

# PERSPECTIVE

RESEARCHERS AT ISEAS – YUSOF ISHAK INSTITUTE ANALYSE CURRENT EVENTS

**Singapore** | 20 April 2021

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## **ASEAN Navigates between Indo-Pacific Polemics and Potentials**

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*Driven by their growing strategic concerns over a powerful and assertive China, the Quad countries have pushed forward their Indo-Pacific strategies and enhanced the Quad in both institutional and operational terms in the past two years. In this picture, the Royal Australian Navy rejoins the Malabar Exercise in 2020 which will therefore now include all four Quad countries. Credit: U.S. Indo-Pacific Command.*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Despite releasing the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific in June 2019, ASEAN member states have yet to reach a coherent view on the Indo-Pacific.
- They remain ambivalent about the Indo-Pacific to different degrees due to the concept's malleability and external pressures from China and Russia.
- As one of the more forward-leaning ASEAN members on the Indo-Pacific, Indonesia adopts a constructivist ASEAN-led approach focusing on maritime connectivity and marine resources. Vietnam's approach has a realist balance-of-power anchor.
- ASEAN has been pragmatic in promoting different AOIP elements with different Dialogue Partners who hold divergent views on the Indo-Pacific.
- The Biden Administration's proactive moves to consolidate the US' Indo-Pacific strategy, especially through the first Quad summit, has injected further dynamism into the Indo-Pacific discourse with a broader and more positive agenda.
- ASEAN and its member states should continue to leverage the Indo-Pacific concept and its unfolding possibilities to promote and defend their interests.

## INTRODUCTION

In June 2019, the ASEAN leaders adopted the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP)<sup>1</sup> to present their collective voice on the emerging Indo-Pacific discourse that had been actively promoted by the US, India, Japan and Australia – four members of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad). The Outlook articulates ASEAN’s inclusive and cooperative “vista” on the Indo-Pacific with the hope to present “an inclusive meeting place for the competing visions of regional order offered by great and regional players” and to maintain ASEAN’s relevance and Southeast Asia’s strategic autonomy<sup>2</sup> in this discourse.

The Indo-Pacific maritime domain has since become more contested and crowded with increased risks of conflicts over critical flashpoints such as the Taiwan Strait, the South China Sea (SCS) and the East China Sea. Geopolitical tensions as well as trade and territorial disputes between China and the Quad members have increased sharply and have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Driven by their growing strategic concerns over a powerful and assertive China, the Quad countries have pushed forward their Indo-Pacific strategies and enhanced the Quad in both institutional and operational terms in the past two years. Of note, despite recent leadership change in the US and Japan, both the Biden and Suga administrations have made it clear by policy announcements and actions that the Indo-Pacific is here to stay.<sup>3</sup>

Whereas the Quad countries remain steadfast and perhaps even more determined in their Indo-Pacific strategies, the Indo-Pacific discourse in Southeast Asia is much more chequered. This Perspective examines the continued ambivalence within ASEAN towards the Indo-Pacific due to both internal incoherence and external sensitivities. It looks at Indonesia and Vietnam as examples of two different approaches within ASEAN on the Indo-Pacific. It also ponders what the future may hold for ASEAN member states (AMS) as the US, India, Japan and Australia continue to solidify their Indo-Pacific strategies through the Quad.

## ONE TERM, MANY MEANINGS

The AOIP was expected to provide a common script for AMS amid mounting external pressures on them to take a stand on the Indo-Pacific. In reality, it remains the case that AMS have yet to internalise the Indo-Pacific to the same extent, and most still hold ambivalence towards the concept. Singapore Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan was realistic about the modest impact of the AOIP at the time of its adoption: “The Outlook will not stop strategic forces from pulling individual ASEAN Member States in different directions. ASEAN unity – the pre-requisite for ASEAN Centrality – will be tested. Our inherent diversity will make internal coherence difficult, but ultimately more necessary too.”<sup>4</sup>

Developments in the past two years have borne this out. The AOIP is not a magic wand that instantly removes AMS’ reluctance to embrace the term “Indo-Pacific”. In their national submissions to the ARF Security Outlook 2020, all AMS, except Vietnam, continued to use the term “Asia-Pacific” to describe the broader region. Vietnam meanwhile used neither term – arguably a deliberate omission given that “Asia-Pacific” was still featured in its ARF Security Outlook 2019 submission.<sup>5</sup>

