

DOD Official Says AUKUS Partnership Strengthens Indo-Pacific Security

Sept. 6, 2023 | By David Vergun , DOD News

The 2022 National Defense Strategy describes China as the most consequential strategic competitor for the coming decades, highlights Indo-Pacific security and stability and underscores the importance of new and fast-evolving technologies to meet the shifting global security environment.



AUKUS, the enhanced trilateral security partnership among Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States is a critical part of how those goals will be achieved, said Mara Karlin. Performing the duties of the deputy undersecretary of defense for policy, she testified today at a Senate Foreign Relations Committee hearing.

In September 2021, leaders of Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States announced the creation of AUKUS.

Under this partnership, Australia has demonstrated a commitment to purchasing conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarines, she said.

"The United States, United Kingdom and Australia have committed to conducting naval nuclear propulsion cooperation in a manner that is fully consistent with our respective legal obligations, and that sets the highest nonproliferation standard. We are moving out swiftly," Karlin said.

This year, three Australian officers have graduated from U.S. nuclear power school and the USS North Carolina, a Virginia-class attack submarine, conducted the first port visit to Australia, she noted.

The U.S. and Australia are also enhancing cooperation on other critical military capabilities.

Spotlight: Focus on Indo-Pacific

"In April, under the auspices of the Artificial Intelligence Working Group, we trilaterally demonstrated the joint deployment of artificial intelligence-enabled assets in a collaborative swarm to detect and track military targets in real time," Karlin said.

Karlin noted that the trilateral partnership isn't only about defense. The State and Commerce departments are also integral to the trilateral relationship, as is the support of Congress.



There are several areas which require congressional legislation, she said, including authorization to sell Virginia-class submarines to Australia as an interim capability, training Australia's submarine workforce and enabling export licensing exemptions.

"We cannot implement AUKUS without your critical support in all of these areas," she said.

The U.S. needs to expand defense cooperation with partners in the Indo-Pacific region even more, she said. "The U.S. network of alliances and partnerships is a strategic advantage that competitors cannot match."

Hosted by Defense Media Activity - WEB.mil