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Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III Statement on Two-Year Anniversary of AUKUS

Sept. 15, 2023

Two years ago, the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia established a once-in-a-generation partnership through AUKUS. As close allies, we set out together on an ambitious mission to strengthen the industrial capacities of our three proud democracies, to expand our collective undersea presence, and to deepen our interoperability—and by doing so, to help secure a free and open Indo-Pacific.

I am incredibly proud of the tireless work of this Department and our U.K. and Australian counterparts, and I am confident in the bright future of our historic partnership. Working together over these past two years, we have accelerated efforts toward our common goals faster than anyone would have thought possible.

Just this year, the first Australian officers graduated from U.S. Nuclear Power School alongside America's most promising Sailors. Across the ocean, the submariners of USS North Carolina upheld our country's promise to increase rotations of attack submarines in Australia as the opening phase of the Optimal Pathway to support Australia's acquisition of conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines. And when we recently demonstrated the trilateral deployment of artificial intelligence-enabled assets, we proved that AUKUS can deliver on combined advanced capabilities.

AUKUS is breaking down barriers to strengthen cooperation among the U.K. and Australia and their defense industries. With continued support from our U.S. interagency colleagues

and Congress, I am confident that we will be able to realize the full potential of this groundbreaking partnership.

AUKUS reaffirms our three democracies' bedrock commitment to an international system that upholds the rule of law and insists on the peaceful resolution of disputes, free from coercion, threats, or violence. At the very heart of this free and proud alliance are our people. Today, we not only celebrate this partnership but also the countless individuals who have shaped the success of AUKUS.

As we commemorate this important milestone, I am deeply grateful to everyone involved in the AUKUS journey. We look forward to many more years of cooperation, growth, and solidarity. Together, we will continue to pave the path toward a safer and more secure world.

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