Much ambivalence among Southeast Asian countries towards the Indo-Pacific is attributed to the malleability of this concept. In the 2019 and 2020 editions of the State of Southeast Asia (SSEA) survey undertaken by the ASEAN Studies Centre of ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute,

the majority of respondents – 61.3% (2019) and 54% (2020) – thought that “the concept is unclear and requires further elaboration.” Meanwhile, few of them – 17.2% (2019) and 28.4% (2020) – pinned their hope on the concept to present “a viable option for a new regional order.”<sup>6</sup>

There is a sense of *déjà vu* reminiscent of “Asia-Pacific” when the term was first trending in the early 1990s. Scholar Arif Dirlik then tried to address the question “What is the Pacific?” by specifying “whose Pacific and when”. He wrote: “In a fundamental sense, there is no Pacific region that is an “objective” given, but only a competing set of ideational constructs that project upon a certain location on the globe the imperatives of interest, power, or vision of these historically produced relationships.”<sup>7</sup> The same can be said for the Indo-Pacific which is even more geographically expansive and more amorphous in definition than the Asia-Pacific.

Furthermore, unlike the Asia-Pacific which has taken a relatively solid shape on the global map with both institutional and spatial representation, the Indo-Pacific remains much more malleable and open to “manipulation and interpretation in accordance with configurations of interest and power”.<sup>8</sup> The nouns attached to “Indo-Pacific” are elastic – such as “region”, “vision”, “vista”, “outlook”, “concept”, “construct”, “guidelines” and “strategy”. The adjectives that come with it are equally flexible – including, among others, the Trump Administration’s “free and open”, ASEAN’s “rules-based and inclusive”, or the Biden Administration’s “free, open, inclusive, resilient and rules-based” which combines all of the above.

Yet, no matter how “Indo-Pacific” has been qualified and appropriated by different players to fit their objectives, the overriding geopolitical fact remains that its champions – namely the US, India, Japan and Australia – share the strategic imperative for closer coordination and collective action in dealing with the China challenge even as their concerns over and disagreements with Beijing are not monochromatic. “China containment” may be too reductionist to describe the nuance and complexity in the Quad members’ emerging strategic alignments, but balancing China is arguably the most important rationale behind the Quad’s renaissance. Therefore, in the perceptions of many, the Indo-Pacific continues to carry the baggage of a US-led anti-China coalition, which is abetted by the Trump Administration’s markedly confrontational policy towards Beijing following the COVID-19 pandemic. As for China, its dismissive attitude towards the Indo-Pacific as “sea foam that will soon dissipate”<sup>9</sup> quickly morphed into alert and anger over what it calls the US’ “strategy of hegemony” and “Cold War zero-sum thinking”.<sup>10</sup> Beijing’s heightened sensitivity towards the Indo-Pacific has added to the reluctance of Southeast Asian countries to fully and officially endorse the Indo-Pacific concept.

The embrace of the Indo-Pacific in ASEAN’s dialogue relations and ASEAN-led mechanisms has been patchy, given that its Dialogue Partners are polarised on this issue. As demonstrated in the ARF Security Outlook 2020, China and Russia steadfastly hold on to “Asia-Pacific”; the Quad countries strongly advocate for “Indo-Pacific” and the remaining Dialogue Partners are caught in the middle of the spectrum.<sup>11</sup> Differences on whether the region should be called “Asia-Pacific” or “Indo-Pacific” almost derailed the issuance of the Joint Declaration to mark the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the ADMM-Plus in December 2020.

ASEAN therefore has to sing different tunes with different Dialogue Partners when it comes to the Indo-Pacific. For example, ASEAN recognises the common principles and is exploring possible cooperation between its AOIP and Japan’s Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP) and

India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI), as reflected in the Joint Statement of the 2020 ASEAN-Japan Summit on Cooperation on ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific<sup>12</sup> and the ASEAN-India Plan of Action 2021-2025.<sup>13</sup> The language in the ASEAN-US Plan of Action 2021-2025<sup>14</sup>, on the other hand, is more guarded but there is a clear willingness to leverage the US' Indo-Pacific vision to support the normative ballast of the AOIP. As for China, ASEAN takes a different tack focusing on development and connectivity, as reflected in the 2019 ASEAN-China Joint Statement on Synergising the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025 and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).<sup>15</sup> This is indeed ASEAN's promiscuous diplomacy at its best.

