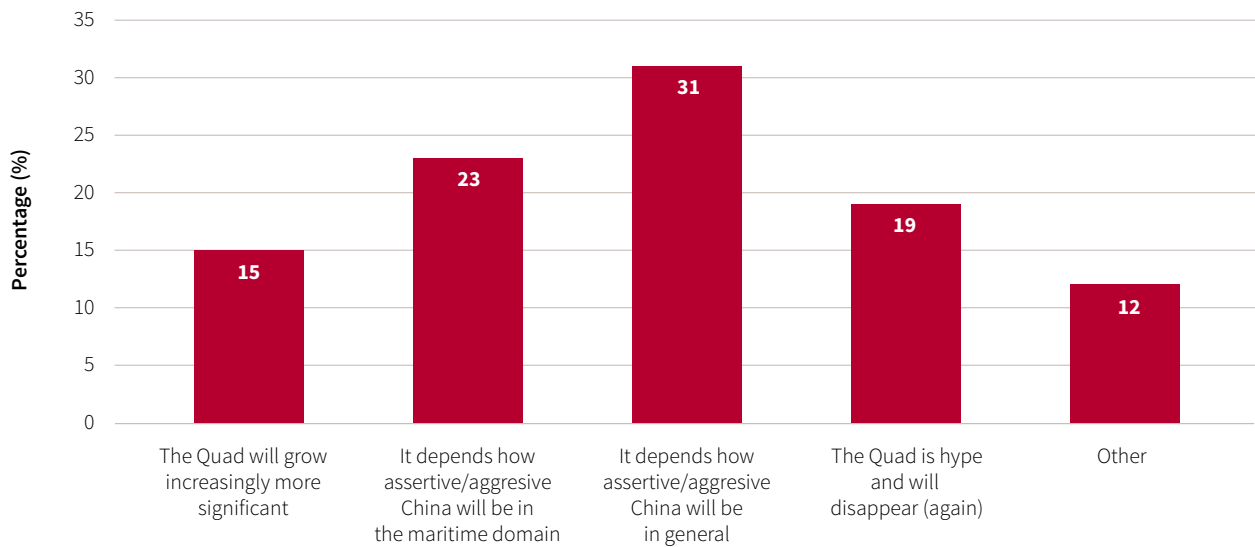
While the Quad isn't an answer to all the concerns in the region, including undeniable concerns about China's strategic and economic dominance, Southeast Asians seem to be clear-headed about that. It's seen as valuable to have such an option as the Quad. Fifty-six per cent of respondents thought that the Quad could partially limit or slow China's economic and strategic dominance, while 27% thought that it wouldn't be able to stop China's economic and strategic dominance (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Will the Quad be effective in countering China's increasing economic and strategic dominance in the region?



However, in the perception of the respondents, the future of the Quad remains tied to China's behaviour. One-third of respondents thought that the Quad's prospects were linked to how assertive/aggressive China is in general (Figure 11). The second most popular answer was also about China's aggression, but specifically in the maritime domain.

Figure 11: What are the Quad's prospects?

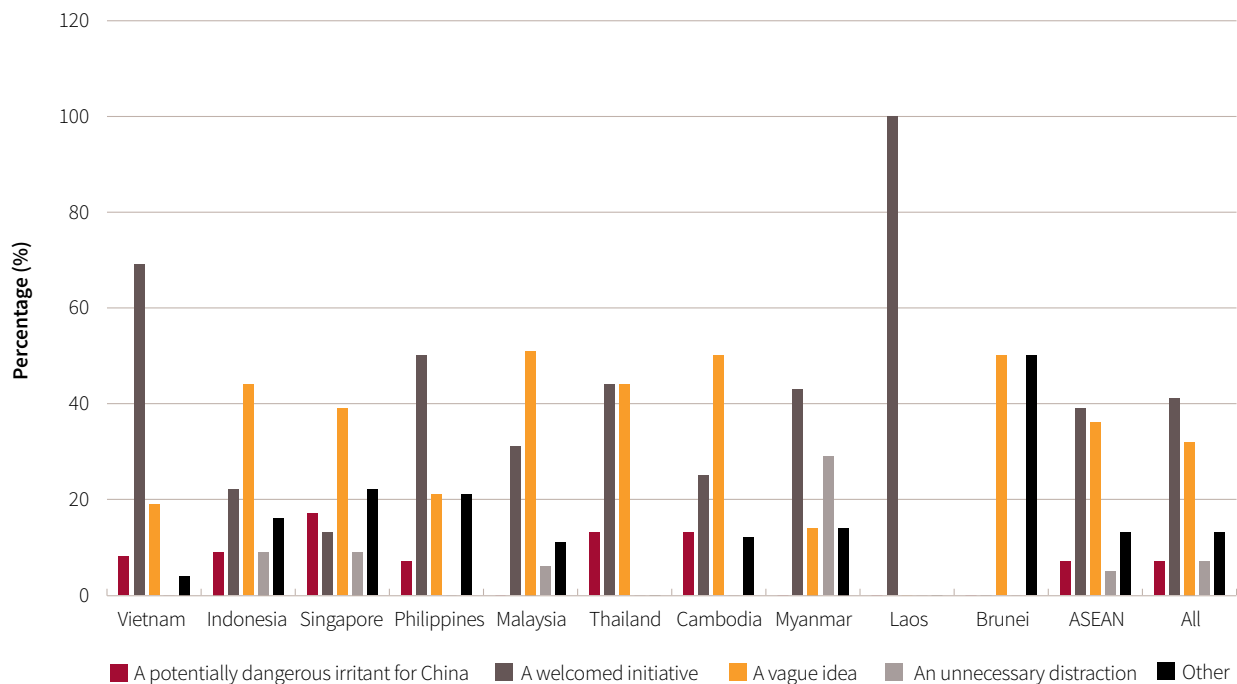


## The effect of the Quad on Southeast Asia

Among Southeast Asians, the Vietnamese hold the most favourable opinion towards the Quad: 69% thought that their country relates to it as a welcomed initiative (Figure 12). The second most in favour were the Filipinos (50%) and Thais (44%). The most unclear about what the Quad is were respondents in Malaysia (51%), Indonesia (44%) and Singapore (39%).

On average, Southeast Asians were torn between the Quad being a 'welcomed initiative' (median of 39%) and a 'vague idea' (36%). A minority thought that it's a dangerous irritant for China (7%) or an 'unnecessary distraction' (5%)—as we often hear in the media. Many of those who chose 'Other' as an answer noted that there's little or no mention of the Quad in their countries.

