

AUKUS Defense Ministers Meeting Joint Statement

The Hon Richard Marles MP
Deputy Prime Minister
Minister for Defence

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Release content

2 DECEMBER 2023

Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III hosted the Honourable Richard Marles MP, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, Australia, and the Right Honourable Grant Shapps, Secretary of State for Defence, United Kingdom, at the Defense Innovation Unit Headquarters in California today to discuss the AUKUS enhanced defense and security partnership.

For more than a century, the three nations have stood shoulder to-shoulder, along with other allies and partners, to help sustain peace, stability and prosperity around the world. The Secretaries and Deputy Prime Minister acknowledged that, in the face of an evolving security environment, AUKUS presents a generational opportunity to modernize and enhance longstanding partnerships and cooperation to address global security challenges and contribute to stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond. The Secretaries and Deputy Prime Minister reaffirmed that at the core of this partnership is the shared resolve to bolster security and stability and ensure that the Indo-Pacific remains a region free from coercion and aggression.

For Australia's acquisition of conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines (Pillar I), AUKUS partners are collaborating to deliver this capability at the earliest possible date while upholding the highest nuclear non-proliferation standard. For Advanced Capabilities (Pillar II), AUKUS partners are substantially deepening cooperation on a range of security and defense capabilities, making sure that each nation has the capabilities needed to defend against rapidly evolving threats. Through these efforts, AUKUS contributes to integrated deterrence by

pursuing layered and asymmetric capabilities that promote increased security and stability.

The Secretaries and Deputy Prime Minister reaffirmed the three nations' commitment to maximize the strategic and technological advantage of AUKUS by combining national strengths and pooling resources to deliver game-changing capabilities. They agreed that advancing AUKUS requires continued commitment to streamlining defense trade controls and information-sharing while minimizing policy and financial barriers across public and private sectors. The Secretaries and Deputy Prime Minister directed their organizations to continue taking additional steps to promote efficient defense and industrial collaboration among the three nations.

The Secretaries and Deputy Prime Minister reaffirmed that all AUKUS collaboration is and will be undertaken in full compliance with the partners' respective international legal obligations and commitments. In pursuit of this shared vision, the Secretaries and Deputy Prime Minister endorsed the following announcements and initiatives across both Pillar I and Pillar II.

PILLAR I—CONVENTIONALLY ARMED, NUCLEAR-POWERED SUBMARINES

The Secretaries and Deputy Prime Minister reviewed the exceptional progress that has been made since the March 2023 announcement of the Optimal Pathway for Australia to acquire conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines. They discussed the strategic significance of this endeavor and the deterrence effect it is already delivering. They reaffirmed their commitment to delivering each phase, to include establishing Submarine Rotational Force-West (SRF-West) in Australia as early as 2027, selling U.S. Virginia-class submarines to Australia from the early 2030s, and delivering SSN-AUKUS to the Royal Navy in the late 2030s and the first Australian-built SSN-AUKUS to the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) in the early 2040s.

- **Increased Royal Australian Navy Education and Training.** The Secretaries and Deputy Prime Minister acknowledged the significant progress on increased education and training opportunities for RAN personnel to attend specialized U.S. and UK schools, including training at the U.S. Submarine School in Groton, U.S. Nuclear Power School in Charleston, and the UK Nuclear Power School at HMS Sultan. The Secretaries and Deputy Prime Minister were pleased that six RAN officers have now graduated the U.S. Nuclear Power School, with a further three RAN officers on track to graduate from the UK Nuclear Power School in January 2024. This follows two RAN officers who have completed other Sultan nuclear

operator courses, with two more planned. These pioneering cohorts will be the first to operate Australia's future nuclear powered submarines.