## **INDONESIA AND VIETNAM – A TALE OF TWO INDO-PACIFIC APPROACHES**

Within ASEAN, Indonesia and Vietnam are arguably the most forward-leaning in embracing the Indo-Pacific construct, albeit from different perspectives. For Indonesia which saw its own Indo-Pacific cooperation concept reincarnated in the AOIP, embracing "Indo-Pacific" means giving full expression and effect to the Outlook. Indonesia has pushed, with little success, for follow-up to the AOIP at the East Asia Summit (EAS). Indonesia also actively promoted support for the AOIP at the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and with ASEAN Dialogue Partners. Speaking at the 2020 ASEAN-US summit, foreign minister Retno Marsudi said: "Indonesia will always hope the US becomes an important and strategic partner in the Indo-Pacific region, including in the application of ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific".<sup>16</sup>

Through the AOIP, Jakarta aims to promote a non-aligned Indo-Pacific that is led neither by America nor China but is ASEAN-centred, one that is anchored in the normative elements and four key cooperation areas of the Outlook. ASEAN centrality is both an end and a means in Indonesia's Indo-Pacific vision, which befits the role that Indonesia sees for itself as "ASEAN's leader and as a global middle power".<sup>17</sup> As noted by Dewi Fortuna Anwar, the AOIP "underlines the importance that Indonesia places on ASEAN as the cornerstone of its foreign policy, emphasising ASEAN's centrality as the primary vehicle for managing relations with the major powers in the Indo-Pacific region."<sup>18</sup>

Also in line with President Jokowi's foreign policy pragmatism, Indonesia prioritises the implementation of the AOIP's four priority areas of maritime cooperation, connectivity, sustainable development, and economic cooperation. This is indeed the extension of Jakarta's Indo-Pacific cooperation concept that focuses on promoting maritime trade and connectivity and protecting marine resources rather than diving into the narrative of great power rivalry.<sup>19</sup> Indonesia planned to host the Indo-Pacific Infrastructure and Connectivity Forum in 2020 as "a manifestation of Indonesia's Indo-Pacific cooperation concept" and as part of its follow-up agenda on the AOIP.<sup>20</sup> The event is yet to take place, and was postponed due to COVID-19. Indonesia is also the proponent of the EAS Statement on Marine Sustainability in November 2020.<sup>21</sup>

Compared to Indonesia's constructivist ASEAN-led approach, Vietnam's embrace of the Indo-Pacific has a realist balance-of-power anchor that is more receptive to minilateral engagements outside the ASEAN framework. Hanoi is more interested in leveraging the Indo-Pacific discourse for its own security and economic interests than in promoting the AOIP for its own sake. Officially, Vietnam maintains the term "Asia-Pacific region" as reflected in the Political Report of the recent 12<sup>th</sup> National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV).<sup>22</sup> Yet,

even as Hanoi stops short of an official endorsement of the Indo-Pacific, it has tacitly embraced this construct in both declaratory and substantive ways.

Vietnam's worries over China's assertive actions in the SCS, hence the imperative to find a counterbalance, is an underlying key factor for that embrace. Whenever Vietnam engages in the Indo-Pacific discourse, it always evokes the principles of independence and sovereignty, respect for legitimate rights and interests of all nations, and upholding of international law and rules-based order. Commenting on the Trump Administration's declassified Strategic Framework for the Indo-Pacific on 14 January 2021, the spokeswoman of Vietnam's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said: Vietnam "welcome[s] regional connectivity initiatives, contributing to peace, stability, cooperation and development of the region based on rules and respect for international law, as well as respecting the legitimate rights and interests of all countries, including ASEAN's central role in the evolving regional structure."<sup>23</sup>

The past year also witnessed the strengthening of Vietnam's bilateral relations with the Quad countries, all of which attach increasing importance to Hanoi in their respective Indo-Pacific strategy. Hanoi welcomed Japan's new Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga in his first overseas trip in October 2020 and US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien in the last few months of the Trump Administration. The Joint Vision Statement of the Vietnam-India Virtual Summit in December 2020 saw Vietnam embrace the term "Indo-Pacific" for the first time in a high-level joint statement. It says "enhanced defense and security partnership between Viet Nam and India will be an important factor of stability in the Indo-Pacific region" and highlights "the AOIP and India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative to further promote partnership in the Indo-Pacific region".<sup>24</sup>

