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Joint Statement on Australia-U.S. Ministerial Consultations (AUSMIN) 2022

MEDIA NOTE

OFFICE OF THE SPOKESPERSON

DECEMBER 6, 2022

The Governments of the United States of America and Australia released the following statement on the occasion of the 32nd annual Australia-United States Ministerial Consultations (AUSMIN).

Begin Text:

Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III hosted Minister for Foreign Affairs Penny Wong and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Richard Marles on December 6 in Washington, D.C. to advance cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region and globally. Building on the November 2022 meeting between President Biden and Prime Minister Albanese, the Secretaries and Ministers (principals) noted that the U.S.-Australia Alliance and partnership have never been stronger, or more vital to regional peace and prosperity. The principals committed to advancing a stable, rules-based international order where differences are resolved peacefully and without coercion, and where states cooperate transparently to address shared challenges. They further committed to deepening their cooperation to strengthen and reform the multilateral system and galvanize collective action to address the climate crisis; protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy, and gender equity and equality; and advance the rules of the road for technology, cyberspace, trade, and commerce. The principals also decided to evolve their defense and security cooperation to

ensure they are equipped to deter aggression, counter coercion, and make space for sovereign decision making.

Indo-Pacific Cooperation

The principals committed to deepening cooperation, bilaterally and with regional partners and institutions, to ensure an Indo-Pacific region that is free, open, stable, peaceful, prosperous, and respectful of sovereignty. The principals affirmed that regional growth and stability are underpinned by international law, which serves the interests of all nations. They committed to strengthen their engagement with Indo-Pacific countries to promote economic development, climate change cooperation, security, connectivity, good governance, disaster management, health, and resiliency consistent with regional and national priorities. The principals further committed to establishing a regular meeting between the Australian Minister for International Development and the Pacific and U.S. Agency for International Development Administrator to support closer development cooperation throughout the Indo-Pacific region and globally.

The four principals emphasized the importance of all states being able to exercise rights and freedoms consistent with international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), including freedom of navigation and overflight. They reiterated their strong opposition to destabilizing actions in the South China Sea, such as the militarization of disputed features and dangerous encounters at sea and in the air. They also expressed concern about other actions by the People's Republic of China (PRC), including it asserting excessive maritime claims that are inconsistent with international law. They resolved to work with partners to support regional maritime security and uphold international law.

The principals reiterated Taiwan's role as a leading democracy in the Indo-Pacific region, an important regional economy, and a key contributor to critical supply chains. They also reaffirmed their commitment to maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and shared opposition to unilateral changes to the status quo. They further committed to working together to support Taiwan's meaningful participation in international organizations and enhancing economic, social, and people-to-people ties with Taiwan, and affirmed that they would continue working with Taiwan to enhance development coordination in the Pacific.

The four principals emphasized the importance of all countries managing strategic competition responsibly and committed to work together to ensure competition does not escalate into

conflict. The United States and Australia look to the PRC to do the same and plan to engage Beijing on risk reduction and transparency measures. The principals encouraged the PRC to take steps to promote stability and transparency in the area of nuclear weapons. They also affirmed the importance of cooperation with the PRC on issues of shared interest, including climate change, pandemic threats, non-proliferation, countering illicit and illegal narcotics, the global food crisis, and macroeconomic issues. The principals committed to enhancing deterrence and resilience through coordinated efforts to offer Indo-Pacific nations support to resist subversion and coercion of any kind.

The principals redoubled their commitment to cooperation with the Pacific Islands in support of the objectives of the Pacific Islands Forum 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, guided by Pacific priorities of climate change, resilient infrastructure, maritime security, and with support for Pacific regional institutions that have served the region well over many years. The principals affirmed their commitment to encourage their partners to increase engagement in support of Pacific priorities. This includes by further developing the recently established Partners in the Blue Pacific (PBP) initiative, which is led and guided by the Pacific Islands through close consultations on its priorities and initiatives, including through the Pacific Islands Forum. Australia and the United States are contributing funding to an initiative to bolster the Pacific Islands' ability to prepare for and respond to devastating disasters, in support of goals outlined at the first Pacific Disaster Risk Reduction Ministers meeting in September 2022.

