

## **AUKUS could rock China's Boat in the Indo-Pacific**

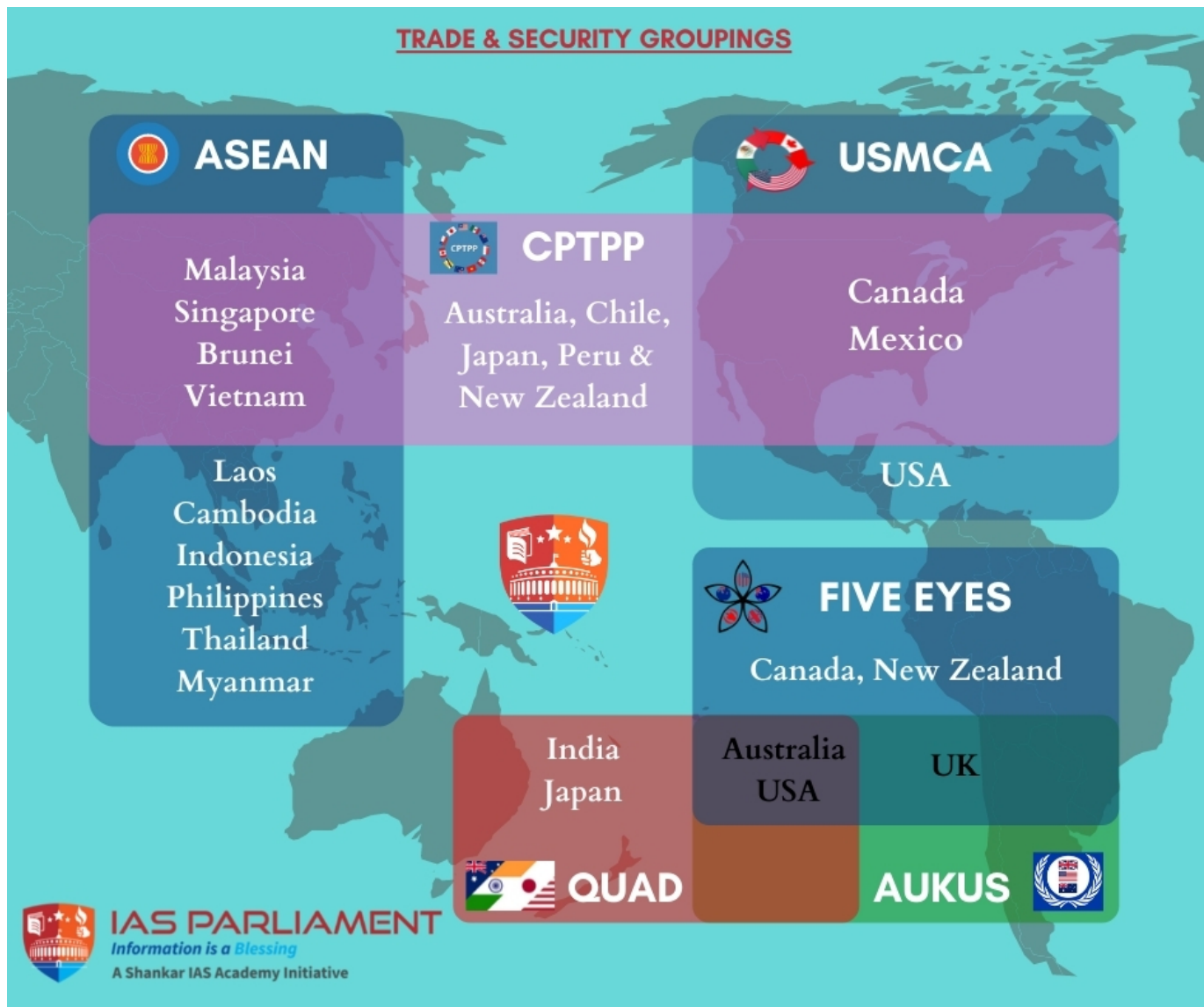
### **What is the issue?**

The ruffle over the AUKUS agreement continues to prevail as France has expressed its resentment at the Australian action at the G20 press conference.

### **What is AUKUS?**

- AUKUS is a new trilateral security partnership among The United States, United Kingdom, and Australia for enduring freedom and openness in the Indo-Pacific region.
- Under the agreement, America and Britain proposed to transfer technology to build a fleet of nuclear-powered submarines for Australia within 18 months.

To know more about AUKUS agreement, click [here](#)



## What are the concerns over the emergence of AUKUS?

- **The ASEAN factor** - There is a matter of ASEAN disunity over the emergence of AUKUS.
- Even though AUKUS is not a defence alliance, issues such as the strategic threats posed by China are a matter of concern for AUKUS.
- Australia has clearly assured its commitment to ASEAN centrality and its continued support for the South Pacific Nuclear-Free Zone Treaty and the Treaty of Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon-Free Zone.
- **The China factor** - The rise of China, particularly its rapid militarisation and aggressive behaviour, is undoubtedly the trigger for the emergence of the agreement.
- The China has criticised AUKUS as an “exclusive bloc” that gravely undermines regional peace and security and reflects a Cold War mentality.

## **What is the significance of this decades old partnership?**

- The U.S. and the U.K. have enjoyed a special defence partnership for decades and have fought together as allies, together with Australia, in the Second World War.
- The U.S. shared nuclear weapons technology with the U.K. following the merging of the latter's nuclear weapons programme with the American Manhattan Project as early as in 1943.
- The first U.K. test was conducted in 1952 in the Montebello Islands in Australia.
- The transfer of sensitive submarine technology by the U.S. to the U.K. is an arrangement based on their long-standing Mutual Defence Agreement of 1958.
- The other areas covered are cyber capabilities, artificial intelligence and quantum technologies, apart from undersea capabilities.
- All three nations will also play a major role in U.S.-led programmes such as Build Back Better World, Blue Dot Network and Clean Network to meet the challenge of China's Belt and Road Initiative.

## **What is the status of their engagement with China?**

- Australia had subordinated its strategic assessment of China to transactional commercial interests.
- China's naval expansion and incursions into the Indo-Pacific has compelled Australia to revisit its defence and security policies.
- In 2017 and 2019, China's *Dongdiao*-class Type 815 auxiliary general intelligence (AGI) vessel tagged the Talisman Sabre exercises (a biennial exercise that is led by either Australia or the U.S.).
- China also used the same type of vessel to monitor the multilateral Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) exercise in 2018.
- AUKUS provides an opportunity to the U.S. to place proxy submarine forces to limit China's forays, especially in the Pacific Ocean.

## **Reference**

1. <https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/aucus-could-rock-chinas-boat-in-the-indo-pacific/article37372664.ece>



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