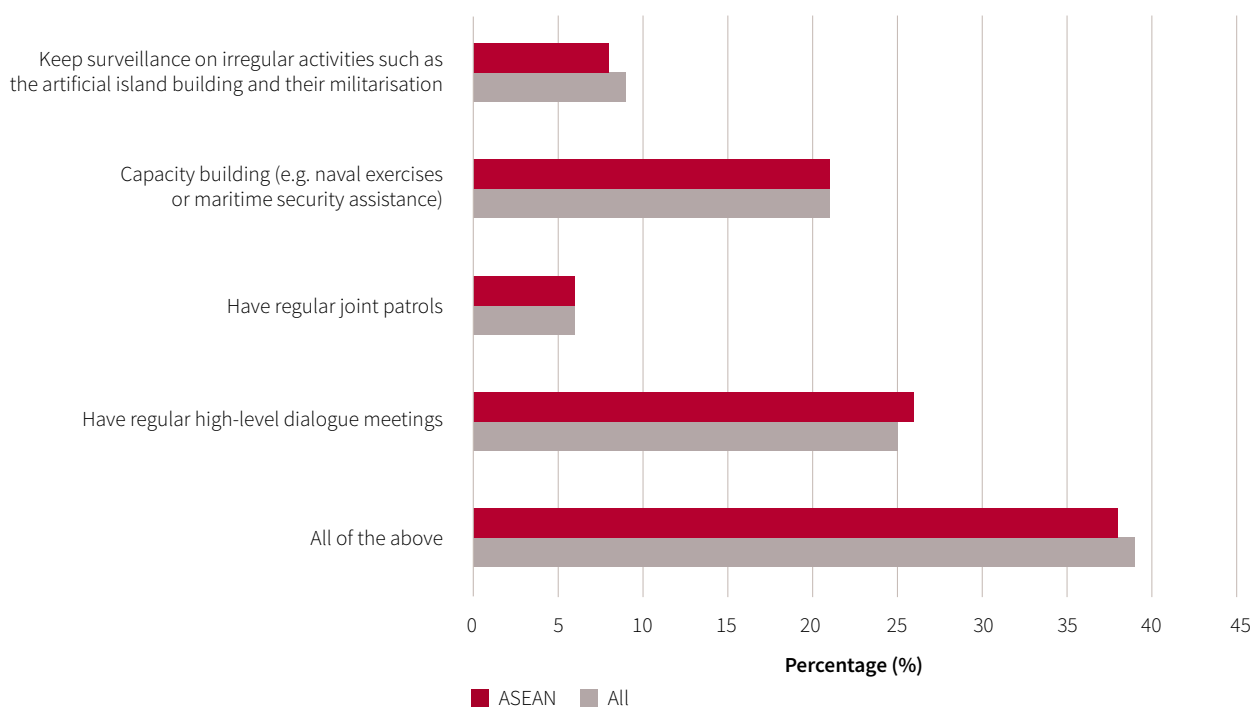
Figure 12: How does your country refer to the Quad?



## The future of the Quad

Expectations for the Quad are high—most respondents wanted it to have wide-ranging functions, including regular high-level meetings, capacity building in the region, and joint patrols and surveillance activities (Figure 13). As the survey shows, there’s a significant need for Southeast Asia to have functional enforcement mechanisms and that’s where the Quad would, in their eyes, make the biggest contribution. It can be seen that future expectations for the Quad are associated with a form of security guarantee.

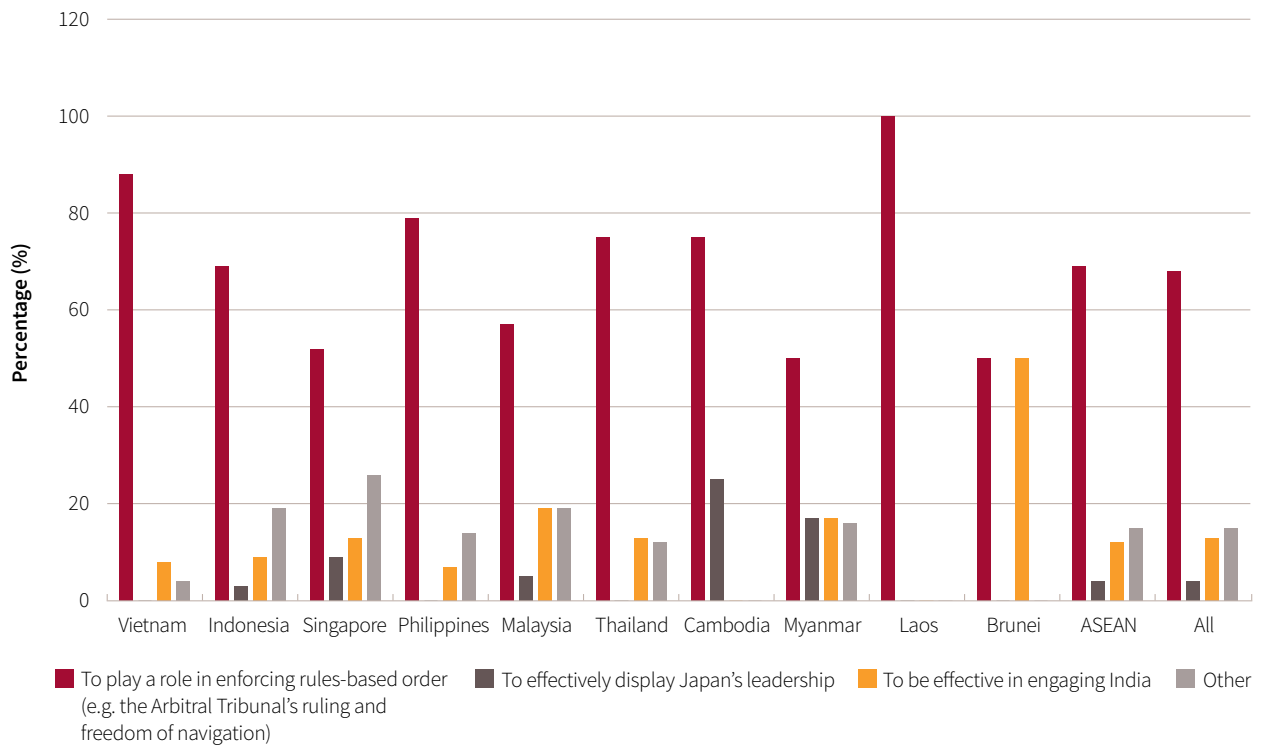
Figure 13: What should the Quad do?



Despite Southeast Asians’ considerable confusion about the Quad, when asked about their expectations for its contribution they were ambitious.