The principals committed to strengthening coordination to deliver on Pacific priorities, including through our diplomatic missions. With the recent reopening of borders in the Pacific Islands, the principals discussed supporting the entry or re-entry of U.S. Peace Corps volunteers into the Pacific and a proposal to expand cooperation between the Peace Corps and the Australian Volunteers Program.

The principals welcomed the offer from the United States Coast Guard, developed in consultation with the Pacific Island countries that participate in the Pacific Maritime Security Program, to provide training that will enhance the benefits the Pacific Islands derive from the Australian-gifted Guardian-class Patrol Boat fleet. They also welcomed the recent discussion on making additional U.S. assets available to Pacific Island countries for maritime surveillance, reinforcing their capacity to protect their vast maritime domains. The principals also committed to further collaboration with Japan, India, and regional partners on the Quad-supported Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness.

The principals welcomed the inclusion of the Papua New Guinea Defence Force, the Republic of Fiji Military Forces, and His Majesty's Armed Forces of Tonga in future exercises, including in Exercise TALISMAN SABRE 2023 as part of the Australian Defence Force contingent. They expressed their desire to continue to enhance interoperability with the militaries of the Pacific, through support for and participation in regional exercises. They also decided to work together to do more to dispose of unexploded ordnance in the Pacific.

The principals noted that Southeast Asia was critical to regional stability and reaffirmed their commitment to ASEAN centrality and ASEAN-led regional architecture. They underscored the role of the East Asia Summit as the region's premier, leaders-led forum for addressing strategic challenges and expressed their ongoing support for the practical implementation of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific. Australia welcomed the ASEAN-U.S. Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. The principals expressed support for Indonesia's priorities as next year's ASEAN chair. They also welcomed recent progress towards Timor-Leste's accession to ASEAN.

The principals committed to work with Southeast Asian partners to support their economic, climate, energy infrastructure, and security cooperation priorities. They reiterated their support for ASEAN-led efforts to respond to the ongoing crisis in Myanmar, and their deep concern at the deteriorating situation in the country. They urged the Myanmar military regime to implement its commitments under the ASEAN Five-Point Consensus, to refrain from violence, release all those unjustly detained, and to allow unimpeded humanitarian access. They committed to expanding their partnership to deliver for the Mekong sub-region through an additional AUD \$1.2 million (USD \$0.8 million) in funding to the Mekong Safeguards Program.

The principals welcomed deepening engagement through the Quad to respond to the region's needs. They looked forward to the 2023 Quad Leaders' Summit in Australia to advance the Quad's positive and practical agenda.

The principals discussed the devastating impact of COVID-19 with special regard to the Indo-Pacific region, and plan to increase collaboration to strengthen resilience to prepare for future pandemics by working to prevent, detect, and respond to outbreaks of infectious diseases. They recommitted to joint efforts to expand access to safe and effective vaccines; support pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response, including through the Quad, global health funds, and the newly established Pandemic Fund at the World Bank; and to work with other Indo-Pacific countries to promote public health best practices. They also committed to a new program of

cooperative support to UN and regional organizations working in the Indo-Pacific to strengthen national and regional health security with a particular emphasis on the intersection between animal and human health. The principals affirmed their commitment to multilateral and international efforts to end the pandemic, and to strengthen the World Health Organization and the global health architecture. The principals reaffirmed the importance of research and technical collaboration in providing equitable access to healthcare, particularly in remote communities.

The principals also committed to ensuring Indigenous Peoples' voices are heard at the international level, and that we protect, learn from, and embed their knowledge and experience to deal with global challenges. The United States and Australia are also highlighting the role of Indigenous Peoples in our societies through projects to connect indigenous business stakeholders, including the exchange of best practices and development of cross-Pacific networks.

