

International Disaster Response: Rebuilding the Quad?

Stimson Center

March 11, 2019

TRANSCRIPT

Panelists:

Yuki Tatsumi (Moderator)

Kate Stevenson (Panelist)

Akriti Vasudeva (Panelist)

Yasuhito Jibiki (Panelist)

Pamela Kennedy (Panelist)

Yuki Tatsumi: Thank you for joining us on Monday. I know it's the beginning of the week, so some people said it can be a little hectic. But we appreciate your time. My name is Yuki Tatsumi. I'm a co-director of East Asia Program. I'm director of the Japan Program here at Stimson. Every year we enjoy working with the embassy of Japan in Washington, DC, to work on the issues that are relevant for Japanese foreign policy and coming up with practical policy recommendations. And one of the hallmarks about this *Views from the Next Generation* series is that we make a conscious effort on introducing new talents to the conversation. And I'm really happy, especially for this year, that we have our own Stimson talents to promote. You all have a book in front, and if you would like additional copies, please feel free to do so.

So the reason why we decided on this topic of disaster relief and the Quad is that at the time of formulating this project, the reemergence of a Quad which is the partnership between Australia, India, Japan, and the United States, have been said to be on the rise. Now things seem to have tapered a little bit and I think Akriti might go into it a little bit from an Indian perspective, how that might be the case, and how we can overcome the kind of current plateau, if you will.

But the organization of this panel is fairly simple. We're going to go in alphabetical order of the countries. So we'll start from Australia, and then India, followed by Japan and finish off by the U.S. At the end of this book, you'll have the bio of the speakers. I won't go into terrible detail. But immediate to the right to me is Kate Stevenson. She co-wrote this Australian piece with David Envall. She currently actually lives in Japan for the scholarship, Monbukagakusho scholarship. But she has been studying at the Australian National University.

Right next to her is Akriti Vasudeva. She's a research analyst at Stimson's South Asia Program. And I really wanted to bring her into the conversation, as a part of the effort to promote new talent. And then also she is originally from India, and she does bring in that unique on-the-ground perspective.

Next to her is Dr. Yasuhito Jibiki. He's an assistant professor at Tōhoku University. And he has been doing extensive research on the disaster management and crowd control and how early warning systems, early warning issues can be helpful in natural disaster situations.

And last but not least we have Pam Kennedy. She's also a research associate here at Stimson's

East Asia Program. And she is going to talk to you about how the U.S. organizes itself in the area of disaster management. So without further ado, I think each speaker is going to go for about 10 to 12 minutes. And then after that, we will immediately open it up to the questions, answers, and further comments. So without further ado, Kate. You're on now.

Kate Stevenson: Thanks Yuki. First I would like to say thank you to my co-author, David Envall who is not here today. He was actually my honors supervisor at the Australian National University back in 2013. And he got back in touch with me in summer last year and said, "They're doing this panel discussion at the Stimson Center. I think you would be interested." And yes, I'm very interested.

I've been looking at disaster relief and international relations since about 2011. And that came about through a string of events. Mostly by managing to arrive in Japan on the day of the disaster in 2011. And then going to the Australian embassy the following year for an internship. And that got me thinking how disaster relief is approached and is used as a part of international relations and engagement with other countries. And that has brought me through to where I am today.

I should make a caveat of some sort. It's actually the first time in a long time I've talked about Australia. That first project that I did as an honors student with David Envall was on 3-11 and how the cooperation between Australia and Japan and the U.S. and Japan affected strategic and diplomatic relations between each of those countries. After that, however, I primarily looked at Japanese disaster relief to how Japan does relief overseas, how that's developed since 2011, how Japan does civil-military engagement as part of disaster relief. So the civil search and rescue medical teams and the Self-Defense Forces. And then why those civil and SDF teams don't seem to be able to get cooperation together actually on the ground.

I don't think it would be a surprise to many of you if I said that it's more of a coexistence than actual cooperation. But yes, this has been a great opportunity to go back and look at how my own country does engagement through disaster relief in its region.

Finally, before I get into my substantive comments, I'd also like to express my appreciation to my colleagues at G.R. Japan. I'm not actually a student or an academic. I work for a consultant firm in Tokyo. One of my colleagues is here today. My company has been very supportive of me doing this in addition to my other work. I should say however that my opinions are my opinions, and they don't express any position held by my company.

So, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief and the Quad. I'm going to make two general points about Australian engagement in the Quad, and I think there might be points shared by the other members on this panel. And then I actually want to bring up a number of points from an operational perspective. So not high strategy but actually how humanitarian assistance and disaster relief works. How deployments are actually done.

My first point from the Australian perspective is that there's an elephant in the room, and that's China. I think we all know that. And it is a challenge for the Quad if it is seen as a mechanism to contain China. And a lot of the discussion today about the Quad has taken that approach. There are, on the other hand, a number of academics, researchers in Australia who have said that it isn't

meant to contain China. In fact, Euan Graham at the Lowy Institute said it's not now possible to contain China. But others don't see it that way. And that includes our neighbors in Southeast Asia.

There was a survey done by ASPI, the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, last year which said that 57% of policy makers, academics, and representatives of ASEAN institutions in Asia thought that the Quad was designed as a hedge mechanism for China. So that is an issue. It's important what something looks like. The Quad has an image issue. It needs to do something about it. And this re-imaging needs to be a comprehensive look at what the Quad is and what it's meant to do so we can break away from these China hedge discussions.

