

News story

Update on AUKUS export reform progress

The UK warmly welcomes the significant progress made with our partners the US and Australia to advance the AUKUS trilateral partnership, working together for a free and open Indo-Pacific and thereby enhancing stability, security, and prosperity in the region.

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The UK and the US are not only assisting Australia in acquiring nuclear-powered submarines, we are working closely trilaterally to strengthen and improve interoperability and innovation in areas such as hypersonic and counter-hypersonic capabilities, electronic warfare, quantum technology, artificial intelligence and automation, cyber, and additional undersea capabilities.

In March 2023, our three Leaders met in San Diego to inaugurate the AUKUS partnership. Since then, we have been working tirelessly to advance the practical aspects. As part of this, to support and sustain our work, and to maximise the potential of technological advances, the 2024 US National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) allowed exemptions to the US International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) for the UK and Australia.

Yesterday, 18 April, the US Commerce Department also announced an expansion of the scope of licence-free trade to AUKUS nations under the Export Administration Regulations.

UK and Australia are on track to meet the requirements of the NDAA and benefit from the exemptions. These will significantly reduce licensing requirements for both the UK and Australia and enable the closest possible collaboration between our scientists and engineers and our defence industries as a sector.

The reforms will make it easier for our public and private sector security institutions to deliver a more integrated defence industrial base, secure jobs for our talented citizens and identify new opportunities for trilateral capability development.

As we reach the first 120-day milestone identified in the NDAA, we are pleased to say that, as the next step in this process, the US will, in the next few weeks, be consulting with defence industry to ensure that implementation of the planned AUKUS exemptions realises their full potential.

The UK will in this period also be finalising the last technical steps to benefit from the NDAA provisions. We are confident that by the next 120-day period we will have completed all the requirements for full implementation of the ITAR exemptions.

UK, Australia and the US have long been indispensable partners and allies, across the globe. With these ground-breaking reforms, our shared values and strategic outlook will be underpinned by significantly enhanced capabilities and the prospect of even greater collaboration to come.