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Bipartisan US Support Bolsters AUKUS Amid Pentagon Review

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A bipartisan group of U.S. House members strongly endorsed the AUKUS pact in a letter dated 22 July 2025, urging U.S. Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth to uphold the trilateral arrangement between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States. Key figures behind the letter include Representative John Moolenaar (R–Michigan) and Representative Raja Krishnamoorthi (D–Illinois), co-chairs of the House Select

Committee on the Chinese Communist Party, who warned that increased Chinese military assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific underscores AUKUS's importance.

Launched in September 2021, the AUKUS agreement commits to providing Virginia-class nuclear-powered submarines to Australia in the early 2030s and to jointly develop new AUKUS-class submarines with the UK. Australia has invested approximately A\$3 billion in supporting the U.S. submarine industrial base, including a significant payment in 2025.

The Pentagon, under the oversight of Under-Secretary Elbridge Colby, is conducting a review of AUKUS. Concerns have been raised about U.S. submarine availability and whether Australia's capability contributions are adequate in a potential regional conflict scenario.

Australian Defence Industry Minister Pat Conroy has stated that Australia will not pre-commit troops and will always prioritise national interests. Meanwhile, Opposition figures have criticised the Albanese government's defence spending, noting that it remains capped at around 2% of GDP, potentially limiting Australia's ability to fully support AUKUS objectives, particularly as U.S. officials push partner nations to meet NATO-aligned spending benchmarks.

The letter also attracted support from Representatives Michael McCaul, Mike Rogers, Adam Smith, Joe Courtney, and Trent Kelly, underlining congressional determination to maintain AUKUS as a deterrent to regional aggression and a platform for developing advanced systems such as the MQ-28 Ghost Bat.

Australia is also deepening its industrial commitment at home. More than 120 Australian submariners are in training on U.S. submarines, and domestic facilities are being prepared for rotational basing of U.S. and UK submarines. This deepens strategic integration, though questions remain about sustained investment and whether current fiscal policies under the ALP will support long-term alliance obligations.