That leads me to my second point, however, that this re-imaging isn't going to be so easy because the four members of the Quad have some very different strategic priorities and perspectives. So one of these is due to geographic proximity. Japan and India are of course much closer to China. So no matter what we say about the Quad not being about China, it's always going to be in the background of considerations.

The point about it basically is that Australia is not in the same headspace as other members of the Quad. Some other comments from the ASPI survey that was done last year was also that ASEAN countries don't necessarily think that disaster relief is something that the Quad should do. When asked what they thought would be most useful it tended to be things like anti-piracy, surveillance of certain islands, maritime security and capacity building. So these again are more maritime security issues and not necessarily disaster relief. And there needs to be some sort of consensus about how the Quad is going to define itself and its actual role in the region.

My next points are the operational perspective. And they come to some degree from talking to people in Japan and a little bit in Australia who actually do disaster relief overseas. And I want to say that it's important to ask whether the Quad is an appropriate forum for disaster response and disaster relief. It's very important to note that deployments of both civilian and military teams are based on request. It's not something that's done on impulse. There's a request from the affected government to the governments that they want to have assistance from. And everything is based around that framework.

That bilateral framework, however, is position against an international system which is centered on the United Nations and their capacities and their ways of managing international disaster relief. And particularly since 2011 and 2013 in the Philippines typhoon, that system has gotten a lot better than it used to be and it is much more efficient.

So, is the Quad doing disaster relief or is doing ... How is it going to engage with those frameworks? And if it's not actually doing disaster relief, is it going to be doing training? Is it going to be focusing on capacity building? And that's not being clear in discussions to date. Also in particularly in the Asia Pacific, Indo-Pacific region, there are a number of existing forums ASEAN, ASEAN regional forum, the East Asia Summit – other well-established, less controversial forums that are possibly better at doing disaster relief already have that experience. So Australia needs to take that into consideration also.

The next question from an operational perspective is through in Quad disaster relief, are we talking about civilian capabilities or military capabilities? The Quad, when it originally was brought up as a possibility was a security forum. So this suggests that it's talking more military coordination for disaster relief. However, the fact is that international disaster relief is really focused on civilian capabilities. And the basic principle is that military assistance only happens when the need exceeds the capability that exists on the civilian side.

So if the Quad is going to be engaged in actual disaster relief, first, it's only going to be in a limited number of extremely large disasters. So you're talking the 2004 tsunami, Typhoon Haiyan, Nepal. But it has to clarify what it's doing about the civilian capacity as well. And Australian and Japan, in particular, have very good civilian capabilities that have been assessed by, for search and rescuing, assessed by INSARAG which is the UN institution for that. And that's something that we want to still maintain.

Also, there's importance of equal capability and commitment. So Australia knows a lot about American and Japanese capability, but not so much about Indian capabilities for disaster relief. And I think Akriti is going to talk more about that. And commitment, well, we were the ones who kind of pulled the plug on the first version of the Quad. So I don't know that we should be the ones asking. But if we can't agree on the same level of commitment to the Quad from all of its members, then maybe Australia is better off sticking with the existing forums for disaster relief.

So to wrap that up, I think for suggestions the first one is that on a strategic level, the Quad clarifies what it's actually going to do and how it sits in position to China.

Second, that Australia can go about building up the Quad relations, particularly with India. And third, that Australia can see what it is capable of doing in terms of taking a leadership role in HA/DR between these four countries.

Overall, the Quad started with the Tsunami Core Group. So it started with HA/DR. But that was over ten years ago now. So Australia I think needs to consider whether it is now the appropriate use of the Quad and whether there are significant benefits both in the strategic and the operational side from using it to pursue disaster relief in the region. Thank you.

Tatsumi: Thank you, Kate. Akriti, you're up.

Akriti Vasudeva: Well, good afternoon to everyone present here and those watching on the livestream. Before I begin I wanted to thank Yuki for the opportunity to be part of this publication, to be on this panel, and to Pam for all her support throughout this process. I also want to congratulate my fellow contributors. I enjoyed reading each one of your chapters and I think it offers a unique perspective on this issue.

I'm interested in the security dynamics of the Indo-Pacific and India's role in it. And so as Yuki has already laid out, in this volume we were asked to assess the potential for cooperation on disaster relief in a Quad setting. And I was asked to consider the opportunities and challenges from the Indian perspective. And I argue that for India, engaging with the members of the Quad

on disaster relief has the potential to strengthen its capabilities as a net security provider and bolster its experience with expeditionary operations outside its home borders, especially looking at the fact that this is important, should be important to India from the concerns that it has about maritime competition with China. And although challenges exist, such as a potential negative reaction from Beijing and resource constraints, I believe there may be space to moderate them and explore such cooperation to secure Indian interests.

So talking first about what are the motivations behind India's disaster relief policies whether domestic or international and what are its notable contributions in the last decade or so, India is among the most vulnerable to natural disasters because of its geoclimatic conditions. And so due to this vulnerability, it has had to develop capabilities to deal with such challenges, whether it's domestically or regionally. And though most of India's disaster relief activities are focused on dealing with events at home, the imperative to be a good neighbor and especially as its growth outpaces that of the region, and a recognition of its role as a regional and global actor, it has actually led New Delhi to contribute to disaster relief efforts outside of its borders.