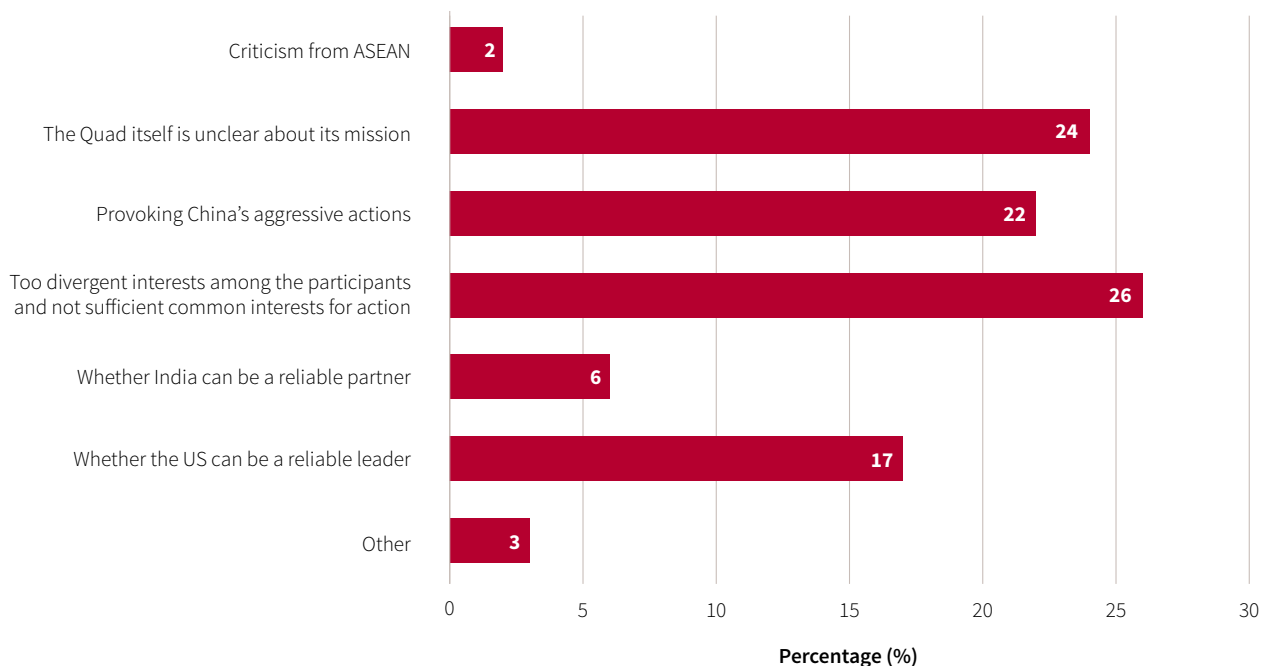
Among a few notable responses, there was some commonality of opinion that the Quad should be an ‘enforcing mechanism’. Asked about their best hopes for the Quad, a median of 69% of respondents hoped that it will enforce the rules-based order, including the 2016 Arbitral Tribunal ruling on the South China Sea dispute (Figure 14).<sup>31</sup> Again, the Vietnamese and the Filipinos led with 88% and 79%, respectively. The gap between the preference for an enforcing role and any other role for the Quad is significant. The function of engaging individual members, Japan and India in particular, as many have argued, proves to be marginal. This also contradicts a popular proposition that the Quad should focus on a non-controversial agenda, such as humanitarian assistance and search and rescue, while avoiding buttressing the ‘rules-based’ regional order because that would risk upsetting China and fuelling the tension.<sup>32</sup>

Figure 14: What are your best hopes for the Quad?



Southeast Asians foresee particular challenges ahead for the Quad (Figure 15). As the top two challenges, respondents rated too much divergence in the interests of Quad members (27%) and that the Quad itself is unclear about its own mission (24%), followed by the third concern—antagonising China (22%). Taking into consideration responses to previous questions, most respondents thought that the Quad has the appearance of being confrontational towards China.

Figure 15: What is the Quad's biggest challenge?

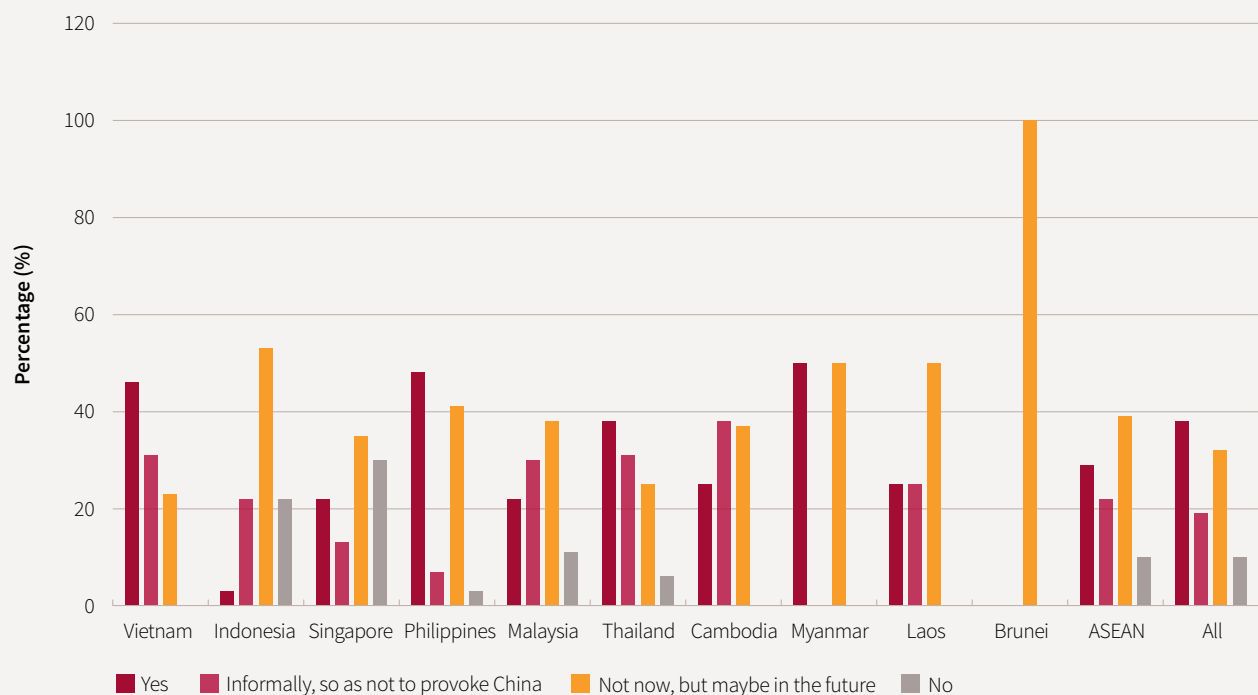


# A WIDE GAP IN SOUTHEAST ASIAN OPINIONS

This study's findings demonstrate that views of the Quad in Southeast Asia are far from simply negative, as most commentators depict. They vary significantly, depending on national interests (Figure 16). The Quad is most highly valued and supported by Vietnamese and Filipino respondents. For example, support for the Quad (both unambiguously 'Yes' and 'Informally, so as not to provoke China') totalled 77% of respondents in Vietnam, 69% in Thailand and 56% in the Philippines. No Vietnamese respondent answered 'No' to this question. The biggest sceptics are Singaporeans (30% 'No') and Indonesians (22% 'No'). More than half of Indonesian respondents (53%) don't exclude the possibility of future support for the Quad if it succeeds.

