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Joint Statement on Australia-U.S. Ministerial Consultations (AUSMIN) 2023

July 29, 2023

The Governments of Australia and the United States of America released the following statement on the occasion of the 33rd Australia-United States Ministerial Consultations (AUSMIN).

Minister for Foreign Affairs Penny Wong and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence Richard Marles hosted the U.S. Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken and Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III on 29 July in Brisbane to advance the Australia-U.S. Alliance and their cooperation in the Indo-Pacific and globally. Building on the high tempo of engagement between leaders and ministers, including the meeting between Prime Minister Albanese and President Biden in May 2023, the Ministers and Secretaries (the principals) determined that the Alliance has never been stronger. Based on a bond of shared values, it remains a partnership of strategic interest – premised on a common determination to preserve stability, prosperity, and peace.

All four principals acknowledged the traditional custodians of the land upon which AUSMIN took place and highlighted the ancient and enduring links between Australia's First Nations people and Country. They committed to ensuring the voices of First Nations people are heard at the international level, and to draw on their knowledge and experience to address shared challenges, such as climate change. They committed to work together to elevate Indigenous People's business interests, including through the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) and bilateral initiatives.

Shaping an Open, Stable and Prosperous Indo-Pacific, Together

The principals committed to expand collaboration—bilaterally and with regional partners and institutions, principally ASEAN and the Pacific Islands Forum—to ensure an Indo-Pacific that is open, stable, peaceful, prosperous, and respectful of sovereignty, human rights, and international law. They committed to further enhance engagement in the Indo-Pacific – underpinned by regional partner priorities such as economic and social development, climate change cooperation, security, connectivity, good governance, timely and effective humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, health security, and resilience initiatives.

The principals underscored the vital importance of all states being free to exercise rights and freedoms consistent with international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, including freedom of navigation and overflight and rights to manage and develop marine resources. They reiterated their strong opposition to destabilising actions in the South China Sea, such as unsafe encounters at sea and in the air, the militarisation of disputed features, the dangerous use of coast guard vessels and maritime militia, and efforts to disrupt other countries' offshore resource development. The principals committed to maintaining the steady and long-term presence of Australian and U.S. aircraft and vessels, consistent with international law and in partnership with Southeast Asian and other states, to promote stability and security in the region's vital international waterways, including the South China Sea. They also committed to strengthen their support in building the capability of Southeast Asian partners to manage their maritime domains. The principals further expressed concern about the People's Republic of China's (PRC) excessive maritime claims that are inconsistent with international law and unilateral actions that have raised tensions in the region. The principals reaffirmed the 2016 South China Sea Arbitral Award as final and binding on the parties.

The principals also expressed serious concerns about the situation in the East China Sea – they shared an intention to remain in close communication about the situation there and expressed strong opposition to any destabilising or coercive unilateral actions that increase tensions in the area, undermining peace and stability.

The principals reaffirmed the importance of maintaining peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and their shared opposition to unilateral changes to the status quo. They called for the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues through dialogue, without the threat or use of force or coercion. They emphasised Taiwan's important role as a leading Indo-

Pacific economy and democracy and reiterated their commitment to work together to support Taiwan's meaningful participation in international organisations, to deepen economic, trade, and people-to-people ties and committed to enhance development coordination with Taiwan in the Pacific.

The principals emphasised the imperative for all countries to manage strategic competition responsibly. Australia expressed support for renewed U.S. efforts to establish reliable and open channels of communication with the PRC to manage strategic competition and guard against conflict. The principals encouraged the PRC to engage constructively with the United States and to take steps to promote stability and transparency. They affirmed the importance of cooperating with the PRC to address issues of global and shared interest including climate change, global food and nutrition security, trade, and macroeconomic stability.

The principals noted that Southeast Asia was critical to regional stability and underscored their commitment to work together and with likeminded partners to support Southeast Asia's economic, development and security priorities. They reaffirmed their commitment to ASEAN centrality and ASEAN-led regional architecture including the East Asia Summit (EAS), the ASEAN Regional Forum, and the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus. They emphasised the role of the EAS as the region's premier leaders' forum for addressing strategic challenges and expressed their ongoing support for the practical implementation of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific. They expressed support for Indonesia's priorities as 2023 ASEAN chair and extended their support to Laos as the ASEAN chair in 2024. They repeated their support for Timor-Leste's accession to ASEAN and committed to implement their respective Comprehensive Strategic Partnerships with ASEAN.

