

AUKUS Revamped: The Complete Militarisation of Australia

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Region: [Oceania](#)

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There is much to loathe about the AUKUS security agreement between Canberra, Washington and London. Of the three conspirators against stability in the Indo and Asia Pacific, one stands out as the shouldering platform, the sustaining force, the political and military stuffing. But Australian propagandists and proselytisers of the US credo of power prefer to see it differently, repeatedly telling the good citizens down under that they are onto something truly special in being a military extension, the gargantuan annexe of another's interests. Give them nuclear powered submarines, let them feel special, and a false sense of security will follow.

The August 2024 AUSMIN talks in Annapolis, Maryland, held between US **Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III**, US **Secretary of State Antony Blinken**, and their Australian counterparts, **Richard Marles** (Minister of Defence) and **Penny Wong** (Foreign Minister) provided yet another occasion for this grim pantomime. No one could be in doubt who the servitors were.

The [factsheet](#) from the US Department of Defense on the meeting is worth noting for Washington's military capture - no other word describes it - and Australia's sycophantic accommodation. As part of the "Enhanced Force Posture Cooperation," the US and Australia are to advance "key priorities across an ambitious range of force posture cooperation efforts". This is merely a clumsy way of describing the deeper incorporation of Australia's own military requirements into the US military complex "across land, maritime, air, and space domains, as well as the Combined Logistics, Sustainment, and Maintenance Enterprise". US military forces, in short, are to occupy every domain of Australia's defence.

The greedy and speedy US garrisoning of Australia is evident through ongoing "infrastructure investments at key Australian bases in the norther, including RAAF Bases Darwin and Tindal" and "site surveys for potential upgrades at RAAF Bases Curtin, Learmonth, and Scherger." Rotational deployments of US forces to Australia, "including frequent rotations of bombers, fighter aircraft, and Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aircraft" are to increase in number. As any student of US-Australian relations knows, rotation is the disingenuous term used to mask the presence of a permanently stationed force - occupation by another name.

The public relations office has obviously been busy spiking the language with a sense of false equality: the finalising, for instance, by December 2024 of a Memorandum of Understanding on Co-Assembly for Guided Multiple Rocket Systems (GLMRS) - a "co-production"; finalising, by the same date, an MOU "on cooperative Production, Sustainment,

and Follow-on Development of the Precision Strike Missile (PrSM)”; and institutionalising of “US cooperation with Australia’s Guided Weapons and Explosive Ordnance (GWEO) Enterprise”. Everywhere we look, a sense of artificial cooperation under the cover of Washington’s heavy-handed dominance, be it cooperative activities for Integrated Air and Missile Defence, or the hypersonic weapons program, can be found.

In this even more spectacular surrender of sovereignty and submission than previous undertakings, Canberra is promised second hand nuclear-powered toys in the form of Virginia Class submarines, something forever contingent on the wishes and whimsy of the US Congress. But even this contingent state of affairs is sufficient for Australia to bury itself deeper in what has been announced as a *revised* AUKUS agreement. More accurately, it constitutes a touch-up of the November 22, 2021 agreement between the three powers on the Exchange of Naval Nuclear Propulsion Information (ENNPIA).

The ENNPIA [allows](#) the AUKUS parties the means to communicate and exchange relevant Naval Nuclear Propulsion Information (NNPI), including officially Restricted Data (RD) as part of what is described as the “Optimal Pathway” for Australia’s needless acquisition of nuclear powered vessels.

In his [letter](#) to the US House Speaker and President of the Senate, **President Joe Biden** explains the nature of the revision. Less clumsily named than its predecessor, the new arrangements feature an Agreement between the three powers for Cooperation Related to Naval Nuclear Propulsion. In superseding the ENNPIA, it “would permit the continued communication and exchange of NNPI, including certain RD, and would also expand the cooperation between the governments by enabling the transfer of naval nuclear propulsion plants of conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines, including component parts and spare parts thereof, and other related equipment.”

The Agreement further permits the sale of special nuclear material in the welded power units, and other relevant “material as needed for such naval propulsion plants.” Transferrable equipment would include that necessary for research, development, or design of naval propulsion plants. The logistics of manufacture, development, design, manufacture, operation, maintenance, regulation and disposal of the plants is also covered.

Tokenistic remarks about non-proliferation are then made in Biden’s letter. The powers, for instance, commit themselves to “setting the highest nonproliferation standard” while protecting US classified information and intellectual property. This standard is actually pitifully low: Australia has committed itself to proliferation not only by seeking to acquire submarine nuclear propulsion, but by *subsidising* the building of such submarines in US and UK shipyards.

Marles, the persistently reliable spokesman for Australia’s wholesale capitulation to the US war machine, calls the document “the legal underpinning of our commitment to our international obligations so it’s a very significant step down the AUKUS path and again it’s another demonstration that we are making this happen.”

Obligations is the operative word here, given that Australia is burdened by any number of undertakings, be it as a US military asset placed in harm’s way or becoming a radioactive storage dump for all the AUKUS submarine fleets. Marles [insists](#) that the only nuclear waste that will end up on Australian soil will be that generated by Australia. “That is the agreement that we reached with the UK and the US back in March of last year, and so all

this is doing is providing for the legal underpinning of that.”

Given that Australia has no standalone, permanent site to store high-level nuclear waste, even that undertaking is spurious. Nor does the understanding prevent Australia from accepting the waste accruing from the fleets of all the navies. Given the cringing servitude of Canberra, and the admission by the Australian government that they have [made undisclosed “political commitments”](#), such an outcome cannot be ruled out.

Always reliably waspish, former Australian **Labor Prime Minister Paul Keating** gave [his assessment](#) about the latest revelations of the AUSMIN talks. “There’ll be an American force posture now in Australia, involving every domain.” The Albanese government had “fallen for the dinner on the White House lawn.” That, and much more besides.

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