

5.2 – AUKUS Statements: IAEA Board of Governors

June 2022

This document includes the statements of the official U.S., UK, and Australian representatives to the IAEA delivered to the IAEA Board of Governors in June 2022. The statements expressed disapproval of the continued efforts made to include an agenda item on AUKUS in the Board of Governors' meetings, expressing the shared opinion that it is a politically driven effort that detracts from other important matters that demand the attention of the board. The U.S., UK, and Australian officials emphasized the IAEA Director General's satisfaction with the engagement and transparency shown by the three countries thus far and reiterated their commitment to continue trilateral cooperation in a manner that fully complies with and upholds non-proliferation standards.



AUKUS STATEMENTS

As delivered at the IAEA Board of Governors Meeting, June, 2022

By PETERSCJ

9 MINUTE READ



JUNE 10, 2022

IAEA Board of Governors, June 2022: Adoption of the agenda

AUKUS Statement as delivered by Ambassador and UK Permanent Representative to IAEA and CTBTO, Corinne Kitsell OBE

Thank you Chair,

I take the floor on behalf of Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Chair,

Once again, there are genuinely urgent, pressing issues demanding this Board's undivided attention. Australia, the UK and the US have made, and continue to make, our position very clear. We believe an agenda item on AUKUS at this time is inappropriate, premature and unnecessary. We are disappointed to see an AUKUS agenda item added to the Board's agenda again.

Chair,

AUKUS partners are engaged in an open and transparent consultation process with the IAEA with regard to Australia's safeguards obligations related to Australia's acquisition of conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarines. We remain fully committed to transparency. Consistent with that commitment, at the March 2022 Board meeting, we provided an AUKUS update under the 'Any Other Business' agenda item. At this meeting, we will again update the Board under Any Other Business. We also circulated a non-paper to all Member States in advance of this meeting – as we have done at the March 2022 and November 2021 Board meetings.

Chair,

I reassert that Australia, the UK and the US do not support the inclusion of an agenda item on AUKUS. We see it as a politically-driven attempt that subtracts from the time available for the Board to address legitimate issues of concern. This is in stark contrast to our demonstrable commitment to transparency.

To be clear, we fully support the Director General's authority to report to the Board when he deems it appropriate, consistent with established practice for issues of this nature, and the technical independence of the IAEA – and we trust and expect that he will do so.

Chair,

Despite our sustained objections, we did not block consensus on the adoption of the agenda today. Given the important work before this Board this week, and the finite amount of time available, our priority is the Board being able to proceed swiftly to give its full attention to the most pressing issues of the day.

Thank you, Chair,

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IAEA Board of Governors Meeting

6-10 June 2022

Agenda Item 10: AUKUS

Statement by H. E. Mr Richard Sadleir, Resident Representative of Australia to the IAEA, on behalf of Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States

Chair,

I take the floor on behalf of Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

We understand and welcome the interest of Board members in this trilateral effort. As noted at the adoption of the agenda, to support the Board's efforts to address genuinely pressing issues this week and to limit time spent on procedural matters, we did not block consensus on the addition of this agenda item. We will provide a substantive update on our non-proliferation efforts related to AUKUS under the AOB agenda item — the appropriate place for such an update and for any other statements on this issue.

Unfortunately, Chair,

We have just heard several troubling mischaracterisations and inaccurate assertions, which we will address now very briefly.

It remains our firm view that any agenda item on AUKUS, whether one-off or standing, is inappropriate and unnecessary at this juncture. The Director General's prerogative must be respected.

In his introductory statement to this Board, the Director General has affirmed his satisfaction with the engagement and transparency shown by our three countries, and informed States of his decision to present a report to the September Board. We fully support the Director General's right and authority to update the Board as he sees fit, and accordingly reiterate that the agenda item today is unnecessary.

Chair,

Repeated suggestions made by one country to create a 'special committee' risk undermining the IAEA's well-established mandate and authority to engage with Member States bilaterally on safeguards issues. We firmly reject this proposal.

