

Speech

Nuclear safeguards: AUKUS statement to the IAEA Board of Governors

UK Deputy Representative Nicola Murray gave a statement on behalf of Australia, the UK and the US about AUKUS safeguards under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

From: [Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office](#) ([/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-development-office](#)) and Nicola Murray, Deputy Permanent Representative at the UK Mission to the UN and other International Organisations, Vienna

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Statement made by the UK on behalf of AUKUS partners under agenda item 9: transfer of the nuclear materials in the context of AUKUS and its safeguards in all aspects under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT):

Chair, I take the floor on behalf of Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States to respond to comments made regarding Australia's acquisition of naval nuclear propulsion technology.

In response to the inclusion of this politically-motivated, artificial and unnecessary agenda item, we refer Board members to our note verbale dated 28 February. We regret that we must continue to clarify for the record that the item proposed does not, and has never, enjoyed consensus support and is not a standing agenda item.

In order to support the Board's efforts to dedicate its limited time to address genuinely pressing issues, we have not taken procedural action against the addition of this agenda item. But to be clear, in common with many other Board members, that does not mean we support it.

As we have done at previous Board meetings, an [update will be provided on Australia's naval nuclear propulsion programme](https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/australias-naval-nuclear-propulsion-aukus-update-to-iaea-board-of-governors) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/australias-naval-nuclear-propulsion-aukus-update-to-iaea-board-of-governors>) under Any Other Business. Regrettably though, we must again invoke our Right of Reply to address some of the misleading assertions made today.

We continue to engage consistently, openly and transparently with member states. Unfortunately, attempts at genuine discussion of this issue continue to be subject to persistent attempts designed to sow mistrust in the Agency or undermine its independent mandate. As one delegation stated yesterday, it is important that the Secretariat's cooperation with certain member states not be politicised.

Chair, the Director General has already provided clear answers to questions raised today and in previous meetings:

- first, the Agency already has “the necessary experience to develop the arrangements related to the use of nuclear material for naval nuclear propulsion in accordance with the Statute and relevant safeguards agreements”
- second, the nuclear material transferred to Australia will remain subject to IAEA monitoring, in accordance with Australia's CSA and Additional Protocol
- third, Australia's Article 14 arrangement will allow the Agency to continue to fulfil the technical safeguards objectives established for Australia
- fourth, the Board has already authorized the Director General to conclude and implement Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements on the basis of INFCIRC/153, which provides for the establishment of Article 14 arrangements.
- fifth, for any CSA state acquiring naval nuclear propulsion technology, the Director General will transmit the Article 14 arrangement to the Board for ‘appropriate action’. To suggest that the Board will somehow be bypassed is categorically false

Chair, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States – along with the majority of the Board – continue to oppose proposals for standing agenda items, parallel processes, or any other efforts that undermine and politicise the independent technical mandate of the IAEA. We reject any suggestion that the Agency does not have a mandate to engage bilaterally with member states on issues relevant to the implementation of safeguards. The majority of member states that have voiced an opinion have been clear that there is no need for this agenda item.

We welcome constructive Board discussions on NNP on the basis of reports by the Director General, under apolitical agenda items. Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States have provided updates on our ongoing engagement with the IAEA at Board meetings since the initial AUKUS announcement in September 2021.

We will continue to engage in good faith with member states on genuine questions, consistent with our approach to maintaining open and transparent engagement, and welcome the Director General's continued commitment to provide updates on naval nuclear propulsion, as he deems appropriate. Thank you, Chair.

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