So if you just look at the two biggest examples of such operations, the first is of course India's role as part of the multilateral effort in the Indian Ocean tsunami response and stabilization of the countries of Sri Lanka, Indonesia, and the Maldives. And of course as Kate also mentioned, Nepal. But that was actually India's largest disaster assistance abroad ever. And it helped in sort of responding to assuring recovery after the 2015 earthquake and rescued over five thousand people and provided a lot of relief and medical supplies. It has also done such operations in Myanmar, in Bangladesh, and other countries around the region. But I won't go into too much detail because I want to cover other aspects of my argument.

So what might India gain from Quad cooperation on disaster relief? I think it has three benefits. So the first is it will help India boost its net security provider credentials. Now with China making inroads into South Asia and New Delhi and Beijing sort of in this battle to maintain influence in the region, especially in the smaller states, the Indian Navy is seeking to play a benign role in the region. They want to play up that aspect and they want to project sort of soft power in this way. And so cooperating with the Quad on disaster relief is actually a great way for India to be a provider of public goods in the region. It also actually will help a little bit with its image in its neighborhood.

India is generally considered the big brother because its economic growth outpaces the other countries in the region. It is sometimes known to influence the neighbors' domestic politics. And so doing cooperation on disaster relief in a Quad setting actually helps India build goodwill by showing it is not in it just for reputational benefits or using this kind of cooperation as leverage but truly to build shared security in the region.

The second benefit I think that India could see in developing this kind of cooperation is an opportunity to test out the utility of the Quad. So as many of you already know, India has had some reservations about the Quad as a hard security mechanism. It doesn't want to attach a political-military value to the Quad, especially because of concerns about antagonizing China, especially because India has an active border dispute with China and doesn't want to do anything that will ruffle its feathers too much.

But I believe that making disaster relief as the focus of the Quad which has more benign connotations and I mentioned earlier as a cooperative tool for shared security in the region, I believe it can actually help soften the image of the Quad and could be a useful way for India to test the utility of this grouping beyond just a consultative mechanism and gauge the reaction of the stakeholders in the region whether it's ASEAN or China.

And the third benefit, I believe, from the Indian perspective is burden sharing and transfer of knowledge. Because of the Indian Navy and the other partners in the country that have to frequent disasters and really severe disasters all of the time such as floods and cyclones, and also because of resource constraints that the Indian Navy faces, it might actually be worth developing such cooperation with the Quad countries because you can have burden sharing in the form of common use of disaster equipment and supplies, and potentially even sharing technology.

So those are I think the potential benefits for India to develop such cooperation in a Quad setting. But there are considerations for India that may be challenges as it goes forward to think about this. And I believe the very first challenge and most important challenge which Kate has already mentioned is China. But I think it's a lot to do also with the fears of playing into the Chinese narrative. So what is known mostly about the Quad at the moment is that it's sort of a talk shop. It's about exchanging ideas. It hasn't actually been ... The countries haven't laid out a clear action item. And so China hasn't had anything that it can really oppose because nothing has been done as part of that framework yet.

So if you have cooperation on disaster relief, it can make the Quad a tangible initiative that China can then view as a confirmation of its worst fears and act out. So that's something that India needs to consider and it needs to sort of weigh the benefits of doing this versus the risks or the costs of doing this.

The second is the complexity of Quad cooperation. So India has already developed habits of bilateral cooperation particularly with the United States and Japan, whether it's in the form of doing exercises, whether it's sharing best practices in disaster management. India and the U.S. have also done scenarios in their military exercises which are focused on HA/DR. And there has been some interaction I think with Australia in sort of the AUSINDEX exercises and some under the Indian Ocean Rim, the IORA. And there has been some conversation on disaster management. But doing it in a Quad setting just adds a layer of complexity that India would just want to avoid because why do it in a Quadrilateral setting if can do it in a bilateral or trilateral setting?

And the third is strategic sensitivities of working with foreign powers as India sees it. And what this comes from is that even though India does have a strategic vision for the Indo-Pacific which overlaps with those of these other countries, because of its colonial past, it does have some sensitivities of working with the U.S. and Australia. And so there is a sort of distrust of foreign powers, especially in its sphere of influence. And also actually the point that Kate was mentioning, India specifically believes in only helping in disaster relief when there is expressed request from the home country, and believes in territorial serenity and would not participate if something like that doesn't happen. So that's definitely a challenge, especially if India has to do

something with the United States, which doesn't necessarily believe in that.

So it's understandable for India to be deterred from pursuing the Quad I believe. But I think there is actually real value in pursuing this cooperation in small measure. And sort of doing it as a building block to something that could be bigger. And the reason is because I think there are two types of value in it for India. The first is the symbolic, rhetorical value of it. So, the very existence of the Quad is a deterrent to China. The fact that four democracies with the economic and military power that they have and those that believe in a rules-based order are joining together to protect that vision and the fact that it has China worried, I think that is reason enough to go ahead with that cooperation because it's a powerful incentive to be a member of the grouping. And I believe that no matter how much complexity that adds, it is in India's interest to at least pursue this cooperation and see where it goes.

And the second is it does have a practical and material value as I've already laid out because this cooperation can help India in developing the tools, equipment, data, and experience that's required to bolster its leadership in disaster relief within its region and also expand it beyond its traditional area of responsibility.