The principals expressed serious concerns about severe human rights violations in Xinjiang, the human rights situation in Tibet, and the systematic erosion of Hong Kong's autonomy, democratic institutions, and processes undermining the commitments made by the PRC before the handover. The principals strongly condemned the ruthless suppression of peaceful protests by Iranian authorities, and remain committed to standing with the Iranian people, especially women, as they demonstrate extraordinary courage in standing up for their rights. They also discussed ways to continue advancing gender equality and human rights, including the rights of all women and girls, in the international rules-based system and through initiatives in the Indo-Pacific region, including through convening a bilateral Strategic Dialogue on Gender Equality.

The principals reaffirmed their commitment to achieving the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and to addressing the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) unlawful nuclear and ballistic missile programs, which pose a grave threat not only to peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula but also the Indo-Pacific region and the world. In this context, Australia welcomed the Phnom Penh Statement on the U.S.-Japan-Republic of Korea Trilateral Partnership for the Indo-Pacific. They committed to continued bilateral and multilateral coordination and reaffirmed the need for the international community to fully implement all relevant UN Security Council resolutions related to the DPRK. Acknowledging their shared belief that diplomacy is essential to denuclearization and the establishment of a permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula, the principals called on the DPRK to engage in sustained dialogue and cease its

destabilizing behavior. They noted with grave concern continuing reports of severe violations of human rights in the DPRK.

Climate, Clean Energy, and Environment

The principals emphasized the need for urgent action on climate change and the importance of a clean energy transition, committing to pursue these as a new pillar of the U.S.-Australia Alliance. This partnership builds on Australia's updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) and its legislated target to reduce emissions by 43 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030, and the United States' NDC and its target to reduce emissions by 50 to 52 per cent below 2005 levels in 2030. It also builds on the landmark climate action and investment by the United States, including under the Inflation Reduction Act and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and on the Australian Government's Powering Australia Plan. Principals committed to work together across the whole of their respective governments to strengthen investment in climate mitigation, including renewable energy and associated infrastructure, clean transportation, nature-based solutions, and climate resilient infrastructure, in line with efforts under the bilateral Net-Zero Technology Acceleration Partnership, the Clean Energy Demand Initiative, and the U.S.-Australia Energy Security Dialogue.

The principals pledged to drive stronger global action to address the climate crisis and to strengthen efforts throughout this critical decade to keep a limit of 1.5 degrees temperature rise within reach. The principals also committed to continue coordination on building greater climate preparedness and resilience, especially in consideration of those most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, including women, girls, Indigenous Peoples and First Nations, and people with a disability. Building on Australia's support for the Global Methane Pledge, both nations committed to work towards significant reductions in methane, particularly in the energy and waste sectors. Australia and the United States also decided to cooperate and share experiences to support reducing public sector emissions globally, building on the Net-Zero Government Initiative the United States launched at COP27 and Australia's commitment for the Australian Public Service to achieve net-zero by 2030.

The principals decided to strengthen coordination to support climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience efforts in response to the needs of partners in Southeast Asia and the Pacific, including to support information and expertise sharing on climate finance and clean energy investment. They intend to continue working together and with Indo-Pacific partners to deliver meaningful

climate outcomes in alignment with existing regional architecture, including the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF), ASEAN, the Pacific Islands Forum, Partners in the Blue Pacific, and the Quad.

The principals committed to taking greater action to support global protection and conservation of land and oceans, including to address the critical issue of biodiversity loss. The United States and Australia have committed to the global ambition of conserving 30 percent of our land and oceans and the successful development of the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, complemented by Australia's recent endorsement of the U.S.-led Ocean Conservation Pledge. Both countries support avenues to invigorate existing ocean related partnerships, such as the International Partnership for Blue Carbon, and intend to work closely together on issues that impact the ocean's health. Australia and the United States intend to continue to support global efforts to halt and reverse forest loss and land degradation by 2030, including through the Forests and Climate Leaders' Partnership. Both countries recognize the growing problem of plastic pollution and intend to actively support the development of an ambitious global response to end plastic pollution by 2040.