Notably, Vietnam's engagement with the Quad members on the Indo-Pacific is as much about economics as it is about security. As part of their broader efforts to present an alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative and to reduce over-reliance on China-centred production networks, the US, Japan and Australia, individually or jointly, see Vietnam as a preferred destination for their infrastructure financing and supply chain resilience initiatives. In November 2020, the chief of the CPV Central Economic Committee Nguyen Van Binh held a virtual conference with the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), the United States International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) and Australia's Export Financing Agency (EFA) to promote infrastructure financing in Vietnam.<sup>25</sup> Another high-profile event was the Indo-Pacific Business Forum (IPBF) in November 2020 with the participation of Vietnam's foreign and trade ministers. Such high-level political endorsement has been translated to a series of energy projects with American investors, especially power plants using liquefied natural gas (LNG) imported from the US.<sup>26</sup>

Of note, Vietnam does not shy away from the publicity and sensitivity of the Indo-Pacific narrative that underlie these initiatives. Another example is Vietnam's participation in the 2020 *ad hoc* Quad plus three meetings (together with New Zealand and South Korea) to discuss cooperation on pandemic response and economic recovery.<sup>27</sup> This does not necessarily mean that Vietnam will be forthcoming in joining a Quad-plus arrangement proper. Yet, its participation sent an important signal about the range of strategic choices that Vietnam keeps available for itself.

**A CONTENTIOUS BUT DYNAMIC DISCOURSE**

While the Indo-Pacific concept is yet to be internalised as part of ASEAN's strategic culture, there is a growing reckoning within the region that the Indo-Pacific is here to stay. Only 11.8% (2019) and 13.3% (2020) of the respondents to the SSEA survey thought that "the concept will fade away". When we factor the Quad, the picture becomes even more dynamic and complex. According to the SSEA survey in 2020, 45.8% of the respondents thought that the Quad had 'positive' or 'very positive' impact on regional security versus only 16.2% choosing 'negative' or 'very negative' impact. Again, Indonesia's development-oriented approach and Vietnam's realism towards the Indo-Pacific also influence their respective perceptions of the Quad. 65.8% of Vietnamese respondents chose 'positive' and 'very positive' impact, compared to only 31.1% of Indonesian respondents.<sup>28</sup>

There is another layer of complexity when we zero in on what Southeast Asian foreign policy elites think about their respective country's engagement with the Quad at the operational level. Even though they have divided opinions with regard to the Quad's impact on regional security, the majority of them (61.6%) thought that their country should participate in security initiatives and military exercises under the Quad framework. Except for Laos and Cambodia, more than half of the respondents from the remaining eight AMS chose "Yes" for this proposition.<sup>29</sup>

The coming into power of the Biden Administration has injected further dynamism into the Indo-Pacific discourse. While inheriting the Trump Administration's Indo-Pacific strategy, especially in continuing the US' competitive and even adversarial approach towards China,<sup>30</sup> the Biden Administration has made significant updates to the Quad. Biden's proactive moves in his very first months to consolidate the Quad through the first-ever Quad summit on 12 March 2021<sup>31</sup> sent a strong message that America is back, in close consultation and coordination with its allies and partners, and is pushing forward the Indo-Pacific strategy.

The current state of affairs has evolved significantly from where the Quad 2.0 was restarted in late 2017 or even where it was last year. The convergence of strategic interests among the four powers has become more solid. The Quad's institutional set-up, albeit still nascent and ever evolving, is getting more dense and regular.<sup>32</sup> Most remarkably, the Quad's agenda has been broadened beyond the heavily militarised maritime focus to "put forward a positive agenda and a positive vision"<sup>33</sup> that aims to address global issues and deliver global public goods in climate change, critical technologies and COVID-19 vaccines.

Arguably, the broadening of the Quad's horizons does not dilute its China focus. Rather, its approach towards addressing the China challenge has become more holistic and multi-dimensional, involving not only raw hard power but also smart power and soft power. Such a positive agenda will help the Quad gain more currency. Especially, the Quad Vaccine Partnership with a focus on Southeast Asia<sup>34</sup> is a calibrated move that, if implemented effectively and in a timely manner, would go a long way in winning hearts and minds in the region. It will also help shift the prevailing narrative on the Quad as a China-containing NATO-like coalition, and demonstrates the collective strength of the Quad for global public goods if they can get their act together. The appeal of their positive agenda and their capacity to deliver would then be harder for other countries to resist.

