



[Home](#) [Embassy Information](#) [China-Australia Relations](#) [Consular & Visa](#) [Topics](#) [Connecting with China](#) [About China](#)

[Home](#) > [Embassy Highlights/Media Release](#)

Chinese Embassy Spokesperson's Remarks on AUKUS Nuclear Submarine Cooperation

2022-09-20 20:45

Q: Recently, the Director-General of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) presented to the Board of Governors a report on IAEA safeguards in relation to AUKUS nuclear submarine cooperation, saying that the IAEA has conducted technical consultations with the US, the UK and Australia and he welcomes their engagement with the Agency to date. What is the comment of the Chinese Embassy on the Director-General's report and AUKUS nuclear submarine cooperation?

A: 1. The Director-General's report is an act of ultra vires. It is neither neutral nor objective, still less professional. This report, submitted by the IAEA Director-General to the Board of Governors without the mandate of Member States, lopsidedly cited the account given by the US, the UK and Australia to explain away what they have done, but made no mention of the international community's major concerns over the risk of nuclear proliferation that may arise from the AUKUS nuclear submarine cooperation. The report turns a blind eye to many countries' solemn position that the AUKUS cooperation violates the purposes and objectives of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and draws misleading and ultra vires conclusions that are completely inconsistent with the reality. The IAEA Secretariat, its Director-General included, must not overstep its authority and carry out activities that are not mandated by Member States and particularly its decision-making body, such as the Board of Governors. AUKUS nuclear submarine cooperation goes beyond the existing international nuclear non-proliferation regime and the scope of responsibilities of the IAEA Secretariat. It is not something that the three countries can handle in their own way, but must be heard and discussed by the IAEA Member States.

2. AUKUS nuclear submarine cooperation is not simply a matter of a sovereign country's independent research and development of nuclear materials for military vessels, but the first time that nuclear weapons materials are openly and directly transferred illegally from a nuclear-weapon State to a non-nuclear-weapon State, which is a blatant act of nuclear proliferation.

Firstly, it violates the NPT. NPT is the cornerstone of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime, and an important component of the post-war international security system. The relevant NPT provisions clearly stipulate the non-proliferation obligations of nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States, as well as the definition and legal basis of nuclear proliferation. Relevant cooperation apparently violates the purposes and objectives of the NPT, and seriously undermines the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, of which the NPT is the cornerstone. Since AUKUS officially announced their decision on nuclear submarine cooperation in September 2021, they have not yet notified the IAEA of any substantive information on the cooperation. But at the same time, the leaders of AUKUS have repeatedly and publicly declared that the cooperation is progressing smoothly. This indicates that AUKUS have deliberately concealed information on the transfer of nuclear weapons materials while advancing relevant cooperation.

Secondly, it sets a bad precedent for the international community. The cooperation will open a Pandora's box, stimulating other nuclear-weapon states to transfer nuclear weapons materials to non-nuclear-weapon states, and other non-nuclear-weapon states will follow Australia's example to obtain nuclear-weapon materials, which will lead to the demise of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Thirdly, it threatens regional peace and stability. The cooperation not only increases Australia's own national strategic security risks, but also undermines the South Pacific Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty and the efforts of ASEAN countries to establish the Southeast Asian-Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. Moreover, AUKUS' open pursuit of double standards on non-proliferation issues will have negative and far-reaching impacts on the resolution of regional hotspot issues such as the Iranian and North Korean nuclear issues. What's more, it will further stimulate arms race and intensify regional tensions. In a nutshell, the cooperation does far more harm than good.

We urge Australia, a non-nuclear-weapon state under the NPT, to attach importance and respond to the serious concerns of regional countries and the international community, earnestly fulfill its safeguards and monitoring obligations, and take concrete actions to uphold the NPT, the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, and the peace and security of the international community. We also urge the IAEA Secretariat to

adopt an objective, neutral and professional position on this issue, perform its duties in strict accordance with its mandate, and provide a platform for discussing and addressing Member States' concerns over nuclear proliferation regarding the AUKUS nuclear submarine cooperation.

Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Commonwealth of Australia
Address: 15 Coronation Drive, Yarralumla, ACT 2600

Tel: 0061-2-62283999, Fax: 0061-2-62283836
E-mail: chinaemb_au@mfa.gov.cn

Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Commonwealth of Australia All Rights Reserved