

# **Complex Interdependence in the Post-Pandemic Era:**

## **A Case Study of QUAD**

Theдини Herath<sup>1</sup>

### **Abstract**

The coronavirus underscores global interconnectedness, with its impact and efforts to combat it highlighting interdependency and the need for international cooperation. Given the context, the post-pandemic era is an ideal setting to assess the relevance of complex interdependence theory put forward by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye in their 1977 book “Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition.” The theory describes a world where states and actors exhibit interdependence through diverse channels, underscoring various facets of interconnectedness beyond mere military might. Complex Interdependence in international politics is characterized by three key features: Multiple channels linking nations, absence of a distinct issue hierarchy, and reduced military emphasis with economic and ecological focus. This paper aims to test the applicability of the afore-mentioned principles of the complex interdependence in the post-pandemic era with regards to QUAD: The Quadrilateral Security Dialogue comprising four Indo-Pacific nations: The United States, Japan, India, and Australia. The significance of this study lies in its assessment of the relevance of a 1970s theory in today's world. This study is a qualitative case study that relies on secondary sources, including scholarly journal articles, QUAD summit reports and joint statements. The QUAD, exemplifying the principle of multiple channels through its diverse interaction channels, has expanded its agenda to encompass non-military issues such as health, technology, infrastructure, and climate change in the post-pandemic era. The pandemic and immediate measures taken by the QUAD show that security threats are not always military and that military security does not always dominate the agenda in this complex interdependent world. In the post-pandemic era, the QUAD emphasizes economic recovery through member cooperation while addressing China's assertiveness with ministerial-level working groups. This study, drawing from diverse secondary sources, highlights the enduring relevance of the 1977 principles of complex interdependence in explaining contemporary global dynamics.

**Keywords:** *Complex Interdependence, Covid-19, International Cooperation, Post-pandemic Era, QUAD*

---

<sup>1</sup> BA Honours in International Studies, University of Kelaniya  
hthedini@gmail.com