So my suggestion is of course that India should take certain actions. But it should also have a way out if it wanted to dial down this cooperation. So what I suggest is ... My first suggestion ... I'm smiling because Kate has already mentioned the issues between India and Australia. But I believe Australia has requested to join India, Japan, and the United States trilateral naval exercise called Malabar thrice in the past when India has said no. I believe that India should invite Australia to join its trilateral naval exercise even if it is as a one-off.

I think it's worth doing this to demonstrate to Beijing that Quad cooperation can be dialed up if China becomes more aggressive in the region. And I believe to soften that threat, the focus could be on disaster relief because then it could be sort of billed as the Quad countries preparing for an eventuality in which they have to respond to a calamity in the region. And if it doesn't go well, it's sort of just an experiment. India could dial it back down if there is an adverse reaction from China.

And the second is I think to avoid Chinese ire but strengthen capabilities to working together, the Quad can actually start small by putting, like I was saying earlier, the building blocks in place for an interoperable environment by building complimentary capabilities. And I think this can be done through data and information sharing such as preparing of a common base for assessment of disasters in the Indo-Pacific. And also developing disaster management technology jointly that all four could use whether in their home settings or in an international setting. So I'll end there and I will look forward to your questions.

Tatsumi: Great. Thank you, Akriti. Dr. Jibiki, it's your turn.

Yasuhito Jibiki: Good afternoon everyone. My name is Yasuhito Jibiki. As a Japanese, I would like to thank you for today's opportunity because today is March 11th, and we Japanese experienced the huge tsunami and nuclear powerplant accidents. So for me, at least for me, today's event is very significant in order to keep remembering that event. Thank you very much.

And today for me, I would like to introduce the Japanese perspective to you. In order to explain my chapter, I think 10 minutes is not enough so I would like to focus on three points.

The first point is money, budget issues. When we think about Australia, Japan, and the United States, and if we add India, we think that the Quad could be a very big donor in that field of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief field in terms of international community level. So I guess that this point is very important to think about the importance of the Quad.

Number two, I'm thinking about a Japanese uniqueness to think about the meaning of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. Usually when we think about humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, we think about emergency phase. However, in the Japanese government context, we, the Japanese government also includes the phase of recovery and reconstruction. And also preparedness. I don't know if you know Sendai Framework of disaster risk reduction. This is an international, United Nations document adopted by the member states in 2015. The Japanese government emphasized the importance of disaster risk reduction, not only for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. I am quite doubtful if the Quad can share that Japanese government understanding or perspective. But the Japanese government wants to say that disaster risk reduction must be considered.

And the last one is something about donor coordination issues. At least as far as I observed, military coordination has been better rather than civilian coordination. What I would like to say is that we would, the military services of the Quad have been doing many exercises, drills, simulations, and also visiting, exchange visiting. And we have already listened to some examples including the Philippines typhoon in 2013. The Quad implemented ... Maybe India was somehow different. But the United States, Australia, and Japan implemented together in order to give the real implementation. However, when we think about the coordination among civilian organizations just like USAID, JICA, Japan International Cooperation Agency, and [AusAID], and the Embassy of India, it is very difficult to observe how they coordinate with each other.

When we read this book, the core concept initially started in the case of Indian Ocean tsunami 2004. I agree with that view. However, I would like ... I don't if you know, but I would like to introduce one example. In the response phase in the Indian Ocean tsunami, I think that the collaboration work between Quad was very good. Now after that, after emergency phase we needed to think about recovery and reconstruction. At the time the Japanese government suggested some ideas to the government of Indonesia. And also the United States of America also suggested a different idea to the government of Indonesia. And then, USAID and JICA tried to reach the consensus.

However, it was very difficult at the time for these two agencies. And then actually the government of Indonesia adopted the USAID idea and JICA did not touch somehow. Of course the Japanese government donated some facilities to the government of Indonesia, however, these two agencies showed different perspectives at the time. So if we think about that reconstruction and early recovery phase, would be included in that humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, I think that it is somehow difficult to share that same understanding even though when among the Quad countries. That's all for me. Thank you very much.

Tatsumi: Thank you, Dr. Jibiki. So this issue about coordination, not only within military elements and civilian elements in one country but then across the Quad is I think one of the interesting points that I think we might want to further pursue once the opportunity for future research comes up. Last but not least, Pam?

Pam Kennedy: Okay, thanks Yuki for spearheading this project and for offering me the opportunity to write one of the briefs. And thank you also to my fellow contributors. We all worked hard over months when think pieces keep coming out: “is the Quad dead or comatose or just sleeping?” So it’s great that we’ve reached this point.

The short version of my talk is that it is in the U.S. interest to pursue HA/DR cooperation through the Quad. But this may not necessarily be the right time. And also, if the right time does come, it may not be best to have a standalone Quad structure but to embed the Quad in a preexisting mechanism. So I’ll go through that a little bit.

Disaster assistance has been a core component of U.S. national security strategy for the past 15 years or so, since the major disasters like the Indian Ocean earthquake in 2004, Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the Pakistan earthquake also in 2005. So it is discussed as a national security issue and as part of the U.S.’s military strategy in key documents. But operationally, HA/DR is directed by the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance which sit in USAID in the State Department.