- **Increased Industry Training.** The Secretaries and Deputy Prime Minister were pleased that the first tranche of Australian industry personnel have commenced work at Pearl Harbor Navy Shipyard in the United States and Barrow-in Furness shipyard in the UK to develop their skills to build and sustain nuclear powered submarines. This will support future maintenance activities during nuclear-powered attack submarine (SSN) visits to Australia.
- **Preparing for Submarine Rotational Force-West.** The Secretaries and Deputy Prime Minister noted that efforts are well underway to increase Australia's experience with nuclear powered submarines and build Australia's capacity to participate in future maintenance activities. The Secretaries and Deputy Prime Minister announced that Australian sailors will commence duty in Guam in early 2024 to build their SSN maintenance skills and qualifications in the lead up to SRF West. The Secretaries and Deputy Prime Minister also agreed to the increased frequency of SSN visits to HMAS *Stirling* in 2024, building on the USS NORTH CAROLINA visit in August 2023. The next U.S. SSN visit is planned to occur in the first half of 2024. The first planned maintenance activity of a U.S. SSN is planned to occur at HMAS Stirling in the second half of 2024. This will represent a substantial increase in Australian Defence Force participation in maintenance activities on U.S. SSNs. The UK reiterated its commitment to increasing SSN port visits beginning in 2026.
- **Upholding the Highest Non-Proliferation Standard.** The Secretaries and Deputy Prime Minister reaffirmed their shared commitment to upholding the highest standard for nuclear non proliferation, and welcomed the regular, open, and transparent engagement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to date. The Secretaries and Deputy Prime Minister acknowledged commencement of Australia's bilateral negotiations with the IAEA on an arrangement pursuant to Article 14 of Australia's Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement.
- **Enabling Legislation.** The Secretaries and Deputy Prime Minister discussed the importance of securing legislative support across all three systems to ensure the success of AUKUS. Secretaries and Deputy Prime Minister welcomed the new Foreign Military Sales case between Australia and the United States presented to the U.S. Congress, which will facilitate early delivery of capability to support SRF-West and provide mechanisms to train Australians. The Secretaries and Deputy Prime Minister also welcomed Australia's introduction of legislation to the Australian Parliament which will establish the framework to ensure nuclear safety within Australia's nuclear powered submarine enterprise, including establishing an independent nuclear safety regulator. They also welcomed the entry into force of the first AUKUS enabling legislation introduced to the Australian Parliament, the Defence Legislation Amendment (Naval Nuclear Propulsion) Act 2023, in July 2023.

PILLAR II—ADVANCED CAPABILITIES

Pillar II is accelerating and deepening the development and delivery of advanced military capabilities. The strategic alignment of our national defense strategies, anchored by our shared values, is facilitating unprecedented collaboration in advanced technologies. In addition to work focused on dedicated AUKUS capabilities, AUKUS is providing a vehicle to break down barriers and improve cooperation in other areas. While many AUKUS-related advanced capability activities remain classified, the Secretaries and Deputy Prime Minister shared the following commitments:

- **AUKUS Maritime Autonomy Experimentation and Exercise Series.** The AUKUS partners will undertake a series of integrated trilateral experiments and exercises aimed at enhancing capability development, improving interoperability, and increasing the sophistication and scale of autonomous systems in the maritime domain. The experiments and exercises will provide opportunities for defense industry to participate in capability demonstration, development, and delivery. Through these experiments and exercises, the AUKUS partners will also further test and refine the ability to jointly operate uncrewed maritime systems, share and process maritime data from all three nations, and provide real-time maritime domain awareness to support decision-making.
- **Trilateral Anti-Submarine Warfare.** The AUKUS partners have demonstrated and will deploy common advanced artificial intelligence (AI) algorithms on multiple systems, including P-8A Maritime Patrol Aircraft, to process data from each nation's sonobuoys. These joint advances will allow for timely high-volume data analysis, improving our anti-submarine warfare capabilities.
- **Undersea Vehicle Launch and Recovery.** The AUKUS partners are integrating the ability to launch and recover undersea vehicles from torpedo tubes on current classes of submarines to deliver effects such as strike and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance. This capability increases the range and capability of our undersea forces and will also support SSN-AUKUS.
- **Quantum Positioning, Navigation, and Timing.** The AUKUS partners are accelerating the development of quantum technologies for positioning, navigation, and timing in military capabilities. These capabilities create resilience for our trilateral forces in Global Positioning System-degraded environments and enhance stealth in the undersea domain, which will also support SSN-AUKUS.
- **Resilient and Autonomous Artificial Intelligence Technologies (RAAIT).** The AUKUS partners are delivering artificial intelligence algorithms and machine learning to enhance force protection, precision targeting, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance. This effort builds on joint work demonstrated in the UK in April 2023 and in South Australia in October 2023. The AUKUS nations aim to integrate RAAIT into national programs in 2024, to pursue the rapid adoption of these technologies across land and maritime domains.

