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UK and Australia Sign 50-Year AUKUS Treaty to Deepen Strategic and Economic Ties

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The United Kingdom and Australia have formalised a 50-year bilateral treaty aimed at strengthening their defence and economic relationship under the AUKUS (Australia–United Kingdom–United States) security partnership. Announced during high-level meetings in Sydney, the agreement cements long-term cooperation on nuclear-powered

submarines and strategic defence technologies, while unlocking significant industrial benefits for both countries.

UK Foreign Secretary David Lammy and Defence Secretary John Healey met with their Australian counterparts, Penny Wong and Richard Marles, to finalise the deal. Central to the treaty is the joint development of the SSN-AUKUS class of nuclear-powered submarines, incorporating cutting-edge UK and US technology. The agreement is projected to support up to £20 billion in UK exports over the next 25 years and create over 7,000 jobs, with more than 21,000 workers employed across UK shipyards and supply chains at peak construction.

This deepened partnership follows the 2024 Australia-UK Ministerial (AUKMIN) meetings and reflects a shared commitment to regional security in both the Indo-Pacific and Euro-Atlantic. It also establishes a framework for collaborative defence production, training, intelligence-sharing, and joint military exercises, including the future hosting of HMS Prince of Wales in Australian waters.

Australia is expected to build at least five SSN-AUKUS submarines, while the UK plans to construct up to twelve. British defence manufacturers, including BAE Systems and Rolls-Royce, will see expanded production and investment at facilities in Barrow-in-Furness and Derby, supporting the submarine programme over the next two decades.

Although a review by the United States Department of Defense has raised concerns about delivery timelines and cost-sharing among AUKUS partners, both UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese have reaffirmed their support for the trilateral alliance. Australia has already made significant financial contributions,

including a recent payment of over one billion US dollars to support AUKUS-linked infrastructure and workforce training.

From a centre-right perspective, this treaty exemplifies practical diplomacy, fortifying the UK's defence capabilities while stimulating industrial growth and export potential. It aligns with post-Brexit goals to reassert Britain's global presence through high-tech partnerships and defence collaboration, all without overreliance on EU frameworks.

In summary, the AUKUS treaty represents a forward-looking platform for security, economic resilience, and technological innovation, ensuring both nations remain influential players in the evolving global order.