The principals reiterated their support for ASEAN-led efforts to respond to the ongoing crisis in Myanmar, and their deep concern for the deteriorating situation. They again urged the Myanmar military regime to implement its commitments under the ASEAN Five-Point Consensus, refrain from violence, release all those unjustly detained, and allow unimpeded humanitarian access. They called for the international community to sustain international pressure on the regime, and urged all countries to avoid lending credibility or military support to the regime as it continues its brutality against the people of Myanmar.

The principals emphasised their commitment to working with Pacific Island Countries through existing regional architecture, recognising the centrality of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), and to support the objectives of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent. They would continue to consult and be guided by Pacific priorities and encouraged other partners to similarly pursue best practice engagement that is transparent and places Pacific interests first.

The principals reaffirmed their confidence that Partners in the Blue Pacific (PBP) is enhancing capacity for likeminded countries to coordinate and pool resources in support of the priorities and needs of Pacific Island Countries. They agreed to work closely with PBP partners towards delivering initiatives on climate action, cyber capacity-building, and humanitarian warehousing.

The principals committed to pursue further joint financing for sustainable, resilient infrastructure in the region. Australia welcomed U.S. commitment to explore new grant funding for infrastructure projects in the Pacific, and its intent to further develop sovereign financing capacity to meet critical infrastructure needs in the region. They noted their commitment to the Blue Dot Network (BDN) to certify projects that have met global standards for quality infrastructure development, assisting developing countries to better attract private sector investment and close the infrastructure gap.

The principals committed to leverage—in consultation with Pacific Island Countries – the planned deployment of a USCG Cutter to the Pacific in early 2024 to further maritime domain awareness and training in the region and to address maritime security priorities including illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

The principals affirmed their commitment to jointly expand support for Pacific law enforcement and justice sector actors to secure maritime borders, combat transnational crime, and promote the rule of law in accordance with the Boe Declaration on Regional Security and the PIF's 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent. They welcomed deepened cooperation between Australian, Pacific and U.S. law enforcement agencies to improve maritime law enforcement and domain awareness, law enforcement capacity building, border security, and capacity to combat transnational organised crime, cybercrime, money laundering, corruption, and trafficking.

The principals reaffirmed their commitment to enhance interoperability with the militaries of the Pacific, including through Exercises CORAL WARRIOR and CARTWHEEL in Fiji, and Exercise PUKPUK in Papua New Guinea (PNG). They welcomed Fiji, Indonesia, PNG, and Tonga's participation in Exercise TALISMAN SABRE 2023 for the first time, as well as India, Singapore, Thailand, and the Philippines as observers of the largest bilateral military training activity between Australia and the United States.

The principals discussed deepening Quad cooperation between Australia, the United States, India and Japan, in support of an open, stable, and prosperous Indo-Pacific. They welcomed Australia's hosting of the 2023 Quad Leaders' Summit in Hiroshima, where Quad Leaders announced practical initiatives on climate change and clean energy, infrastructure and connectivity, critical and emerging technology, and health security in response to regional priorities. They welcomed the continued progress of the Indo-Pacific Partnership for Maritime Domain Awareness—now in its pilot phase—which is helping to build a more accurate picture of maritime activities and enable responses to IUU fishing, bringing increased transparency to the region. The United States thanked Australia for its leadership in the Quad in 2023, and the principals affirmed their support for India's hosting of the 2024 Quad Leaders' Summit.

The principals welcomed the growing development cooperation across their two systems in the Indo-Pacific and globally, including on development programming, climate and development financing, infrastructure, and health security. The principals welcomed the signing of an MOU between Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the U.S. Agency for International Development to facilitate joint pre-positioning of humanitarian supplies in Australia and PNG, enabling more effective humanitarian responses in the region.

The principals reiterated their commitment to achieving gender equality and advancing the human rights of all women and girls, in all their diversity, globally and through initiatives in the Indo-Pacific. They welcomed the inaugural annual Australia-U.S. Strategic Dialogue on Gender Equality held in June 2023, and their commitment to collaborate on implementing the Women, Peace and Security agenda, ending all forms of sexual and gender-based violence, advancing gender equality in trade and progressing women's economic empowerment.