Counterintuitively, we have heard one country assert [in the same statement] both that we have not engaged sufficiently with the IAEA, and that we should not engage with the IAEA.

We once again recall the Director General's expression of satisfaction with our engagement and transparency.

We will continue to engage with the IAEA on Australia's safeguards obligations related to its acquisition of a naval nuclear propulsion capability in an open and transparent manner.

Similarly, it is critical to the international non-proliferation regime that the IAEA continues to be allowed to fulfil its mandate to engage with Member States on safeguards issues with independence and without interference.

Chair,

Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States will continue to undertake trilateral cooperation in a manner that is fully consistent with our respective non-proliferation obligations and reflects our longstanding leadership in the global non-proliferation regime.

We hope this item can swiftly conclude and that the Board be allowed to return to the genuinely pressing matters before us without further delay.

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Agenda Item 15: AUKUS Statement under Any other business

**Trilateral Statement on behalf of Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States
As delivered by U.S. Ambassador to the IAEA, Laura S.H. Holgate
Vienna, Austria, June 10, 2022**

Chair,

I have the honor of speaking on behalf of Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States in our effort to determine the optimal pathway for Australia to acquire conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines.

We remain firmly committed to engaging openly and transparently with all IAEA Member States on Australia's safeguards obligations related to its acquisition of a naval nuclear propulsion capability.

Chair,

The AUKUS endeavour will continue to be undertaken in a manner that is fully consistent with our respective non-proliferation obligations and reflective of our longstanding leadership in, and respect for, the global nuclear non-proliferation regime.

In a joint statement on April 6, 2022, our leaders reiterated that they are fully committed to establishing a robust approach to sharing naval nuclear propulsion technology in a way that strengthens the integrity of the regime.

Chair,

Since our last update to the Board in March 2022, we have furthered our consultations on determining a robust approach to sharing naval nuclear propulsion technology in a way that maintains and reinforces the non-proliferation regime. Senior officials and technical experts have held regular trilateral discussions in our capitals. We have also met with the Director General and the IAEA Secretariat in Vienna.

We are now at the halfway point of our 18-month consultation period, and we are pleased with the progress made in our early discussions.

And we can confirm that Australia's naval nuclear propulsion activities, including verification of the non-diversion of nuclear material from Australia's naval nuclear propulsion program, will occur within the framework of Australia's Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement (CSA) and its Additional Protocol (AP).

Additionally, Australia has decided to voluntarily commit not to domestically enrich or reprocess nuclear material in support of its nuclear-powered submarine program.

Chair,

We welcome, and highlight, the Director General's positive remarks at the beginning of this Board meeting, where he expressed his "satisfaction with the engagement and transparency shown by the three countries thus far."

There is a firm legal basis for the IAEA, through the Director General and the Secretariat, to engage Australia, with the support of AUKUS partners, on these issues. Both the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and Australia's CSA with the IAEA permit naval nuclear propulsion activities — as do other CSAs between other States and the IAEA.

Ongoing open engagement is central to our approach. The global nuclear non-proliferation regime relies on such engagement taking place. Consultations with the IAEA and between and among partners will continue.

Chair,

We will continue to be guided by our shared objectives of setting the highest possible non-proliferation standards, strengthening the integrity of the non-proliferation regime, and maintaining Australia's exemplary non-proliferation credentials.

We welcome the Director General's pending report on these issues, which he indicated in his written statement will be submitted to the September Board. Issuing such a report is his prerogative, consistent with established practice and the technical independence of the IAEA.

When the Director General submits such a report, we would welcome the Secretariat also requesting an agenda item under which this Board can discuss that report at that meeting, should the Director General see an agenda item then as appropriate. We will in all cases continue to inform the Board of significant developments related to naval nuclear propulsion cooperation under AUKUS under Any Other Business at future meetings of this Board.


Thank you, Chair.

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