## CONCLUSION

The Indo-Pacific discourse over the past two years has proven to be dynamic and adaptable, with an evolving agenda that engages both Indonesia's constructivist and Vietnam's realist approaches. ASEAN and its member states should continue to be creative and adept in leveraging the Indo-Pacific to their interests. For instance, through ASEAN frameworks such as the EAS and ASEAN dialogue relations with the Quad members individually or collectively, they can amplify the Southeast Asia content/focus in the Quad Vaccine Partnership and the Supply Chain Resilience Initiative. Outside of ASEAN, states in the region should continue to utilise existing engagements and emerging platforms at bilateral, trilateral and minilateral levels to access resources and facilities made available by the major powers in the Indo-Pacific context. What is needed is grit and confidence from small states to look at the Indo-Pacific through the lens of unfolding possibilities rather than as a limited set of choices.

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<sup>1</sup> The ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, June 2019, [https://asean.org/storage/2019/06/ASEAN-Outlook-on-the-Indo-Pacific\\_FINAL\\_22062019.pdf](https://asean.org/storage/2019/06/ASEAN-Outlook-on-the-Indo-Pacific_FINAL_22062019.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Rizal Sukma, "Indonesia, ASEAN and shaping the Indo-Pacific idea", *East Asia Forum*, 19 November 2019, <https://www.eastasiaforum.org/2019/11/19/indonesia-asean-and-shaping-the-indo-pacific-idea/>.

<sup>3</sup> Malcolm Cook, David Engel and Huong Le Thu, "Suga signals commitment to 'free and open Indo-Pacific' with Vietnam and Indonesia visits", *The Strategist*, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 2 November 2020, <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/suga-signals-commitment-to-free-and-open-indo-pacific-with-vietnam-and-indonesia-visits/>; Ken Moriyasu, "Biden's Indo-Pacific team largest in National Security Council", *Nikkei Asia Review*, 11 February 2021, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Biden-s-Asia-policy/Biden-s-Indo-Pacific-team-largest-in-National-Security-Council>.

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Singapore, "Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr Vivian Balakrishnan's Written Reply to Parliamentary Question", 5 August 2019, [https://www.mfa.gov.sg/Newsroom/Press-Statements-Transcripts-and-Photos/2019/08/05-Aug\\_Min-Written-PQ-Reply](https://www.mfa.gov.sg/Newsroom/Press-Statements-Transcripts-and-Photos/2019/08/05-Aug_Min-Written-PQ-Reply).

<sup>5</sup> ARF Annual Security Outlook 2019 and 2020, ARF website, <https://aseanregionalforum.asean.org/librarycat/annual-security-outlook/>.

<sup>6</sup> Tang, S. M. et al., *The State of Southeast Asia: 2019* (Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak, Institute, 2019) and Tang, S. M. et al., *The State of Southeast Asia: 2020* (Singapore: ISEAS-Yusof Ishak, Institute, 2020), <https://www.iseas.edu.sg/category/articles-commentaries/state-of-southeast-asia-survey/>.

<sup>7</sup> Dirlik, Arif. "The Asia-Pacific Idea: Reality and Representation in the Invention of a Regional Structure." *Journal of World History*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1992, pp. 55–79. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/20078512](http://www.jstor.org/stable/20078512). Accessed 7 Apr. 2021.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, "Foreign Minister Wang Yi Meets the Press", 9 March 2018, [https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa\\_eng/zxxx\\_662805/t1540928.shtml](https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/t1540928.shtml).

<sup>10</sup> "U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy "hegemonic": FM spokesperson", *Xinhuanet*, 13 January 2021, [http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2021-01/13/c\\_139664977.htm](http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2021-01/13/c_139664977.htm).

<sup>11</sup> ARF Annual Security Outlook 2020, op. cit.

<sup>12</sup> Joint Statement of the 23<sup>rd</sup> ASEAN-Japan Summit on Cooperation on ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, 12 November 2020, <https://asean.org/joint-statement-23rd-asean-japan-summit-cooperation-asean-outlook-indo-pacific/>.