In general, overwhelmingly more Southeast Asians answered 'Yes' than 'No' to supporting the Quad. An aggregated 51% of ASEAN respondents expressed their support, 39% were open to future support and only 10% were not supportive. While this report puts less emphasis on responses from BCLM countries—due to the smaller sample size and relatively lower interest in the topic in those countries—they're consistently more positive than negative.

Figure 16: Do you support the Quad?





Asked whether they directly support the Quad, respondents were far from unanimous. An interesting and rare disparity between ‘all responses’ and ‘ASEAN-only’ responses reveals how prevalent the perception of a ‘China threat’ is among Southeast Asians and how that affects their answers. The widest gap in all answers (9 percentage points) was between support for the Quad by 38% of all respondents but by 29% of ASEAN-only respondents. However, if we include both the answers ‘Yes’ and ‘Informally, so as not to provoke China’ as affirmative for the Quad initiative, the difference would be 6 percentage points (57% support from all respondents, and 51% from ASEAN-only respondents).

But there was no difference in the percentages of ASEAN-only citizens and all respondents providing a clear ‘No’ in answer to whether they supported the Quad (10%).

While some, particularly Vietnamese and Filipino respondents, clearly saw the value of the Quad, there was notable scepticism among Indonesians and Singaporeans.

Qualitatively, thinkers from both Indonesia and Singapore, however, expressed more nuanced views. For example, former ASEAN Secretary General, Singaporean diplomat and head of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Ong Keng Yong, told me in an interview that as long as the Quad, or any other regional initiative, is in line with the ASEAN Charter—in particular, in accordance with the rule of law and non-use of force—then there’s no reason why Southeast Asians shouldn’t support it.<sup>33</sup>

Similarly, Dr Marty Natalegawa, former Indonesian Minister of Foreign Affairs, advocated for ASEAN not only to embrace the Indo-Pacific concept, but to actively promote it, saying, ‘It also represents a natural progression for ASEAN, ever reaching outwards, to East Asia, the Asia-Pacific and the Indo-Pacific region.’<sup>34</sup> With regard to the Quad, he noted that ‘unless its goals and purposes are clearly explained [it] may inadvertently and mistakenly be construed as a Cold War-like containment strategy’. This comes back to the core issue highlighted by this report: the perception—or, more precisely, the misperception—of what the Quad is and what it is not. Other conversations I had with Indonesian experts revealed that their main concern is that the Quad—without knowing what its intention is and whether its agenda would overlap with ASEAN’s<sup>35</sup>—would sideline ASEAN’s role—a worry that can be adequately addressed.

The value of the Quad is recognised, even though still vaguely. A conversation with a Vietnamese thinker confirms that the concern about the Quad is not its value but its realisation. ‘The Quad sounds almost like a “formation” ... but it doesn’t matter how it is called, it matters if they come together. Everybody can benefit from positive cooperation. But cooperation must happen first.’<sup>36</sup>

A Filipino retired policy officer showcased the positive viewpoint: ‘Four is better than one, right? Better to have four Quad members that want [to collaborate], rather than rely on one that is unpredictable.’<sup>37</sup>

The more hesitant view was justified by lack of clarity around the concept. Singaporean respondents were among the biggest sceptics about the Quad. This follows the logic that Singapore’s Foreign Minister, Vivian Balakrishnan, articulated when he referred to the elusiveness of the emerging Indo-Pacific concept: ‘We never sign on to anything unless we know exactly what it means.’<sup>38</sup> The Quad, as this study demonstrated, suffers from a lack of clarity of intentions and objectives. Many equate the Quad with the Indo-Pacific concept, which suffers from the same weakness—lack of clarity.

Another Singaporean interviewee told me a more pragmatic explanation: ‘We are quietly supportive. Most important is to see if it follows through. If not and we publicly endorse, then it falls out, then imagine our situation.’<sup>39</sup>

China is a concern, but it isn’t a ‘showstopper for the Quad itself; the main issue is how the individual Quad members interact with China. In the words of a Malaysian military officer: ‘The Quad may say it’s not anti-China, but it is about China. But can they [the Quad members] really agree on how to address China together?’<sup>40</sup>

The Quad members can mitigate these hesitations by further developing the Quad’s agenda, intentions and mode of operation and by better communicating those aspects to partners and actors in the region. As stated at the beginning of this report, the key problem that the Quad is struggling with is its ability (or, thus far, intention) to manage and mitigate perceptions of it.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Recommendations for the Quad

The main recommendation for the Quad is: make it happen. The findings prove that there's a belief that the Quad would be positive for regional stability. Reticence arises from lack of clarity about the direction that the Quad will develop and act in, rather than whether it would be a good initiative. The Quad initiative, and the credibility of its members, cannot afford a second false start.

If the reservations coming from ASEAN and, in particular, Indonesia and Singapore can be addressed, then the potential tension would be resolved. The main concern of ASEAN member states is that the Quad could be too confrontational in its narrative and conduct and would force them to choose. But if that perception is managed and the Quad can demonstrate its constructive contribution to the region's stability and respect for the rule of law, there would be no reason why such an initiative wouldn't receive support.

Instead of waiting for individual ASEAN states to decide to engage with the Quad when it materialises, the Quad members should pursue concrete measures of cooperation. Given the current political atmosphere in Washington and New Delhi, Tokyo and Canberra should take up more proactive roles in defining the Quad and outlining its agenda.

## Recommendations for ASEAN

Given the differences revealed by this study, the ASEAN countries should have open debates on the Quad to share their individual understandings and views. A debate on the Quad will help to prevent the proliferation of misperceptions (for example, that the Quad would challenge or sideline ASEAN) and provide room for a more objective understanding of it. While diversity and different opinions within the ASEAN member states may be to the Quad's advantage, a discussion about the Quad as an ASEAN agenda item can prevent the persistent challenges that ASEAN has had to face on a number of issues of regional political-strategic importance.

