Hosting visits from politicians and officials is one of the key functions of embassies. But some embassies are, of course, busier than others, and the traffic they see depends on the perceived importance of the relationship Australia has with the country in which they are located. During the 1980s and 1990s, the footfall in the high commission in New Delhi was relatively light. Malcolm Fraser’s five-day long sojourn in India in January 1979, during which he was the guest of honour at the Republic Day parade, was followed only by intermittent visits by his successors. Bob Hawke attended a Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in New Delhi and Goa in November 1983, but did not return to the country until 1989. Paul Keating went to Japan four times while in the top job, but never to India. During the whole of the 1990s, indeed, the high commission was spared a prime ministerial visit—it took until July 2000 before John Howard made the journey to New Delhi.

All this changed in the decade that followed. By 2008, diplomatic and political interaction between Australia and India had intensified to the point that no fewer than 39 delegations travelled to New Delhi that year, and 26 in the other direction, on their way to Canberra. That year was not exceptional, as such interactions multiplied during the late 2000s and

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RISING POWER AND CHANGING PEOPLE

2010s. Between 2000 and 2018, there were six visits by Australian prime ministers to India, and many more by foreign and defence ministers, officials and delegations of business leaders and university vice-chancellors. An Indian president and prime minister also travelled to Australia, and the number of visits by Cabinet ministers and high-level diplomats grew too. The work of the high commission in New Delhi intensified as a result, and resourcing expanded, if perhaps not at the same rate as the traffic it had to manage. This was partly caused by Australian ministers, diplomats, businesses and universities seeking out economic opportunities, but also because Canberra took the initiative in trying to strengthen defence and security ties to India, to cope with shifting strategic dynamics across what soon became known as the Indo-Pacific.

Since the mid-2000s, indeed, Australia and India have built a robust and broad security partnership, involving regular high-level dialogues between politicians and officials, inter-agency cooperation, regular joint military exercises, the sharing of intelligence and defence technology, and nascent defence industrial collaboration. Getting these various initiatives started has not been easy, and nor has keeping them running and making them work. But on the whole, more has arguably been achieved in defence and security cooperation between the two countries than in any other area of the bilateral relationship, including trade and investment. Despite high hopes and significant diplomatic effort, the value of two-way trade in goods and services barely increased in the decade or so between the late 2000s to the late 2010s. By contrast, a great deal of progress was made—albeit in fits and starts—in constructing a security partnership.

This chapter explores how and why this occurred. To set the scene and provide a rough gauge by which to measure how far and fast the partnership has developed, the first section looks back to perhaps the lowest point in Australia–India relations, the late 1990s. It explores the role played by the September 11 attacks and their aftermath in driving an initial rapprochement, and then turns to the first attempts to build better defence and security ties in the last years of John Howard’s government. The second section examines the turbulence experienced during Kevin Rudd’s time in office. Under Rudd, the foundations were eventually laid

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for a strategic partnership and a possible free trade agreement. But there were also disagreements, notably about the longstanding ban on the sale of Australian uranium to India and about the Rudd Government’s decision to pull out of the so-called ‘Quad’, which sowed seeds of doubt in New Delhi about Canberra’s reliability as a partner. The third section investigates Australia’s turn to the ‘Indo-Pacific’ under the Julia Gillard and Tony Abbott governments, and its rethinking of India’s regional role. The last section explores the coalescence of the defence and security elements of the strategic partnership after Narendra Modi’s rise to power in May 2014. It argues that what has driven Australia and India together and—paradoxically—what has kept them from cooperating more closely is the same thing: China.

From Pokhran to the Quad 1.0: 1998–2007

On 11 May 1998 India tested three nuclear weapons, and two days later, two more, at the Pokhran range in the Thar desert in the west of Rajasthan. Pakistan soon followed with six tests of its own, on 28 and 30 May. Both countries then declared that they would now develop fully-fledged nuclear deterrents. In so doing, they shook the nuclear nonproliferation regime, of which Australia had become a prominent champion during the 1980s and 1990s. India’s breakout, in particular, deeply upset Canberra. Foreign Minister Alexander Downer called the tests ‘outrageous acts’ that he judged ‘in flagrant defiance of the international community’s strong support for nuclear non-proliferation’. To demonstrate Australia’s displeasure, the high commissioner was recalled for consultations, defence cooperation was broken off and official visits to India were suspended. Three Indian military officers studying at Australian defence colleges were immediately sent home.

