

A Critical Analysis of Five Eyes Alliance in the Indo-Pacific Region

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Abstract: *The Indo-Pacific region has become a hub of geopolitical competition among regional and extra regional powers. The Five Eyes alliance being composed of the US, the UK, Australia, Canada and New Zealand has grown its potential activities to keep check on geopolitical adversaries in the Indo-Pacific region particularly China. This study is conducted to examine the potential of the alliance addressing geopolitical threats and its effectiveness to counter the Chinese geopolitical expansion in the Indo-Pacific region. Utilizing a qualitative interpretivist approach this endeavour evaluate the cooperation among the member states within the context of the regional dynamics. By analysing primary and secondary data this study disclose that the Five Eyes alliance play pivotal role in regional security collaboration. But it faces certain limitations in countering Chinese expansion in the Indo-Pacific region in the dynamic nature of international geopolitics. The findings indicates that the alliance is influential but its potency to effectively restraint Chinese expansion is limited.*

Keywords: Five Eyes alliance, Indo-Pacific, the US, China, Geopolitics, Regional Security, Intelligence, Strategy

Introduction

In the 21st century the Indo-Pacific region has become the focus point in the political, economic, military and strategic vision of several global powers. According to Randev (2022), this region is home to 60 percent of global population, 44 percent of the global surface area, 60 percent of global GDP, 2 / 3 of global growth, 7 of the largest armies of the globe, the second largest (China) and the third-largest (Japan) economies of the world. About one third of trade ships pass through the Indo-Pacific region (Randev, 2022). These peculiarities have turned the region pivotal point of global geo-politics, economic interdependence, territorial bickering and strategic contesting among major powers. The intensification in the security concerns inclined the major powers to take measures in the context of their relative national interests in the region (Poonkham, 2022). The Chinese unmatched endeavours have enabled the country to vision itself a dominant power in the world. The initiation of several gigantic projects and commitment to economic development have turned the country to an influential power of the world. Chinese emergence has changed the balance of power, the model of economy and the way of politics in the world. These advancements are taken as flickering challenges to the US authoritative seat in the world. At the contemporary stage of international politics China is the sole player challenging the US superpower status. In this context, both the US and China have configured their relative influential strategic policies to overcome the challenges in this competition (Ali & Ali, 2021).

To compete with China, the US has formulated a configuration of collective security mechanism strengthening its alliances and partnerships. Navigated by the US, the “Five Eyes” and QUAD have exacerbated its sphere of collaboration in security considerations in the Indo-Pacific region. Australia has been engaged through the formation of AUKUS (Enfu & Jing, 2024). According to Stoltz, the basis of the Five Eyes (FVEY) is found in a series of World War agreements inscribed between the US and Britian. Later on, these agreements were extended including New Zealand, Canada and Australia. These agreements were based on signal intelligence sharing mechanism among these countries. Although, with the passage of time

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cooperation exacerbated to multifarious intelligence sharing (Stoltz, [2020](#)). The Five Eyes (FEVY) played vital role during the World War 2 and the Cold War (Sherazi, 2025). The objective of the Five Eyes (FEVY) intelligence alliance was to keep the USSR under surveillance and keep eye over activities related to communism and anti-capitalist approaches in Asia, Africa and Latin America (Leymarie, [2022](#)).

Five Eyes render crucial strategic importance in the context of a 2nd Cold War scenario. In the US National Security Strategy (NSS), the US has recognised China and Russia as menace to its interests in the region. The formation of AUKUS and QUAD to counter China is intensifying the strategic run in the region. The secondary mainstay of AUKUS is over the sophisticated collaboration in quantum technology, biotechnology and artificial intelligence (AI) (Sherazi, [2025](#)). Australia, the UK and the US being members of the QUAD and AUKUS are also part of the Five Eyes (FEVY). This establish a close bond of these security arrangements in the context of the Indo-Pacific region (Stoltz, [2022](#)). Among several economic and security formations in the Indo-Pacific region by major powers of the world, the Five Eyes (FEVY) renders critical position for the member states to pursue their relative interests in the region. The economic, political, military and security contestation in the region requires a conclusive role of the Five Eyes for the member states. An insightful evaluation is needed whether the Five Eyes is obtaining its goals in the context of addressing geopolitical threats, regional security and Chinese surge. As the activities and policies of the Five Eyes alliance are formulated and regularised under a veil of secrecy these are rarely disclosed to public domain. Hence, this study mostly relies on official statements, open-source data and the geopolitical behaviour of relative states in the Indo-Pacific region.

Problem Statement

This research study critically investigates the position of the Five Eyes in the Indo-Pacific region. This region has become a focal point of geopolitical tensions, specifically with the emergence of China. The Five Eyes alliance being an alliance among the five democratic states has expanded its scope to counter broader security and strategic challenges in the Indo-Pacific region. This study examines the potential of the alliance to address geopolitical threats in the region and its credibility to counter Chinese influence in the region.

Research Objectives

This critical examination seeks to address the following questions: How does the Five Eyes alliance, through coordination and cooperation, exert its potential to address geopolitical threats in the Indo-Pacific region? Does the alliance play a crucial role in countering Chinese expansion in the region?