This study reveals that, in many cases, the Quad doesn't even get a mention in a number of ASEAN countries. Lack of information and official views on this important initiative aren't helpful in developing policies towards the Quad.

The findings also highlight the divergence among Southeast Asians in their current perceptions, including hopes and concerns that have not been discussed before. ASEAN leaders and policymakers can make use of this report, knowing that their informed citizens hope for a peaceful region where there are enforceable mechanisms to protect the rules-based order.

The study doesn't attempt to answer all the existing questions about the Quad. In fact, it finds many inconsistencies and even contradictions in Southeast Asian views about the Quad. For example, some respondents saw the Quad as contributing to the peace and stability of the region but also as an 'anti-China bulwark'; others saw it as 'another informal dialogue' but also hope for it to have an ambitious enforcing role. These contradictions reflect the complexity of people's perceptions as well as the flexibility of their evolving views. The findings provide a base for policy circles to work on the future shape and image of the Quad. Knowing that most of the policy and expert communities in ASEAN consider the Quad to be a positive or potentially positive initiative should also encourage ASEAN to work with the Quad as a partner, rather than as a potential regional rival.

In fact, there's little in the Quad's agenda that would challenge ASEAN or an ASEAN-centred framework. Neither its structure and organisation nor its agenda is comparable, let alone competitive, with ASEAN. Given that most ASEAN respondents thought that the Quad is complementary with the ASEAN-centred architecture, ASEAN leaders should explore channels for cooperation and coordination, particularly in those areas in which there is nearly unanimous agreement across different national perspectives. After all, the region needs more efforts towards sustaining peace, stability and prosperity—not less.

The Quad leaders have also, time and again, publicly recognised the principle of ASEAN centrality and have little appetite to develop the Quad into another institution of similar format as ASEAN.

This is a primary study at the early stage of Quad 2.0. Its main value is not simply to highlight to the Quad members that there will be no 'one size fits all' approach to engaging with individual ASEAN states. Instead, based on the findings, the Quad should tailor its policies according to the views and considerations in individual Southeast Asian states. This study can be also instrumental for Southeast Asians to understand the significant divergence in strategic assessments within the group—an issue that calls for a closer look.

A recommendation for all is to conduct further studies as the Quad continues, including on larger scale research that tests perceptions of the Quad as it develops, among the Quad members and among other key actors in the region, including China, the Republic of Korea, Taiwan and even key European powers.

# CONCLUSION

The Quad debate hasn't been detached from debate about ASEAN and the existing ASEAN-centred regional architecture. In fact, the first meeting of the Quad in May 2007 happened on the sidelines of the ASEAN Regional Forum meeting in Manila. The Quad members' intention—whether or not it's been well expressed or well managed—has been to contribute to the region's activities, rather than to compete.

But, as this study found, presenting the Quad (or even the Indo-Pacific construct) as a challenger to ASEAN centrality or is inimicable to ASEAN's interests is incorrect. Conclusions that the ASEAN states have a common and negative view of the Quad are premature and imprecise. Overall, regional perceptions of the Quad are positive, perhaps somewhat hesitant, but not negative. Most Southeast Asians hope that the Quad initiative can provide what is, indirectly, viewed as missing but needed—an enforcing mechanism that would guard the rules-based order.

The survey shows that the characterisation of the Quad as confrontational towards China can be accepted by the region, or at least understood. Concerns about China's assertiveness have caused many to think that a formation such as the Quad is necessary. But those who are uncomfortable and worried about the potential worsening of antagonism are relatively confident that it won't affect their country directly in the foreseeable future. The argument against the Quad, therefore, can't be built around what others think of the Quad. Rather, it's about whether the Quad members will again allow it to 'slide' due to lack of action and leadership. The biggest challenge is lack of clarity about it. Respondents pointed to the lack of clarity not only as a justification for their ambivalence towards it, but, more importantly, as the Quad's biggest weakness. If they don't adequately address these concerns, the Quad actors (both members and supporters) will leave a vacuum that can continue to be filled with widely disseminated misperceptions.

Responses from Malaysia, Vietnam and the Philippines made up half of this study's overall sample. Their views on the Quad are likely to be affected by their claims in the South China Sea disputes, but this has been a variable for their overall strategic behaviour, and hence is not treated as an exceptional factor in this study. While the still modest development of Quad 2.0 may mean that it is not widely discussed in the region, this study has provided a summary of the already existing views. In doing so, it identifies the areas of convergence and divergence among the ASEAN states and points out the main misperceptions that the Quad stakeholders need to work on.

The Quad's potential is big, and so are the challenges. The first one to deal with is to clarify its agenda and successfully communicate it to the regional actors. The symbolic value of the Quad—which most of the respondents recognised—is important in sending a signal to China that the concerns are shared and that the long-term peace and stability of the region depend on reconciling the divergent national interests of not only the very different Quad members, but also other regional actors that support the Quad's efforts, or potentially other initiatives in the future.

# APPENDIX A: MOTIVATION FOR AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

## Motivation for the study

This report contributes to the debate as a part of ‘careful management of the Quad 2.0’. A combination of qualitative and quantitative methods is designed to bring a more representative picture of the opinions across Southeast Asia’s informed audience. While many prominent policy leaders and public intellectuals have been vocal about their views on the Quad, it would be an oversimplification to rely on those opinions only. Southeast Asia is a diverse region and there is no reason to expect that the views on any matter, including the Quad, would be homogeneous. This report aims to showcase the complexity of strategic considerations in the region and highlight the agency of the region in an important initiative such as the Quad.

## Survey methodology

A comprehensive study of expert views, derived from interviews and a quantitative survey of 276 respondents, allowed a nuanced reflection on representative opinions from different corners of Southeast Asia.

### Survey design and collection

The survey comprised 20 questions (mixture of multiple-choice and open-ended—see Appendix B), which were designed after a literature review on existing opinions about the Quad as well as preliminary interviews that I had conducted in Southeast Asia. The survey was then run on a test audience of a dozen security analysts before it was circulated to respondents. Due to the nature of the survey, the questions were kept focused and within a limited scope. The survey collection was conducted online. The responses were collected through ‘snowball sampling’, which is also known as ‘chain referral’ or ‘referral sampling’.<sup>41</sup> This is a statistical research technique in which identified respondents are asked to pass along the survey and recruit further respondents.

Generally, snowball sampling, unlike larger scale random sampling in larger sociological studies, can be subject to biases. However, because this survey had a relatively narrow focus and required respondents to be familiar with the issue, bias isn’t a weakness of this study. In fact, the narrow focus guaranteed that responses were informed; respondents were preselected as people who both know the subject and have opinions about it.

