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AUKUS Partners Demonstrate Advanced Capabilities Trial

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Trilateral AUKUS partners successfully demonstrated a trial of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Autonomy under the Advanced Capabilities pillar (Pillar II), April 28 in the UK.

U.S. delegates joined their Australian and UK counterparts to observe the first AUKUS artificial intelligence (AI) and autonomy trial, held at Upavon in Wiltshire, UK, with the aim of rapidly driving these technologies into responsible military use.

The work saw the initial joint deployment of Australian, UK and U.S. AI-enabled assets in a collaborative swarm to detect and track military targets in a representative environment in real time. Accelerating the development of these technologies will have a massive impact on coalition military capability.

This is the first instance of jointly developed Australian, UK and U.S. AI capability being deployed on coalition autonomous systems for an Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) mission as part of Pillar II.

“Accelerating technological advances will deliver the operational advantages necessary to defeat current and future threats across the battlespace,” said UK General Rob Magowan, Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (Financial and Military Capability).

The trial, organised by the UK's Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl), achieved several firsts for the trilateral, including the live collaborative retraining of models in flight and the interchange of AI models between AUKUS nations. The AUKUS collaboration is looking to rapidly drive these technologies into military capabilities.

“We recognize the immense importance of this collaboration in strengthening our combined national security of our nations,” said Abe Denmark, Senior AUKUS Advisor to the U.S. Secretary of Defense. “The development and deployment of advanced artificial intelligence technologies have the potential to transform the way we approach defense and security challenges. This capability demonstration is truly a shared effort, and is a critical step in our trilateral initiative to stay ahead of emerging threats.”

The AUKUS Advanced Capabilities Pillar, known as Pillar II, is pursuing a trilateral program of work on a range of leading-edge technologies and capabilities to promote security and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. Through Pillar II, Australia, the UK, and the US have collaborated to accelerate collective understanding of AI and autonomy technologies, and how to rapidly field robust, trustworthy AI and autonomy in complex operations, while adhering to the shared values of safe and responsible AI.

“This capability of mission-tailored adaptive AI is going to be able to deliver a capability greater than what any country can do alone,” said Hugh Jeffrey, Australian Deputy Secretary for Strategy, Policy and Industry. “That really is the rationale for AUKUS.”

By sharing AI - and the underpinning data to enable it - with one another, Australia, UK, and US militaries can access the best AI, reduce duplication of effort, and ensure interoperability.

“We are pooling our expertise and resources through our AUKUS partnerships, ensuring that our militaries are equipped with the latest and most effective tools to defend our nations and uphold stability around the world,” said Denmark.

The delivery of Advanced Capabilities such as AI and autonomy enables Australia to maintain collective multi-domain awareness, operate seamlessly with our allies and partners, and enhance deterrence in the Indo-Pacific. It demonstrates AUKUS partners’

contribution to a stable, peaceful, and prosperous Indo-Pacific region, complementing our commitment to ASEAN and regional-led security architecture.

“The trial demonstrates the military advantage of AUKUS advanced capabilities, working in coalition to identify, track and counter potential adversaries from a greater distance,” said Magowan. “Service personnel, scientists, and engineers from our three nations combined to develop and share critical information during operations to enhance commanders’ decision making.”

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