Significance of the Study

The Five Eyes has played a crucial role in the context of intelligence sharing for the Anglo-Saxon member countries in different global security issues. It is less examined in a specific region with diverse geopolitical rivalries and security concerns. Investigating the connection between the Five Eyes and the Indo-Pacific states, this analysis is targeted to present overarching comprehension of the intelligence network worth in the region in the context of geopolitical threats, regional security and Chinese emergence.

Theoretical Framework

In the domain of international relations, Realism as a theory has attained prominent place in world's politics. The basic postulates of "Realism" fulfil a state's requirements to become stable and influential in the world. According to Realism, human nature pursue power and states like human seeks power. State does not agree to compromise on its interests. State's priority is to give precedence to state's interests whatsoever. The nature of the international system is anarchic. A state should have to strive to survive on its own means and resources. There exists no global authority to configure a merit-based order in the world and apply the rules and norms over the states in the world. In such circumstances a state must act sensibly, rationally and influentially in the prevailed contemporary global system. The Five Eyes member countries the US, Canada, Australia, the UK and New Zealand being democratic countries have inter-related and critical national interests in the Indo-Pacific region. The intelligence sharing network has engaged in the security competitive milieu in the region. States security is foremost concern of Realism.

The shores of four of the Five Eyes states meet the Indo-Pacific waters, relate them with the security considerations in the region. Any assertiveness from a powerful state can jeopardize the sovereignty of these states. This is evident from the Australia and New Zealand strengthening security ties with the US.

According to the AUKUS, the US and the UK will equip Australia with nuclear submarines in the coming few years. Also, the regional allies of the US stress security cooperation with the US to counter the Chinese threat of expansion. The omnipotent emergence of China has created chaos in the political vision of opponent countries in the world. The Five Eyes countries portray Chinese rise a potential threat to their interests in the region. Its gigantic infrastructure projects, developing trade routes, economic boom and military expansion has shaken the balance of power in the region. The realist approach of the Five Eyes inclines it to act balancing the power mechanism in the region. The formation of AUKUS and QUAD are part of this security perception. The member countries of AUKUS, QUAD and five Eyes are mutually striving for the balance of power in the region. These formations further convey the threat perception of being de-securitize by a hegemonic power. In the competitive and hostile security environment of the Indo-Pacific region, the Five Eyes countries seek to align with a formation rather than to be alone and become victim of a security threat. So, the intelligence sharing mechanism in areas like cyber security, military interoperability and sophisticating weapons help these states to act influentially against China in the region. The theory of Realism precisely portrays the inclusion of the Five Eyes in the region. This elaborate the Five Eyes countries are in seek of their relative national interests, security and power in the Indo-Pacific region.

Methodology

This study adopts interpretivist and qualitative approach focusing on the descriptive analytical method. The interpretivist kind of research underlines the understanding the meanings and viewpoint behind the measures and policies of the Five Eyes alliance in the Indo-Pacific region. This approach qualifies a profound examination of how the members of the Five Eyes alliance contextualize and respond to the regional security perspectives, particularly in the case of emerging China. The descriptive analysis assists in understanding the structure, evolution and advancements of the Five Eyes alliance with the provision of clear base standing upon facts. Furthermore, this interprets these descriptions critically evaluating the alliance's influential geopolitical dynamics, security collaboration and regional power ties. Data for this research study is accumulated from primary and secondary sources. For primary data collection open ended questions in shape of interviews were asked from academicians, analysts and experts in the subject. For secondary data collection sources were utilized like journal articles, newspapers, policy papers and other online sources. These sources are utilized because of their reliability, relevance and deepness which facilitates the study to present robust and critical perspective.

Literature review

Since the last decade a change in terminology has been observed using the name "Indo-Pacific" instead of "Asia-Pacific" for the Indo-Pacific region. This is not only a shift in terminology but evidence of the expansion of the region into a mega-region. There are two factors those convert this region into a mega region. Firstly, it connects the Indian and Pacific Oceans as a solitary maritime entity. Secondly, it covers the territorial limits of the littoral states having extended part in the maritime strategic milieu of the region (Kratiuk et al., [2023](#)). The Indo-Pacific region portray a melting pot of interests of several states. Many of these states are not physical part of the region. The region has become centre stage of geopolitical contestation. The US pivot to Asia competing China, India's expansionist vision, Japan vision of rejuvenation, Indonesia search for might, Australia's inclinations towards alliances and so forth has turned the region into a hub of geopolitical competition (Salil, [2023](#)). The most important development in international relations of this century is the rise of the Indo-Pacific as the geopolitical center of gravity in global security affairs. While the Indo Pacific is not a geographical concept, it is a space where regional and global powers project their influence in economic, political and security terms.

