

Proactive Release - AUKUS

02/08/2024

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Some parts of this information release would not be appropriate to release and, if requested, would be withheld under the Official Information Act 1982 (the OIA). Where this is the case, the relevant sections of the OIA that would apply have been identified. Where information has been withheld, no public interest has been identified that would outweigh the reasons for withholding it.

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- 6(b)(i): to protect the passing of information from another government on a confidential basis;
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- 9(2)(f)(iv): to protect the confidentiality of advice tendered by Ministers of the Crown and officials; and
- 9(2)(h): to maintain legal professional privilege.

Briefing for call with Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong: AUKUS

8:45 PM Thursday 9 March [Minister's office to add call details]

Ahead of the AUKUS leaders' announcement on next steps for the partnership, Australia is undertaking a series of calls to brief Aotearoa New Zealand in advance. In addition to your call with Minister Wong, the Minister of Defence and the Prime Minister will speak to their Australian counterparts on 9 March and 13 March respectively.

Pito korero – Talking points

These talking points include the key messages you have agreed with Minister Lit le (in red), combined with additional points (in blue) which you may wish to draw on during the call.

- Thank you for the briefing on the forthcoming Leaders' announcement – we appreciate the early outreach.
- We place great value on our alliance and relationship with Australia. Australia is our most important security partner, and our most important defence relationship.
- We acknowledge the deterioration in the strategic security situation in our region, and that is why we have our defence policy review under way. ^{s6(a), s6(b)(i)}
- AUKUS is a set of arrangements to strengthen security in the region.
- It does not conflict with our existing Five Eyes arrangements
- We are open to non-nuclear cooperation under Pillar 2 of the arrangements.
- New Zealand will remain proudly nuclear free and continue to uphold our obligations including the Treaty of Rotonga.
- s6(a)

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

s (a), s9(2)(g)(i)

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Background

1 The Australian High Commissioner has confirmed that the AUKUS leaders will meet in-person in the US (13 March West Coast US time) ^{s6(a), s6(b)(i), s9(2)(g)(i)}

2 s6(a), s6(b)(i), s9(2)(g)(i)

s6(a), s6(b)(i), s9(2)(g)(i)

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3 s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

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4 s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i) - 1 page withheld



**MANATŪ KAUPAPA
WAONGA**
NEW ZEALAND
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

MOD Ref: MOD-018-2023

MFAT Ref: INTS-47-366

7 March 2023

Minister of Defence
Minister of Foreign Affairs

For action by 9 March 2023
For action by 9 March 2023

AUKUS: Updating New Zealand's Approach

BRIEFING Decision Submission

PURPOSE This submission updates Ministers on key developments regarding AUKUS, previews forthcoming announcements, and seeks approval of New Zealand's updated approach to AUKUS going forward.

Tukunga tūtohua – Recommended referrals

Prime Minister	For concurrence by	13 March 2023
Minister for Trade and Export Growth	For information by	13 March 2023
Associate Minister of Foreign Affairs	For information by	13 March 2023

Taipitopito whakapā – Contact details

NAME	ROLE	DIVISION	WORK PHONE
s9(2)(g)(f)	Unit Manager (acting)	International Security and Disarmament Division, MFAT	s9(2)(a)
	Sen or Analyst	Defence Policy and Planning Division, MoD	

Pito matua – Key points

- Over the past eighteen months, Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States have made significant advances on the AUKUS trilateral military technology partnership.
- The three AUKUS Leaders are expected to meet in-person in the US during the week of 13 March to make a substantive announcement, likely to focus on the details of Australia's acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines – Pillar One of AUKUS. ^{s6(a)}

- ^{s6(a)}

The AUKUS partners have also been closely engaged with the International Atomic Energy Agency to ensure that the nuclear non-proliferation implications are addressed through robust safeguards and verification measures, in line with the three partners' obligations at international law, and to set a high threshold for any other state that seeks to follow the precedent.

- Regional perceptions of and reactions to AUKUS continue to evolve. ^{s6(a)}
- Pillar Two of AUKUS - accelerated cooperation on a range of advanced military technologies and capabilities - has gained momentum. The AUKUS partners have indicated there will be some degree of opening up of Pillar Two to other key partners. ^{s9(2)(g)(i)}
- New Zealand's existing approach to AUKUS, including our key messages, was developed immediately after the September 2021 announcement, ^{s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)}

Officials propose updating New Zealand's approach on two fronts:

- Re-calibrating our key messages, ^{s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)}
- ^{s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)}
- ^{s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)}

Andrew Bridgman
Secretary of Defence

Ben King
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Tūtohu – Recommendations

It is recommended that you:

- | | | |
|---|---|-----------------|
| 1 | Note the key developments in respect of AUKUS. | Yes / No |
| 2 | Note that the AUKUS partners are expected to make a substantive announcement during the week of 13 March about next steps. | Yes / No |
| 3 | Agree that New Zealand should update its approach to AUKUS by recalibrating our key messages. | Yes / No |
| 4 | s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i) | Yes / No |

Hon Andrew Little
Minister of Defence

Date: / /

Hon Nanaia Mahuta
Minister of Foreign Affairs / Minita Take Aorere

Date: / /

Pūrongo – Report

AUKUS: military technology sharing ^{s6(a)}

1. Announced in September 2021, the AUKUS trilateral security partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, is a military technology partnership, focused on advanced capabilities.

2. ^{s6(a)}

This assessment of the deteriorating strategic environment is shared by New Zealand, as reflected in the *Defence Assessment 2021*, ^{s6(a), s9(2)(f)(iv)}

3. ^{s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)}

4. The initial and highest profile initiative under AUKUS is Australia's planned acquisition of at least eight nuclear powered, conventionally armed submarines utilising US and UK nuclear propulsion technology - known as Pillar One of AUKUS. Pillar Two of AUKUS involves accelerated cooperation on a range of advanced military technologies and capabilities¹.

Significant announcements are expected soon

5. Australian, US and UK officials have indicated that **President Biden and Prime Ministers Albanese and Sunak are expected to meet in person in the US during the week of 13 March, and make a substantive announcement about the next steps for AUKUS.** ^{s6(a)}

The mid-March timing aligns with the eighteen-month timeframe set by the AUKUS partners for determining the preferred pathway for Australia's acquisition of nuclear powered submarines.

6. Australian officials have arranged to brief New Zealand in advance of these announcements. ^{s6(a), s6(b)(i)}

the announcements are likely to cover what type of submarine Australia will acquire, where and how these will be constructed, the likely overall costs, and the timeframes for achieving this. Australia will likely also address questions about the capability gap between the retirement of its existing Collins-class submarines, and the entry into service of the new fleet of nuclear powered submarines. While Pillar One of AUKUS is expected to be the primary focus for the trilateral announcement, there may also be further details revealed about Pillar Two and how this will be advanced.

Eighteen months of AUKUS: Key Developments

7. ^{s6(a)}

Prime Minister Albanese has described AUKUS as “the single biggest leap in our defence capability”, and that it further

¹ These technologies and advanced capabilities are: undersea warfare; quantum; artificial intelligence; advanced cyber; hypersonics; electronic warfare; innovation; and information sharing.

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formalised “the three partners’ common values and shared interest in preserving peace and upholding the rules and institutions that secure our region and our world”.

8. For Australia, AUKUS sits alongside the broader Defence Strategic Review, s6(a), s6(b)(i), s9(2)(g)(i)

9. **The AUKUS partners have focused significant effort on engagement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on the non-proliferation implications of AUKUS.** The central focus is determining robust safeguards and verification measures to ensure the highly enriched uranium used as submarine fuel cannot be diverted to other military uses, in order to meet obligations at international law and to set a high threshold for any other state that seeks to follow the precedent set by AUKUS. The IAEA’s first report noted satisfaction with the engagement and transparency shown by the AUKUS partners – a second report is expected later in 2023. s6(a), s6(b)(i)

10. **Regional perceptions of and reactions to AUKUS continue to evolve.** s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

11. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

12. **There has been growing momentum on Pillar Two of AUKUS,** s6(a), s6(b)(i), s9(2)(g)(i)

Pillar Two concentrates on accelerating technologies and capabilities s6(a), s6(b)(i), s9(2)(g)(i)

The AUKUS partners have indicated to New Zealand that **there is in-principle agreement that there will be some degree of opening up of Pillar Two to other key partners.** s6(a)

13. s6(a), s6(b)(i)

Japan and Canada have publicly expressed keen interest in participating in Pillar Two; s6(a), s6(b)(i)

New Zealand’s existing approach to AUKUS

14. New Zealand’s existing approach to AUKUS was determined by Ministers based on advice from officials in October 2021, and informed by subsequent public comments by the

Prime Minister and Ministers, and direct engagement with the AUKUS partners and other partners. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

15. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

16. Eighteen months on, we know considerably more detail about AUKUS, s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

17. Officials consider it timely to update New Zealand's key messages on AUKUS, s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

17.1. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

17.2.