3 These tests were labelled Pokhran II, to distinguish them from India’s first test back in 1974. They are also commonly referred to by their codename, ‘Operation Shakti’. The earlier test was codenamed ‘Smiling Buddha’.
New Delhi was not impressed by this reaction, which it saw as disproportionate and disrespectful. It suggested ‘double standards’ were at play, observing that despite its bluster at India, Canberra was apparently happy to turn a blind eye to alleged Chinese violations of the nuclear nonproliferation and missile technology regimes. With lasting damage done on both sides, it took some time for bilateral ties to return to normal.

In March 2000, almost two years on from the tests, Australia eventually took the initiative. Foreign Minister Alexander Downer travelled to India to try to patch up the relationship and to lay the groundwork for John Howard to visit New Delhi. When he did in July that year, he became the first Australian prime minister to go to India since Bob Hawke, 11 years earlier. The trip was more than symbolic, however. In New Delhi, Howard delivered a frank message: Canberra still did not approve of India’s nuclear program, but was no longer ‘going to allow’ differences on that issue ‘to contaminate the whole relationship’. It was time, Howard declared, for a proper ‘strategic dialogue’ between the two, focusing on the Indian Ocean and Asia-Pacific regions, to see if they could find some ‘common ground’ and work together.

It took time—and the shock of the September 11 and Bali attacks, which catalysed the process—for this conversation to develop. In June 2001, India’s External Affairs Minister, Jaswant Singh, travelled to Australia, and with Downer, in Adelaide, held the first annual Foreign Minister’s Framework Dialogue. Together, they gave their approval for the first formal Australia–India Strategic Dialogue. This meeting brought together delegations led by Australia’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) first assistant secretary and India’s Ministry of External Affairs joint secretary, to discuss a broad agenda involving various security and economic issues. Twelve days before al-Qaeda struck in New York, the first

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6 For a discussion, see: Rupakjyoti Borah, ‘Australia–India Relations during the Howard Era’, in Darvesh Gopal (ed.), India–Australia Relations: Convergences and Divergences (Delhi: Shipra, 2008), 177.
of these strategic dialogues took place in New Delhi.\textsuperscript{12} The deployment of Australian troops to Afghanistan soon after, and the heightened threat from terrorism, then put a premium on better intelligence on militant Islamism in Central, South and South-East Asia. This elevated India's importance to Australia, and thus Canberra sought—and in August 2003 concluded—a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with India that would facilitate better interagency cooperation and intelligence sharing between the two, to address that challenge.\textsuperscript{13}

It took another three years before the next element of the security partnership was put in place. In the meantime, India's economy boomed, with GDP growth at or around 8 per cent between 2003 and 2007, and bilateral trade burgeoned too.\textsuperscript{14} As a result, the Howard Government began to perceive India as a significant opportunity for Australian businesses and universities. When the prime minister returned to New Delhi in March 2006, he took with him a large delegation, praised India's 'spectacular' growth, and began to shift towards support for the country's membership of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, which Canberra had hitherto opposed.\textsuperscript{15} More substantively, Howard also signed an MoU on defence cooperation that moved the partnership beyond strategic dialogues and cooperation on counterterrorism. The new deal envisaged more dialogues, to be sure, and more professional exchanges of military officers, but also joint naval exercises and ship visits, as well as collaboration on the acquisition, development and management of military materiel.

The declared intentions of this enhanced defence cooperation were to better comprehend New Delhi's 'strategic outlook' and to 'encourage a positive contribution to global security from India'.\textsuperscript{16} It was clear,
however, that the Howard government was already convinced that India’s outlook was substantially commensurate with Australia’s, and that New Delhi was willing and able to make a positive contribution to regional and global security. Its controversial decision to involve Australia—along with India, Japan and the United States—in the so-called Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QSD or Quad), a little over a year later in May 2007, reflected that view. Essentially a ‘minilateral’ officials’ meeting, the Quad was first proposed by Japanese Prime Minister Abe Shinzo as one element of a broader political and military construct.\(^\text{17}\) It extended a series of existing bilateral and trilateral strategic dialogues at various levels, and served as a kind of signalling exercise, principally to China, but also to the wider region about the intentions of all four states concerning regional security.\(^\text{18}\) It also showed how far some in Canberra had come, in a relatively short period of time, in their perceptions of India as a putative security partner.