Acknowledging the national security challenge posed by climate change, the principals committed to strengthen information sharing and exchange best practices between both Departments of Defense to accelerate progress towards climate resiliency objectives. This includes exploring the inclusion of updated climate verbiage in a review of the 2005 Joint Statement of Environmental and Heritage Principles for Combined Activities. The principals also committed to explore establishing a new senior officials working group to share assessments and advice on the national and regional security risks posed by climate change.

Prosperity, Innovation, and Resilient Supply Chains

The principals welcomed the upcoming negotiations of IPEF and its vision for a free and open, connected, prosperous, resilient, inclusive, and secure Indo-Pacific region. Together with 12 other IPEF partners, the United States and Australia plan to address economic challenges and opportunities, including through commitments related to trade, supply chains, clean energy, and tax and anti-corruption. The principals are committed to ensuring that IPEF delivers for everyone, especially workers, consumers, and under-represented groups such as Indigenous Peoples and women. The United States appreciates Australia's hosting of the first in-person IPEF negotiating round in Brisbane from December 10-15.

The principals highlighted the United States' and Australia's shared commitment to supporting security across the information and communications technology (ICT) ecosystem as a critical foundation for expanding connectivity and bridging digital divides. They identified additional areas for collaboration and financing opportunities to support trusted ICT infrastructure, including promoting supplier diversity and innovation to build more resilient supply chains in the Indo-Pacific region and globally. They also discussed how additional public-private partnerships on topics such as 5G/Open RAN, standards, and supply chains could augment our work to support critical and emerging technology among Quad governments.

The principals welcomed and acknowledged the role of APEC, the premier economic forum in the region, in improving the region's resilience to future economic shocks; promoting a free, fair, and open trade and investment environment; strengthening supply chains; addressing health-related threats; and advancing inclusive, sustainable growth, including during the United States' APEC 2023 host year.

The United States and Australia reaffirmed their commitment to supporting quality, transparent infrastructure development that addresses the needs of Indo-Pacific partners and generates local employment opportunities. They welcomed the renewal of the Trilateral Infrastructure Partnership (TIP) MOU with Japan, which brings together key agencies to deliver quality and sustainable infrastructure projects across the Indo-Pacific region. TIP partners completed a joint mission to Vietnam in October 2022, and have another mission planned to Indonesia in early 2023. The principals also noted the role that the Blue Dot Network could play in promoting quality infrastructure projects across the region and supporting infrastructure investment in low- and middle-income countries. The United States and Australia are also partnering with Japan to support digital projects that improve access to digital services in the Pacific. The U.S. International Development Finance Corporation and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation will, subject to final approvals, provide \$50 million each in credit guarantees for Export Finance Australia's financing package, which was provided to support Telstra's acquisition of Digicel Pacific's telecom assets in Papua New Guinea and the Pacific, that will assist network upgrades to improve security and performance.

The principals emphasized the importance of diverse, resilient, and sustainable supplies of critical minerals throughout the energy transition value chain and to our economic and national security. Both countries are committed to working bilaterally and with like-minded countries through forums such as the Minerals Security Partnership, Energy Resource Governance

Initiative, Conference on Critical Materials and Minerals, and International Energy Agency to identify and develop critical minerals extraction, processing, and manufacturing opportunities to secure supply chains essential to clean energy, electric vehicles, semiconductors, aerospace, and defense, among other sectors. Both countries plan to work with industry and international partners to promote high environmental, social, and governance standards for critical minerals production and processing.

Defense and Security

The principals decided to formalize the Enhanced Force Posture Cooperation announced in 2021 as 'Force Posture Initiatives' under the Force Posture Agreement. In doing so, these areas of cooperation—Enhanced Land Cooperation, Enhanced Maritime Cooperation, and the Combined Logistics, Sustainment, and Maintenance Enterprise—will sit alongside the existing initiatives that were announced in 2011. They affirmed that Australia and the United States would continue the rotational presence of U.S. capabilities in Australia, across air, land, and maritime domains. This would include U.S. Bomber Task Force rotations, fighters, and future rotations of U.S. Navy and U.S. Army capabilities. The principals decided to identify priority locations in Australia to support enhanced U.S. force posture with associated infrastructure, including runway improvements, parking aprons, fuel infrastructure, explosive ordnance storage infrastructure, and facilities to support the workforce.