The principals expressed their continued grave concern about severe human rights violations and abuses in Xinjiang, the erosion of religious, cultural, educational and linguistic rights and freedoms in Tibet, and the systematic erosion of Hong Kong's autonomy and democratic institutions, including through the introduction of the National Security Law and the decision of Hong Kong authorities to issue arrest warrants for democracy advocates who no longer live in Hong Kong. They strongly condemned ongoing human rights violations and abuses in Iran, including the persecution of women and girls, aggressive suppression of civil society and discriminatory treatment of ethnic and religious minorities. They also strongly condemned the Taliban for their egregious human rights abuses, particularly the systemic and all-encompassing denial of women and girls exercising their human rights. They expressed a shared commitment to standing with the people of Iran and Afghanistan, particularly women and girls.

Driving Climate Action and the Transition to Clean Energy

The principals committed to deepening cooperation to address the climate crisis through the implementation of the Australia-United States Climate, Critical Minerals and Clean Energy Transformation Compact announced by Prime Minister Albanese and President Biden in May 2023. They reaffirmed the existential threat posed by climate change and underscored the importance of working together to mitigate its global impacts. This aligns with the shared goal of keeping a global average temperature rise of 1.5 degrees Celsius within reach.

The principals acknowledged clean energy transformation as fundamental to global climate action and reaffirmed the important role of the Compact in enhancing integration between Australia and U.S. clean energy and critical minerals industries to unlock economic growth, drive down emissions, and build regional energy security. They recognised the importance of the Quad Statement of Principles on Clean Energy Supply Chains and Quad Clean Energy Supply Chains Diversification Program in facilitating a coordinated approach to the clean energy transition in the Indo-Pacific.

The United States welcomed Australia's bid to host COP31 with Pacific partners. The principals reiterated their unwavering support for the Pacific in dealing with the impacts of climate change – which present daily challenges for, and have a disproportionate impact on,

communities and governments in the region. Recognising this, they agreed it was vital to accelerate implementation of the Compact as soon as possible, including by supporting the preparatory work for the Pacific Resilience Facility.

Building on the establishment of the Senior Officials' Working Group on Climate Security Risk, the principals committed to strengthening coordination on climate security initiatives, such as enhanced information sharing, collaboration on climate risk assessments, and the integration of climate considerations into existing military exercises and planning.

The principals reiterated their commitment to strengthen coordination with regional partners on climate mitigation, adaptation, and resilience, especially in consideration of those most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, including women, girls, and First Nations people. They will continue to share expertise on climate finance and clean energy investment, including development of potential new and innovative financial approaches to increase private investment into the region's net zero transition and resilience needs. The principals also agreed on the need to provide greater opportunities for First Nations people to contribute to and benefit from the clean energy transition, noting their unique expertise in environmental management.

Defence and Security Cooperation

The principals reaffirmed their shared commitment to operationalise the Alliance, including through Enhanced Force Posture Cooperation. They underscored that their cooperation was based on a foundation of trust, a long record of achievement and a shared vision for upholding an open and stable international order. They recalled the Force Posture Agreement, which recognises the mutual benefits to Australia and the United States from access to facilities and areas in Australia by the United States Armed Forces for activities and that such access and use is on a rotational basis, as mutually determined, and at the invitation of Australia, with full respect and observance of both Australia and U.S. sovereignty.

The principals reaffirmed their commitment to deliver the ambitious trajectory of Enhanced Force Posture Cooperation across land, maritime, and air domains, as well as the Combined Logistics, Sustainment and Maintenance Enterprise (CoLSME). They declared Enhanced

Space Cooperation as a new Force Posture Initiative to enable closer cooperation in this critical operational domain. They also announced their intent to increase space integration and cooperation in existing operations and exercises.

The principals affirmed their intention to continue to progress upgrades at key Australian bases in the north, including RAAF Bases Darwin and Tindal, supported by site surveys to scope additional upgrades at new locations, RAAF Bases Scherger and Curtin. Through Enhanced Air Cooperation, they announced their intent to rotate U.S. Navy Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aircraft in Australia to enhance regional maritime domain awareness, with an ambition of inviting likeminded partners to participate in the future.

Through Enhanced Maritime Cooperation, the principals noted their intention to conduct more regular and longer visits of U.S. SSNs from 2023 to Australia, with a focus on HMAS Stirling. These visits would help build Australia's capacity in preparation for Submarine Rotational Force-West, an important milestone for the AUKUS Optimal Pathway that would commence as early as 2027.

