

SPEECH

14 Mar 2023

Prime Minister

Naval Base Point Loma San Diego, USA

Check against delivery

President Biden.

Prime Minister Sunak.

I am honoured to stand alongside you both – here, overlooking the Pacific Ocean - as leaders of true and trusted friends of Australia.

Today, a new chapter in the relationship between our nation, the United States and the United Kingdom begins.

A friendship built on our shared values, our commitment to democracy and our common vision for a peaceful and prosperous future.

The AUKUS agreement we confirm here in San Diego represents the biggest single investment in Australia’s defence capability in our history.

Strengthening Australia’s national security and stability in our region.

Building a future made in Australia with record investments in skills, jobs and infrastructure.

And delivering a superior defence capability into the future.

My Government is determined to invest in our defence capability.

We are also determined to promote security by investing in our relationships across our region.

From early in the next decade, Australia will take delivery of three US Virginia class nuclear-powered submarines.

This is the first time in 65 years - and only the second time in history - that the US has shared its nuclear propulsion technology.

We are also proud to partner with the United Kingdom to construct the next generation submarine, to be called SSN-AUKUS.

A new, conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered, submarine - based on a British design, and incorporating cutting edge Australian, UK and US technologies.

This will be an Australian sovereign capability - built by Australians, commanded by the Royal Australian Navy and sustained by Australians in Australian shipyards - with construction to begin within this decade.

Australia's proud record of leadership in the international nuclear non-proliferation regime will continue.

We will of course continue to adhere to our obligations under the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and the Treaty of Rarotonga.

Our agreement unlocks a set of transformative opportunities - for jobs and skills and research and innovation.

In Adelaide and Barrow-in-Furness.

In Western Australia and here in the United States.

Opportunities that will shape, and strengthen, and grow Australia's economy for decades and create around 20,000 direct jobs for Australians from many trades and specialisations.

Engineers, scientists, technicians, submariners, administrators and trades people.

Good jobs, with good wages, working to ensure the stability and prosperity of our nations, our region, and our world.

Our future security will be built and maintained not just by the courage and professionalism of our defence forces, but by the hard work and know-how of our scientists and engineers, our technicians and programmers, electricians and welders.

For Australia, this whole-of-nation effort also presents a whole-of-nation opportunity.

We will work with the state governments of South Australia and Western Australia to develop training programs that equip Australians with the skills they need to fill these jobs.

Working together, our universities and research institutes will collaborate to train more Australians in nuclear engineering.

We are already sharing skills, and knowledge, and expertise across our borders, lifting the capability and capacity of all three countries.

Already - today - Australians are upskilling on nuclear technology and stewardship alongside their British and American counterparts.

Already - today - there are Australian submariners undergoing nuclear power training in the United States and I am proud to confirm that they are all in the top 30 per cent of their class.

Built by innovation and extraordinary and emerging technologies, these boats will present a unique opportunity for Australian companies to contribute - not only to the construction and sustainment of Australia's new submarines, but to supply chains in America and in Britain.

The scale, complexity and economic significance of this investment is akin to the creation of the Australian automotive industry in the post-war period.

And, just as the vision of Curtin and Chifley in creating our automotive industry lifted our entire manufacturing sector, this investment will be a catalyst for innovation and research breakthroughs that will reverberate throughout the Australian economy and across every state and territory.

Not just in one design element, not just in one field, but right across our advanced manufacturing and technology sectors.

Creating jobs and growing businesses, right around Australia.

Inspiring and rewarding innovation.

And educating young Australians today for the opportunities of tomorrow.

Our AUKUS partnership is not just about the US and UK sharing their most advanced submarine capability with Australia, it's also about drawing and building on the expertise within our three nations, so that we can achieve things greater than the sum of our parts.

This is a genuine trilateral undertaking – all three nations stand ready to contribute and all three nations stand ready to benefit.

I look out from here today and I see new frontiers in innovation to cross.

New breakthroughs in technology to achieve.

A new course for us to chart, together.

Mr President. Prime Minister.

For more than a century, brave citizens from our three countries have been part of a shared tradition of service in the cause of peace, and sacrifice in the name of freedom.

We honour their memory. We always will.

While we respect and honour the past – through AUKUS, we turn ourselves to face the future.

Because what the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia hold in common is more fundamental, and more universal, than our shared histories.

We are bound – above all – by our belief in a world where the sovereignty of every nation is respected – and the inherent dignity of every individual is upheld.

Where peace, stability and security ensure greater prosperity and a greater measure of fairness for all.

And where all countries are able to act in their sovereign interests free from coercion.

Our historic AUKUS partnership speaks to our collective and ongoing determination to defend those values and secure that future – today, in the years ahead, and for generations to come.

A journey that will strengthen the bonds between our nations – as friends, as peers, as leaders.

We embark with great confidence in the capacity and creativity of our people.

With optimism in the power of what our partnership can achieve.

And with an unwavering conviction that whatever the challenges ahead, the cause of peace and freedom will prevail.

Thank you very much.