The factor of region's growing economic importance, crucial maritime trade routes as well as rising security concerns contributed to the geopolitical shift towards the Indo Pacific (Medcalf, 2019). There are several factors caused the US-China rivalry. A peer observation results in the issue of COVID -19, the US-

China competition in the South China Sea, Chinese involvement in various regions of the globe like Latin America and Africa, Hong Kong issue, human rights issue and US restrictions over Chinese companies in foreign direct Investment (FDI). Furthermore, there are harsh political sentiments in American congress against China. Chinese authoritarian political regime is excessively criticized in the US political circles (Blanchard, [2021](#)). The US Department of State accuses China using economic and military coercion to interfere in neighboring countries, exacerbating unlawful maritime claims, menacing maritime trade routes and disrupting the periphery around the country. These factors escalate the risks of miscalculation and confrontation in the region. The US favors its partners and allies against China in the region (US Department of State, [2020](#)). The core feature of disputes in the South China Sea is efforts for dominance between the US and China. The Asian Pacific security alliance with the US and the US-Japan alliance against China crystallise the geopolitical disputes in the South China Sea (Hailin, [2016](#)). China has territorial claims in shape of U-shaped “nine-dashed line” including EEZs of Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, the Philippines and Taiwan. It also claims over Paracel islands and Spratly islands (Pearson, [2020](#)). Along with other Chinese set of actions the Chinese construction of bases and building of islands on the sights of Paracel and Spratly islands have escalated the US concerns in the region. These Chinese activities were observed in 2013 and were publicised in 2014.

Other Chinese activities in the region those flare up issues includes conflict between China and Philippines over Scarborough shoal where Chinese ships attempted to have control over island, Chinese announcement of air defence identification zone (ADIZ) over the East China Sea (ECS), Chinese maritime patrols at Senkaku islands, Chinese pressurizing the Philippines small scale military presence at Second Thomas Shoal in Spratly islands, Chinese growing civilian presence in some Chinese occupied parts of the SCS and Chinese military movement in the SCS region have exacerbated the US authorities concerns in the region (O'Rourke, [2021](#)). The US stance regarding the geopolitical situation in the SCS specify the freedom of Seas, equal rights to use the Sea and airspace routes according to international law. The US will operate, sail and fly according to the international law avoiding consideration of maritime claims. According to international law, countries are not allowed to operate in other countries EEZs, but the US will operate with its military ships in other countries EEZs. The US will continue its international surveillance flights in these EEZs of other countries. According to the US these are lawful under international law (O'Rourke, [2021](#)). The Sea Lines of Communications (SLOCs) in the South China Sea are crucial for Japan's trade and energy supply. Most of the Japanese maritime trade passes through this region. While in the proximity in the East China Sea, Japan has serious territorial disputes over the Senkaku/Diaoyu islands (Yoshimatsu, [2017](#)). In the Indo-Pacific region six countries actively claim some parts or whole of the South China Sea. The Paracels islands are claimed by China, Taiwan and Vietnam. Spratlys islands are claimed by China, Taiwan, Brunei, Vietnam, Malaysia and Philippines. Almost all the South China Sea is claimed by China (Winter, [2018](#)).

Research Gap

Previous literature on the topic conveys much has been investigated about the Five Eyes but there is limited approach in the context of the Indo-Pacific region. This provides a gap in encapsulating the attributes of the Five Eyes intelligence sharing mechanism at regional level in the dynamic security scenario of the Indo-Pacific region. This study aims to fill the gap focusing on the security and geopolitical aspects of the alliance in the Indo-Pacific region.

China's Perspectives and Scenarios

Chinese provision of economic projects and military assistance to South Asia and Indian Ocean region has profound impacts over India's regional position in its neighbourhood. Moreover, the Chinese naval expansion as escalated threat perception in the region. It is effecting India's status as regional influence and a net security provider in the region (Kumar, [2024](#)). In the US and Australia, Indo-Pacific security considerations are observed antagonistic in the region. This perception portrays a concrete vision of defending the regional security against China. India perceives Chinese expansion as a threat to regional security ; however, it also recognizes that the declining influence of the US contributes to strategic instability in the Indo-Pacific region (Heiduk, [2022](#)).

The five Eyes originated when the UK Prime minister decided to include the US in one of the eminent secrets when the UK had destabilised the German Enigma Cipher system. The UK secret system (ULTRA) was controlled in the country and was shared with the US. It was a threatening risk, but the time proved it a reasonable decision for the UK. With the end of the 2nd World War the UK-US intelligence cooperation was extended to form the 1946 UK-USA agreement. The five countries have taken the world issues in similar terms and cooperated altogether closely on most of the crises since 1946. On the issues like the Korean War, Cold war and the war against terror. Currently, they are inclined to focus on dangers associated with Chinese emergence (Wilsey, [2021](#)). With the joining of the Canada, Australia and New Zealand the agreement established to be known as Five Eyes but till 2010 it was not made public (Bloomfield, [2022](#)).

The Five Eyes is taken as an alliance in international security lexicon but technically it is not an alliance in nature as it does not encapsulate any defence treaty which is a vital feature of the definition of an alliance. However somebody can urge, the five members are tied together by NATO and ANZUS (Australia, New Zealand and the United States). Although this group based on intelligence sharing mechanism lacks an explicit mutual defence clause. It has no secretariat and a coordinating body to deal with security coordination (Hemmings & Peter, [2021](#)).