The interesting balance in the U.S.’s response to foreign disasters is that while OFDA is coordinating the effort at the top of a whole-of-government approach, we often do see, like Yuki mentioned, the military arrives first because the U.S. has a global network of military bases and resource stockpiles, personnel based around the globe. And when there are lives at stake, often the military is the body that is able to be there fastest. Though the U.S. does try to follow the OFDA guidelines as closely as possible by placing civilians in control of the process, it can look like a military effort like Operation Tomodachi is what we hear about most often in regards to the U.S.’s contributions after the Tōhoku earthquake when in reality it’s actually a civilian-controlled process.

A second point of complication about U.S. HA/DR is the funding. While the U.S. does not shy away from funding HA/DR at all, such as when disaster response exceeds the budgeted amounts, Congress generally does pass supplemental funding, bipartisan support. But the budget allocated for HA/DR funding in USAID which holds the bulk of this funding at about nine billion dollars for this fiscal year, it does appear to be underestimated in recent years necessitating supplemental funding.

So the fact that Congress is willing to pass additional funding as needed doesn’t change the fact that it seems that the U.S. is either underestimating the amount that disaster response will actually require or there is some hesitance to acknowledge that disasters are becoming more expensive.

Another problematic point, though the funding does exist, is that the current White House is also trying to reduce American contributions to HA/DR. So the budget request for both fiscal year

2019 and 2018 said that the U.S. government would, "Urge other donors to increase funding for humanitarian assistance and lessen the burden on the United States to respond." I think this is very misleading. The implication that the U.S. is overburdened in terms of HA/DR compared to other countries is just not correct. While the U.S. spends the most in terms of dollars, that's just because the GDP is very large. The U.S. only spends about 0.2% of its GDP on HA/DR which is well below the UN's recommended 0.7%. And without sufficient funding for these activities, the U.S.'s image abroad and its national security could be damaged because HA/DR is one way that we preserve global stability. That's why it is part of our military strategy.

So regarding the Quad, the U.S. has continued to support these consultations since 2017, which I think is an encouraging sign. The question now is how to avoid antagonizing China. I'll mention the elephant in the room for a third or fourth time. China did react negatively to the original Quad meetings, to the second round of the Quad meetings, and at this time it's difficult for the U.S. to say whether it's time to push China further by formalizing the Quad in some way at a time when U.S.-China relations are already on tenterhooks with the trade war, with the Huawei investigations, and possibly with whatever happens next with North Korea.

The U.S. I don't think can move forward with the Quad as a security formulation. That may or may not work to contain China's influence without making relations with China even worse. So the U.S. does need to consider its appetite for further freezing relations with China.

But having said that, I don't think the U.S. should let China's accusations of encirclement drive its decisions on the Quad. So that's why I think that the HA/DR focus is actually a really good idea for the Quad to consider. The HA/DR in the Quad would provide a forum for the members to work on cooperation and also provide a public good for the broader region at a time when more people in the Asia Pacific and the Indo-Pacific live in areas that are more prone to disasters. There are more people living on the coasts. The cities in Southeast Asia are growing. So Quad cooperation would be an opportunity for the U.S. to build trust with its partners through a strong commitment and a significant investment in both exercises and then regular implementation because while we know that the Quad is a security mechanism might have some purpose in the future, what is that purpose? It's really nebulous. But if the Quad is focused on HA/DR every single year there are ways for the Quad to leap into action. It may not be the Indian Ocean earthquake magnitude, but there are little disasters that happen every day.

On the other hand, were the U.S. to opt out of cooperation I think that would damage its relationship with the other three countries as well as its appearance of leadership in the international community. And that's where the 2004 earthquake and tsunami provide another example. Though that was a long time ago, the newspaper coverage at the time was very clear that when the Bush administration failed to respond immediately and forcefully after the earthquake, there was international censure.

The reason for the delay was that the administration just wasn't aware of how terrible the disaster was. What magnitude the earthquake was. But the sort of weak response at the beginning wasn't negated by the following one billion dollar government response later. It's important for U.S. leadership to be prompt and to be decisive. So I think that the U.S. needs to take a leadership role in at least thinking about whether the Quad could be an HA/DR forum.

Back to my point about whether the best format for a hypothetical HA/DR Quad is standalone or embedded in some other mechanism, I think that if the Quad were to stand alone it would be interpreted by China as a threat of some sort. At least until they could demonstrate that it literally was just responding to disasters. I think that there are other mechanisms as we've mentioned that already very capably address disasters in the Indo-Pacific region. And I think the Quad should look for opportunities to support those existing mechanisms, make capabilities, funding, personnel, and expertise available to them in order to boost their capabilities. There is no point in reinventing the wheel or providing competing organizations.

I think a good example could be the ASEAN Coordinating Center for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management, which is shrunk down to the very short AHA Center. This is an ASEAN-run organization that focuses on disasters in Southeast Asia. And it's very well integrated. It has a lot of tools that the U.S. has helped the AHA Center to build in the past. In addition, Australia, Japan, and India have all worked with the AHA Center as well. So we have these preexisting relationships that we could leverage by pulling in the Quad as a sort of menu of options, more opportunities for all four countries to work with the nations that are actually hit by disasters. I think this has the benefit of maintaining ASEAN centrality as well. And because ASEAN does not like the idea of a Quad antagonizing China because of the Belt and Road Initiative projects that occur throughout Southeast Asia, I think this would be a way to make the Quad actually useful instead of just wrangling the region by coming in and sort of bulldozing over everyone else's opinions.