The principals affirmed their intent to enable a regular rotation of U.S. Army Watercraft in Australia, commencing with participation in Exercise TALISMAN SABRE this month, and noted the benefits for interoperability and regional engagement. Through the CoLSME, Australia and the United States announced their intent to conduct a proof of principle prepositioning of U.S. Army stores and materiel in Bandiana, Australia following Exercise TALISMAN SABRE 2023. This is a precursor to the longer-term establishment of an enduring Logistics Support Area in Queensland—designed to enhance interoperability and accelerate the ability to respond to regional crises.

The principals welcomed the commitment at the Australia, Japan and U.S. Trilateral Defense Ministers' Meeting in June to develop a roadmap for enhanced trilateral cooperation in Australia. The roadmap will develop concrete proposals for trilateral cooperation that will increase Japanese participation in exercises and training related activities in Australia including F-35 Joint Strike Fighter training and cooperation. Enhancing trilateral interoperability is an important investment in credible, effective deterrence.

Building upon intent shared at this year's Trilateral Defense Ministerial Meeting, the principals agreed to enhance trilateral Integrated Air and Missile Defence (IAMD) cooperation with Japan, including through involvement of attendees from all three countries in their respective bilateral IAMD policy discussions, where appropriate.

As the United States develops its enhanced IAMD architecture on Guam and elsewhere in the Indo-Pacific region, the principals affirmed their intent to work together closely to identify areas and activities where bilateral cooperation can be expanded, including strengthened operational collaboration on IAMD-related military exercises.

The principals committed to explore opportunities to further deepen cooperation with partners, including Japan, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, and the Republic of Korea, noting the dividend for security and stability in the Indo-Pacific.

The principals agreed to establish Combined Intelligence Centre – Australia within Australia's Defence Intelligence Organisation by 2024. The Centre would further enhance the long-standing intelligence cooperation between the Australian Defence Intelligence Organisation and the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency, focused on analysing issues of shared strategic concern in the Indo-Pacific.

Shared Commitment to Global Security

The principals committed to upholding a global order based on international law, including the fundamental principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity. They condemned Russia's unlawful and immoral war against Ukraine, and again called on Russia to immediately, completely, and unconditionally withdraw its forces from within the internationally recognised borders of Ukraine. The principals emphasised that Russia's war is causing immense human suffering and exacerbating existing fragilities in the global economy. They condemned Russia's weaponisation of food, including its decision to end its participation in the Black Sea Grain Initiative and its continued attacks on Ukrainian agriculture and export infrastructure. The principals called on all those with influence on Russia, particularly China, to exert it now to end the war. They noted Russia's nuclear threats were a serious and unacceptable menace to international peace and security, and that the use of nuclear weapons would be met with resolute responses by the international community.

The principals denounced Iran's destabilising behaviour, including its wrongful detention of foreign and dual nationals and targeting, intimidation, and harassment of dissidents overseas, its nuclear-related expansions, proliferation of ballistic missiles, support for armed proxies, and threats to shipping and freedom of navigation in the Gulf. They also condemned Iran's provision of drones to Russia for use in Russia's war against Ukraine.

The principals strongly condemned the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) unprecedented series of unlawful ballistic missile launches since 2022 and continued development of its ballistic missile and nuclear weapons programs which are prohibited by multiple UN Security Council resolutions. They noted with grave concern continuing reports of severe violations of human rights in the DPRK.

They noted with concern reports that the DPRK was conducting increasingly sophisticated cyber-attacks against financial institutions and cryptocurrency exchanges to raise illicit funds for these programs and called for the complete denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula consistent with UN Security Council resolutions. They further encouraged the DPRK to immediately return to constructive dialogue.

The principals committed to enhance cooperation to prevent proliferation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, and to strengthen the global multilateral non-proliferation architecture, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation and disarmament regime and the IAEA safeguards system, including through working to promote universal adoption of the Additional Protocol.

The principals reiterated shared concerns about the increased scale and severity of malicious cyber activity and committed to hold to account those that engage in unacceptable behaviour in cyberspace. The principals reiterated their support for the UN Open Ended Working Group and the UN Programme of Action to advance responsible state behaviour in cyberspace and protect an open, secure, stable, accessible and peaceful cyberspace founded upon international law and norms. They also underscored their ambition for the UN Open-Ended Working Group on Reducing Space Threats through Norms, Rules, and Principles of Responsible Behaviours to produce outcomes and recommendations in its final session in August that will bolster security, transparency, stability, predictability, and trust in outer space.

The principals reiterated their shared commitment to the safe and ethical development of critical technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI) and quantum. Australia congratulated the Biden-Harris Administration for securing the eight voluntary commitments from industry to manage the risks posed by AI and noted that it is currently reviewing its regulatory framework for AI.