Recognizing logistics cooperation is a key line of effort for force posture cooperation, the principals decided to preposition stores, munitions, and fuel in support of U.S. capabilities in Australia and to demonstrate logistics interoperability through joint exercises. To support Enhanced Air Cooperation, Australia and the United States committed to co-develop agile logistics at nominated airfields—including at bare bases in northern Australia—to support more responsive and resilient rotations of U.S. aircraft. Further, to strengthen U.S. land presence, the principals decided to expand locations for U.S. Army and U.S. Marine Corps forces, to enable exercises, activities, and further opportunities for regional engagement, including in the context of Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief support to the region.

Consistent with the recent Australia, Japan, and United States Trilateral Defense Ministers' Meeting commitment to advance concrete and practical security initiatives, the principals decided to enhance trilateral defense cooperation activities and invite Japan to increase its participation in Force Posture Initiatives in Australia.

The principals commended the significant progress AUKUS partners have made on developing the optimal pathway for Australia to acquire a conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarine capability at the earliest date possible. They confirmed that the AUKUS partners are on track to announce a pathway forward by early 2023. They reaffirmed AUKUS partners' commitment to setting the highest possible non-proliferation standards and to continue working transparently with the International Atomic Energy Agency towards an approach that will strengthen the non-proliferation regime. They further lauded AUKUS efforts on the trilateral development of advanced capabilities for deterrence and operational effectiveness.

The principals condemned in the strongest possible terms Russia's illegal and immoral invasion of Ukraine. They once again called on Russia to immediately, completely, and unconditionally withdraw its forces from within the internationally recognized borders of Ukraine. They noted that Russia's nuclear threats are a serious and unacceptable menace to the peace and security of the entire international community, and that the use of nuclear weapons would be met with resolute responses by the international community.

The principals committed to continued support for Ukraine's rightful resistance to Russia's naked aggression, and to hold individuals, entities, and nations that facilitate Moscow's war on Ukraine to account for the extreme suffering they have helped unleash on the Ukrainian people. They recognized that Russia's war is affecting food security, energy, agriculture, and fertilizer imports by countries globally, hampering regional economic recovery from the pandemic. They called on Russia to continue participating in the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which reduces the prices of essential grains, cereals, and oil.

They also committed to enhance cooperation to prevent proliferation of nuclear or other weapons of mass destruction, and to defend the global multilateral non-proliferation architecture, including the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

Securing our Technological Edge

The principals emphasized that robust industry and technological innovation are fundamental to promoting positive social and economic outcomes. They highlighted how our bilateral partnership in critical and emerging technologies helps to provide a model for the entire Indo-Pacific region. This includes joint capacity building and outreach to Southeast Asia and other

Indo-Pacific partners on responsible deployment of new technologies like artificial intelligence and facial recognition.

The United States also reaffirmed its support for Australia's Guided Weapon and Explosive Ordnance (GWEO) Enterprise, given the criticality of resilient supply chains. The principals committed to locally maintain, repair, and overhaul more priority munitions in Australia to improve existing stock holdings through GWEO.

The principals welcomed the robust technology and capability collaboration being undertaken across the Alliance and noted the criticality of combining strengths to effectively respond to the tougher strategic environment. The principals committed to strengthening efforts to better streamline and facilitate technology transfer and information sharing, including under the Australia-United States Defense Trade Cooperation Treaty. They also committed to work closely on future E-7A Wedgetail Airborne Early Warning and Control Aircraft cooperation, including through the training of United States Air Force personnel by the Royal Australian Air Force in Australia.

The principals decided to enhance space cooperation and space domain awareness and strengthen assured access to space through future bilateral space arrangements. They also acknowledged an important milestone in bilateral space collaboration, with the U.S.-built Space Surveillance Telescope, recently marking initial operating capability in Western Australia in September 2022.

Australia looks forward to hosting the next AUSMIN in 2023.

End Text

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