

1.5 – Fact Sheet: Implementation of the AUKUS partnership

April 6, 2022

This published fact sheet disclosed the extent of behind-the-scenes discussions and high-level meetings. The fact sheet revealed that the partnership was framed around two lines of effort (submarines and advanced capabilities) and had a three-tiered structure for collaboration including a Senior Officials Group, joint steering groups, and lower-level working groups. The Senior Officials Group involves the national security advisors of all three countries meeting periodically to assess progress. There are two joint steering groups, one for each line of effort, and 17 working groups (nine for the submarines line of effort and eight related to the other advanced capabilities line of effort).

Key points:

- Combined teams conducted site visits in Australia to determine the baseline of Australia's nuclear stewardship, infrastructure, workforce, and capabilities.
- The Australian government plans to establish a submarine base on its east coast.
- The Australian government began the process of readying the infrastructure in South Australia for a nuclear-powered submarine construction yard.
- AUKUS partners have been in consultations with the IAEA; the IAEA director issued a statement of confidence on March 7, 2022.
- The advanced capabilities line of effort includes the following eight areas (likely reflective of the working groups):
 - o The AUKUS Undersea Robotics Autonomous Systems (AURAS) project
 - o The AUKUS Quantum Arrangement (AQuA) to accelerate investments to deliver quantum capabilities focused on positioning, navigation, and timing
 - o Artificial intelligence and autonomy
 - o Advanced cyber
 - o Hypersonic and counter-hypersonic capabilities
 - o Electronic warfare
 - o Innovation
 - o Information sharing

FACT SHEET: Implementation of the Australia – United Kingdom – United States Partnership (AUKUS)

6 April 2022

Today, Prime Minister Scott Morrison of Australia, Prime Minister Boris Johnson of the United Kingdom, and President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. of the United States reviewed progress in implementing the Australia – United Kingdom – United States (AUKUS) partnership. The leaders reaffirmed their commitment to a free and open Indo-Pacific, and more broadly to an international system that respects human rights, the rule of law, and the peaceful resolution of disputes free from coercion – a commitment whose importance has only grown in response to Russia’s unprovoked, unjustified, and unlawful invasion of Ukraine.

Implementation of the AUKUS partnership has now begun. It has two related lines of effort.

- **Submarines.** AUKUS will provide Australia with a conventionally armed, nuclear powered submarine capability at the earliest possible date, while upholding the highest non-proliferation standards.
- **Advanced capabilities.** AUKUS will develop and provide joint advanced military capabilities to promote security and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

Senior-Level Meetings

Since AUKUS was announced on September 15, 2021, the three countries have held multiple high-level meetings.

- **Senior Officials Group.** On March 10, 2022, National Security Advisors from the three allies met virtually to review AUKUS progress and provide direction to the trilateral partnership going forward.
- **Joint Steering Groups.** The three countries have held multiple Joint Steering Group meetings for each of the two AUKUS lines of effort, including in-person sessions in Canberra, London, and Washington, D.C.

- **Working Groups.** Seventeen trilateral working groups have been established (nine relating to conventionally armed nuclear-powered submarines, and eight relating to other advanced military capabilities); each has met multiple times.

Australia’s Future Conventionally Armed Nuclear-Powered Submarine Capability

When AUKUS was announced in September 2021, Prime Minister Morrison, Prime Minister Johnson, and President Joe Biden agreed to determine, by March 2023, the optimal pathway for an Australian conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarine capability. AUKUS partners have taken important steps toward implementation.

- **Information exchange.** The Exchange of Naval Nuclear Propulsion Information Agreement (ENNPIA) entered into force on February 8, 2022, enabling AUKUS partners to share naval nuclear propulsion information trilaterally.
- **Nuclear stewardship.** For several weeks in February, combined teams from Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States visited multiple sites in Australia to baseline its nuclear stewardship, infrastructure, workforce, and industrial capabilities and requirements. On February 28, findings were considered by the Joint Steering Group on submarines. The Joint Steering Group will use this information as it develops the optimal pathway for Australia to acquire nuclear-powered submarines.
- **Australia workforce.** Initial steps are underway to ensure Australia has a workforce with the necessary skills, training, and qualifications to build, operate, and sustain a conventionally-armed nuclear-powered submarine capability. For example, a cohort of Australian personnel have commenced higher-education and training opportunities in nuclear science and engineering.

- **New submarine base.** Prime Minister Morrison announced, on March 7, Australia’s plan to establish a future submarine base on the east coast of Australia to support the basing and disposition of future nuclear-powered submarines. This new facility will operate in conjunction with Australia’s existing submarine base in Western Australia.
- **Nuclear Powered Submarine Construction Yard.** The Australian Government is taking initial steps to secure additional land on which to build the Nuclear-Powered Submarine Construction Yard, including land adjacent to the existing Osborne North Shipyard in South Australia.
- **Non-proliferation.** Since the announcement of AUKUS, our nations have been engaging proactively with the International Atomic Energy Agency on the non-proliferation aspects of our partnership. Following the initiation of technical consultations with the IAEA, IAEA Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi reported to the IAEA Board of Governors on March 7 that Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States “are committed to ensuring the highest non-proliferation and safeguards standards are met.” [<https://www.iaea.org/newscenter/statements/iaea-director-generals-introductory-statement-to-the-board-of-governors-7-march-2022>]
- **Quantum technologies.** The AUKUS Quantum Arrangement (AQuA) will accelerate investments to deliver generation-after-next quantum capabilities. It will have an initial focus on quantum technologies for positioning, navigation, and timing. Together, we will integrate emerging quantum technologies in trials and experimentation over the next three years.
- **Artificial intelligence and autonomy.** Trilateral cooperation on artificial intelligence (AI) and autonomy will provide critical enablers for future force capabilities, improving the speed and precision of decision-making processes to maintain a capability edge and defend against AI-enabled threats. Early work is focused on accelerating adoption, and improving the resilience of, autonomous and AI-enabled systems in contested environments.
- **Advanced Cyber.** In light of the importance of the cyber domain to advanced capabilities, we are focusing our efforts on strengthening cyber capabilities, including protecting critical communications and operations systems.
- **Hypersonic and counter-hypersonic capabilities.** The AUKUS partners will work together to accelerate development of advanced hypersonic and counter-hypersonic capabilities.
- **Electronic warfare.** The electromagnetic spectrum is increasingly contested. The three countries will work together to share understanding of tools, techniques, and technology to enable our forces to operate in contested and degraded environments.
- **Innovation.** Our work on innovation aims to accelerate our respective defense innovation enterprises and learn from one another, including ways to more rapidly integrate commercial technologies to solve warfighting needs.
- **Information sharing.** We will expand and accelerate sharing of sensitive information, including as a first priority enabling workstreams that underpin our work on agreed areas of advanced capabilities.

Advanced Capabilities

AUKUS partners have made strong progress in the four advanced capabilities that the President and Prime Ministers identified in September 2021, and have recently initiated work in four additional areas. As we mature trilateral lines of effort within these and other critical defense and security capabilities, we will seek to engage allies and close partners as appropriate.

- **Undersea capabilities.** Through the AUKUS Undersea Robotics Autonomous Systems (AURAS) project, our nations are collaborating on autonomous underwater vehicles, which will be a significant force multiplier for our maritime forces. Initial trials and experimentation of this capability are planned for 2023.