

Defence Secretary Visits Australia to Sign 50-Year AUKUS Treaty, Deepening Defence Partnership

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— Categories: Defence & Security



A UK Defence Secretary visit to Australia has culminated in the signing of a landmark 50-year bilateral treaty that solidifies the AUKUS defence alliance between the United Kingdom (UK) and Australia. The treaty will underpin long-term strategic collaboration, particularly in nuclear-

powered submarine development, intelligence-sharing and defence innovation.

During joint press engagements, Defence Secretary John Healey and Foreign Secretary David Lammy joined Australia's Defence Minister Richard Marles and Foreign Minister Penny Wong to finalise the agreement. The pact commits both nations to the cooperative development and operation of SSN–AUKUS nuclear-powered submarines. Initial vessels will be constructed in the UK, with production transitioning to Australian shipyards in Adelaide from the early 2040s. In total, up to twelve SSN–AUKUS submarines will be built, delivering enhanced deterrence and collective naval capability.

Officials noted the pact will generate significant economic benefits: UK exports related to submarine components and technology are projected to reach £20 billion over 25 years, supporting over 21,000 jobs at peak production, including approximately 7,000 roles in UK shipyards and supply chains.

The visit coincided with the largest military exercise Australia has hosted, Exercise Talisman Sabre, where more than 3,000 British personnel participated alongside allies. This deployment, including the carrier HMS Prince of Wales, underscored the operational dimensions of the AUKUS pact and the UK's commitment to Indo-Pacific security.

Healey described the treaty as “one of Britain's most important defence partnerships,” stating that it confirms AUKUS commitments for the next half-century and drives growth at home while strengthening international security. Lammy added that the UK–UK–Australia relationship remains

“an anchoring friendship in a volatile world,” with the new treaty embodying joint efforts to maintain a free and open Indo-Pacific.

The agreement emerges amid uncertainty surrounding the United States’ (US) future involvement in AUKUS during a broader US-led review. Nonetheless, both governments expressed confidence in the durability of the alliance, positioning the UK–UK–Australia strand as essential regardless of developments in Washington.

From a centre–right standpoint, the treaty exemplifies forward–looking security and economic planning. By investing in sovereign submarine capability, reinforcing industrial capacity, and creating high-skill employment, it embodies principles of strategic self-reliance and pragmatic alliance-building.

Looking ahead, the UK will continue to coordinate defence research, intelligence platforms, and future innovation efforts with Australia through the enhanced bilateral infrastructure the treaty provides. The Defence Industrial Strategy is expected to deliver further gains in technological sovereignty and export growth as implementation progresses.

In summary, the new 50-year AUKUS treaty marks a historic deepening of UK–UK–Australia defence cooperation. It anchors strategic military partnerships, boosts industrial resilience, and affirms the UK’s long-term presence in the Indo-Pacific, anchored in pragmatism and mutual alignment.