While the current role of the Five Eyes alliance has brought several implications in maritime and aerospace domains. The alliance tracks maritime traffic passing through crucial maritime regions and it also keeps eye over the ballistics missile tests, satellite installation and military operations of other countries (Tossini, [2020](#)). A change has been observed in the global security mechanism. New trends in security like hybrid warfare, focus on non-Kinetics threats and grey-zone tactics are used to gain security interests. This led states to political warfare, economic warfare, strategic contacts and cyber expeditions without using traditional military sources against a targeted state. Along with security threats from non-states actors, members of the Five Eyes are facing potential security threats from Iran, Russia and China. They operate alone as well as occasionally together (Hemmings & Peter, [2021](#)).

The historical background from where the five members of the Five Eyes emerged is the same. They were not only allied during the Second World War, but they shared same ideological, linguistic and cultural norms. The common history, common legal system and common democratic traditions bonded them with one another. This feature is seen in the practical approach of the alliance as it seeks common security interests (Hemmings & Peter, [2021](#)).

When he was asked a question regarding the role of the Five Eyes in the Indo-Pacific region, Dr Farooq Ahmed stated that monitoring and countering the rising security challenges, the Five Eyes alliance plays a critical role in the Indo-Pacific region. Particularly the challenges those are tied with the Chinese growing assertiveness and regional stability. Utilizing the intelligence information sharing nature of the alliance, it supports the endeavours to secure trade routes, maintain global security and uphold a rules-based order. Two members of the alliance the US and Australia have active strengthened presence while the others collaborate diplomatic support and intelligence information. The alliance also have intelligence sharing connections with the regional states like Japan and India to counter espionage, expand maritime security and consolidate cyber-security in the Indo-Pacific region (AHMED, [2025](#)).

The foreign policies of the five countries portray China as a strategic contender. In October 2023, the five members jointly warned Chinese attempts of stealing technologies from some private companies. Three of the five members the US, the UK and Australia have formed a security formation AUKUS identifying China as a security threat. In the US 2022 United States National Security Strategy pointed China as “most consequential competitor”, UK’s 2021 Integrated Review of Security Defence Development and foreign Policy pointed China as “Systematic Competitor” and Australia’s 2023 National Defence statement pointed China is “engaged in strategic competition in our country’s neighbourhood”. Most of the policymakers view the five countries are on the same page over concerns related to information security and Chinese interference in domestic institutions (Edney & Turcsányi, [2024](#)). The intelligence sharing is the backbone in country’s security and through this backbone the US has captured a central hub in the Indo-Pacific region. The US is providing potential resources to its allies in the Indo-Pacific region to

counter the emerging geopolitical threats. The intelligence sharing activities of the Five Eyes has exacerbated the US influence and increased the military presence of the country in the region. Particularly responding to the escalating Chinese assertiveness and North Korea's strengthening nuclear program.

Any decline in the US intelligence sharing with its allies-AUKUS, Five Eyes and regional partners like Japan and South Korea in the Indo-Pacific region can minimize the potential to be aware of Chinese assertive actions or any similar geopolitical changes in the region. Particularly this factor play a crucial role for Taiwan's security as the US forces are stationed in Japan in the proximity of Taiwan (Horan, [2025](#)). Muhammad Saeed responded to a question when he was asked about the Five Eyes alliance countering the Chinese threat. According to him the alliance plays vital role to confront Chinese expansion. On behalf of expanded intelligence sharing, the alliance assists its member states to monitor Chinese military activities, its global strategies and cyber espionage. It bolsters collective cyber security endeavours to hold back Chinese cyber intrusions and intellectual property theft. It also assists strategic military coordination including joint military drills and naval deployment to defy Chinese assertiveness in the region, particularly in the South China Sea. It also collaborates in minimizing Chinese influence in crucial technologies like the 5G. It strives to expose Chinese disinformation campaigns and its political endeavours against democracy in democratic societies (Saeed, [2025](#)).

The director of the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Christopher Wray endorsed that China has the potential to threaten the US economic and national security. Particularly he indicated Chinese cyber threat to the US crucial infrastructure. He further asserted that Chinese formulated cyber group "Volt typhoon" poses capability to destabilize the US communications energy, energy transportation and water sectors. The US should engage its Five Eyes allies in the Indo-Pacific region to counter the danger of Chinese "Volt Typhoon" (Atkins, [2024](#)). It seems the Indo-Pacific region is converting into a predominant Chinese assertiveness where it can federate or constrain countries on behalf of diplomatic, economic, cultural and military levers. It will render potential threat to rule of law, global order, democratic norms, maritime freedom, sovereignty and territorial integrity. The possible invasion of Taiwan and emergence of India can be considered as game changers in the region (Lavigne, [2022](#)). Chinese experts criticise the Japanese inclination to be "sixth eye" of the Five Eyes intelligence formation. They assert, the Five Eyes is utilizing Japan to pursue their own interests in the region. While Japan is committed to enhance its status becoming member of the formation. It is ambitious to exacerbate cooperation with the Five Eyes in various fields like military, security, politics and culture (Anqi, [2024](#)). There exists a strong desire from inside and outside of both the governments of the US and Japan to increase intelligence sharing between their militaries. This pave a way of Japanese inclusion into the Five Eyes. This is the emerging Chinese assertive posture which is providing an enhancing rationale to Japan to join the group (Hemmings, [2023](#)).