I generated two hyperlinks, the first of which was used to send the survey to institutions and individuals in governments, the ASEAN Secretariat, media and research institutes, universities and think tanks in all 10 ASEAN countries. I asked for further dissemination. The total collection time was nearly three months.

Another hyperlink was posted on Twitter, tagging official Twitter accounts of relevant research and media organisations in the region. This allowed wider dissemination of the survey, but it generated only 17 responses in total, and most of them were from non-ASEAN citizens.

Due to resource limitations and the scale of the introductory phase of the survey, one weakness of the survey was its English language limitation. Only respondents comfortable with English responded to the survey, which meant that some individual countries had more representation (such as Malaysia, which produced the highest number of valid responses: 37) than the BCLM group.

### Demographics of the respondents

Out of 276 responses, 233 were fully completed surveys without any ‘skipped’ answers. A total of 190 respondents were from ASEAN countries. Respondents who chose ‘Other’ for their citizenship identified as being from the US, the UK, India, Japan and Russia. Respondents who didn’t disclose their citizenship were grouped with ‘Other’ (Figure 17 and Table 1).

Figure 17: Nationality of respondents

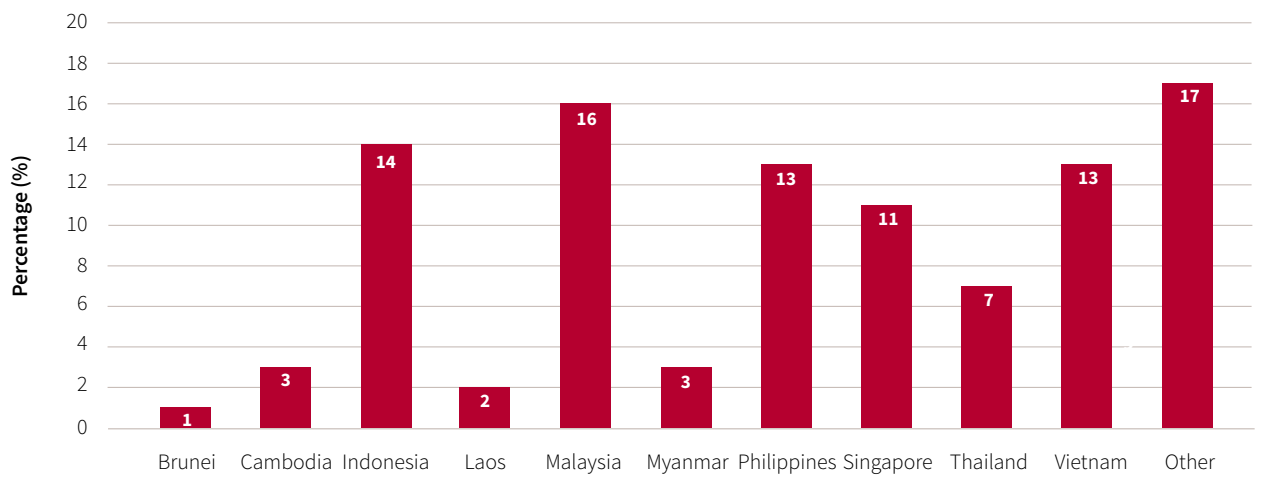


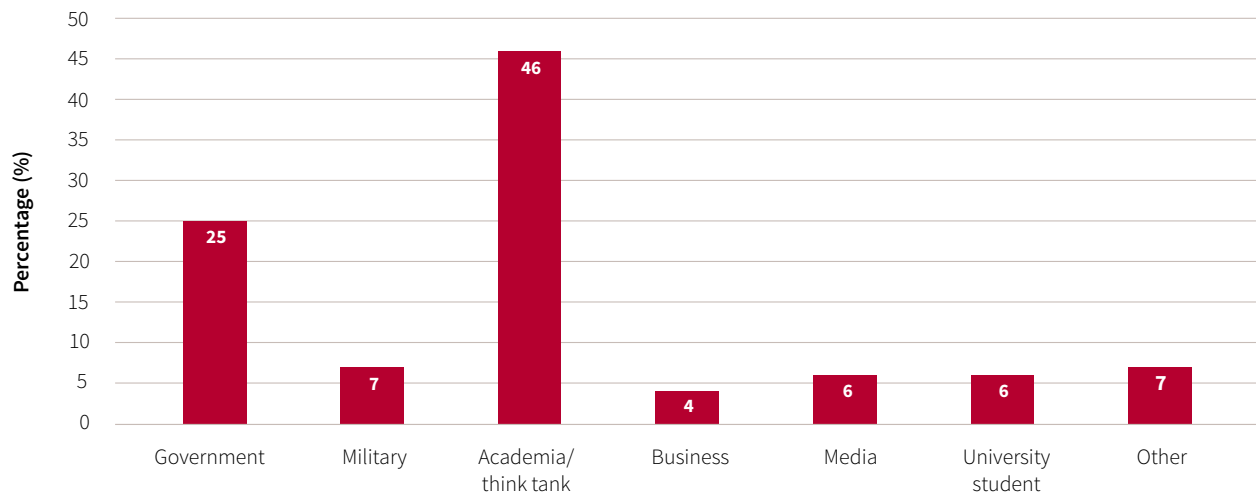
Table 1: Valid responses, by nationality

| Brunei | Cambodia  | Indonesia | Laos  | Malaysia | Myanmar | Philippines | Singapore | Thailand    | Vietnam        | Total |
|--------|-----------|-----------|-------|----------|---------|-------------|-----------|-------------|----------------|-------|
| 2      | 8         | 33        | 4     | 37       | 8       | 29          | 24        | 16          | 29             | 190   |
| US     | Australia | India     | Japan | UK       | EU      | Canada      | Russia    | New Zealand | Non-disclosure | Total |
| 11     | 8         | 5         | 3     | 2        | 2       | 2           | 1         | 1           | 8              | 43    |

Eight respondents in the ‘Other’ category opted not to disclose their citizenship. Based on communication with me, they were mainly ASEAN citizens who preferred their responses not to be linked to their national perspective. Many were staff of the ASEAN Secretariat and considered their views not to be restricted to one national perspective. Most respondents who identified as American, Australian, Canadian or British were based in Southeast Asian institutes or worked in regional think tanks and businesses. Most Indian respondents responded to the survey’s second collection mechanism—the URL disseminated via Twitter.

