

US May Demand Australia Pledge Subs Against China

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Australia could soon be asked to make a serious commitment about its role in any future conflict with China. As part of the Australia-United Kingdom-United States (AUKUS) security pact, the United States is reportedly considering new conditions that would require Australia to guarantee American-made nuclear submarines would be used in coordination with US forces if tensions over Taiwan escalate.

This pressure comes as Prime Minister Anthony Albanese prepares for a six-day trip to China, while his government tries to balance Australia's longstanding alliance with the

United States and its national interests. Just days ago, the Prime Minister publicly reaffirmed Australia's support for its US partnership but made it clear the country will always make decisions based on its priorities first.

The situation has become even more complicated with reports that former US President Donald Trump's administration may also demand Australia pay more money under the \$368 billion submarine agreement. Elbridge Colby, the Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, is leading a review of the pact. He is known for his skepticism about America's security commitments abroad and for pushing a more isolationist "America First" agenda.

According to Politico, Colby's actions have frustrated many within Washington. Some officials say he is determined to scale back US engagement worldwide, which has caused friction not just with American diplomats but also with allied governments. For example, when British defense officials recently visited the Pentagon to discuss deploying an aircraft carrier to Asia, Colby reportedly questioned whether the mission should be canceled altogether.

Back in Australia, there are growing concerns that the Albanese government has been too passive in defending the deal. Opposition finance spokesman James Paterson warned that Australia risks losing influence over critical decisions. He pointed out that Prime Minister Albanese has yet to meet President Trump face-to-face and that Australia's ambassador in Washington may be struggling to gain high-level access.

Meanwhile, Australian Greens Senator Sarah Hanson-Young has called the submarine program a "dud deal," criticizing the growing costs to taxpayers. "The United States is already starting to signal that Australians will have to pay even more," she said.

As Australia navigates this delicate moment, leaders face the challenge of maintaining security ties with Washington while protecting national sovereignty and ensuring taxpayers are not left carrying an even bigger bill.

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