

Ex-Aussie PM: The Era of US “Supremacy” Has Already Passed

Description

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The Quad was officially launched in 2007 but suspended in 2008 after Australia pulled out of the US-led grouping over concerns expressed by China. The grouping was revived in 2017, a year after the US announced its ‘Indo-Pacific Strategy’. Beijing has labelled the Quad ‘Asian NATO’, accusing Washington of inciting tensions in the region.

Former Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating has [slammed](#) the US-led Quad grouping as “illegitimate” and a “strategic piece of nonsense,” as he advised Canberra to not be a part of the US-led efforts to “ring-fence” China.

The Quad, which comprises Australia, India, Japan and the US, says that its official goal is to maintain a “free and open Indo-Pacific region”.

“We shouldn’t be [stringing together](#) the US, Japan, India and Australia to try to contain China,” Keating, a senior party colleague of Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, said on Wednesday.

Keating argued that that Beijing’s “ambitions are in the west, not the east,” as he underlined the inroads made by the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in regions outside Asia. “Everywhere between Wuhan and Istanbul, in the next 30 years, will have a huge Chinese influence.”

Keating pointed out that the BRI has already financed infrastructure projects in the Baltic states as well as in former Soviet countries.

The multi-trillion-dollar BRI initiative was launched by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013 and strives to connect east Asia with Europe and beyond through connectivity and infrastructure projects. As of March 2022, a total of 147 countries across Asia, Africa, Europe, South America as well as North America have been members of the Beijing-backed global initiative.

Keating also reckoned that the era of US “supremacy” as the pre-eminent global power has already passed.

“This idea that the US is an exceptional power... they have God’s ear and proselytizing democracy was fine in the 20th century. The 20th century was owned by the US. The 21st century belongs to someone else,” stated Keating.

He also expressed doubts whether the US would come to the help of Taiwan if Beijing went ahead with the re-unification of the island with the mainland through military means.

Beijing has doubled down on its commitment to “reunify” Taiwan with the mainland following the [visit](#) of US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to Taipei in August. Chinese President Xi Jinping has said that reunifying Taiwan is part of China’s goal to achieve “national rejuvenation”.

“China would see every amphibious vessel coming towards the United States, whether it is San Diego or Honolulu. They would see them and sink them,” the former Australian PM claimed, suggesting that the chances of an American “victory” in such a scenario would be “nil”.

Keating advised the Australian government not to get involved in the “[geopolitical conflict](#)” around Taiwan.

“We should be no more interested in the political system of Taiwan than Vietnam and Kazakhstan,” argued Keating.