17.3.

17.4.

New Zealand's approach going forward

18. The updated approach proposes changes on two interrelated fronts: (1) re-calibrating our key message on AUKUS; s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

R -calibrated key messages

19. Re-calibrated key messages would build on and expand New Zealand's existing core messages in order to:

19.1. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i) and its overarching objective of bolstering regional security and stability – while maintaining our clear stance on nuclear issues, and our commitment to non-proliferation;

19.2. Acknowledge that New Zealand understands the strategic rationale for AUKUS, and that we share our partners' assessment of the deteriorating strategic outlook, s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

19.3. ^{s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)}

19.4.

20. ^{s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)}

21.

^{s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)}

22. ^{s6(a), s6(b)(i), s9(2)(g)(i)}

23.

24. Pillar Two initially encompassed four advanced technologies, and now covers eight areas of focus:

Advanced Capability
Undersea capabilities
Quantum technologies
Artificial Intelligence and autonomy
Advanced cyber
Hypersonic and counter-hypersonic capabilities

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Electronic warfare	s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)
Innovation	
Information sharing	

25. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

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29.1. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

29.2.

29.3.

30. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

30.1. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

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30.2. ^{s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)}

30.3.

30.4.

31. Officials will keep Ministers informed as we gain more clarity around the questions and issues outlined above.

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Annex: updated key messages on AUKUS

Black text = existing talking points

Blue text = new content

General points

- The announcement of AUKUS was a significant development for the wider region. The peace and stability of the region, and upholding the international rules-based order, are objectives we share with the AUKUS members.
- New Zealand understands the strategic drivers for AUKUS. As the *Defence Assessment 2021* makes clear, our own assessment of the deteriorating strategic environment aligns closely with that of key partners.
- For New Zealand as a Pacific nation, we welcome security architecture that contributes to regional security and stability, and reflects the interests of the countries of the region.
s9(2)(g)(i)
- New Zealand has close and important relationships with Australia, the US and the UK, including on security and defence matters. We welcome these partners lifting their engagement in our region.
s9(2)(g)(i)
- New Zealand is engaged in our own review of defence policy settings and capability needs – the Defence Policy Review.
- New Zealand has long-standing engagements with Australia, the US and the UK on military capability and interoperability issues, including areas which feature in AUKUS – such as cyber. We will continue to engage closely with the AUKUS partners on how we can cooperate to mutual benefit in such areas.
- We are pleased that the AUKUS partners continue to share information about how the initiative is progressing.

If raised does New Zealand have concerns about nuclear-powered submarines or nuclear proliferation risks?

- We recognise that the AUKUS submarine initiative presents challenges for the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, which need to be carefully considered. We welcome the AUKUS partners' reiterations of commitments to non-proliferation.
- We welcome the AUKUS partners' ongoing engagement with the International Atomic Energy Agency to address these challenges. We note the IAEA's report on the constructive and transparent engagement to date with the AUKUS partners.

If raised – will New Zealand join any of the non-nuclear aspects of AUKUS?

- Whether New Zealand potentially engages with non-nuclear aspects of AUKUS would be a future decision for Ministers, taking account of any invitation on the part of the AUKUS partners and an assessment of our national interests.
- New Zealand is a Pacific nation. Reflecting our region's legacy of nuclear testing, we remain committed to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

s6(a)

- Pacific countries face a complex and growing array of challenges, including the impacts of climate change and an increasingly contested strategic environment.
- As a region, we have agreed that security responses within the Pacific should come first and foremost from within our Pacific family. As a member of the Pacific Islands Forum, Australia is part of the Pacific family.
- Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia will continue to work closely together to lift our engagement in the region and scale up our response to all these challenges, including through deepening our partnerships with Pacific Island countries.
- Our responses are developed through ongoing engagement with our Pacific partners and respond to their priorities.

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

Briefing for call with Prime Minister Albanese: AUKUS

Between 11.35am and 12.05pm Monday 13 March

Ahead of the AUKUS leaders' announcement, Australia is undertaking a series of calls to brief New Zealand in advance. Minister Mahuta and Minister Little spoke to their Australian counterparts on 9 March.

Talking points

These talking points reflect key messages agreed between Ministers Little and Mahuta, as well as additional messages drawn from the 7 March joint MFAT-MoD submission.

- Thank you for the briefing on the forthcoming Leaders' announcement – we appreciate the early outreach.
- We place great value on our alliance and relationship with Australia. Australia is our most important security partner, and our most important defence relationship.
- We acknowledge the deterioration in the geostrategic situation in our region, and that is why we have our defence policy review underway.
- AUKUS is a set of arrangements to strengthen security in the region. It does not conflict with our existing Five Eyes arrangements.
- Our long-standing nuclear free policy is unchanged. We are open to continuing to explore non-nuclear cooperation under Pillar Two of AUKUS.
- s6(a)

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

Background

1 PM Albanese will meet with President Biden and Prime Minister Sunak in San Diego on 1 March West Coast US time (14 March NZ time). The three Leaders will announce the details of Australia's acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines, and how Australia will transition from its current submarine fleet.

2 Minister Mahuta and Minister Little spoke to their Australian counterparts on 9 March. The key messages from Australia were that:

- s6(a), s6(b)(i)

. Australia would remain fully committed to and compliant with its Treaty of Rarotonga¹ and Non-Proliferation Treaty obligations.

¹The Treaty prohibits the manufacture, use, testing and possession of nuclear weapons in the South Pacific region. It does not prohibit the transit of vessels carrying nuclear weapons, explicitly leaving Parties to determine for

- The capability that Australia was seeking was in support of regional peace, stability and prosperity - s6(a)
- The Leaders' announcement will feature three phases:
 - Increased regional presence by US and UK nuclear powered submarines (near term), and forward rotations to Australia of US and UK submarines (by the late 2020s);
 - Australian acquisition of nuclear powered submarines (early 2030s) [*the specifics of this, what class of vessel Australia will receive, and from which partner remains tightly held, although media reports suggest that Australia may receive a number of US Virginia Class submarines*]; and
 - Construction in Australia of a new class of nuclear powered submarine based on a UK design (work to start soon, for entry into service by the early 2040s)
- s6(a), s6(b)(i)
- s6(a), s6(b)(i)

3 In response, Ministers affirmed the importance of engagement and reassurance in the Pacific and indicated New Zealand's interest in Pillar Two of AUKUS (cooperation on a range of advanced non-nuclear military technologies and capabilities). This is likely to be a focus of discussion when Australian Defence Minister Marles visits New Zealand next month. Minister Little also held a secure call with his UK counterpart on 9 March which will be reported separately

4 In terms of New Zealand's initial public response to the announcement, the proposed key messages in the attached 7 March MFAT-MoD joint submission – subject to your feedback on these - provide the basis for this. s9(2)(g)(i)

5 s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

themselves whether to allow visits, transit or navigation by foreign ships and aircraft (Article 5). The Treaty does not deal with nuclear propulsion.