Securing Our Technological Edge

The principals reaffirmed the importance of maximising the strategic and technological advantage of the Alliance by combining strengths and pooling resources in an age of heightened strategic competition. They lauded the progress made since the last AUSMIN in December 2022 to streamline defence trade controls and information sharing between the two countries. The principals reiterated their joint commitment to security standards to safeguard sensitive technology and information. The Governments of Australia and the United States are examining their export control regimes to streamline the flow of defence trade.

The principals committed to collaborate on critical technologies and innovation to ensure the Alliance's asymmetrical capability edge and to explore opportunities for regional co-development, co-production, and co-sustainment aligned to agreed capability priorities. They welcomed opportunities for future collaboration between Australia's Advanced Strategic Capabilities Accelerator and the U.S. Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency and Strategic Capabilities Office including on synergies for planned capability programs.

The principals agreed to deepen cooperation on Australia's Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance Enterprise by collaborating on a flexible guided weapons production capability in Australia, with an initial focus on the potential for co-production of Guided Multiple Launch Rocket Systems by 2025. This is key to expanding the combined industrial power of the Alliance and to building Australia's industrial infrastructure and skilled workforce. The principals reaffirmed their commitment to address global supply chain constraints and to transfer technical data for the M795 155mm artillery shell in support of future production in Australia. They reaffirmed their commitment to progress the maintenance, repair, overhaul, and upgrade of priority munitions in Australia, noting this would enhance supply chain resilience, with an initial focus on MK-48 heavyweight torpedoes and SM-2 missiles.

The principals welcomed progress under the AUKUS partnership towards Australia's acquisition of a conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarine capability and the development of advanced capabilities to safeguard stability and security in the Indo-Pacific. They reaffirmed their commitment to transparency and urged others to take a similar approach to their capability development. The principals reaffirmed their commitment to set the highest nuclear non-proliferation standard. The United States reiterated its confidence that the non-proliferation approach Australia is developing in consultation with the International Atomic Energy Agency would set the strongest precedent for the acquisition of a nuclear-powered submarine capability. The principals recognised the strong progress made to implementing the AUKUS Optimal Pathway since it was announced, including the establishment of the Australian Submarine Agency on 1 July 2023. They welcomed the embedding of Australian Government personnel within the U.S. submarine industrial base and Australians deployed on U.S. submarines as a way for Australia to progressively develop the skills, knowledge, and expertise required to operate, maintain, and steward nuclear-powered submarines under the AUKUS Optimal Pathway.

Developing Trusted Regional Trade Infrastructure and Resilient Supply Chains to Build Economic Resilience

The principals reiterated their commitment to a rules-based international trading system. They opposed economic coercion in all its forms and recognised the importance of multilateral institutions and norms which promote free, fair, and open international trade.

The principals look forward to the substantial conclusion of negotiations for the remaining IPEF agreements on trade, clean economy, and fair economy, in support of IPEF's vision for a free and open, connected, prosperous, resilient, inclusive, and secure Indo-Pacific region. Working together with 12 other IPEF partners, Australia and the United States seek to address economic challenges and opportunities, including through high-standard commitments related to trade, supply chains, clean energy, and anti-corruption and tax. They affirmed their commitment to ensuring that IPEF delivers for everyone. They commended the substantial conclusion of negotiations for the IPEF Supply Chains Agreement and reaffirmed their respective commitment to quick implementation in order to deliver concrete benefits as soon as possible.

The principals welcomed the collaboration and progress made during the United States' APEC host year, including at the APEC Ministers Responsible for Trade Meeting and the Transportation Ministerial Meeting. They highlighted and acknowledged the importance of APEC as the premier economic forum in the region, which aims to create greater prosperity for the people of the region including by advancing a free, fair, and open trade and investment environment, sustainable economic growth, and women's economic empowerment, and building a more interconnected, innovative, and inclusive APEC region. They also agreed to continue to work cooperatively toward the successful conclusion of the APEC year, including at the APEC Ministerial Meeting and the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting this November.

The principals highlighted their ongoing cooperation to build their shared economic security and economic resilience in a time of heightened competition. They recognised the value of the annual Australia-U.S. Strategic Commercial Dialogue to advance our shared geoeconomic and commercial interests across the nexus of economic, foreign, and national security policy.

The United States looks forward to hosting the next AUSMIN in 2024.

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