

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2024

Joint Statement by President Biden, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese of Australia, and Prime Minister Keir Starmer of the United Kingdom on the Third Anniversary of the Australia-United Kingdom-United States (AUKUS) Trilateral Security Partnership

September 17, 2024

We the leaders of Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, mark the third anniversary of AUKUS—an enhanced security partnership that promotes a free and open Indo-Pacific that is secure and stable. We reaffirm our shared commitment to this historic partnership and acknowledge the considerable progress to date.

Pillar I—Conventionally-Armed, Nuclear-Powered Submarines

In March 2023, our nations announced a pathway to deliver Australia's conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarine (SSN) capability, while setting the highest non-proliferation standard.

We are steadily building Australia's capabilities to steward and operate its own fleet of conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarines from the early 2030s. The United Kingdom and the United States welcomed Australian naval officers and sailors into their submarine training schools and embedded Australian personnel into the UK Ministry of Defence and U.S. naval shipyards. Our nations have made enormous strides towards the establishment of a rotational presence of U.S. and UK SSNs at HMAS *Stirling* in Western Australia as early as 2027. Increased visits by U.S. SSNs to Australia have supported steady progress in Australian workforce development, and, in August 2024, Australian personnel demonstrated their progress through participation in the first maintenance activity conducted on a U.S. nuclear-powered submarine in Australia.

We have made significant investments to lift our respective submarine industrial bases. The United Kingdom has made an initial allocation of nearly £4 billion to continue work on SSN–AUKUS, and £3 billion to expand production capabilities across its Defence Nuclear Enterprise. The United States decided to invest USD 17.5 billion into its submarine industrial base. Australia has committed to invest over AUD 30 billion in the Australian defense industrial base and make proportionate contributions to the United Kingdom and the United States to support the production of SSN–AUKUS and to accelerate the delivery of Virginia class submarines respectively. In March 2024, Australia announced the selection of ASC Pty Ltd and BAE Systems to build SSN–AUKUS and ASC Pty Ltd to sustain Australia's SSNs. These respective investments and decisions will deliver thousands of highly skilled jobs across our three nations.

In August this year, the AUKUS partners signed a historic international agreement for cooperation relating to naval nuclear propulsion. Once it enters into force, this agreement will enable AUKUS partners to go beyond sharing naval nuclear propulsion information to include allowing the United States and the United Kingdom to transfer the material and equipment required for the safe and secure construction, operation, and sustainment of Australia's conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarines.

The agreement reaffirms AUKUS partners' existing non-proliferation obligations and Australia's safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The agreement will make our non-proliferation commitments under AUKUS legally-binding between the partners. Our nations continue to consult with the IAEA to develop a non-proliferation and safeguards approach that sets the highest non-proliferation standard.

Pillar II—Advanced Capabilities

When AUKUS was first announced, we pledged to pursue information and technology sharing and unprecedented integration of our innovation communities, industrial bases, and warfighter capabilities in support of a shared goal to build the advanced capabilities needed to bolster deterrence in support of security and stability in the Indo-Pacific.

This work is delivering as our Navies are strengthening undersea warfare capabilities by integrating the ability to launch and recover undersea vehicles from submarine torpedo tubes to deliver effects such as strike and reconnaissance. We are also deploying advanced Artificial Intelligence algorithms across our shared military systems to process sonar-buoy data, assisting anti-submarine operators in making better decisions, faster. We are strengthening maritime autonomy through a series of joint exercise and experimentation known as the Maritime Big Play, where we will conduct ground-breaking tests on the collective use of autonomous and un-crewed systems in maritime operations. Together, we are making further strides in quantum technologies, cyber capabilities, hypersonics, and electronic warfare.

In April 2024 our Defense Ministers announced principles for additional AUKUS Pillar II partner engagement on specific projects where new partners could contribute to, and benefit from, AUKUS. Following initial consultations this year and leveraging Japan's deep technical expertise, AUKUS partners and Japan are exploring opportunities to improve interoperability of their maritime autonomous systems as an initial area of cooperation. Recognizing these countries' close bilateral defense partnerships with each member of AUKUS, we are consulting with Canada, New Zealand, and the Republic of Korea to identify possibilities for collaboration on advanced capabilities under AUKUS Pillar II.

To promote innovation and realize the goals of AUKUS, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States have implemented momentous amendments to our respective export control regimes, including reforms to the U.S. International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR). These critical reforms will facilitate billions of dollars in secure, license-free defense trade and maximize innovation across the full breadth of our defense collaboration and mutually strengthen our three defense industrial bases.

NOTE: The joint statement referred to U.S. Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III; Minister for Defense Richard Marles of Australia; and Secretary of State for Defense John Healey of the United Kingdom. An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Categories: Joint Statements : Australia, Prime Minister Albanese; Joint Statements : United Kingdom, Prime Minister.

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