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Pito kōrero – Key points

- We continue to welcome the increased engagement of the UK and US in the region, along with our ally Australia.
- We agree with the AUKUS partners the collective objective needs to be the delivery of peace and stability, and the preservation of the international rules-based system in the region.
- We too see the deteriorating strategic environment in our wider region. We know that Pacific countries are focused on geostrategic pressures, as well as climate change as the existential security challenge facing the region.
- Aotearoa New Zealand's Defence Policy Review – currently underway – is part of our response to both, in the context of our broader Pacific Resilience Approach.
- Aotearoa New Zealand has a long-standing and bipartisan nuclear free policy – that won't change.
- We understand the region's long-standing concerns about nuclear issues. The AUKUS partners have reiterated their commitment to non-proliferation, and their compliance with international law – including for Australia the Treaty of Rarotonga. This is an important message.
- We welcome the AUKUS partners' ongoing engagement with the International Atomic Energy Agency to ensure robust safeguards and verification measures. We look forward to further advice from the IAEA, which is the international authority on this issue.
- AUKUS includes cooperation in emerging security areas, including areas in which we already work closely with Australia, the US and the UK.
- We are interested in discussing with the AUKUS partners opportunities for cooperation on the non-nuclear aspects under Pillar Two of AUKUS.

s9(2)(g)(i)

- s9(2)(g)(i)
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Papamuri - Background

What is AUKUS?

1. Announced in September 2021, the AUKUS trilateral security partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, is a military technology partnership.

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

2. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

3. The initial and highest profile initiative under AUKUS is Australia's transition from its current fleet of conventionally armed, diesel powered submarines, to significantly more advanced conventionally armed, nuclear powered submarines - known as Pillar One of AUKUS. Pillar Two of AUKUS involves accelerated cooperation on a range of non-nuclear advanced military technologies and capabilities¹,

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

The AUKUS Leaders' announcement and international reactions

4. The AUKUS Leaders' announcement on 14 March (13 March US) confirmed next steps for the AUKUS submarine initiative. This includes plans for increased US and UK submarine visits to Australia, including a rotational presence from 2027; Australian purchase of US conventionally armed, nuclear powered submarines (early 2030s); and the joint trilateral development of a new class of conventionally armed, nuclear powered submarine (for entry into service in the early 2040s).

5. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

6. Pacific reactions have been mixed. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

¹ Specific areas of focus include: undersea warfare; quantum; artificial intelligence; advanced cyber; hypersonics; electronic warfare; innovation; and information sharing.

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

7. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

8. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

9. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

10. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

Potential Aotearoa New Zealand engagement in Pillar Two

11. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

Ministers have confirmed to AUKUS counterparts New Zealand's interest in engaging on possible opportunities under Pillar Two. Our interest has also been confirmed publicly by Ministers.

Non-proliferation considerations, and the Treaty of Rarotonga

12. Aotearoa New Zealand has an interest in ensuring that AUKUS does not set a precedent for proliferation by other countries, and has been strongly supportive of the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in engaging with AUKUS partners. The focus is determining robust safeguards and verification measures to ensure the highly enriched uranium used as submarine fuel cannot be diverted to other military uses, in

order to meet obligations under international law and to set a high threshold for any other state that might seek to follow the precedent set by AUKUS.

13. The AUKUS partners continue to emphasise that all three countries would continue to be in full compliance with their obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and for Australia under the Treaty of Rarotonga². Australia has confirmed that the future rotational presence of UK and US submarines will be conducted in full accordance with Australia's Treaty obligations. ^{s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)}

During Question Time on 6 April Minister Little rebutted assertions that AUKUS was contrary to the Treaty of Rarotonga, noting that the Treaty does not address nuclear propulsion.

14. The IAEA Director General has noted the Agency's satisfaction with the constructive engagement with the AUKUS partners to date. Following the AUKUS Leaders' announcement, the Director General issued a statement making the following key points:

- The AUKUS Parties have safeguards obligations which need to be implemented in accordance with their respective safeguards agreements and additional protocols with the Agency. Article 14 of Australia's Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement allows Australia to use nuclear material for nuclear propulsion for submarines provided that Australia makes an arrangement with the Agency in this regard.
- The Agency will continue to have its verification and non-proliferation mandate as its core guiding principle. It will exercise it in an impartial, objective and technical manner.
- Australian has formally requested the Agency to commence negotiations on an Article 14 arrangement. Once the arrangement is finalised, it will be transmitted to the Board of Governors of the IAEA for appropriate action.
- The Agency's role in this process is foreseen in the existing legal framework and falls strictly within its statutory competencies. The Director General will keep the IAEA Board informed and will submit a report to the next regular Board meeting in June 2023.

*International Security and Disarmament Division
April 2023*

² The Treaty of Rarotonga prohibits the manufacture, use, testing and possession of nuclear weapons in the South Pacific region. It does not prohibit the transit of vessels carrying nuclear weapons, explicitly leaving Parties to determine for themselves whether to allow visits, transit or navigation by foreign ships and aircraft (Article 5). The Treaty does not deal with nuclear propulsion.

Aide Memoire: AUKUS Leaders' announcement and Aotearoa New Zealand's response

The AUKUS Leaders' announcement: a key step in the partnership

- The leaders of Australia, the UK and the US will make a major announcement on 13 March in San Diego (Tuesday 14 March NZ time) on next steps for the AUKUS partnership. This will include:
 - Increased regional presence and visits to Australia by US and UK nuclear powered submarines (in the near term), and forward rotations to Australia (by the late 2020s);
 - Australian acquisition of a number (five is the figure in the media) of US Virginia Class nuclear powered submarines (by the mid-2030s); and
 - Construction in Australia of a new class of nuclear powered submarine (for entry into service by the early 2040s) to be developed trilaterally.

Why it matters to Aotearoa New Zealand

- s6(a), s6(b)(i), s9(2)(g)(i)

- Aotearoa New Zealand shares the AUKUS partners' assessment of the deteriorating strategic environment, and its drivers. These assessments are set out in the *Defence Assessment 2021*, the draft *National Security Strategy*, the draft *Defence Policy and Strategy Statement* and the draft *MFAT Strategic Assessment*.

- s6(a), s6(b)(i), s9(2)(g)(i)

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- New Zealand has been briefed in advance of the announcement by all three AUKUS partners, at Ministerial and senior officials' level. The Prime Minister will talk to PM Albanese today. s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

Setting out New Zealand’s position

s6(a), s6(b)(i), s9(2)(g)(i)

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New Zealand's approach to the non-nuclear dimensions of AUKUS (Pillar Two)

- Minister Little and I have also agreed to update New Zealand's approach to AUKUS Pillar Two (cooperation on a range of advanced non-nuclear military technologies and capabilities). Pillar Two presents significant capability opportunities for New Zealand, as well as interoperability implications for how we work with our key security partners.
- s6(a), s6(b)(i), s9(2)(g)(i)

This will ensure we have sufficient visibility, and to inform consideration of what potential participation in AUKUS Pillar Two could look like and the key benefits, risks and implications.

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Annex: AUKUS Leaders' announcement: Aotearoa New Zealand's communications and media material

1. New Zealand's core messages on AUKUS
2. 'If raised' points for use prior to the Leaders' announcement
3. ^{s9(2)(g)(i)}
- 4.
5. Contingency media lines – for use if required

1. Core messages

New Zealand's core messages - from the joint MFAT-MoD submission of 7 March. These set out New Zealand's overall position and can be utilised at any point

- AUKUS is a significant development for the wider region. The peace and stability of the region, and upholding the international rules-based order, are objectives we share with the AUKUS members.
- New Zealand understands the strategic drivers for AUKUS. As the *Defence Assessment 2021* makes clear, our own assessment of the deteriorating strategic environment aligns closely with that of key partners.
- For New Zealand as a Pacific nation, we welcome security architecture that contributes to regional security and stability and reflects the interests of the countries of the region. New Zealand welcomes AUKUS as an initiative to enhance regional security and stability.
- New Zealand has close and important relationships with Australia, the US and the UK, including on security and defence matters. We welcome these partners lifting their engagement in our region
- ^{s9(2)(g)(i)}
- New Zealand is engaged in our own review of defence policy settings and capability needs – the Defence Policy Review.

New Zealand has long-standing engagements with Australia, the US and the UK on military capability and interoperability issues, including areas which feature in AUKUS – such as cyber. We will continue to engage closely with the AUKUS partners on how we can cooperate to mutual benefit in such areas.
- We are pleased that the AUKUS partners continue to share information about how the initiative is progressing.

