



## Webinar On

### ***QUADRO: Reimagining Collective Leadership in a Fragmented World Order*** **10<sup>th</sup> February, Tuesday, 06:00 PM IST**

#### **1. Background**

- 1.1. The contemporary international system is confronted with a deepening crisis of leadership and coordination. The erosion of multilateral norms, growing strategic mistrust among major powers, and the weakening capacity of global institutions to deliver public goods have together created conditions akin to what Charles Kindleberger described as a systemic “leadership vacuum”. Neither the established power nor the emerging challenger appears willing or able to provide sustained stewardship of global economic stability, climate action, and security.
- 1.2. Against this backdrop, the concept of QUADRO structured cooperation among the United States, China, India and Russia has emerged as a framework to examine whether a minimal but functional form of collective leadership among the four most consequential powers could arrest the current drift in global governance and restore predictability to international affairs.
- 1.3. The present moment is defined less by inevitable great-power conflict than by a deficit of responsibility. The rules-based trading system is under strain from uncertainty and unilateralism; climate governance remains hostage to weak commitments and persistent North–South mistrust; and security competition is intensifying across multiple theatres, from Eastern Europe to the Indo-Pacific. Emerging technologies, energy transitions and pandemic risks further complicate this landscape, demanding coordination that existing institutions have been unable to deliver.
- 1.4. At the same time, no credible alternative leadership configuration currently exists. The G7 lacks representativeness and climate credibility without China. BRICS excludes the United States, the anchor of global finance and maritime security. Minilateral groupings are issue-specific and regionally bounded. In material terms, only the United States, China, India and Russia together command the economic weight, technological capacity, emissions profile, demographic scale and strategic reach necessary to influence global outcomes in a decisive manner.



1.5.Recent debates in Washington further underscore the growing relevance of this line of thinking. Media reports indicate that policy circles close to former President Donald Trump are informally exploring the idea of a “Core-5” grouping that would bring together the United States, China, India and Russia, with the inclusion of Japan at a later stage. This is particularly notable given Trump’s remarks only months ago that the United States had “lost” India and Russia to China. Although no official initiative has been announced, a former White House official has acknowledged discussions on the inadequacy of existing platforms such as the G-groupings and the UN Security Council for managing contemporary power realities. The conceptual convergence between QUADRO and the proposed Core-5 highlights a broader recognition, across strategic communities, that structured engagement among systemically indispensable powers may be unavoidable in addressing global instability.

1.6.QUADRO is therefore not proposed as a hegemonic directorate, ideological alliance or substitute for multilateral institutions, but as a functional mechanism for minimum viable **cooperation** among systemically indispensable actors. The emphasis is on pragmatic, incremental collaboration in technical domains – such as pandemic preparedness, maritime safety, climate data, space governance and crisis communication – where shared interests exist despite deep political differences. An Indo-Pacific entry point has been identified as a practical testing ground, given the region’s centrality to global trade, manufacturing and security dynamics.

1.7.Against this backdrop, CUTS International, in partnership with the Chintan Research Foundation, is organising a global webinar by convening leading industry representatives, and subject experts, to develop a forward-looking agenda for collective global leadership.

## 2. Rationale for the Webinar

While the idea of QUADRO has gained traction within policy and research circles, its long-term relevance depends on engagement with a wider international audience including voices from the United States, China, Russia, Europe, Southeast Asia and the Global South.

The webinar aims to:

- Test the analytical validity of QUADRO beyond national strategic lenses;



- Examine whether competition among major powers can realistically coexist with institutionalised cooperation;
- Explore differentiated responsibilities for each participant in providing global public goods;
- Assess regional pathways, particularly in the Indo-Pacific, as stepping stones to broader frameworks; and
- Identify political, economic and institutional constraints that could undermine or reshape the concept.

At a time when geopolitical discourse is increasingly polarised between bloc formation and decoupling, the webinar seeks to re-centre attention on **collective risk management** and the costs of inaction: prolonged economic uncertainty, underinvestment, climate-induced displacement, and the possibility of large-scale military confrontation.

### **3. Themes for Discussion**

- The global leadership vacuum and the relevance of the Kindleberger Trap in today's geopolitical economy
- Trade, climate and security as interconnected global public goods under systemic stress
- Why cooperation among the United States, China, India and Russia may be functionally unavoidable
- Managing rivalry: Can institutionalised cooperation coexist with strategic competition?
- Differentiated responsibilities and power-sharing in a multipolar world order
- The Indo-Pacific as a potential entry point for operationalising collective leadership
- Implications for global business confidence, investment flows, demographic transitions and social stability
- Alternatives to QUADRO and the risks of continued fragmentation of global governance

### **4. Expected Outcomes**

The webinar is intended not to produce a negotiated blueprint, but to deepen analytical clarity, surface divergent international perspectives, and refine policy-relevant pathways for structured cooperation among major powers. By widening the discourse beyond national silos, it seeks to sustain momentum towards rethinking leadership in a multipolar world – before systemic drift hardens into irreversible fragmentation.



## 5. Session Flow

<b>Time (IST)</b>	<b>Agenda</b>
1800 – 1810	Welcome and Introduction
1810 -- 1820	Thematic Presentation of the Topic
1820 – 1900	Panelists Opening Remarks
1900 – 1920	Q & A
1920 – 1945	Panelists Closing Remarks