- **Deep Space Advanced Radar Capability.** AUKUS is accelerating capabilities that provide trilateral partners with advanced technology to identify emerging threats in space. AUKUS played a critical role in advancing trilateral collaboration on the Deep Space Advanced Radar Capability program, which will provide 24 hour continuous, all weather global coverage to detect, track, and identify objects in deep space and increase space domain awareness. This capability will contribute to the security, safety, and responsible use of space. Sites will be in the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia. The first radar site in Western Australia will be operational in 2026, with all three in service by the end of the decade.
- **Cyber.** Trilaterally, AUKUS partners are engaging on cyber security with critical suppliers to the naval supply chain. We are collaborating with industry partners to deploy some advanced tooling which will uplift the cyber security of our supply chains, while also giving us greater insight into the threats to AUKUS. The AUKUS partners are also working to strengthen cyber capabilities, including protecting critical communication and operations' systems.
- **Establishing Trilateral Requirements.** The AUKUS partners are committed to ensuring AUKUS capability and technology development focuses on the most important military challenges each nation faces. The Secretaries and Deputy Prime Minister noted that the International Joint Requirements Oversight Council, co-chaired by the Vice Chiefs of Defense from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, is a key collaborative forum for identifying and validating operational requirements common to our three nations that will contribute to deterrence and our ability to prevail if deterrence fails.
- **AUKUS Innovation Challenges.** The AUKUS partners are aligning our defense innovation ecosystems by creating seamless opportunities for trilateral cooperation. AUKUS partners will launch a series of AUKUS innovation challenges in which companies from across all three innovation ecosystems will be able to compete for prizes on a common innovation challenge topic. In early 2024, partners will launch the first trilateral Innovation Prize Challenge, focusing on electronic warfare.
- **Defense Trade and Industrial Base Collaboration.** The AUKUS partners are working to facilitate deeper and more rapid defense trade between the three nations by streamlining policies and processes, along with implementing comparable security standards for guiding the transfer of sensitive military technology, data, and know-how. These efforts, including proposed legislative changes, will increase private sector cooperation across the AUKUS partners in emerging technologies and strengthen resiliency across our supply chains.
- **AUKUS Advanced Capabilities Industry Forum.** The AUKUS partners will establish and convene a standing Industry Forum with trilateral government and industry representatives to help inform policy, technical, and commercial frameworks to facilitate the development and delivery of advanced capabilities. The first meeting will occur in the first half of 2024.

- **AUKUS Defense Investors Network.** The AUKUS partners are increasing and expanding private sector engagement by welcoming the creation of an AUKUS Defense Investors Network, leveraging the current networks in all three countries to strengthen financing and facilitate targeted industry connectivity.

Together, these activities enhance the AUKUS partners' capabilities, collective security, and deterrence amid an evolving strategic and security environment. The AUKUS partners remain committed to deepening trilateral collaboration, enhancing information and technology sharing, and integrating our defense industrial bases to further strengthen joint capabilities and increase resiliency across the three nations. The initiatives and accomplishments announced today advance these objectives and set the conditions for continued partnership and progress towards a bold and innovative future for AUKUS.



The Honourable Richard Marles MP

**Deputy Prime Minister
Minister for Defence**

Visit to United States
30 November – 1 December 2023
Briefing Pack

Defending Australia and its national interests in order to
advance Australia's security and prosperity
www.defence.gov.au



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Official Delegation

Official party

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Minister for Defence

Ms Jo Tarnawsky
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Minister for Defence

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Adviser to the Deputy Prime Minister,
Minister for Defence

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Media Adviser to the Deputy Prime Minister
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Aide-de-Camp to the Deputy Prime Minister
Minister for Defence

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Defence Photographer
Department of Defence

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AUKUS Defence Ministers Meeting

Introductions and opening remarks [10 minutes]

Following a photo opportunity, principals will provide opening remarks. These will be open to the press.