2. 'If raised' points for use prior to the Leaders' announcement

Reactive key points for use on Monday 13 and Tuesday 14 March prior to the Leaders' announcement to respond to questions about the forthcoming AUKUS announcements. These points are drafted for use by the Prime Minister, but can be adapted for other Ministers.

What is New Zealand's position on AUKUS?

- AUKUS is a significant development for the wider region. The peace and stability of the region, and upholding the international rules-based order, are objectives we share with the AUKUS members.
- For New Zealand as a Pacific nation, we welcome security architecture that contributes to regional security and stability, and reflects the interests of the countries of the region. ^{s9(2)(g)(i)}
- New Zealand has close and important relationships with Australia, the US and the UK, including on security and defence matters. We welcome these partners lifting their engagement in our region.

What does New Zealand expect to be announced at the AUKUS Leaders' meeting?

- Australia, the US and the UK have all confirmed that their respective Leaders will be meeting in the US on 13 March (US time).
- We are aware of various media reports about what might be announced. We don't intend to comment on these – we will await formal announcements.

Has New Zealand been briefed in advance on what will be announced?

If before PM-PM Albanese call:

- The Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Defence have spoken to their counterparts.
- As you will appreciate, I won't go into details ahead of any announcement.

If after PM-PM Albanese call:

- I spoke to Prime Minister Albanese [today/yesterday]. The Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Defence have also spoken to counterparts.
- As you will appreciate, I won't go into details ahead of any announcement.

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5. Contingency media lines

Contingency media lines on topics that may be raised by media – for use as required. These are drawn from the joint MFAT-MoD submission, as well as additional points that have been developed following the pre-briefing from the AUKUS partners.

Was New Zealand briefed in advance of the announcement? Who else was briefed in advance?

- Yes. New Zealand was briefed in advance by all three AUKUS countries.
- The Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Defence all received calls from their Australian counterparts over the past few days.
- Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Defence both also received calls from their UK counterparts.
- New Zealand was also briefed by US senior officials, through New Zealand's Embassy in Washington DC, and through the US Embassy in Wellington
- Details about which other countries were briefed in advance would be a question for the three AUKUS partners.

Will New Zealand join any of the non-nuclear aspects of AUKUS?

- Whether New Zealand potentially engages with non-nuclear aspects of AUKUS would be a future decision for Ministers, taking account of any invitation by the AUKUS partners and an assessment of our national interests.
- New Zealand is a Pacific nation. Reflecting our region's legacy of nuclear testing, we remain committed to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

Is New Zealand concerned about an increased presence in our region of US and UK nuclear submarines?

- It's important to distinguish between nuclear powered submarines and nuclear armed submarines
- New Zealand's views on nuclear weapons are well known and we continue to advocate for their total elimination.
- We acknowledge that nuclear powered submarines have been present in the wider region for decades. They are not permitted to enter New Zealand's internal waters pursuant to the New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone, Disarmament, and Arms Control Act 1987. This will not change.
- [if needed] Questions about other countries' specific submarine deployment plans would be a matter for them.

s9(2)(g)(i)

How will these announcements be received in the Pacific? Have any Pacific countries expressed concern to New Zealand?

- Like New Zealand, other Pacific countries will form their own views on the AUKUS announcements.
- Reflecting the experience of nuclear testing, the Pacific region is strongly committed to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.
- Questions about other countries' views would be a matter for them.

s9(2)(g)(i)

Does New Zealand have concerns about nuclear powered submarines generally or nuclear proliferation risks from AUKUS?

- As set out in our 1987 legislation, New Zealand has taken the view that nuclear propelled vessels are not for us, or for our ports.
- We have always been clear that it is for other countries to make their own decisions on nuclear propulsion.
- We recognise that the AUKUS submarine initiative presents challenges for the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, which need to be carefully considered. We welcome

the AUKUS partners' reiteration of their non-proliferation obligations and commitments.

- We welcome the AUKUS partners' ongoing engagement with the International Atomic Energy Agency to address these challenges. We look forward to further advice from the IAEA, which is the world's international authority on this issue.
- [If asked about the safety of nuclear powered submarines] New Zealand has long advocated for the highest standards of nuclear safety, including in the context of the maritime transport of nuclear material. Nuclear safety is in everyone's interests and we welcome the AUKUS partners' commitment to this.

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

- Pacific countries face a complex and growing array of challenges, including the impacts of climate change and an increasingly contested strategic environment.
- As a region, we have agreed that security responses within the Pacific should come first and foremost from within our Pacific family. As a member of the Pacific Islands Forum, Australia is part of the Pacific family.
- New Zealand and Australia will continue to work closely together to lift our engagement in the region and scale up our response to all these challenges, including through deepening our partnerships with Pacific Island countries.
- Our responses are developed through ongoing engagement with our Pacific partners and respond to their priorities.

s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i) - 1 page redacted

Briefing for call with UK Secretary of State for Foreign,
Commonwealth and Development Affairs, Rt Hon James
Cleverly, 7:30 PM Monday 13 March

Haurongo – Biography

out of scope

Ngā whakaritenga - Call logistics

- MFA's office to add

Ngā Whāinga – Objectives

out of scope

Ngā Take - Issues

AUKUS

These points reflect key messages agreed between you Ministers Little, as well as additional messages drawn from the 7 March joint MFAT-MoD submission.

- Thank you for the briefing on the forthcoming Leaders' announcement – we appreciate the early outreach
- We place great value on our relationship with the UK, and the significant defence and security aspects of this.
- We see the deterioration in the geostrategic situation in our region, and that is why we have our defence policy review underway.
- AUKUS is a set of arrangements to strengthen security in the region. It does not conflict with our existing Five Eyes arrangements.
- Our long-standing nuclear free policy is unchanged. We are interested, however, in potential cooperation on non-nuclear elements under Pillar Two of AUKUS.

- s9(2)(g)(i), s6(a)

s9(2)(g)(i), s6(a)

- s9(2)(g)(i), s6(a)

-

out of scope

Tuarongo - Background

AUKUS

1 Ahead of the AUKUS Leaders announcement, the AUKUS partners are briefing Aotearoa New Zealand in advance. On 9 March you spoke to Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong, and Minister Little spoke to his Australian and UK counterparts. The PM will speak to PM Albanese at 11:30 am today (13 March). The US has engaged at senior officials' level.

2 PM Albanese will meet with President Biden and Prime Minister Sunak in San Diego on 13 March US time (14 March NZ time).^{s6(a), s6(b)(i), s9(2)(g)(i)}

○ s6(a), s6(b)(i), s9(2)(g)(i)

○

○

3 Key messages from the AUKUS partners' outreach to over the past few days have included:

● s6(a), s6(b)(i), s9(2)(g)(i)

●

●

●

●

out of scope

¹The Treaty prohibits the manufacture, use, testing and possession of nuclear weapons in the South Pacific region. It does not prohibit the transit of vessels carrying nuclear weapons, explicitly leaving Parties to determine for themselves whether to allow visits, transit or navigation by foreign ships and aircraft (Article 5). The Treaty does not deal with nuclear propulsion.

s6(a)

7 s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

8 s6(a)

- s6(a)
-
-
-
-

ISED/EUR/PDG
March 2023

Proactively Released

If Raised Issues

If raised: AUKUS

- Emphasise that we understand the strategic drivers for AUKUS, given the deteriorating geostrategic outlook in the Indo-Pacific. The same drivers have informed our Defence Policy and Strategy Statement
- Re-register that we are interested in discussing opportunities for cooperation on the non-nuclear aspects under Pillar Two of AUKUS. We look forward to senior officials' engagement on this soon.

Out of scope - 2 pages redacted

Out of scope

out of scope

s6(a)

Out of scope - 2 pages redacted

Proactively Released

From: [ECKMAN, Ben \(ISED\)](#)
To: [ESD](#)
Subject: FW: AUKUS: Forthcoming joint leaders' statement from the AUKUS partners
Date: Friday, 15 September 2023 11:01:00 am

s9(2)(a)

Subject: AUKUS: Forthcoming joint leaders' statement from the AUKUS partners

Kia ora Greg and Jess

The Australian High Commission has been in touch to provide advance notice of a forthcoming joint statement (at Leaders' level) that the three AUKUS partners are expected to issue Saturday 16 September NZT / Friday 15 September Washington DC time. This is to mark the second anniversary of the original AUKUS announcement. The High Commission has advised that the statement won't make any new announcements, but will provide a brief update on AUKUS implementation and reiterate the AUKUS partners' commitment to setting the highest non-proliferation standard.