So I'll be brief with my policy recommendations. First, I think that the U.S. should increase its own budget for humanitarian assistance rather than passing multiple supplemental funding bills every year. We need to be comfortable with the idea that disasters are extremely expensive now, both domestically and abroad. And we need to signal to our partners that we understand what it costs to respond to a disaster.

Second, the U.S. should convene a Quad dialog to explore whether the Quad as a standalone format or as an embedded mechanism would be a good idea. So this would involve bringing in each Quad nation's lead agencies for disaster response, government representatives, and experts to join the dialogue.

And third, I think that the U.S. should discuss the desirability and the feasibility of Quad cooperation with these existing multilateral mechanisms like the AHA Center. While I think it's a great idea, we do need to first find out whether these organizations are even interested, whether this is a possibility that would help them or hinder them in achieving their mission. So I think that would at least be a starting point. Thank you so much.

Tatsumi: Great. Thank you, Pam. Actually before I'm opening up to the floor, let me ask one question kind of based on what Jibiki-san said. It's about how Japan may be defining the concept of humanitarian disaster relief a little bit broader than the other three countries to include, that includes actually risk reduction and risk management. And I wonder to each three of you, so Kate, Akriti, and Pam, based on your research for this project, how do you think each government might respond to a little bit broader definition of the disaster relief and basically

perhaps thinking about incorporating in those areas too in terms of risk mitigation and risk management? Whoever would like to go first. I mean, I don't have to do it by country order.

Kennedy: I'm happy to start with that. I think that the U.S. would be in support of that since OFDA already does work from risk reduction, risk mitigation, prevention, community resilience. Those are all core parts of U.S. HA/DR. So I think there would be support there. And the trick is then, how can the Quad also help to prevent disasters or improve resilience instead of simply kicking into action after a disaster has occurred?

Tatsumi: Akriti or Kate, whoever would like to go first.

Vasudeva: Thank you for the question, Yuki. So I think as part of the federal agency in India that deals with disaster management, the Disaster Management Authority, it does have within its purview sort of a broader definition. So it does include prevention and mitigation. But I think at the moment, India's focus is mostly on the emergency response and may not have the personnel or the resources necessarily to talk in depth about these things. So it does, India and Japan actually do have a memorandum of understanding to exchange best practices on some of these issues on prevention, mitigation. But how that develops into action they can take, I'm not sure if right now would be the time for that based on my understanding of it.

Tatsumi: Thanks.

Stevenson: I think I would take a very similar to Akriti on that. I think the Australian government would in principle support initiatives that promote prevention and also recovery. However, if you expand the scope of this Quad it gets harder to manage. It would be easier to coordinate cooperation between the four countries if you kept the scope at the emergency response phase. Once you go into ODA type, recovery activities which Jibiki-san mentioned in reference to 2004 in Japanese and American proposals for post-tsunami recovery, you have different programs and different interests and different initiatives to consider. And it might be too complicated in the long term.

Tatsumi: Thanks all. So with that, I think I'll open up the floor. Leo, good to see you!

Leo Bosner: Thank you, Tatsumi-san. Thanks to everybody. Leo Bosner retired FEMA specialist currently disaster research lecturer in Taiwan. Two questions I am speaking of quickly. One is about Taiwan. I know we don't want to annoy the Chinese. But is there some way that currently or in the future, officially or unofficially, bring Taiwan into this. It's centrally located right in the middle of most of these countries. And they do have a strong capability and a will to be involved in this. That's question one.

Question two is all of our countries here have domestic disaster management [inaudible]. FEMA in the U.S., other agencies up here. Now there's HA/DR internationally. But I really haven't seen that much sharing back and forth of the experience, the expertise, lessons, etc. learned between these two spheres, and I'm wondering if that could be something that everybody could benefit from just from sharing some of their experiences and information?

Tatsumi: So that's for everyone, right? Not ... Everyone. Okay. Who would like to tackle that one first and then everybody else, feel free to pile on.

Stevenson: Hi Leo. Your first question on Taiwan. I mentioned that there was a study by ASPI in Australia which looked at ASEAN states and their position on the Quad. One of the comments on that was that there hadn't been enough research, enough feeling out of Taiwan and other actors who might be interested. So it would be something that the Quad itself would probably have to pursue.

And your second question on sharing of capability and knowledge between domestic agencies. Australia, actually, it has a very highly ranked search and rescue team, based one in Sydney and one in Brisbane. And every year they hold training exercises and invite representatives of teams from other countries. I know people from JICA in Japan have been to that before and the guy I talked to from JICA said they also had representatives from the U.S., from Britain, from Canada as well. So it might not be very public and very well advertised, but I do think there is a kind of network going for sharing information and capabilities.

Tatsumi: Anyone else would like to add?

Kennedy: I will comment that I think bringing in Taiwan is an interesting idea that should be considered. We have to think if we are going to have an HA/DR Quad, is it only these four countries? Then it's Quad for Quad sake. But if the goal is effective disaster relief, then the more the merrier. Especially countries that have experience and capabilities that we could leverage. It would depend very much on the political situation. So there would also have to be a right time for that.

On the other hand, that would be very beneficial for Taiwan to have another way to participate in the international community, particularly in its own neighborhood.

