



Uncrewed undersea capabilities strengthen AUKUS partnership

10 NOVEMBER 2023

Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States have conducted a combined exercise off the east coast of Australia testing autonomous undersea warfare capabilities.

The Integrated Battle Problem 23-3 exercise demonstrated the strength of AUKUS partners' maritime collaboration. A range of modified commercial and military autonomous systems were deployed, in conjunction with existing capabilities, in order to test trilateral undersea warfare objectives.

During the exercise, Australia's new undersea support vessel, Australian Defence Vessel (ADV) *Guidance*, hosted a range of undersea capabilities for testing at sea. The UK's offshore patrol vessel, HMS *Tamar*, which is on a five-year deployment to the Indo-Pacific, also played a key role. HMS *Tamar* used a combination of divers and autonomous underwater vehicles to conduct mine-countermeasure operations and monitor critical infrastructure, including pipelines and communication cables.

The successful trial demonstrates significant progress in the development of undersea warfare capabilities under AUKUS. It highlighted how, through collaboration with our collective industrial bases, AUKUS partners can operate uncrewed and remote capabilities to effectively support decisions and engage targets in the maritime domain.

AUKUS partners will continue to undertake the development of advanced capabilities in a transparent way. AUKUS complements our other partnerships, in line with collective efforts across the region to promote a free, open and peaceful Indo-Pacific.

Quotes attributable to Chief of Navy, Vice Admiral Mark Hammond AO, Royal Australian Navy:

"Submarines are critical to the defence of Australia. Our submarines, and other military assets, will increasingly work with autonomous systems below and on the surface of the ocean to extend range and lethality.

"AUKUS Pillar Two is about delivering advanced capabilities, including through technologies that extend reach and range.

"As we have seen in the Ukraine conflict, scalable autonomous and semi-autonomous systems have the capacity to transform warfighting. The Defence Strategic Review identified asymmetric capabilities like these as critical in the defence and protection of the nation.

"These technologies originate from a range of industries, like the offshore oil and gas and communications industries. They have been modified to carry a military payload to become force multipliers, working in concert with our ships, submarines and aircraft, and to serve as a key deterrent.

"What we get by working with industry in this way is speed, what we get by doing it together under the AUKUS partnership is scale, where the sum of the whole is greater than its parts."

Quotes attributable to Commander US Pacific Fleet, Admiral Samuel Paparo, United States Navy:

"These exercises accelerate our combined development of advanced military capabilities. In a dynamic strategic environment and the escalation of competitors' coercive activities, AUKUS is not just about the exchange of submarines and capabilities, it is an expansion of our continued trust in and commitment to our allies.

“We are prioritising capabilities that improve our warfighters’ ability to see, understand, decide and act – then work together to bolster integrated deterrence.

“Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States are developing and fielding joint advanced military capabilities to promote security and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. The strategic alignment of our national defence strategies anchored by shared values is driving unprecedented collaboration in advanced technologies.

“Our trilateral exercises develop and deliver interoperable, threat-informed capabilities key to the warfighter, and contribute to sustained defence industrial-based collaboration. Meanwhile, the AUKUS partners are investing in trilateral projects that are enhancing our scientific and technological capacity to build enduring advantages for the future.”

Quotes attributable to First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Ben Key KCB CBE ADC, Royal Navy:

“The recent AUKUS trials and exercise demonstrate the advances being made possible by our trilateral collaboration under the partnership.

“It is hugely exciting to see the strength of our three nations, coming together through the AUKUS partnership to successfully develop and demonstrate a range of underwater capabilities that are crucial to ensuring safety and security in the region and more broadly.”

Media note:

Media can access imagery at <http://images.defence.gov.au/S20233371>

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