Given the potential for renewed media interest in New Zealand's position on AUKUS, included below for reference is the set of existing key messages.

Cheers
s9(2)(a)

AUKUS Key messages

- Our priority is to work alongside partners who share our values to ensure a secure, safe and stable region.
- We continue to welcome the increased engagement of the UK and US in the region, along with our ally Australia.
- We agree with the AUKUS partners that the collective objective needs to be the delivery of peace and stability, and the preservation of the international rules-based system in the region.
- We understand the strategic drivers for AUKUS, given the deteriorating geostrategic outlook in the wider region. The same drivers have informed the development of our own defence and national security policy settings.
- Aotearoa New Zealand has a long-standing and bipartisan nuclear free policy – this won't change.
- Pacific countries have long-standing concerns about nuclear issue. The AUKUS partners have reiterated their commitment to non-proliferation, and their compliance with international law – including for Australia the Treaty of Rarotonga. This is an important message.
- We welcome the AUKUS partners' ongoing engagement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to ensure robust safeguards and verification measures. We look forward to further advice from the IAEA, which is the international authority on this issue.
- **[Pillar two – if raised]** Pillar Two of AUKUS includes cooperation in emerging security areas, including areas in which we already work closely with Australia, the US and the UK. Officials are having conversations about what Pillar Two might offer or mean for New Zealand, on a no commitments basis.

If needed – Treaty of Rarotonga

- Australia has been clear that AUKUS is consistent with the Treaty of Rarotonga.
- Based on what we know about AUKUS, we are confident that Australia can, and will, continue to meet its international legal obligations under the Treaty of Rarotonga.
- Australia is a trusted partner and responsible international citizen. It takes compliance with its international legal obligations seriously, and there is nothing in AUKUS which gives us reason to doubt this commitment.
- The Treaty of Rarotonga prohibits the manufacture, use, testing and possession of nuclear weapons in the South Pacific region. It does not apply to nuclear propulsion
- s9(2)(g)(i)

s9(2)(a)

| Lead Adviser | International Security Policy

Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade | Manatū Aorere

s9(2)(a)

s9(2)(a)

AUKUS

The Aide Memoire from the DPMC PAG provides a factual briefing on the AUKUS partnership to support the 11 April Cabinet discussion ^{s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)}

1 Our messaging on AUKUS: ^{s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)}

- ^{s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)}

2 ^{s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)}

- ^{s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)}

-

-

3 Next steps on Pillar Two: New Zealand has clearly registered (both directly with the AUKUS partners, and publicly) its interest in discussing opportunities to engage in the non-nuclear aspects of AUKUS under Pillar Two. ^{s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)}

- ^{s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)}

-

Annex: updated key messages on AUKUS

- Our priority is working alongside partners who share our values to ensure a secure, safe and stable region.
- We continue to welcome the increased engagement of the UK and US in the region, along with our ally Australia.
- We agree with the AUKUS partners the collective objective needs to be the delivery of peace and stability, and the preservation of the international rules-based system in the region.
- We too see the deteriorating strategic environment in our wider region. Aotearoa New Zealand's Defence Policy Review – currently underway – is part of our response to that.
- Aotearoa New Zealand has a long-standing and bipartisan nuclear free policy – that won't change.
- Pacific countries have long-standing concerns about nuclear issues. The AUKUS partners have reiterated their commitment to non-proliferation, and their compliance with international law - including the Treaty of Rarotonga. This is an important message.
- AUKUS includes cooperation in emerging security areas, including areas in which we already work closely with Australia, the US and the UK
- We are interested in discussing with the AUKUS partners opportunities for cooperation on the non-nuclear aspects under Pillar Two.

*International Security and Disarmament Division
April 2023*

RESTRICTED

AUKUS

What is AUKUS?

1. Announced in September 2021, the AUKUS trilateral security partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, is a military technology partnership. s6(a)

2. s6(a)

3. The initial and highest profile initiative under AUKUS is Australia's transition from its current fleet of conventionally armed, diesel powered submarines, to significantly more advanced conventionally armed, nuclear powered submarines - known as Pillar One of AUKUS. Pillar Two of AUKUS involves accelerated cooperation on a range of non-nuclear advanced military technologies and capabilities¹, s6(a)

The AUKUS Leaders' announcement and international reactions

4. The AUKUS Leaders' announcement on 14 March confirmed next steps for the AUKUS submarine initiative. This includes plans for increased US and UK submarine visits to Australia, including a rotational presence from 2027; Australian purchase of US conventionally armed, nuclear powered submarines (early 2030s); and the development of a new class of conventionally armed, nuclear powered submarine (by the early 2040s).

5. s6(a)

6. s6(a)

7. s6(a)

8. s6(a)

On 23 April, the Prime Minister said (in a joint press conference with PM Albanese) that in respect of AUKUS, New Zealand - like Australia - was clear-eyed about the challenging Indo-Pacific strategic environment; that we agreed with the AUKUS partners that the collective objective was peace and stability and the preservation of the

¹ Specific areas of focus include: undersea capabilities; quantum; artificial intelligence; advanced cyber; hypersonics; electronic warfare; innovation; and information sharing.

international rules-based system in our region; and that we welcomed the assurance that AUKUS did not impact on Australia's commitment to non-proliferation.

9. s6(a)

Potential New Zealand engagement in Pillar Two

10. s6(a)

New Zealand has indicated to the AUKUS partners (and publicly) that we are open to conversations about what AUKUS Pillar Two might offer/mean for New Zealand, on a no commitments basis.

Non-proliferation considerations, and the Treaty of Rarotonga

11. New Zealand has an interest in ensuring that AUKUS does not set a precedent for proliferation by other countries, and has been strongly supportive of the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in engaging with AUKUS partners. The focus is determining robust safeguards and verification measures to ensure the highly enriched uranium used as submarine fuel cannot be diverted to other military uses, in order to meet obligations under international law and to set a high threshold for any other state that might seek to follow the precedent set by AUKUS.

12. The AUKUS partners continue to emphasise that they will remain in full compliance with their obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and for Australia under the Treaty of Rarotonga². They have engaged constructively in response to concerns raised about NPT obligations and the Treaty of Rarotonga. s6(a), s9(2)(h)

13. The IAEA Director General has noted the Agency's satisfaction with the constructive engagement with the AUKUS partners to date. The Director General's second report on AUKUS (released on 31 May) provided an update on the Agency's technical engagement with the AUKUS partners, including work towards developing a safeguards arrangement with Australia under Article 14 of Australia's Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, and in-country verification activities in Australia.

*International Security and Disarmament Division
August 2023*

² The Treaty of Rarotonga prohibits the manufacture, use, testing and possession of nuclear weapons in the South Pacific region. It does not prohibit the transit of vessels carrying nuclear weapons, explicitly leaving Parties to determine for themselves whether to allow visits, transit or navigation by foreign ships and aircraft (Article 5). The Treaty does not apply to nuclear propulsion.

Hot issues — reactive lines

Out of scope

AUSTRALIA — AUKUS

- We continue to welcome the increased engagement of the UK and US in the region, along with our ally Australia.
- We agree with the AUKUS partners the collective objective needs to be the delivery of peace and stability, and the preservation of the international rules-based system in the region.
- We too see the deteriorating strategic environment in our wider region. We know that Pacific countries are focused on geostrategic pressures, as well as climate change as the existential security challenge facing the region.
- Aotearoa New Zealand's Defence Policy Review is part of our response to both, in the context of our broader Pacific Resilience Approach.
- Aotearoa New Zealand has a long-standing and bipartisan nuclear free policy — that won't change
- We understand the region's long-standing concerns about nuclear issues. The AUKUS partners have reiterated their commitment to non-proliferation, and their compliance with international law — including for Australia the Treaty of Rarotonga. This is an important message.
- We welcome the AUKUS partners' ongoing engagement with the International Atomic Energy Agency to ensure robust safeguards and verification measures. We look forward to further advice from the IAEA, which is the international authority on this issue.
- Pillar Two of AUKUS includes cooperation in emerging security areas, including areas in which we already work closely with Australia, the US and the UK. Officials are having conversations about what Pillar Two might offer or mean for Aotearoa New Zealand, on a no commitments basis.

