



## Biden to meet Quad leaders virtually on Friday

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U.S. President Joe Biden will hold an online meeting on Friday with the leaders of Japan, India and Australia, the White House said on Tuesday, the first leader-level meeting of a four-country group seen as part of efforts to balance China's growing military and economic power.

1. U.S. President Joe Biden will meet virtually with the leaders of Japan, India and Australia on Friday.

2. A senior US administration official told Reuters: A key focus will be financial agreements to support an increase in manufacturing coronavirus vaccines in India, as well as the aim to reduce manufacturing backlogs.

3. They are also expected to discuss security in the Indo-Pacific, economic cooperation and climate change.

4. White House spokeswoman Jen Psaki said Tuesday the meeting of the "Quad" countries will highlight Biden's emphasis on bolstering U.S. alliances in the Indo-Pacific region.

"The Quad has met regularly at the working and minister level. However, Friday will be the first time that the quad is meeting at the leader level. That President Biden has made this one of his earliest multilateral engagements speaks to the importance we place on close cooperation with our allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific."

5. The U.S. is looking to strengthen ties with key allies and partners as China adopts an increasingly assertive foreign policy in the Indo-Pacific, around Taiwan and Chinese-occupied islands in the disputed South China Sea.

6. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin are planning high-profile visits to allies Japan and South Korea later this month.

7. A senior U.S. official told Reuters Friday's Quad meeting will last about two hours, and lay the groundwork for an in-person meeting later in the year.