

DOD Plans Indo-Pacific Innovation Challenge

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Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III today announced the start of a series of defense innovation challenges beginning early next year and involving industry partners in AUKUS, the trilateral security partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States.



The challenges will focus on development of improved electronic warfare systems, he said.

In making the announcement at a press conference in Mountain View, California, Austin was joined by Australian Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles, who also serves as defense minister, and British Defense Secretary Grant Shapps.



The conference took place during a visit to the Defense Innovation Unit at Moffett Field. DIU is the department's premier organization for accelerating the adoption of commercial technology.

The goal of AUKUS, Austin said, is a free and open Indo-Pacific region.



The defense leaders at DIU saw capability demonstrations focused on such things as artificial intelligence, integrated air defense systems, tactical augmented reality, space architecture and virtual training for air dominance.

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A senior defense official said that AUKUS is collaborating on artificial intelligence, autonomy, advanced cyber, electronic warfare, hypersonics, counterhypersonics, quantum technologies and undersea warfare.



The official also said the three nations are also establishing an AUKUS Industry Forum with trilateral government and industry representatives to help inform policy, technical and commercial frameworks to facilitate the development and delivery of advanced capabilities. The initial meeting of that forum will occur in the first half of 2024.

The official noted that work is on pace for the nuclear-powered, conventionally-armed attack submarine program.

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