On the second question, I do know that FEMA does occasionally assist, I think, with international disaster relief or at least beyond the lower 48 states. It's very limited though-

Bosner: My experience is basically provide the search and rescue teams [inaudible] requests, but it's looking back and picking up FEMA because I was there for a while is there's not ... FEMA is out there building all kinds of guidebooks and training modules and things like this. I haven't seen much connection of those to like OFDA or even these other international groups that might be useful.

Kennedy: Right.

Bosner: And vice versa.

Kennedy: I agree particularly on the civil-military cooperation. I know that since Hurricane Katrina, FEMA has done so much work on trying to integrate the U.S. military's response to domestic disasters, which the U.S. has ample experience with. So I think there is a lot of potential in that area.

Tatsumi: Either of you or ... Jibiki-san, do you want to add? Yeah.

Jibiki: Your questions were very difficult for me to answer. But I am worried my answer sounds a little bit negative. When we think about Taiwan, I think that it is very difficult to include Taiwan right now. If we focus on the emergency phase in terms of Quad cooperation, we need to think about governmental relationships. Many authors said we needed to think about the formal requests by the affected government. Without such formal requests, the government cannot do anything.

When we think about Taiwan, they don't have diplomatic relationships with many countries. So it is of course I agree that Taiwan has a very unique geological situation in the Pacific Ocean. So it is useful. It is no doubt. However, practically speaking, it is very I think, it is not feasible to invite Taiwan right now.

And for the question two, the lessons learned between domestic disaster management agencies? I am keeping one – how do I say – opinion ... In United States of America, in Australia, maybe India are using a concept of an incident command system. It's very simple. We can identify some specific sectors and one incident commander. This is a kind of idea, and these three countries are sharing that common understanding. But in Japan, we don't use it. Many Japanese researchers strongly recommend that incident command system, the idea of incident command system, is very useful to the government of Japan. However, in the government of Japan, they have very systematized vertical lines. And municipalities use that similar structure.

So your question is that they are not able to easily find why they needed to use such incident command system. So that's why I think it is not easy for municipalities in Japan to do some exchange or lessons learned. This is my answers. Thank you very much.

Tatsumi: Okay. Anyone like to-

Woman: Yes, I have two questions. The first one is about the [inaudible] I think the same point that you mentioned about Quad coordination. How would you define good coordination?

A second one is do you think the U.S. is ... The White House is willing to reduce the U.S. budget HA/DR. But you're saying at the same time that actually the U.S. is overspending it. And so if the U.S. wants to reduce it, it will be a bad image that the US was pulling out from these assistance measures. But also you said in your recommendation that the U.S. needs to increase its budget. I'm not sure whether I got you correct or not, so could you clarify that budget issue? Also if you think the U.S. is overpaying it, then what other areas should the U.S. budget be used for?

Kennedy: I can provide immediate clarification on that. So the U.S. is spending above the budgeted amounts for HA/DR most years, I believe. And so Congress passes supplemental spending. So it's not that the U.S. is spending too much on HA/DR. It's just that we seem to be underbudgeting for the amounts. And then my point on the White House's recent budget requests significantly lowered the amount of funding, and then Congress simply bumped it back up to

about nine billion dollars. I think the White House proposed about six billion dollars. So that is simply an image problem. We're going to spend the necessary amount to respond to disasters anyway. And it's just a signal to allies, to partners, from a financial standpoint, from a fiscal standpoint, how much we prioritize HA/DR, in my opinion. Thank you.

Tatsumi: So for her other question about how do you all define or how do you think each country's government might define good coordination?

Woman: Or it could be like what do you think is bad coordination.

Tatsumi: Exactly. Either way.

Vasudeva: This is not necessarily the Indian government view because I'm not sure. But I believe that good coordination has to be based on you looking at the same data. And that's why I had the recommendation for having the same base for assessment of disasters. So I think that we need to develop technological solutions to make communication more streamlined through digital technologies or apps that you can use where real-time information is coming in and you're sort of interpreting the data the same way. I believe that would be good cooperation and communicating about it effectively, which is why I'm saying— I think that could also have applications in other ways. Once these countries work together on things like this, sort of building blocks of cooperation, you can extend that into many other things.

Stevenson: I would agree with Akriti on that and link that to an overall picture that assistance, good coordination for assistance is smooth and effective, fast response which actually responds to needs and again, doesn't double up. And for the emergency phase, effective assistance is getting out as fast as you got in. Not staying any longer than you have to be there. For the Quad, in particular, effective assistance would be that plus some value add over existing bilateral and multilateral frameworks.

Tatsumi: Dr. Jibiki, do you have any-

Jibiki: When we think about the definition of good coordination we have many, many, many, many definitions and I think that many countries have not yet reached its consensus. However, I can introduce some bad examples of the good coordination. The coordination itself take a long time. So if we focus on life-saving activities soon after a disaster happens, coordination does not work after a disaster happens. It means that good coordination must be organized prior to disasters. So that's why the government of Japan emphasizes the importance of preparedness. This is my answer. Thank you very much.

Tatsumi: Thank you.

Polly Nayak: Hi. I'm Polly Nayak. I have an affiliation with Stimson. I wondered how much thought has been given in regard to coordination to what sorts of information would we need to go out pretty automatically to countries in the region, of course China comes to mind, that might misconstrue sudden activity particularly by military early arrivals for the rescue. I'm sure that that's been discussed. The possibility of misunderstanding is certainly one of the risks. And so

that's my first question.