Speaking order: United States; Australia; United Kingdom.

- Pleased to attend the second AUKUS Defence Ministers' Meeting and thank Secretary Austin for hosting.
- We meet not only as allies and partners, but as close friends who share deep, enduring ties and a long history of cooperation across the breadth of our relationships.
- For over a century, Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States have worked together, with our allies and partners, to promote security and stability around the world.
- The Indo-Pacific is facing the most challenging strategic circumstances we have seen since the Second World War.
- The primary objective of AUKUS, announced just over two years ago, resonates clearly.
- Through this trilateral security partnership, we will pool our resources and capitalise on our collective strengths to enhance our deterrence capabilities, and ensure that our region remains stable, prosperous and free from coercion.
- On submarine cooperation, today's meeting will be a chance for the AUKUS leadership to reflect on the strong progress our countries have made in the nine months since we announced the Optimal Pathway for Australia's acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines, and set the direction for continued momentum over the coming year.

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- On Advanced Capabilities, we are exploiting the unique ability of the three AUKUS partners to share information and translate, at pace, cutting edge technology into advanced military capabilities.
- Advanced Capabilities is the epitome of the trilateral partnership delivering more than the sum of its parts.
- Industry and innovation collaboration under AUKUS Pillar II is changing the way our three nations are operating together to tackle fast development of asymmetric capability.
- Today, we will set a clear trajectory for Pillar II; to enhance capability, interoperability and maintain our collective military edge.
- Collectively, we are re-doubling ambition and effort to deliver leading edge capability and a fit-for purpose enabling environment.
- Looking forward to frank and productive discussions today to advance the AUKUS endeavour and deliver our ambitious agenda.

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Conclusion and closing remarks [5 minutes]

Speaking order: United States; Australia; United Kingdom.

- Thank Secretaries Austin and Shapps for very productive discussions today.
- The outcomes we have agreed will enable our three countries to deliver on our commitments across submarines and advanced capabilities cooperation.
- Important we continue to work together in lockstep to maintain momentum and capitalise on strong progress made to date.
- Visible progress will have a strong deterrent effect and demonstrate to the world that we are serious about AUKUS.
- I am encouraged by the productive outcomes for Pillar II, and look forward to continued cooperation across our nations.

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- I remain steadfast in my commitment to both AUKUS Pillars and will do all it takes in the Australian system to ensure its success.

Following this item, there will be a 30 min media preparation opportunity, followed by a trilateral press conference.

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Bilateral Meeting with Honorable Lloyd J Austin III, Secretary of Defense

This brief will be provided at upon arrival in-country

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Factsheets

Defence Relationship Brief



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



KEY MESSAGES

- The Australia-United States Alliance ('the Alliance') is unprecedented in scale, scope and significance. It continues to grow and adapt, commensurate with our strategic circumstances.
- Defence engagement features longstanding cooperation on training, exercises, operations, intelligence and capability development, underpinned by a network of people working side by side.
- Our priorities include enhancing force posture cooperation in Australia, breaking down barriers to collaboration (including technology transfer and information sharing), and expanding regional engagement – most notably with Japan.

KEY LEADERS



- President: HE Joseph (Joe) Biden
- Secretary of Defense: The Hon Lloyd J Austin III
- Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (designate): Gen Charles Q Brown, Jr
- Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: Adm Christopher W Grady
- Commander US Indo-Pacific Command: Adm John 'Chris' Aquilino
- Ambassador to Australia: HE Ms Caroline Kennedy

KEY AGREEMENTS



- Enhanced Partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States (AUKUS) (2021)
- Force Posture Agreement (2014, into force 2016)
- Agreement relating to the Operation of and Access to an Australian Naval Communications Station at North West Cape in Western Australia (Harold E. Holt Treaty) (into force 2011)
- Exchange of Notes concerning Mutual Defence Commitments (Chapeau Agreement) (1995)
- The Pine Gap Treaty (1988)
- Agreement Concerning the Status of United States Forces in Australia (SOFA) (1963)
- Security Treaty between Australia, New Zealand and the United States (ANZUS) (1951)

STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

The Alliance remains central to Australia's national security and strategy. Close cooperation with the United States is important for balance and stability in the Indo-Pacific. Defence is pursuing greater scientific,

FAST FACTS

	Defense Strategic Documents <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2022 National Security Strategy• 2022 Indo-Pacific Strategy• 2022 National Defense Strategy, Missile Defense Review and Nuclear Posture Review• 2021 Global Posture Review
	Defence Budget <ul style="list-style-type: none">• USD 817 billion (AUD 1.44 trillion) FY 23 (Oct 22-Sep 23)
	Defence Force Size <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Approximately 1.4 million (active duty)
	Bilateral Defence Relationship Budget <ul style="list-style-type: none">• FY 22/23: AUD 1.09 million• FY 23/24: AUD 142 million

technological and industrial cooperation across the Alliance; strengthened interoperability; and enhanced US rotational force posture in Australia, including through conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarine visits.

The US National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy places collaboration with allies and partners as its centre of gravity. Improving our ability to combine strengths and pool resources across sovereign boundaries is a shared Alliance objective.

BILATERAL DEFENCE RELATIONSHIP

The close defence relationship between Australia and the United States is built on a foundation of trust, a long record of achievement and a shared commitment to uphold the global rules-based order and invest in a stable and resilient Indo-Pacific.

KEY AREAS OF COOPERATION

Force posture cooperation in Australia, intelligence,

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science and technology, defence industry, capability, training and exercises and regional engagement.

AUKUS

In 2021, Australia announced a new trilateral security partnership with the United States and United Kingdom, called AUKUS. The first major initiative under AUKUS is to support Australia's acquisition of conventionally-armed nuclear-powered submarines. Partners are also working to develop advanced capabilities with a focus on cyber, artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, hypersonics and undersea capabilities.

United States Force Posture Initiatives (USFPI)

USFPI enhance the capabilities and interoperability of the Australian and US forces, create new opportunities for engagement with regional partners, and better position the Alliance to respond to crises. At AUSMIN 2023, Australia and the United States reaffirmed our commitment to advance Enhanced Force Posture Cooperation across multiple domains, including:

- progressing upgrades at northern bases;
- enabling the prepositioning of US Army stores and materiel following Exercise Talisman Sabre;
- increasing rotations of US capabilities in Australia, including;
- US Army Watercraft in Australia and US Navy Maritime Patrol and Reconnaissance Aircraft;
- longer and more frequent visits of conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarines to Australia, and
- declaring Enhanced Space Cooperation as a new initiative.

MULTILATERAL ENGAGEMENT

Five Eyes Intelligence Grouping, Trilateral Strategic Dialogue (with Japan), AUKUS, Combined Space Operations (CSpO) initiative.

RECENT ENGAGEMENT

Bilateral Dialogues

- Australia-US Ministerial Consultations (Jul 23)
- AUSMIN Defence Acquisition Committee (Jun 23)
- Military Representatives (MILREPS) (Jun 23)
- Defence Policy and Strategy Talks (May 23)

KEY EXERCISES, OPERATIONS, AND VISITS

Exercises and Operations

- Ex TALISMAN SABRE: Largest bilateral exercise; plus participants/observers (Jul-Aug 23)
- Ex KOOLENDONG: Annual bilateral live-fire exercise conducted between the ADF and MRF-D (Jul 22)

AUS DEFENCE FOOTPRINT IN US

Head of Defence Staff (Washington): RADM Ian Murray

Army Attaché: BRIG David Kelly

Naval Attaché: **s47E(d)**

Air and Space Attaché: **s47E(d)**

CDF LO to CJCS: **s47E(d)**

Minister-Counsellor Defence Policy: **s47E(d)**

Minister-Counsellor Defence Materiel: **s47E(d)**

Other personnel

There are 549 Defence personnel (not including ASD, ASA and contractors). This includes:

- 44 Liaison and Support Officers;
- 14 Science and Technology officers;
- 101 embedded officers and

Training & Education

- 20 training instructors and 53 training students across Army, Navy and RAAF.