If raised: Treaty of Rarotonga

25. Australia has been clear that AUKUS is consistent with the Treaty of Rarotonga.
26. Based on what we know about AUKUS, we are confident that Australia can, and will, continue to meet its international legal obligations under the Treaty of Rarotonga.
27. Australia is a trusted partner and responsible international citizen. It takes compliance with its international legal obligations seriously, and there is nothing in AUKUS which gives us reason to doubt this commitment.
28. The Treaty of Rarotonga prohibits the manufacture, use, testing and possession of nuclear weapons in the South Pacific region. It does not apply to nuclear propulsion.

s9(2)(g)(i)

Out of scope

Proactively Released

AUKUS

Ngā Take - Issues

- Aotearoa New Zealand agrees with the AUKUS partners that the collective objective needs to be the delivery of peace and stability, and the preservation of the international rules-based system in the region. We understand the strategic drivers for AUKUS, given the deteriorating geostrategic outlook in the Indo-Pacific.
- The AUKUS partners have reiterated their commitment to non-proliferation, and their compliance with international law. We welcome their ongoing engagement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to ensure robust safeguards and verification measures.

Tuarongo - Background

1. The AUKUS Leaders' announcement in March confirmed next steps for Pillar One of AUKUS – the nuclear-propelled submarine initiative. ^{s6(a)}
2. ^{s6(a)}
3. ^{s6(a)}
4. Aotearoa New Zealand has an interest in ensuring that AUKUS does not set a precedent for proliferation by other countries, and is strongly supportive of the IAEA's engagement with the AUKUS partners. The AUKUS partners continue to emphasise that they will remain in full compliance with their obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and for Australia under the Treaty of Rarotonga. ^{s9(2)(h)}
5. The IAEA Director General has noted the Agency's satisfaction with the constructive engagement with the AUKUS partners to date. The Director General's second report on AUKUS (released on 31 May) provided an update on the Agency's technical engagement with the AUKUS partners, including work towards developing a safeguards arrangement with

Australia under Article 14 of Australia's Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, and in-country verification activities in Australia.

6. Pillar Two of AUKUS engages a number of national interests for Aotearoa New Zealand, including potentially significant defence capability opportunities, and military and intelligence interoperability implications, as our key security partners develop and adopt advanced technologies and capabilities. Aotearoa New Zealand has indicated to the AUKUS partners (and publicly) that we are open to conversations about what AUKUS Pillar Two might offer/mean for Aotearoa New Zealand, on a no commitments basis.

*International Security and Disarmament Division
August 2023*

Proactively Released

AUKUS

Intervention

- Our priority is to work alongside partners who share our values to ensure a secure, safe and stable region.
- We continue to welcome the increased engagement of the UK and US in the region, along with our ally Australia.
- We agree with the AUKUS partners that the collective objective needs to be the delivery of peace and stability, and the preservation of the international rules-based system in the region.
- We understand the strategic drivers for AUKUS - we too see the deteriorating strategic environment in our wider region. We know that Pacific countries are focused on geostrategic pressures, as well as climate change as the existential security challenge facing the region.
- Aotearoa New Zealand has a long-standing and bipartisan nuclear free policy – this won't change.
- We understand the region's long-standing concerns about nuclear issues. The AUKUS partners have reiterated their commitment to non-proliferation, and their compliance with international law – including for Australia the Treaty of Rarotonga. This is an important message
- We welcome the AUKUS partners ongoing engagement with the International Atomic Energy Agency to ensure robust safeguards and verification measures. We look forward to further advice from the IAEA, which is the international authority on this issue.
- **[Pillar two – if raised]** Pillar Two of AUKUS includes cooperation in emerging security areas, including areas in which we already work closely with Australia, the US and the UK. Officials are having conversations about what Pillar Two might offer or mean for New Zealand, on a no commitments basis.

If needed – Treaty of Rarotonga

- Australia has been clear that AUKUS is consistent with the Treaty of Rarotonga.
- Australia is a trusted partner and responsible international citizen. It takes compliance with its international legal obligations seriously, and there is nothing in AUKUS which gives us reason to doubt this commitment.

- Australia is a trusted partner and responsible international citizen. It takes compliance with its international legal obligations seriously, and there is nothing in AUKUS which gives us reason to doubt this commitment.
- The Treaty of Rarotonga prohibits the manufacture, use, testing and possession of nuclear weapons in the South Pacific region. It does not apply to nuclear propulsion.

Handling advice

- s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

Background

1. Announced in September 2021, the AUKUS trilateral security partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, is a military technology partnership. s6(a)

2. s6(a)

3. The initial and highest profile initiative under AUKUS is Australia's transition from its current fleet of conventionally armed, diesel powered submarines, to significantly more advanced conventionally armed, nuclear powered submarines - known as Pillar One of AUKUS. Pillar Two of AUKUS involves accelerated cooperation on a range of non-nuclear advanced military technologies and capabilities, s6(a)

The AUKUS Leaders' announcement and international reactions

4. The AUKUS Leaders' announcement on 14 March confirmed next steps for the AUKUS submarine initiative. This includes plans for increased US and UK submarine

visits to Australia, including a rotational presence from 2027; Australian purchase of US conventionally armed, nuclear powered submarines (early 2030s); and the development of a new class of conventionally armed, nuclear powered submarine (by the early 2040s).

5. s6(a)

6. s6(a)

7. s6(a)

8. s6(a)

On 23 April, the Prime Minister said (in a joint press conference with PM Albanese) that in respect of AUKUS, New Zealand - like Australia - was clear-eyed about the challenging Indo-Pacific strategic environment; that we agreed with the AUKUS partners that the collective objective was peace and stability and the preservation of the international rules-based system in our region; and that we welcomed the assurance that AUKUS did not impact on Australia's commitment to non-proliferation.

9. s6(a)

s6(a)

Potential New Zealand engagement in Pillar Two

10. s6(a)

New Zealand has indicated to the AUKUS partners (and publicly) that we are open to conversations about what AUKUS Pillar Two might offer/mean for New Zealand, on a no commitments basis.

Non-proliferation considerations, and the Treaty of Rarotonga

11. New Zealand has an interest in ensuring that AUKUS does not set a precedent for proliferation by other countries, and has been strongly supportive of the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in engaging with AUKUS partners. The focus is determining robust safeguards and verification measures to ensure the highly enriched uranium used as submarine fuel cannot be diverted to other military uses, in order to meet obligations under international law and to set a high threshold for any other state that might seek to follow the precedent set by AUKUS.

12. The AUKUS partners continue to emphasise that they will remain in full compliance with their obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and for Australia under the Treaty of Rarotonga. They have engaged constructively in response to concerns raised about NPT obligations and the Treaty of Rarotonga. s6(a), s9(2)(h)

13. The IAEA Director General has noted the Agency's satisfaction with the constructive engagement with the AUKUS partners to date. The Director General's second report on AUKUS (released on 31 May) provided an update on the Agency's technical engagement with the AUKUS partners, including work towards developing a safeguards arrangement with Australia under Article 14 of Australia's Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, and in-country verification activities in Australia.

(c) AUKUS

Key Objective

To emphasise that New Zealand understands the strategic drivers for AUKUS, and to re-register our interest in understanding more about Pillar Two.

s6(a)

Key Messages

- Note that New Zealand continues to follow AUKUS developments closely. We recognise that this is an immense endeavour for Australia, and a significant investment in sustaining a favourable balance of power in the Indo-Pacific.
- Register that we have a clear-eyed view of the geostrategic outlook in the Indo-Pacific. We understand the strategic drivers for AUKUS. The same drivers inform our Defence Policy Review, the development of our National Security Strategy, and our national security policy development more generally.
- Emphasise that we agree with the AUKUS partners that the collective objective needs to be the delivery of peace and stability, and the preservation of the international rules-based system in the region.
- Note that we underline this message in our regional interactions - as well as the message that New Zealand continues to welcome the UK and US' increased engagement in the region.
- Note that we also continue to emphasise that we are confident that Australia is meeting its international legal obligations including under the Treaty of Rarotonga.
- Note that there are a range of regional views on AUKUS, including in the Pacific. We know outreach has been a priority for Australia. What are you hearing from the region?
- Note that as Australia knows, regional concerns about nuclear issues are long-standing, as is New Zealand's own nuclear-free policy. s6(a)
- Re-register that we continue to be interested understanding what Pillar Two might offer or mean for New Zealand. s6(a)
- s6(a)
- Re-register that we would welcome an officials' discussion about Pillar Two and what this means, particularly in terms of our bilateral defence relationship, and our common focus on interoperability in a challenging geostrategic environment.