My second question is I wondered whether besides the difficulties, the uniqueness of the Japanese stovepipe vertical organization, I wonder if there are other bureaucratic misalignments in the way each of these countries structures its international rescue and disaster assistance that need to be ironed out in advance of the next disaster.

Tatsumi: So your first question is for everyone?

Nayak: Yes.

Tatsumi: And the second question is everybody except Japan?

Nayak: That's right.

Tatsumi: Okay. All right. For the first one, Akriti, do you want to go first?

Vasudeva: I just want to clarify your first question, Polly. So you're saying the possibility of misunderstanding information? Or-

Nayak: Let me go back to an example. When piracy was a huge issue in the Malacca Straits, the waters were being heavily patrolled by a number of different navies. I know there was some ... I was in government at the time. And I know there were miscommunications. And they had to be ironed out so that people didn't assume that the navy was there or a ship was there for some hostile purpose.

Vasudeva: Oh, okay. Got it.

Nayak: Or surveillance or whatever.

Tatsumi: So basically what ... okay-

Nayak: That actually promoted communication among otherwise not very friendly services. So I'm raising this in a broader sense that if response to disasters has to be done at a time when communication may be more difficult. What are some of the mechanisms and the advance communications with non-Quad countries. Let's assume this thing gels as a Quad with some kind of relationship with ASEAN etc. But what sorts of thought have already been giving or need to be given to communicate to other powers in the areas to- they are not- they don't go on military alert inappropriately.

Stevenson: So when military deploys to another country on disaster response, whether that's an aircraft or maritime vessel, what they have to do, for example if it's a disaster that is happening in the Philippines and they're leaving from Australia. The deploying country has to actually contact the country of ... If it's going through territorial waters or airspace it has to contact each country and inform them and also get their permission to pass through those waters or that airspace. So apparently there has been discussion at least amongst the ASEAN countries about

setting in a mechanism and agreement on allowing fast access for military aircraft in particular that are responding to disasters.

While in principle everyone is happy to let other countries go through on relief missions, sometimes the response isn't as fast as is desired. I think when the Malaysian Airlines plane disappeared off the western coast of Australia, it took Japan a very long time to get permission from Indonesia to fly through. And there was some frustration about that. But yes, there has been discussion about a communication mechanism.

Your second question, let's see. Bureaucratic alignments and misalignments in relief systems. So in Australia and I think surprisingly it's similar in places to Japan's system. So the medical teams are actually managed by the state health ministries. And when there is a major disaster, say for example in the case of the 2011 earthquake and tsunami, an emergency response crisis group is set up inside the Australian Cabinet, and they get people from all the relevant organizations including the military, including the health ministries, including the fire departments because they overlook the search and rescue teams. They have everyone in the same room. Over the course of that emergency they have regular meetings to decide on the approach.

So I think from my understanding, Australia has a relatively streamlined system for responding to these disasters. I don't know if there is anything to add from the U.S. or Indian side.

Vasudeva: Polly, on your first point, that's really interesting and fascinating and I will think more about it. I haven't at this point. On your second question, I think one issue from the Indian side would be that in terms of bureaucratic misalignments, the issue is that in terms of capability, it's the Indian military that is the most equipped to deal with emergency response in India. You do have the National Disaster [Response] Force, but it comes down to mostly the Indian military that actually carries out the emergency response operations, and that is not necessarily the case on the U.S. side or the Japanese side where they have civilian agencies involved that are actually implementing those operations. So there might be some rubbing up with that and some concerns about working directly with militaries even though ... And you would have to see if the home country where this is happening would be okay with that or not.

Tatsumi: Pam?

Kennedy: On the first point, I think that these examples of communication potentially going awry or being difficult, that's why it will be important to formalize a Quad mechanism somehow if this is the way forward. If we don't want to continue just with bilateral agreements between a host nation and a nation offering some aid. And exercises as well. But I also think it will be critical to let partners and other nations in the region know when something has happened, even if it's a more minor disaster that hasn't made international headlines to be able to adjust for political sensitivities.

On the second point, the U.S. does have a very complex system for responding to disasters which I won't go into here. I read so many papers about it. It has been streamlined a lot in recent years though. So while it is a massive inter-agency effort and OFDA's like a radio tower working with so many organizations and training all year long as well to respond, it has gotten better.

I did find examples in the past where U.S. missions abroad would contact the wrong person. But the disaster relief still occurred. And procedures are being made clearer for American officials abroad so that people know where to go to. That has been a problem in the past.

Jibiki: I'd like to respond to your first question. Yes, as Kate-san explained, ASEAN countries are preparing their own procedures to accommodate military organizations. However, I needed to tell that protocol is only given to the ASEAN countries. They have, at least in my understanding, such priority existing. And when we think about international community we have an agency in the United Nations. That name of the agency is very long. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

As you may know, they have a mechanism. The name of the mechanism is OSOCC, Onsite ... Do you know? The accurate name, this is Onsite Coordination something. And ideally speaking, the United Nations establishes such onsite information sharing mechanism. And that Center will provide information to anyone including the military service. Thank you very much.

Tatsumi: Well, this is pretty miraculous, but we are right at 1:30. If you would like to sideline with each of these authors, I'm sure they can hang out a little bit and speak with you. This was actually a new area for me to tackle so I actually learned a lot from their papers as well. And it's exciting to see all these emerging researchers tackling a new issue. So if you can join me thanking them for their effort and thank you again for coming.

END