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Australia, UK Signal Willingness to Back Taiwan Conflict

July 29, 2025

– Categories: General News



Statements made by British Defence Secretary John Healey during a recent visit to Australia have drawn attention from international observers and policymakers. Speaking aboard the HMS Prince of Wales in Darwin, Healey affirmed the United Kingdom’s commitment to working closely with Australia on shared security challenges, stating that “if we have to fight, as we have done in the past, Australia and the UK are nations that will fight together.” The remarks were delivered as part of Exercise Talisman Sabre 2025, a large-scale military drill involving over 35,000 personnel from 19 nations.

Healey clarified that the UK favors peaceful, diplomatic solutions to regional tensions but emphasized that deterrence through cooperation remains essential. His comments come

as the UK continues to expand its strategic presence in the Indo-Pacific, in line with commitments made under the Integrated Review and the 2021 AUKUS agreement with Australia and the United States. That agreement aims to supply Australia with nuclear-powered submarines and foster deeper technological and defense collaboration.

While Healey did not mention Taiwan or China by name, the context of his statement, delivered during a joint military exercise focused on regional stability, has led some analysts to interpret it as a message of deterrence amid rising tensions in the South China Sea. However, there is no formal joint military strategy between the UK, Australia, and the US regarding Taiwan, and both the UK and Australia continue to support the One-China policy.

Australia has recently made efforts to improve its diplomatic relationship with China. In July 2025, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese met with President Xi Jinping in Beijing, marking continued engagement between the two countries. Nonetheless, Australia remains firmly committed to regional security partnerships and has reiterated its support for AUKUS. This was reaffirmed in the recent signing of the Geelong Treaty, a 50-year bilateral agreement that strengthens defense cooperation between the UK and Australia.

Analysts note that public affirmations of alliance between the UK and Australia serve to demonstrate unity and relevance within the broader Indo-Pacific strategy. While some speculate that the comments were intended to reinforce ties with the United States, such interpretations remain conjectural. Official statements from both governments continue to highlight the value of multilateral cooperation and shared defense goals.

China has not issued a formal response to Healey's remarks. However, the broader context of his visit suggests that regional security signaling remains a core element of UK and Australian foreign policy in an increasingly contested Indo-Pacific landscape.