Australia as Major Strategic Actor

Australia's location has bestowed it with vital intelligence advantage. It has geographic proximity to substantial geopolitical, economic and security opponent China (Lyons, [2025](#)). An overwhelming collaboration has been seen between the US and Australia. In September 2021 the three leaders from the US, the UK and Australia came in connection to formulate a security formation AUKUS. However, this development connects back to 1942 when the SIGINT cooperation was initiated during the war in Pacific. The collaboration between the US and Australia also includes the security cooperation through ANZUS and QUAD. These formations cooperate in diverge areas. However, the intelligence sharing (SIGINT) "Five Eyes" has a profound role in the deepening US-Australia ties. In the light of this past cooperation between the two the trilateral AUKUS will strive to engage in areas like the provision of nuclear submarines, crucial minerals, sophisticated technology and climate-related technology. This is a continuation and strengthening of military collaboration between the US and Australia. The advance technology has supported the intelligence sharing mechanism. The inclusion of personal computers, personal devices, laptops and mobile cell phones has altered the industry, society and military from being web-enabled to web-dependent and also to web-vulnerable. This has escalated the need of Cyber security exponentially. Experts in the US and Australia have developed computer emergency response teams those have become as Cyber security teams (Blaxland, [2024](#)).

Australia has a significant intelligence edge of being in the proximity to a great geopolitical, economic and security opponent facing by the western world-China. It plays a vital role on behalf of human and signal intelligence agencies covering the Central and South Asia. It is home to the US-Australia intelligence sharing formation "Pine Gap" which is most worthy interception base in the East. The Pine Gap was to serve as a base to operate spy satellites, intercept commercial communication and Soviet tests of intercontinental ballistic missiles those were used to carry nuclear materials. This programme got access to the spy bases in the Five Eyes countries and was expanded to intelligence activities keeping eye on the telephone, fax and online communications of public and private organizations all over the world (Lyons, 2025). Under the Five Eyes division of responsibilities are specified for the member states. The US is responsible for SIGINT in Latin America, Asia, Russia and northern China. Australia is responsible for Indonesia, southern China and Indo-China. New Zealand is responsible for the Western Pacific (O'Neil, 2017).

China considers Taiwan as a separated part of China and eventually it will be under Chinese control again. On the other side the Taiwanese authorities condemn such kind of Chinese claim and assert that Taiwan is a sovereign democratic state (BBC, 2024). The newly sealed AUKUS has emerging global concerns over the Chinese ascendancy. Will the AUKUS and Five Eyes formulated by the leading democracies will be able to stand against China which is the world's largest exporter and has the largest active military in the world. It looks a difficult task but Chinese actions towards its neighbours has made it easy. The AUKUS pact was signed among three members in September 2021 with the initial goal to provide Australia with eight nuclear-powered submarines. This will take more than ten years to accomplish. At this time six countries the UK, the US, China, France, India and Russia have gained this naval technology. Australia has been in cordial security ties with the US and economic ties with China. It was ambitious to keep balanced relations with each side. But some issues deteriorated the relations like the Australian stance for an independent inquiry into the origin of the Corona virus which was first found in China. Australia took part in the QUAD exercises. In response China threatened Australia with consumer boycott and restricted imports from the country (Marlow, 2021).

A political Science Professor, Jamaluddin responded to a question when he was asked about the Five Eyes collaboration with security formations like AUKUS and QUAD in the Indo-Pacific region, the Five Eyes alliance work closely with these two security formations to consolidate regional stability, collective security and counter Chinese escalating influence. While the Five Eyes focus on intelligence sharing and surveillance, AUKUS emphasizes advance defence cooperation including nuclear submarines technology, cyber capabilities and emerging artificial technologies. This favours the Five Eyes intelligence mechanism enhancing military preparedness. Meanwhile, the QUAD acts like a strategic platform enhancing free and open Indo-Pacific through mutual military exercises, infrastructure construction and maritime security. The Five Eyes assists QUAD in these areas with the provision of crucial intelligence, facilitating coordination and consolidating strategic goals. Together, these three formations shape multi-layered network focused to deter aggression, secure trade routes and uphold global norms in the Indo-Pacific region (Jamaluddin, 2025).

Top spy of New Zealand has warned, Chinese escalating influence in the Pacific region has grown security risks. Chinese strengthening ties with islands like Cook Island would incline the New Zealand intelligence agencies to keep eye on the islands. The economic and transnational crimes issues have engaged China to sign strategic deals with these island nations. China has a complicated intelligence concern in New Zealand authorities. In recent years China has initiated deals with several Pacific Island nations in the region aimed at economic development. According to Hampton Security Intelligence Service Director the Five Eyes alliance has played impactful and long-standing role in New Zealand's history. This alliance has enhanced the security and safety of the country (Chen, 2025). New Zealand is uncomfortable about the use of the seventy years old Five Eyes alliance to criticize China. This alliance was formed to formulate and fulfil intelligence-based policies during 2nd world war. Although, now there exist disagreements among the alliance members over the use of this network to politically exert pressure on China. New Zealand has shown reluctance in signing the joint statements against the Chinese suppression of democratic movement in Hong Kong and its ill treatment with the Muslims of Uyghur Chinese province.

