

OPENING STATEMENT

KIN MOY

**PRINCIPAL DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY
BUREAU OF EAST ASIAN AND PACIFIC AFFAIRS**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE

September 6, 2023

Chairman Menendez and Ranking Member Risch, thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today.

Almost two years ago, President Biden, alongside the leaders from Australia and the United Kingdom, announced the creation of an enhanced trilateral security partnership, or “AUKUS.” AUKUS is a modernization of our longstanding partnerships with Australia and the UK to address the security challenges of the future, and support peace, prosperity, and stability in the Indo-Pacific and beyond. AUKUS deepens our diplomatic, security, and defense cooperation in line with President Biden’s vision of working with our partners and allies to solve global challenges. AUKUS enhances the United States’ security, that of our allies and partners, and contributes to global peace and security.

Since its announcement, much work has been done to actualize this commitment. On March 13, President Biden, Australian Prime Minister Albanese and UK Prime Minister Sunak announced the optimal pathway for Australia to acquire conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines. AUKUS partners are pursuing a multi-phased approach over the coming decades with the goal to deliver the submarine capability to Australia at the earliest possible date. Under Pillar II of the partnership, we continue to scope a variety of advanced capabilities and ensure that our defense export systems are prepared to meet this challenge. These commitments have critical implications for our foreign policy and national security.

AUKUS is a critical element of our efforts to advance implementation of the U.S. National Security, Defense, and Indo-Pacific strategies, with the goal of

advancing a free and open, connected, secure, resilient, and prosperous Indo-Pacific. AUKUS supports our shared vision of a world that is stable and prosperous, where countries thrive, trade, and collaborate to address shared challenges, and where all countries are empowered to make their own sovereign decisions free from coercion. A free and open Indo-Pacific region is vital to global security and prosperity, which is why we must deepen cooperation now. Like our other partners across the Atlantic and Indo-Pacific, AUKUS partners understand the critical role the region plays in global trade and global prosperity. Economic growth and prosperity require stability, and predictability – conditions that AUKUS seeks to undergird through enhanced deterrence and security.

Our alliances and partnerships have played a foundational role in contributing to peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific for the last 70 years. AUKUS is a concrete commitment to strengthening these partnerships by integrating our partners in Europe and Asia together, recognizing that our world is increasingly interconnected and that the security of all the world's regions – and our security here at home – are all inextricably linked. It reflects the critical role that both our European and Indo-Pacific partners will play in supporting our shared vision for enhancing peace and security in the Indo-Pacific and around the world.

AUKUS will bolster the security of the United States, both through the development of cutting-edge defense and security capabilities, but also by ensuring our allies are best positioned to contribute to their own security and our shared interests as they continue to modernize their military capabilities. AUKUS is more than submarines and defense projects. It is a generational commitment to working with two of our closest Allies to strengthen security cooperation to meet the many multifaceted challenges of the future. It is also an unparalleled opportunity to boost the defense capabilities, industrial bases, and economies of all three nations, while increasing investment and economic prosperity here at home. It will bring together our sailors, our scientists, and our industries to showcase the best of American ingenuity and technology, along with that of our allies.

With the optimal pathway now set, the hard work of implementation begins. The size, scope, and complexity of actualizing this partnership cannot be understated or assumed, and work must advance now to deliver a capability to meet the moment as the international security environment continues to rapidly change.

For AUKUS to succeed, it will take the full support of the U.S. government, Congress, and the American worker, working alongside the same constituencies in both Australia and the UK. The continued, bipartisan support of Congress is critical. Passing relevant U.S. AUKUS legislation is not only needed to enable progress, but also to send a critical message that will be received around the world: to U.S. industry to provide assurance to plan and succeed; to our two closest allies, Australia and the UK, to demonstrate that we stand together as we advance an irreversible plan to bolster joint security; to our other allies and partners around the world, demonstrating that the United States delivers on its commitments; and to our adversaries and competitors to demonstrate the seriousness of our intent and resolve to maintain continued international peace and prosperity.

Thank you for your support and consideration.