Aide Memoire — High-level calls on international security issue

National Security System

- We were approached this morning by the Australian and British High Commissions about setting up high level calls in the following order:
 - Prime Minister Scott Morrison secure call to the Prime Minister (5:00pm tonight)
 - Then on Thursday 16 September:
 - UK Foreign Secretary Raab to Minister Mahuta at 7:00am
 - UK Defence Secretary Wallace to Minister Henare at 7:30am
 - Australian Defence Minister Dutton to Minister Henare at 10:10am
 - Australian Foreign Minister Payne to Minister Mahuta at 2:00pm
- Later today, the US Embassy sought a call for Secretary of State Blinken on Minister Mahuta also on Thursday 16 September; the time is TBC, but we have proposed 2:30pm.
- Calls have also been sought for tomorrow by the UK and Australia s6(a)
- The UK has given the purpose of the call as to 'sight New Zealand in a timely manner...on an international security issue'. The Australians have said it is about 'a major security announcement to come.'
- s6(a)
 - s6(a), s6(b)(i)
- s6(a), s6(b)(i)
- It would also appear to be related to a significant defence / security initiative.
 - s6(a)

Australian Ministers

Payne and Dutton are currently in WSH for AUSMIN tomorrow.

*Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
15 September 2021*

Aide Memoire — US/UK/Australia Security Arrangement

- Minister Payne is calling you at 2:00pm today to brief you on the Trilateral Security Arrangement between the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia, known as “AUKUS” (pronounced “or-cuss”). The Minister is currently in Washington DC, with Secretary Blinken, for the annual bilateral talks of Foreign and Defence Ministers (AUSMIN).
- The arrangement was announced at 9:00am Thursday 16 September NZT. A statement issued by the three Heads of Government is attached.
- The Prime Minister was briefed on the arrangement by Prime Minister Morrison in a secure call at 5:00pm on Wednesday 15 September. In addition to this call, Minister Henare is receiving calls today from his Australian and British counterparts, and calls are being made to senior officials in Defence and DPMC. It did not prove possible for us to reschedule a call with Secretary Blinken after the US-proposed timing didn't work.
- We understand that calls are being made to other close countries but we do not have specifics. It is clear that information about the arrangement was kept very close hold by and in all three countries; s6(a)
- s6(a)
- The statement says that the partnership:
 - Builds on long-standing ties and will foster deeper integration of security and defence related science, technology, industrial bases and supply chains;
 - Will deliver, as a first initiative, nuclear powered submarines for the Australian Navy, leveraging expertise from the UK and US;
 - Will focus on enhancement of joint capabilities and interoperability, initially focusing on cyber, artificial intelligence, quantum technologies and additional undersea capabilities; and
 - Will help to sustain peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific.
- The Prime Minister's office have given the attached lines as attributable to her on the arrangement (attached).
- In speaking to Aotearoa New Zealand's position, you could:
 - s6(a)

International Security and Disarmament Division
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
September 2021

Attributable to Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern, Prime Minister:

"I discussed the arrangement with Prime Minister Morrison last night.

Australia's arrangement with the US and the UK is primarily around technology and defence hardware, with the centrepiece being the purchase of nuclear submarines by Australia.

This arrangement in no way changes our security and intelligence ties with these three countries, as well as Canada.

New Zealand is first and foremost a nation of the Pacific and we view foreign policy developments through the lens of what is in the best interest of the region.

We welcome the increased engagement of the UK and US in the region and reiterate our collective objective needs to be the delivery of peace and stability and the preservation of the international rules based system.

New Zealand's position in relation to the prohibition of nuclear powered vessels in our waters remains unchanged."

BRIEFING ROOM

Joint Leaders Statement on AUKUS

SEPTEMBER 15, 2021 • STATEMENTS AND RELEASES

As leaders of Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, guided by our enduring ideals and shared commitment to the international rules-based order, we resolve to deepen diplomatic, security, and defense cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region, including by working with partners, to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. As part of this effort, we are announcing the creation of an enhanced trilateral security partnership called “AUKUS” – Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Through AUKUS, our governments will strengthen the ability of each to support our security and defense interests, building on our longstanding and ongoing bilateral ties. We will promote deeper information and technology sharing. We will foster deeper integration of security and defense-related science, technology, industrial bases, and supply chains. And in particular, we will significantly deepen cooperation on a range of security and defense capabilities.

As the first initiative under AUKUS, recognizing our common tradition as maritime democracies, we commit to a shared ambition to support Australia in acquiring nuclear-powered submarines for the Royal Australian Navy. Today, we embark on a trilateral effort of 18 months to seek an optimal pathway to deliver this capability. We will leverage expertise from the United States and the United Kingdom, building on the two countries’ submarine programs to bring an Australian capability into service at the earliest achievable date.

The development of Australia’s nuclear-powered submarines would be a joint endeavor between the three nations, with a focus on interoperability, commonality, and mutual benefit. Australia is committed to adhering to the highest standards for safeguards, transparency, verification, and accountancy measures to ensure the non-proliferation, safety, and security of nuclear material and technology. Australia remains committed to fulfilling all of its obligations as a non-nuclear weapons state, including with the International Atomic Energy Agency. Our three nations are deeply committed to upholding our leadership on global non-proliferation.

Recognizing our deep defense ties, built over decades, today we also embark on further trilateral collaboration under AUKUS to enhance our joint capabilities and interoperability.

These initial efforts will focus on cyber capabilities, artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, and additional undersea capabilities.

The endeavor we launch today will help sustain peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region. For more than 70 years, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, have worked together, along with other important allies and partners, to protect our shared values and promote security and prosperity. Today, with the formation of AUKUS, we recommit ourselves to this vision.

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Proactively Released

Aide Memoire — AUKUS information paper

This paper provides factual briefing on what relevant New Zealand agencies know about AUKUS, and in particular its Pillar 2. It brings together contributions from MFAT, the Ministry of Defence and the NZDF, the GCSB and the NZSIS, and DPMC (NSG).

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- 1) s6(a)
- 2) The background to being involved in Pillar 2 (information gathering about costs what gains it would provide to New Zealand)
- 3) s6(a)

This paper covers background information and facts. It does not propose specific approaches or recommendation on pathways forward.

What is AUKUS

Announced in September 2021, the AUKUS trilateral security partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, is a military technology partnership, focused on advanced capabilities.

AUKUS emerged fundamentally because of sharpening US and Australian concern about the deteriorating strategic outlook in the Indo Pacific, s6(a)

s6(a) This assessment of the deteriorating strategic environment, s6(a) is shared by New Zealand, as reflected in the Defence Assessment 2021, the MFAT Strategic Assessment, the draft National Security Strategy and the draft Defence Policy and Strategy Statement.

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A key objective of AUKUS is to sustain regional security and stability, alongside a range of other actions that contribute to this.

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On 14 March, the three AUKUS Leaders announced next steps including:

- Increased Australian port visits by nuclear powered submarines from the US (starting this year) and the UK (from 2026), with additional placement of embedded Australian personnel on US and UK vessels for training and development
- From 2027, establishment of a rotational presence in Australia of one UK Astute Class and up to four US Virginia Class nuclear powered submarines, operating from the Naval Base Sterling in Western Australia
- From the early 2030s, Australia to purchase three US Virginia Class submarines, subject to Congressional approval, with the potential to acquire up to two more
- Development of a new class of conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarine (the SSN-AUKUS), based on a UK design, and incorporating Australian, US and UK technology. The SSN-AUKUS class will be operated by both Australia and the UK. The UK will deliver the first SSN-AUKUS in the late 2030s, with the first Australian built SSN-AUKUS to be delivered in the early 2040s.