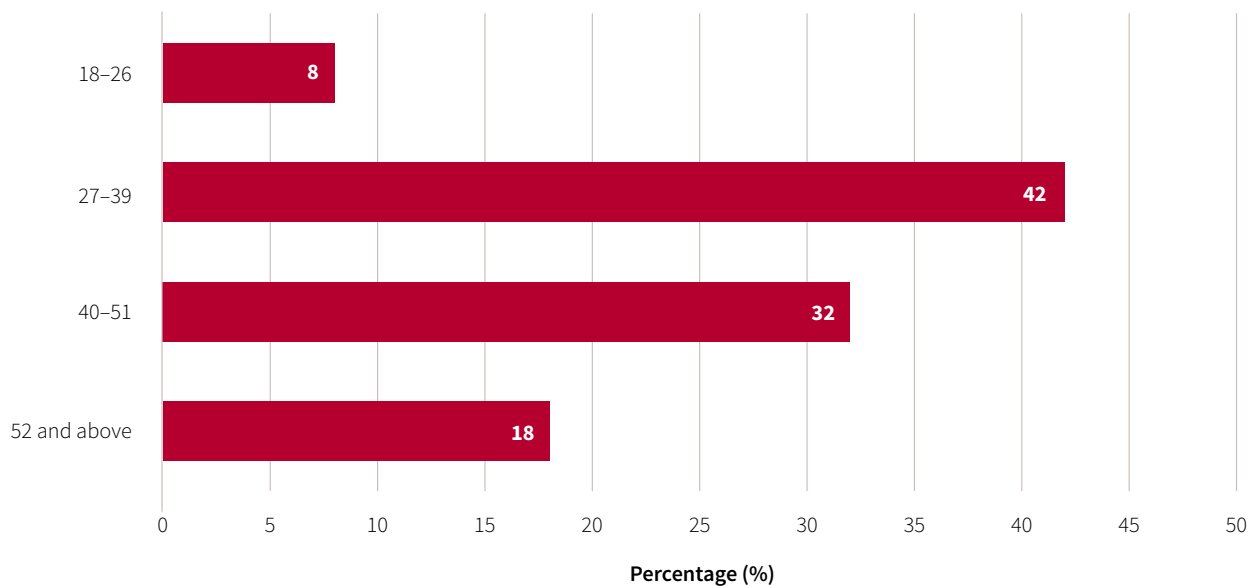
Most respondents (46%) were working in academia or think tanks, while one-quarter came from government agencies (Figure 18). In the category of 'Other', most listed 'Intergovernmental organisation' (which meant, in particular, the ASEAN Secretariat) or 'Non-disclosure'.

**Figure 18: Occupations of respondents**



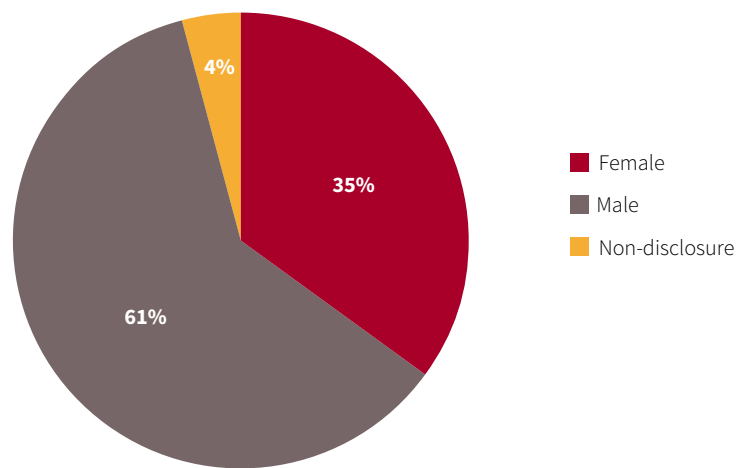
Of the respondents, 42% were aged between 27 and 39 years, 32% were in the group between 40 and 51, 18% were older than 52 and 8% were between 18 and 26 (Figure 19).

**Figure 19: Ages of respondents**



Of respondents, 61% identified as male and 35% as female; 4% chose not to disclose their gender (Figure 20).

Figure 20: Gender of respondents





# APPENDIX B: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) is an informal strategic dialogue between the United States of America, Japan, Australia and India. This survey asks your perception and opinion about the Quad. Please select only one answer that best reflects your thinking in each question.

The survey is anonymous. Please help disseminate the survey within your network.

1. The Quad will contribute to stability and peace of the Indo-Pacific region

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

2. What is the Quad's relationship with the concept of a free and open Indo-Pacific?

- An integral part of the Indo-Pacific concept
- The most concrete representation of the Indo-Pacific concept, thus far
- It is external to and independent from the Indo-Pacific concept
- Whether integral or external to the Indo-Pacific concept, it is complementary
- Other (please specify)

3. What should the Quad do?

- Have regular high-level dialogue meetings
- Have regular joint patrols
- Capacity building, e.g. naval exercises or maritime security assistance
- Keep surveillance on irregular activities such as the artificial island building and their militarisation
- All of the above

4. How important is the Quad for security and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific region?

- It is necessary for sustaining the regional power balance
- It has diplomatic and symbolic value
- It will become the critical initiative to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific
- Other (please specify)

5. Will the Quad be effective in countering China's increasing economic and strategic dominance in the region?

- The Quad cannot stop China's economic and strategic dominance
- The Quad will only accelerate China's drive to dominate economically and strategically
- The Quad will slow down, but not stop China from economic and strategic dominance
- The Quad will partially limit China's economic and strategic dominance
- Other (please specify)

6. Do you think the Quad is an 'anti-China bulwark'?
- Yes, and it's dangerous
  - Yes, but it is necessary
  - No, and it should not be seen so
  - No, but it projects as such
7. How does your country refer to the Quad?
- A potentially dangerous irritant for China
  - A welcomed initiative
  - A vague idea
  - An unnecessary distraction
  - Other (please specify)
8. How do you think the Quad could affect your country's security environment?
- It is too confrontational and may add to a regional arms race
  - It will raise tension in the region, but won't affect the security situation of my country
  - It is a welcomed initiative and our country will be safer
  - It will not have any impact whatsoever
  - Other (please specify)
9. How should the Quad be best perceived?
- As a security coalition with military component
  - As a form of minilateralism (selective multilateralism)
  - As another informal dialogue
  - As an 'innovation' in regional security
  - Other (please specify)
10. Do you support the Quad?
- Yes
  - Yes, but only unofficially so as not to provoke China
  - Not now, but maybe in the future if it turns out to be effective
  - No
11. How does the Quad affect the existing regional security frameworks (e.g. ASEAN, ASEAN Regional Forum, ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting etc.)?
- It complements the existing regional security frameworks
  - It challenges the existing regional security frameworks
  - It sidelines the existing regional security frameworks
  - It does not affect at all
  - Other (please specify)
12. Does it matter if the Quad receives support from Southeast Asia?
- Absolutely, Southeast Asia has a critical role in shaping the future of the region
  - Yes, it will have greater legitimacy and more impact
  - There only can be support from selective Southeast Asian countries
  - No, our (Southeast Asian) support doesn't matter anyway
  - Other (please specify)