The New Zealand's foreign minister criticise the Five Eyes saying the five members of the network do not value the relationship. Having common values and principles we benefit from this formation it is needed to address issues like the human rights.

Observing these views some analysts have accused the New Zealand of selling itself to China. New Zealand gets 29 percent of its export's revenue from China. Now it is coming in between the economic benefits from China and the longstanding ties with its like-minded Five Eyes states. In case of Australia, a decline in coal and wine exports to China was observed due to tariffs and other restrictions from Chinese side. The division in the Five Eyes will benefit China. It will strengthen Chinese policies of divide and rule. Its policies are impactful buying people and state's confidence in terms of major investments and special trade deals. New Zealand stance being part of the network is to focus on border security, cyber safety and defence. It stressed to address the human rights concerns in China and elsewhere (Mercer, 2021). The recent developments have deteriorated relations between the US and Canada. A top White House official has proposed to expel Canada from the Five Eyes formation to increase pressure on the country to be 51st part of the US. According to Dennis Wilder, a former CIA official stated that the Five Eyes alliance is one of the most successful intelligence-based alliance in history of the world. Any destabilization in this network would be a sign of jubilation for our adversaries like Russia, China, Tehran and North Korea. Canada and New Zealand provide very least intelligence information in the network but expelling any member would emerge criticism among the allies and officials of the network.

According to Phil Gurski, former Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) stated that Canada is a smaller partner but the alliance is working properly sharing sensitive intelligence information (Sevastopulo & Gridneff, 2025). The US is strengthening intelligence collaboration with countries in Asia ambitious to counter sophisticated spying mechanism and cyber-attacks. The US Biden administration has expanded intelligence sharing cooperation with its QUAD partners. It has also expanded cooperation in information sharing among three countries Japan, India and Vietnam to boost resilience against Chinese Offensive operations online. It was because of the US-India intelligence sharing that India repelled Chinese military incursion in the Himalayas. In May 2022, contributed a pact among them providing data through a commercial satellite to the Pacific countries. It will track Chinese maritime militia activities. The partnerships in the Indo-Pacific region will complement the "Five Eyes" being a longstanding US intelligence network. It has diverged its focus to China in recent years. The Asian spy networks are newer than the "Five Eyes" and will take time to counter it. No doubt the "Five Eyes" have well established base but when it starts to work on diverse targets its priorities are changed. As we can observe, when it comes to counter China, Japan and South Korea take important place alongside Australia and New Zealand (Martin & Leonard, 2023).

The UK's successive governments have failed to tackle with the magnitude of threat posed by China. A detailed report by the Intelligence and Security Committee "ISC" criticised the UK government of having no reasonable and enough measures to counter Chinese threat. There exists no strategy for this task. The dossier, published on Thursday, also said the UK is of "significant interest to China when it comes to espionage and interference" – placing Britain "just below China's top priority targets" around the world. According to this report China is gaining influence in UK's universities and ambitious to be a permanent player in the civil nuclear energy. China is getting more control in Britain. It further stated Chinese state intelligence mechanism is almost certainly the world's largest with thousands civil personals. It is targeting the UK's interests aggressively and pose challenge to the country's agencies (Forrest et al., 2023). The cyber activities in the Indo-Pacific region in the context of security has gained momentum. Earlier this year a report was leaked from a Chinese company conveying the country is conducting spying campaign against different countries in the region. This includes telecom service providers in countries like Mongolia, Malaysia, Pakistan and various parts of India. Other countries like India, Pakistan and Vietnam have also initiated establishing cyber agencies working for their relative intelligence targets at different destinations in the region. The Indo-Pacific region has turned to a chessboard for complicated disputes over the production of semiconductors in Taiwan, US-China geopolitical competition linked with cyber operations, content control and moderation. There are always cyber threats from state and non-state actors (Hurel, 2024).

According to Japanese officials, Chinese hackers intercepted confidential diplomatic cables through cyber-attacks on the ministry of foreign affairs Japan. Taiwan also asserted, the country is facing a huge surge in Chinese cyber-attacks. A US FBI Director Christopher Wray testified in Congress that Hackers from China were preparing to target vital system and services in the US. The ongoing cyber aggression of Russia and North Korea with artificial intelligence powered threats have converted the Indo-Pacific region into a dangerous region. This is threat not only to the data security but to the regional relations among the states. Businesses and governments can only be stable if they have trust in each other security network. The US vision of strengthening its ties with the Indo-Pacific region cannot ignore the menace of cyber threats and vulnerabilities. Focusing in this way the cyber insecurity in the Indo-Pacific region benefits China, North Korea and Russia in the context of destabilisation in cooperation between the US and the region (Vivek, [2024](#)).

The intelligence information by the Five Eyes is now also shared with France, Germany, Netherland and some of the European countries. Five Eyes has an eminent place in New Zealand's consideration of AUKUS because the AUKUS states Australia, the US and the UK are subsets of Five Eyes intelligence alliance. These two formations cover areas where spy agencies are already well-connected (Witton, [2025](#)).

Discussion and Findings

This section has discussed and analysed the data reviewed and collected in the previous section of the Literature Review. To find relevant answers to the research questions, this section assists the researcher to examine the relevant data in light of the mentioned theoretical framework.