Some significant obstacles still lay in the way, however, of realising that objective. The biggest was Australia’s longstanding ban on selling uranium to India, on the grounds that it was not a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). As late as May 2007, the Howard Government was still insisting that the ban should stay in place, with Industry Minister Ian Macfarlane categorically ruling out the idea.\(^\text{19}\) But some time earlier, Howard had decided to back the deal that the United States had struck with India in July 2005, effectively to allow civilian nuclear cooperation despite New Delhi’s refusal to sign the NPT. This had given rise to an ‘unresolved tension’ in Canberra, lasting for more than a year, as Downer and DFAT held out against uranium sales in defence of the department’s longstanding nonproliferation agenda. The issue was only settled in the dying days of the government.\(^\text{20}\) In the end, Downer and DFAT lost the argument. In August 2007, three months out from the election, Howard


told his Indian counterpart, Manmohan Singh, that Australia was now willing, in principle, to lift the ban, subject to the guarantee that any uranium sold would only be used for civilian purposes.  

**Turbulence: 2007–13**

From 2003 to 2007, the Howard Government worked with two different counterparts in New Delhi, the Hindu nationalist administration of Atal Bihari Vajpayee and the Congress Party–led coalition of Manmohan Singh, to construct practically from scratch a security partnership with a state that only a few years earlier Canberra had condemned as a destabilising force. It took barely four months for Kevin Rudd’s Australian Labor Party (ALP) Government, however, to put what had been built in doubt. Rudd made it clear from the outset that he did not approve of lifting the uranium ban unless India signed the NPT, effectively endorsing DFAT’s position and rescinding Howard’s offer.  

Prior to the election and after it, Rudd and his colleagues also expressed reservations about the Quad. In February 2008, these concerns coalesced into a decision to withdraw from the minilateral dialogue. Apparently without informing New Delhi or even Washington, and with his Chinese counterpart, Yang Jiechi, at his side, Stephen Smith, Rudd’s foreign minister, abruptly announced this decision at a press conference.

In New Delhi, these various moves, made by a Mandarin-speaking prime minister who repeatedly expressed his desire to see Canberra bolster ties with Beijing, generated concerns about the reliability of Rudd and of Australia as putative partners. The Rudd Government did send out more positive signals to New Delhi in other areas, notably in its support for India

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to become a member of the APEC Forum, and for it to be included in the ‘Asia Pacific Community’ the prime minister recommended for the region. It also made reassuring noises about improving bilateral ties and engaging more closely with key states. But after those early rocky months had passed, it took time for trust and momentum to be restored. Significantly, it also took a shift in the Rudd Government’s perception of China and its intentions. This movement towards a more concerned view of China was demonstrated most clearly in the 2009 Defence White Paper. To the consternation of some analysts, that document pointed to China’s military modernisation and observed that Beijing might be aiming to challenge the regional pre-eminence of the United States. Important, the White Paper also foreshadowed a push to strengthen Australia’s defence and security ties with other regional powers, including India.

Soon after the White Paper appeared, Rudd moved to improve ties with New Delhi. He first signalled his government’s seriousness by sending Peter Varghese, then the head of the Office of National Assessments and later secretary of DFAT, to New Delhi as high commissioner. Varghese’s appointment was announced in February 2009. Rudd then travelled to New Delhi for an official visit in November 2009, and made two important steps. He signed a Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation and, together with Manmohan Singh, announced that Australia and India had decided to upgrade their relationship to a fully-fledged ‘strategic partnership’. Both commitments were, to a degree, aspirational and signalled the desire to broaden defence and security ties beyond what was envisaged in the 2003 and 2006 agreements. However, they fell short of what Australia and India seemed willing to do with other partners, notably the United States and Japan. And whatever progress was made continued to be overshadowed by the issue of uranium sales. But all this said, the Joint Declaration and the unveiling of the strategic partnership reflected a very different view of the bilateral relationship than the one that prevailed in Canberra at the beginning of Rudd’s tenure.

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26 Department of Defence, *Defending Australia in the Asia-Pacific Century*, 3, 95 and 96.