<sup>13</sup> Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-India Partnership for Peace, Progress and Shared Prosperity (2021-2025), <https://asean.org/storage/2020/09/ASEAN-India-POA-2021-2025-Final.pdf>.

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<sup>15</sup> ASEAN-China Joint Statement on Synergising the Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity (MPAC) 2025 and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), <https://asean.org/storage/2019/11/Final-ASEAN-China-Joint-Statement-Synergising-the-MPAC-2025-and-the-BRI.pdf>.

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<sup>17</sup> Weatherbee, D. (2019, Indonesia, ASEAN, and the Indo-Pacific Cooperation Concept. *ISEAS Perspective* No. 47.

<sup>18</sup> Anwar, D. F. (2020), Indonesia and the ASEAN outlook on the Indo-Pacific, *International Affairs*, 96(1), 111–129.

<sup>19</sup> Jansen Tham, “What’s in Indonesia’s Indo-Pacific Cooperation Concept?”, *The Diplomat*, 16 May 2018, <https://thediplomat.com/2018/05/whats-in-indonesias-indo-pacific-cooperation-concept/>.

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<sup>21</sup> The East Asia Summit Leaders’ Statement on Marine Sustainability, 14 November 2020, <https://asean.org/storage/2020/11/31-EAS-Leaders-Statement-on-Marine-Sustainability-FINAL.pdf>.

<sup>22</sup> Political Report of the Vietnamese Communist Party at the 13<sup>th</sup> Party Congress, draft as of 10 October 2020, Vietnamese text, *tuoitre.vn*, <https://tuoitre.vn/toan-van-bao-cao-cua-ban-chap-hanh-trung-uong-dang-khoa-xii-ve-cac-van-kien-trinh-dai-hoi-xiii-20210126103335381.htm>.

<sup>23</sup> “Vietnam supports peaceful, stable Indo-Pacific region”, *vov.vn*, 14 January 2021, <https://vov.vn/en/politics/diplomacy/vietnam-supports-peaceful-stable-indo-pacific-region-830705.vov>.

<sup>24</sup> Viet Nam-India Joint Vision Statement for Peace, Prosperity and People, 21 December 2020, <http://news.chinhphu.vn/Home/Full-Viet-NamIndia-Joint-Vision-Statement-for-Peace-Prosperity-and-People/202012/42482.vgp>.

<sup>25</sup> “Trưởng ban Kinh tế Trung ương hội đàm trực tuyến với các tổ chức tài chính lớn” (Chief of the Central Economic Committee holds talks with major financing institutions), *baohinhphu.vn*, 30 October 2020, <http://baohinhphu.vn/Utilities/PrintView.aspx?distributionid=412573>.

<sup>26</sup> US Mission to ASEAN, Fact Sheet: 2020 Indo-Pacific Business Forum Promotes Free and Open Indo-Pacific, 29 October 2020, <https://asean.usmission.gov/2020-indo-pacific-business-forum-promotes-free-and-open-indo-pacific/>.

<sup>27</sup> Derek Grossman, “Don’t Get Too Excited, ‘Quad Plus’ Meetings Won’t Cover China”, *RAND Corporation*, 9 April 2020, <https://www.rand.org/blog/2020/04/dont-get-too-excited-quad-plus-meetings-wont-cover.html>.

<sup>28</sup> Tang, S. M. et al., op. cit.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Clarissa Yong, “Blinken singles out China as biggest geopolitical test for US”, *The Straits Times*, 5 March 2021, <https://www.straitstimes.com/asia/se-asia/blinken-singles-out-china-as-biggest-geopolitical-test-for-us>.

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<sup>32</sup> Tanvi Madan, “What you need to know about the “Quad,” in charts”, *Brookings*, 5 October 2020, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/10/05/what-you-need-to-know-about-the-quad-in-charts/>; “This week’s Quad ministerial meeting, in four charts”, *Brookings*, 8 October 2020, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2020/10/08/this-weeks-quad-ministerial-meeting-in-four-charts/>.

<sup>33</sup> Tanvi Madan and Adrianna Pita, “What does the Quad summit signal for U.S. engagement in the Indo-Pacific?” podcast, *Brookings*, 16 March 2021, <https://www.brookings.edu/podcast-episode/what-does-quad-summit-signal-for-u-s-engagement-in-the-indo-pacific/>.

<sup>34</sup> The White House, op. cit.

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