13. What is the Quad's biggest challenge?
- Whether the US can be a reliable leader
  - Too divergent interests among the participants and not sufficient common interests for action
  - Whether India can be a reliable partner
  - Provoking China's aggressive actions
  - The Quad itself is unclear about its mission
  - Criticism from ASEAN
  - Other (please specify)
14. Should the Quad be further expanded and why?
- No: please say why
  - Case by case: please name examples of countries
  - Expand permanently by: please name countries
  - Please explain why those countries
15. What are the Quad's prospects?
- The Quad will grow increasingly more significant
  - It depends how assertive/aggressive China will be in the maritime domain
  - It depends how assertive/aggressive China will be in general
  - The Quad is hype and will disappear (again)
  - Other (please specify)
16. What are your best hopes for the Quad?
- To play a role in enforcing rules-based order, e.g. the Arbitral Tribunal's ruling and freedom of navigation
  - To effectively display Japan's leadership
  - To be effective in engaging India
  - Other (please specify)
17. What is your nationality?
- Brunei
  - Cambodia
  - Indonesia
  - Laos
  - Malaysia
  - Myanmar
  - The Philippines
  - Singapore
  - Thailand
  - Vietnam
  - Other (please specify)

18. What sector do you work in?

- Government
- Military
- Academia/think tank
- Business
- Media
- University student
- Other (please specify)

19. What is your age group?

- 18–26
- 27–39
- 40–51
- 52 and above

20. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other
- No disclosure

# NOTES

- 1 See, for example, Salman Rafi Sheikh, 'The Quad: new face of China containment', *Asia Sentinel*, 12 February 2018; Anilesh S Mahajan, 'How the Quad hopes to contain China', *Business Today*, 14 November 2017; Nyshka Chandran, 'The US and its Asia Pacific allies are boosting security ties—that could upset China', *CNBC*, 22 March 2018.
- 2 See, for example, Premasha Saha, 'The Quad in the Indo-Pacific: why ASEAN remains cautious', *ORF Issues and Briefs*, Observer Research Foundation (ORF), 26 February 2018, [online](#).
- 3 Quoted in 'Heated debate in Australia over the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue', *Straits Times*, 30 November 2017, [online](#).
- 4 The concept of 'ASEAN centrality' is often quoted in the Quad debate as if it were a clear construct. In fact, the concept remains confusing, unclear and contested among ASEAN member states and partners.
- 5 Ramesh Thakur, 'Australia and the Quad', *The Strategist*, 5 July 2018, [online](#).
- 6 Thakur, 'Australia and the Quad'.
- 7 See, for example, Abhijnan Rej, 'Reclaiming the Indo-Pacific: a political–military strategy for Quad 2.0.', ORF occasional paper no. 147, ORF, March 2018, [online](#).
- 8 Shinzo Abe, 'Asia's democratic security diamond', *Project Syndicate*, 27 December 2012.
- 9 Saki Hayashi, Yosuke Onchi, 'Japan to propose dialogue with the US, India and Australia', *Nikkei Asian Review*, 26 October 2017, [online](#).
- 10 'The National Security Strategy of the United States of America', The White House, Washington DC, December 2017, [online](#).
- 11 Quoted in Peter Hartcher, 'The powerful combination that gives US the edge over China', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 July 2018, [online](#).
- 12 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper, Australian Government, November 2017, 40. The writers seem to have favoured the term 'plurilateral', which is used many times to describe such groups as the World Trade Organization and MIKTA (the informal grouping of Mexico, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Turkey and Australia).
- 13 Penny Wong, Richard Marles, 'Why Labor believes the Quad is important to ASEAN', *Australian Financial Review*, 15 March 2018, [online](#).
- 14 Peter Varghese, 'A contested Asia: what comes after US strategic predominance?', 2017 Griffith Asia Lecture, University of Queensland, 6 September 2017, [online](#).
- 15 'India, Pakistan become full members of SCO', *The Hindu*, 9 June 2017, [online](#).
- 16 Narendra Modi, keynote speech, Shangri-La Dialogue, 1 June 2018, Singapore, [online](#).
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# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| ASEAN | Association of Southeast Asian Nations |
| BCLM  | Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar        |
| FOIP  | free and open Indo-Pacific             |
| Quad  | Quadrilateral Security Dialogue        |

# WHAT'S YOUR STRATEGY?

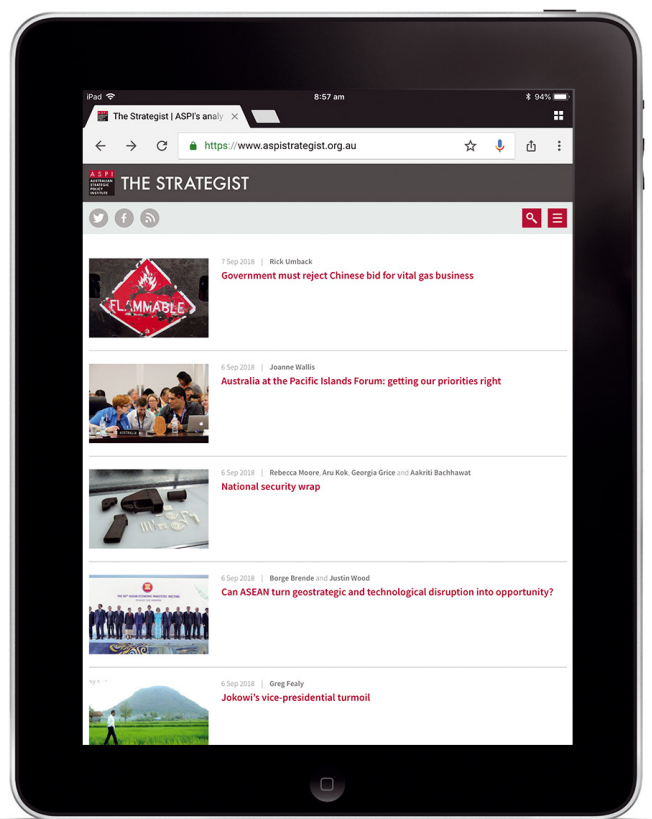


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**Southeast Asian perceptions of the  
Quadrilateral Security Dialogue**  
Survey findings