Analysing Geopolitical threats facing Five Eyes member States in the Indo-Pacific region

The whole of the Cold War was epitomised with shift from traditional warfare to nuance and covert confrontations avoiding full scale war among the adversaries. This shift continues in the 21st century in regions like the Indo-Pacific where strategic rivalries are intensifying with the passage of time. In the 21st century the Indo-Pacific region has become hotspot for global contestation among major powers. The stated significance of the region by (Randev, [2022](#)) cannot be overlooked. These attributes turn the Indo-Pacific region to one of the strategically important focal regions in global politics attracting the strategic priorities of different states. The Five Eyes alliance among the five countries has played a significant role pursuing the interests of member countries throughout its history. The Indo-Pacific region is home to several strategic, military and security formulations. The Five Eyes alliance is one of these critical formations. It is facing several geopolitical threats in the Indo-Pacific region.

All the five members of the alliance have democratic background. The democratic norms of these countries come in overt contrast with the Chinese communist ideology. This has been an observed phenomena that the democratic countries have never been in cordial relations with the communist regimes. Throughout the Cold war the West opposed and united against the communist Russia. China has been an emerging communist state in the Indo-Pacific region poses threats to the Five Eyes democratic states. The findings of the study suggests that China has started expanding strategically in the region. It claims the U-shaped nine-dash line as its maritime territory which encapsulates an extended maritime region claimed by many of the regional states like Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, the Philippines and Taiwan. It is growing its presence in the South China Sea, East China Sea, Taiwan strait and Pacific Island nations. China has established a gigantic project of the BRI which is enhancing the Chinese military and economic influence in the region. China is constructing naval bases and artificial islands in the waters of the Pacific Ocean. It has continued maritime patrols at Senkaku islands which render intense reservations against Japan. Japan itself claims the region as part of its territory. These Chinese actions challenge the freedom of navigation and balance in the regional order. In the pursuance of Chinese strategic interests, it has established grey zone tactics like cyber intrusions, maritime forces operations and diplomacy with the amalgamation of coercion.

According to Hemmings and Peter ([2021](#)), new trends are being introduced to the warfare among the states. Now some part of the conventional warfare has been taken by the hybrid warfare. Where the technological advancement is used to confront an adversary (Hemmings & Peter, [2021](#)). The use of these sophisticated technological weapons has altered the confrontation and security vision of the states. China

being a growing economic giant is inclined towards the formulation and utilizations of such advance technological means of war. The Five Eyes countries have severe concerns about the Chinese cyber-attacks. A Chinese Spy balloon was detected by the US authorities in the country. China is exacerbating its cyber activities with the expansion of 5G technology. It has formulated a Cyber group “Volt typhoon”. It conducts spy expeditions with modern technology in areas like telecom services in several countries. China has been blamed by the US preparing to target its infrastructure using advance cyber technology. Japan claims Chinese official involvement in intercepting confidential diplomatic cables through Cyber-attacks. Taiwan has also mentioned itself vulnerable and targeted to the Chinese cyber-attacks. Chinese deputy chair of Huawei was arrested by Canadian authorities being suspicious in using the technology for espionage purposes.

China is utilizing its omnipotent economic growth to align regional and extra-regional states. Two of the five states have been observed inclined towards China. Australia and New Zealand have strengthened economic relations with China. Australia had signed the memorandum of understanding becoming part of the BRI but later on it withdrew from the deal and joined AUKUS with the US and the UK. The Australian parliament has blamed Chinese involvement in the country’s internal matters. New Zealand has been part of the Five Eyes for decades and has played a significant role for the formation (Chen, 2025). Mercer (2021) noted, there has been observed tendency of inclination towards China. New Zealand has shown reluctance in signing a joint statement by the Five Eyes against the Chinese anti-democratic activities in Hong Kong and its ill treatment towards the Ughur Muslims. Mercer’s words portray the New Zealand’s soft inclination towards the emerging China. New Zealand collects about 29 percent of its export’s revenue from China. Critics blame New Zealand of selling itself to China. Taiwan being a democratic state has been claimed by China as part of the country. China considers it an integral part of its territory. This reveals the Chinese excessive confrontation of the democratic system and countries.

The Role of the Five Eyes in Countering Chinese Expansion in the Indo-Pacific Region

The study finds that the Five Eyes alliance has played a strengthen role for the member states since its inception and now it is inclined towards the emergence of China. This shows the member countries are profoundly engaged to contain Chinese expansion. The economic, military and political expansion of China has created chaos in security perceptions of the adversaries. Particularly the democratic states have severe reservations over Chinese expansion. The five member states have democratic origin with same background. In the Indo-pacific region all the five members are striving to counter China. The findings suggest, the US convince states to be part of Chinese macro-securitization. Four among them have turned to confrontational relations than cordial being committed to unite against Chinese threat. The Five Eyes almost consider China as a strategic contender. In 2022, the US National Security Strategy mentioned China as a most consequential competitor (Biden & Harris, 2022). The UK pointed China as a “systematic competitor”. Australia’s National defence statement in 2022 claimed China’s involvement in strategic competition in the neighbourhood of the country. The US has got central role in the intelligence sharing mechanism being part of the Five Eyes. It has strengthened intelligence sharing relations and cooperation with the member states in the Indo-Pacific region. With Australia the US has formulated close intelligence cooperation ties. Both the countries have developed computer emergency responses teams those have shaped cyber security formations in the region. Australia is base to the “Pine gap” which is an influential interception base for the activities of the Five Eyes. This is used to operate spy satellites and intercept commercial communications. It was part of missions against the Soviet Union where the Soviet tests of intercontinental ballistic missiles were intercepted. The “Pine Gap” has attained access to the Five Eyes member states and extended cooperation spying over telephone, fax and online communications. Five Eyes work closely to the security formation AUKUS in the Indo-pacific region. AUKUS has three main pillars, provision of nuclear submarines to Australia, formulating and conducting cyber operations and utilizing emerging artificial intelligence.