Rudd’s replacement by Julia Gillard just over six months later, in June 2010, opened the way to more progress. In May 2011, the two countries opened negotiations for a free trade agreement, the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA). The change in leadership also allowed for a reconsideration of the uranium ban, both within the ALP and the bureaucracy. In November 2011, Gillard secured approval from the ALP caucus to lift the ban on uranium sales. When she went to New Delhi almost a year later, in October 2012, the two countries commenced discussions about a civil nuclear agreement and agreed to hold annual prime ministerial meetings, alongside the various ongoing strategic dialogues, either in each other’s capitals or on the sidelines of regional summits. It was clear that India loomed ever larger in Canberra’s thinking. In October 2012, DFAT also published its Asian Century White Paper, intended as a basis for a broad national strategy for regional engagement. India was cast as a key partner, mentioned more than a hundred times in the text. This view was similarly reflected in the 2013 Defence White Paper, which muted some of the more robust language about China found in its predecessors, but which also introduced the concept of the ‘Indo-Pacific’ into Australian official discourse, with India a core element in this new geostrategic concept. The 2013 paper explicitly welcomed India’s emergence as a ‘global power’, though it was vague on the manner in which Canberra wished to see the strategic partnership develop.

Rudd’s brief return to the prime ministership in 2013 did not disrupt this perception or the work being done to strengthen the relationship. Tony Abbott’s election in September of that year did, however, add some impetus. He and his government introduced a markedly more ideological dimension to foreign policy, with a clear preference for aligning with democratic and English-speaking states, and a more critical tone on China’s behaviour in the region. That played—however awkwardly, given Australia and India’s very different colonial pasts—in the relationship’s favour. So too did the enhanced regional engagement promised by the Abbott Government, under the slogan ‘more Jakarta, less Geneva’, and

its shift away from high-minded multilateralism towards more pragmatic cooperation with like-minded states. This drew the Abbott Government to India, which was perceived as having congruent interests and useful capabilities. But it did take time to secure any further agreements with New Delhi, because in late 2013 and early 2014, India’s focus turned inward, as its general election loomed.

**Modi and the Quad: 2014–19**

Narendra Modi’s rise to power in May 2014 was met with a mixture of optimism and concern in Australia. Influential analysts predicted that his government’s trade and investment agenda could be advantageous. Others expressed worries about the influence of hardline Hindu nationalists on Modi and his administration. In Canberra, however, the Liberal–National Coalition Government welcomed Modi’s win, and moves were made to arrange for Abbott to visit New Delhi and meet the new Indian leader as soon as practicably possible. Abbott made a phone call to congratulate Modi on his success, and to extend a personal invitation to the G20 meeting to be held in Brisbane later in the year. Four months later, Abbott honoured his commitment to travel to New Delhi, travelling to India for a two-day state visit in early September 2014—the first such visit by a foreign leader since Modi’s election. He took with him a landmark civil nuclear agreement, with provisions permitting uranium exports, which he and Modi duly signed during the trip. He was also accompanied by a business delegation, and both sides expressed the desire

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to conclude the CECA when practicable. Finally, the two prime ministers signalled that the first Australia–India joint naval exercise would soon be held, sometime in 2015.35

Abbott’s solicitous engagement of Modi paid off a couple of months later, when he came to Brisbane for the G20 and stayed for a state visit, becoming the first Indian prime minister to travel to Australia since Rajiv Gandhi in 1986. The trip gave Modi the opportunity both to show how seriously India now took Australia as a partner, and to thank those in the Indian diaspora now living in Australia for their support for his election campaign earlier in the year.36 Further, Modi was given an opportunity to address the Australian parliament, during which he remarked on the new closeness in the relationship, and displayed much bonhomie with his Australian counterpart. ‘There was a time’, he observed, ‘when, for many of us, Australia was a distant land on the southern edge of the world’. But now, he went on, New Delhi welcomes Australia’s ‘growing role in driving this region’s prosperity and shaping its security’ and sees ‘Australia as a vital partner in India’s quest for progress and prosperity’. Modi said that he looked forward to Australia playing a bigger role in India in areas such as education and training, the provision of better housing and electricity, agriculture and food processing, healthcare, finance, manufacturing and building infrastructure in ways that are sustainable and environmentally sensitive. He foreshadowed deeper and broader security cooperation, ‘to create [an] environment and culture that promotes the currency of co-existence and cooperation; in which all nations, small and big, abide by international law and norms, even when they have bitter disputes’. And he made particular reference to the need to work together on counterterrorism and fighting extremism.37


36 On Modi’s diaspora diplomacy in general, see: Ian Hall, Modi and the Reinvention of Indian Foreign Policy (Bristol: Bristol University Press, 2019), 98–102, doi.org/10.1332/policypress/9781529204605.001.0001.