Australia has indicated that the cost of the submarine programme will be between AUD\$268 billion and \$368 billion over the next 30 years (0.15% of GDP per annum).

In making the announcement, the AUKUS leaders put particular emphasis on the fact that all three countries would continue to be in full compliance with their obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and for Australia under the Treaty of Rarotonga. They also highlighted their ongoing work with the IAEA to set the highest standards of verification and transparency.

AUKUS Pillar One

Pillar One is the initial and highest profile initiative under AUKUS. Pillar One concerns cooperation between the AUKUS partners (Australia, the UK and the US) on conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines.

It is Australia's transition from its current fleet of conventionally armed, diesel-powered submarines to significantly more advanced conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines. This is being achieved through Australia's planned purchase of US submarines, as well as the joint bilateral development of a new class of submarine.

AUKUS Pillar Two

Pillar Two of AUKUS involves accelerated cooperation on a range of non-nuclear advanced military technologies and capabilities, s6(a), s9(2)(g)(i)

Pillar Two currently consists of eight key areas: undersea warfare capabilities, quantum technologies; artificial intelligence; advanced cyber; hypersonic and counter-hypersonic capabilities; electronic warfare; innovation; and information sharing. s6(a)

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- The AUKUS Undersea Robotics Autonomous Systems (AURAS) project focuses on developing autonomous underwater vehicles; experimentation is expected to begin this year.

- The AUKUS Quantum Arrangement (AQuA) will initially centre on delivering quantum technologies for positioning, navigation and timing; experimentation is expected to begin over the next two to three years.

Despite several engagements by New Zealand with the three AUKUS partners at the ministerial, senior and working levels, s6(a)

s6(a), s6(b)(i)

Relationship between Pillar One and Pillar Two

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Potential for New Zealand involvement in Pillar Two

....vs existing cooperation arrangements

Through the Defence Technology Agency (DTA), the NZDF currently participates in The Technical Cooperation Program (TTCP), a forum for cooperation on defence science and technology. TTCP participants are Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States (i.e. the Five-Eyes states).

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Beyond DTA, NZDF and the Ministry of Defence currently engage in AUKUS-related technology areas with the AUKUS partners in a range of other ways, s6(a)

Public commentary has identified Pillar 2 as also covering some areas on which New Zealand intelligence agencies are already very well-connected with the three AUKUS members s6(a)

....what would it involve

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Benefits to New Zea and of involvement in Pillar 2

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Undersea capabilities	s6(a)
Quantum technologies	s6(a)
Artificial Intelligence and autonomy	s6(a)
Advanced cyber	s6(a)

Hypersonic and counter-hypersonic capabilities	s6(a)
Electronic warfare	s6(a)
Innovation	Accelerated s6(a)
Information sharing	s6(a)

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The areas that would most benefit Defence would be those that best complement the NZDF's current and planned capabilities and strategy, and which would act as force multipliers rather than entirely new capabilities.

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- Potentially significant military and intelligence interoperability implications, as New Zealand's key security partners develop and adopt advanced technologies and capabilities.

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The AUKUS states are three of New Zealand's closest security partners and include our only formal defence ally. These states are also a subset of the Five Eyes partnership, which is New Zealand's most significant and important intelligence, security and defence arrangement. In relative terms, New Zealand is very much a net beneficiary of this arrangement but provides substantial value in a range of ways.

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- Obstruct interoperability with key partners as they adopt advanced technologies; and,

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Relationships Implications

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New Zealand's positioning on AUKUS

From the outset, New Zealand has been clear s6(a) that it will not be involved in any of the nuclear aspects of AUKUS, and that there will be no change to New Zealand's Nuclear Free Zone, Disarmament, and Arms Control Act 1987 which prevents the entry into New Zealand's internal waters of nuclear-powered vessels. This position is well understood by the AUKUS partners, and there has never been any suggestion that New Zealand is being asked to change its policy.

New Zealand's existing key messages on AUKUS reflect an overall position developed soon after the original AUKUS announcement in September 2021, when there was considerable uncertainty both about the substance of AUKUS, and international perceptions and reactions.

Eighteen months on, and following the AUKUS Leaders' announcement, there is now more detailed understanding of the AUKUS partnership, s6(a)

Following the Leaders' announcement and reactions to this, there is also a clearer understanding of how AUKUS is perceived in the Indo-Pacific and globally, and the perspectives of various countries including in the Pacific, s6(a)

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Ahead of the Leaders' announcement, New Zealand was briefed in advance by the AUKUS partners at both senior officials' level and at the political level. This included the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Defence taking calls from their respective Australian and UK counterparts, as well as a call between the Prime Minister and Prime Minister Albanese.

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As of 29 March, officials have not received any direct feedback from Australian counterparts regarding how they view New Zealand's response to the Leaders' announcement. Officials are aware informally, however, that New Zealand's response has been viewed in Canberra as underwhelming.

Attached are two Annexes - s6(a) and Annex Two: Previous New Zealand comments.

International reactions to the AUKUS Leaders' announcement

On 14 March the three AUKUS Leaders announced key next steps for the AUKUS partnership.

The IAEA Director General issued a statement following the Leaders' announcement, making the following key points:

- The AUKUS partners have nuclear safeguards obligations under their respective safeguards agreements and additional protocols with the Agency. Article 14 of Australia's Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement allows Australia to use nuclear material for nuclear propulsion for submarines provided that Australia makes an arrangement with the Agency in this regard.
- The Agency will continue to have its verification and non-proliferation mandate as its core guiding principle. It will exercise it in an impartial, objective and technical manner.
- Australian Foreign Minister Wong has formally requested the Agency to commence negotiations on an Article 14 arrangement. (Article 14 allows Australia to use nuclear material, such as nuclear propulsion for submarines, provided that Australia makes an arrangement with the Agency in this regard). Once the arrangement is finalised, it will be transmitted to the Board of Governors of the IAEA for appropriate action.
- The Agency's role in this process is foreseen in the existing legal framework and falls strictly within its statutory competencies. The Director General will keep the IAEA Board informed and will submit a report to the next regular Board meeting in June 2023.

A number of countries have released statements in response or issued remarks from government spokespeople. Examples include:

- **Canada:** a foreign ministry tweet "welcoming the AUKUS announcement supporting the rules-based international order in the Indo-Pacific" and noting Canada's commitment to working with partners to promote peace, resilience & security in the region, including through an enhanced naval presence
- **Japan:** a foreign ministry statement noting PM Kishida's view that AUKUS "will contribute to the peace and stability of the Indo-Pacific region amidst an increasingly severe security environment in the region", and that Japan has "consistently supported these efforts." Similar comments made directly by Foreign Minister Hayashi.
- **Republic of Korea:** foreign ministry spokesperson's remarks noting that ROK "welcomes all co-operative efforts with and by partners to promote peace and stability in the region", commending the AUKUS partners' transparency, and noting that ROK hopes that the efforts of AUKUS to promote regional peace and stability in the future be in accordance with international non-proliferation norms, in close cooperation with the IAEA.
- **Indonesia:** a foreign ministry statement s6(a) noting that Indonesia was "closely following the security partnership of AUKUS" and "maintaining peace and stability in the region is the responsibility of all countries. It is critical for all countries to be a part of this effort", and that Indonesia expects Australia to "remain consistent in fulfilling its obligations under the NPT and IAEA Safeguards, as well as to develop with the IAEA a verification mechanism that is effective, transparent and non-discriminatory".
- **Fiji:** remarks from PM Rabuka to media (following a bilateral meeting with PM Albanese) that he "backed" AUKUS and had been assured by Australia that AUKUS would not affect the Treaty of Rarotonga or the NPT. PM Rabuka also suggested that there might be employment opportunities for Fijians under AUKUS.

- **Samoa:** comments from PM Mata'afa during a speech in Canberra, s6(a)
“this is how Australia sees its role in the security aspects of the region, and we understand that”.
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For example, on 22 March Australia hosted in Canberra a delegation of Chinese defence officials for the first bilateral defence dialogue since 2019.

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