US DEFENSE FOOTPRINT IN AUS

Defense Attaché: **s47F**

Service Attachés: **s47F**

(Army), **s47F**

(Navy), **s47F** (Air Force), **s47F** (Coast Guard), **s47F** (Marine Corps)

- Ex PITCH BLACK: Biennial three-week exercise with 17 different countries (Aug-Sep 22)

Recent visits to the United States

- DPM (Oct, Dec 22, Feb, Oct 23)
- MINDI (Jun, Oct 23)
- CDF (Oct, Dec 22, Feb, May, Sep 23)
- SEC (Oct, Dec 22)
- VCDF (Jun 23)
- CJOPS (May 23)
- CN (Jul, Sep 23)
- CJOC (Sep 23)

Visits to Australia

- US SECDEF (Jul 23)
- US SECARMY (Jul 23)
- US SECNAV (Jul 23)
- US COM INDOPACOM (Jul 23)
- CJCS (Jul 23)
- VCJCS (Jul 23)
- Commander US Pacific Fleet (Feb 23)
- Commander US Coast Guard Pacific (Feb 23)
- Commandant US Marine Corps (Feb 23)

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AGENDA
AUKUS Defense Ministers Meeting
December 1, 2023, 1300 – 1435

1300 – 1305 Arrival (5 minutes) at 1300

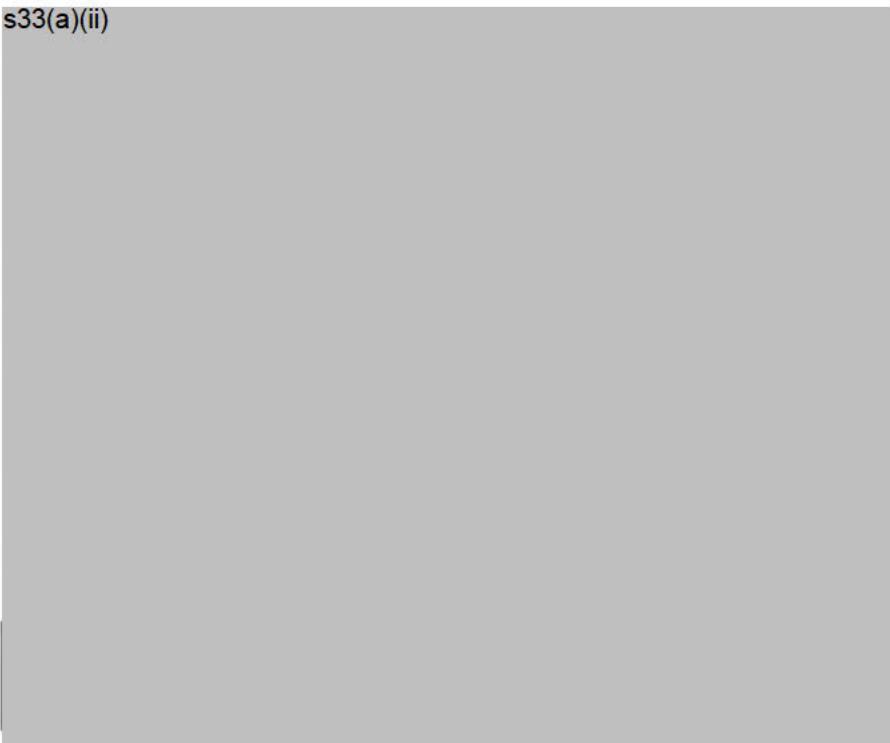
Arrival Order: Australia, United Kingdom

1305 – 1315 Introductions and Opening Remarks (10 min) (open to the press)

- Photo Opportunity
- Brief Welcome (*Secretary Austin*)
- Opening Remarks (*DPM Marles, Secretary Shapps*)

Note: Press departs the room at this point

1315 – 1335 **s33(a)(ii)**



1335 – 1405

1405 – 1430



1430 – 1435 Conclusion (5 min)

Speaking Order: United States, Australia, United Kingdom

- Closing Statements

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