Modi’s visit produced two results. First, the Indian prime minister made a pledge to have his government speed up negotiations on the CECA, with a view to signing a deal by the end of 2015. Second, Australia and India signed a Framework for Security Cooperation. The agreement envisaged more cooperation on counterterrorism and border protection, committed both sides to greater cooperation on defence technology and export control regimes, and promised more collaboration between their respective navies on search and rescue, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. In its wake, there was a marked step-up in bilateral engagement on defence and security, despite the foundering of the CECA talks during the course of 2015, and their eventual suspension. In June 2015, Australia, India and Japan held a trilateral strategic dialogue in New Delhi, led by the respective heads of their foreign ministries, and promised to make the meeting an annual event. In September, Australia and India completed their first bilateral naval exercise (AUSINDEX), involving frigates and tankers, as well as a Royal Australian Navy Collins-class submarine, in the Bay of Bengal. In November, the two held a dialogue on maritime security, again in the Indian capital. Finally, Australia and India agreed to hold a so-called 2+2 meeting between foreign and defence ministers at some convenient time in the near future.

The changes here were both of tempo and substance, and they carried on after Malcolm Turnbull replaced Abbott as prime minister in mid-September 2015. It was obvious by the end of that year, if not before, that Modi’s Government had adopted the language of the ‘rules-based order’ being deployed by like-minded states such as Australia, Japan and the United States, and was working to try to strengthen its strategic partnerships with each, and indeed with others. New Delhi continued
to keep its options open, preferring ‘multialignment’ to both alignment and non-alignment—but its preferred security partners and regional order were increasingly clearly defined.\textsuperscript{43} It was also readily apparent from Australia’s 2016 Defence White Paper, published in February, that Canberra had come to regard India as a significant partner, and one with which it would like to do more. The paper observed overlapping interests in ‘maritime security, regional stability and countering terrorism’ and shared values as bases for greater engagement.\textsuperscript{44} A second maritime security dialogue followed in Canberra in October 2016, and a joint exercise for contingents from the two countries’ special forces took place in the same month.

In April 2017, Turnbull made a five-day visit to India—the sixth by an Australian prime minister since Howard’s first trip back in 2000. Despite the length of Turnbull’s stay, however, only incremental steps were taken. He and Modi agreed to ensure the promised inaugural 2+2 meeting would soon be scheduled, and they announced that an army-to-army exercise would also be arranged. They also unveiled another MoU on counterterrorism.\textsuperscript{45} The most dramatic initiative came about six months later. In Manila on 12 November 2017, on the sidelines of the ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations) Summit, an Australian official met with their Indian, Japanese and American counterparts in a new set of quadrilateral ‘consultations’, as they were termed, at least in the beginning.\textsuperscript{46} The new Quad was intended to serve most of the purposes of the old, but was packaged differently, given a more opaque name and dissociated from more ambitious notions, like Abe’s Democratic Security Diamond.\textsuperscript{47}

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\textsuperscript{47} For a useful take on this idea, see: Lavina Lee and John Lee, ‘Japan–India Cooperation and Abe’s Democratic Security Diamond: Possibilities, Limitations and the View from Southeast Asia’, \textit{Contemporary Southeast Asia} 38, no. 2 (2016): 284–308.
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Indo-Pacific region was a matter of concern to its four members, which demanded regular dialogues about its intentions, capabilities and policies. It also met a felt need for better policy coordination and a forum in which areas for deeper cooperation might be identified.48