Five Eyes in collaboration with AUKUS keeps eye over Chinese maritime military activities in the region. The security formation QUAD worked in collaboration with Five Eyes in areas like Free and Open Indo-Pacific, constructing maritime infrastructure and maritime security. To attain these goals the intelligence sharing against threats like China is an essential element of cooperation. Together the three formations strive to deter Chinese aggression, secure maritime routes and uphold global norms. The Japanese ambition

to be part of the Five Eyes would strengthen the formation efficiency against the expansionist China. Being a strong opponent in the proximity of China, it can play valuable role in attaining the goals of the Five Eyes alliance. Five Eyes play vital role in disrupting the activities of Chinese 5G activities in the region. The study reveals these Five Eyes efforts to counter Chinese geopolitical expansion in the Indo-Pacific region. But the success of the Five Eyes to counter Chinese expansion is directly proportional to the acceleration of the Chinese expansion. Noted by McGowan and Veeton, In February 2025, China has exacerbated its influence in the Indo-Pacific region through diplomatic engagement, infrastructure projects, collaborations in security ties, enhancing economic relations with ASEAN and Middle East, conducting controversial military exercises and cooperation with Thailand and Myanmar in border issues (McGowan & Veeton, 2025). This recent assertion portrays the Chinese unchanged and unstoppable expansion in the region. The strengthen intelligence sharing mechanism of the Five Eyes cannot be overlooked but it has not been able to counter the Chinese geopolitical expansion in the Indo-Pacific region.

Theoretical Discussion

The above discussion aligns the Five Eyes engagement into the Indo-Pacific region with the core attributes of Realism. The Five Eyes, emerging China and the regional states purely pursue their relative national interests in the strategic context of the region. China being an emerging country is strengthening the state. Its economic, military and political expansion portray it will gain more and more authority in power. It has territorial claims in the region. It is constructing artificial islands and military bases in the waters of Indo-Pacific region. Its gigantic BRI is sign of its expansionist vision. There is seen a thirst for power in the region. The absence of a central authority in the region as well as in the world have inclined states to accumulate power. The anarchic geostrategic situation in the Indo-Pacific region have inclined the states to their self-help and security. This factor has driven states to be part of coalitions. There has been observe a security dilemma in the geostrategic scenario of the Indo-Pacific region. Every step taken by an adversary is consider threat to other's sovereignty. The geostrategic perception of China and the Five Eyes portray this dilemma in the Indo-Pacific region. Among the three stakeholders in the region, the Five Eyes and China are striving to balance each other which fulfil a vital attribute of the theory of realism. The advancement in formulation of spy bases and sophisticated technology from the adversaries show their quest for power and dominancy. The two parties Five Eyes and China have grown their interests in Hybrid war and cyber war activities. The Chinese "Volt Typhoon" and the Five Eyes "Pine Gap" are examples of such advancements.

Conclusion

In the Indo-Pacific region the Five Eyes alliance has to address the geopolitical threats against China being one of the two adversaries to the alliance in the region. There exist a strengthen intelligence sharing mechanism among the five members of the Five Eyes alliance to keep eye on the geopolitical expansion of China in the region. Two members of the alliance Australia and New Zealand are geographically located in the waters of Indo-Pacific region with intelligence bases on their soil. These bases are utilizing to gain secret intelligence information and share it with the member states. This information is composed of cyber intelligence activities, early strategic warnings and policies to counter Chinese espionage. The Five Eyes alliance in collaboration with QUAD and AUKUS keeps continue its intelligence sharing activities in the region. Five eyes assist QUAD through its intelligence sharing to pursue its strategic goals like Free and Open Indo-Pacific region, minimizing Chinese regional influence, consolidating maritime security and contributing to cyber security against China. Five eyes alliance contributes with AUKUS through intelligence sharing achieve its goals like the provision of nuclear submarine technology to Australia, utilizing hi-tech technology like AI, quantum computing, cyber capabilities and hypersonic weapons and strengthening strategic deterrence against China.

The Five Eyes alliance has utilized its endeavours through intelligence sharing to counter Chinese geopolitical expansion in the Indo-Pacific region but the excessive exacerbating geopolitical Chinese expansion in the region portray the ineffective role of the alliance. Chinese continuity in diplomatic outreach, building infrastructure projects, military expansion and economic enhancement are vital signs of geopolitical expansion in the region.

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