During 2018 and 2019, the Quad and the other minilaterals continued to meet, and Australia and India continued to work on defence and security ties. New Delhi sought also to demonstrate how seriously it now took Australia, sending President Ram Nath Kovind for a visit in November 2018—the first ever by an Indian head of state.49 Bilateral traffic went on apace. One analyst has calculated that in 2018 alone, there were 38 defence and security-focused dialogues and military exercises between the two, up from 11 in 2014.50 In July and August 2018, the Indian Air Force participated for the first time in the regular ‘Pitch Black’ exercise in northern Australia. In April 2019, the two countries’ navies held another iteration of AUSINDEX, this time focusing on anti-submarine warfare, with the Australian side—significantly—permitted to practice tracking an Indian submarine.51 In parallel, to try to better facilitate these activities, future humanitarian and disaster relief operations, or other contingencies, Canberra proposed that Australia and India sign a logistics support agreement akin to those New Delhi has recently concluded with the United States and France.52

That deal was finally signed in early June 2020 during a virtual summit held between Modi and Scott Morrison that also elevated the bilateral relationship to the level of a ‘Comprehensive Strategic Partnership’ and signalled a willingness on both sides to restart negotiations for some kind

of economic cooperation agreement. The meeting had originally been scheduled for January in New Delhi, but the bushfires that engulfed eastern Australia that month prompted a postponement by Morrison, and then the COVID-19 pandemic intervened to prevent an in-person discussion. In the shadow of tensions with China involving both countries, the virtual summit involved another stepping up of political and defence security engagement, with the release of a ‘Shared Vision’ for maritime cooperation and the announcement of greater cooperation in cyber security. And it was followed in October 2020 by a widely anticipated invitation from India to Australia to participate once again in the Malabar naval exercises, along with the other two Quad partners, United States and Japan.

In parallel, Quad interactions intensified too, driven in part by the need for coordinated responses to the various challenges posed by COVID-19, including vaccine manufacture and distribution, but also pandemic-driven and China-driven disruptions to economies and global supply chains. There were three high-level Quad meetings during the course of 2020, including one of foreign ministers. A virtual Quad leaders’ discussion was convened in March 2021, followed by an in-person summit in Washington DC in September. Each of these interactions broadened the scope of cooperation and coordination between the four, encompassing not just maritime security, counterterrorism, intelligence sharing and infrastructure financing, but also vaccines, cyber security, supply chains, telecommunications and critical minerals. Working groups of officials from the partners were also created.

Conclusion: The China Paradox

There is no doubt that Beijing’s escalating assertiveness has been the primary cause of the strengthening of the defence and security partnership between Australia and India since the mid-2000s. Concern about terrorism—and, for that matter, about New Delhi’s own intentions for the region—might have prompted Canberra to re-engage with India, but once the conversations began, they soon turned to China, especially as it grew more demanding and difficult to manage in the aftermath of the global financial crisis of 2007–08. The dialogues and cooperation have continued, despite the lack of progress on bilateral trade and investment—and indeed despite issues like the uranium ban, which in the past, given India’s well-attested and acute sensitivity about status, might have derailed the relationship.

Yet while China has helped drive Australia and India into a closer security partnership, it has also generated tensions in bilateral ties, partly due to misperceptions of the others’ relationships with Beijing. The debate over the reconstitution of the Quad in late 2017 demonstrated this well. Inevitably, it generated controversy, but it was clear that, 10 years on, there was a firmer bipartisan consensus in Canberra that the initiative was useful and desirable, and there was a stronger commitment to it in New Delhi. At the same time, however, it did not prevent suggestions by Australian and Indian commentators that aspects of the others’ ties to China made them unreliable as a security partner. Analyses arguing that one or other country was the Quad’s ‘weakest link’ became once more something of a cottage industry.

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58 On status and Indian diplomatic behaviour, see: Baldev Raj Nayar and TV Paul, India in the World Order: Searching for Major-Power Status (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511808593.
While eminently contestable, these doubts reflected broader worries within both Canberra and New Delhi about the interests and intentions of the other, especially as pressure generated by China—intentionally and inadvertently—has grown. On the Australian side, the persistent belief that, in a crisis, India will stick to its old policy of non-alignment undermines confidence in New Delhi’s repeated public commitments to the rules-based order and to its security partners. On the Indian side, there is substantial concern about Australia’s trading relationship with China, which some think generates an unhealthy dependence. The worry is that Canberra might choose economic security over the interests of its friends and allies, and even over its continued political independence. So far, leaders and officials in both capitals, including respective high commissioners, have done a good job in managing these concerns, as have more intensive interactions within the context of the Quad, but they may remain obstacles to deeper and more substantive defence and security cooperation.

62 Grare, India Turns East, 132–33.