

A Bold New Agreement; Australia To Acquire American Nuclear Submarines

written by Hamna Seyyed | March 17, 2023



In an ambitious strategy to reinforce Western force throughout the Asia-Pacific in response to a growing China, Australia has announced intentions to purchase up to five nuclear-powered submarines from the US and then construct a new model using American and British technology. President Joe Biden made the announcement at a meeting with the prime ministers of Australia and the United Kingdom at a naval base in San Diego, California.

Australia, which joined the AUKUS alliance with Washington and London 18 months ago, won't be receiving nuclear weapons, as Biden emphasized. Yet by procuring nuclear-powered stealth submarines, Australia joins an exclusive club and leads US-led efforts to counter China military growth. According to Albanese, the agreement is the largest single investment Australia has ever made in its defense capabilities. The submarines are anticipated to be outfitted with cruise missiles that may effectively discourage potential attackers by striking targets at a great distance. Albanese expected that the larger economic effects at home would be comparable to the country's post-World War II introduction of the car sector.



The multi-decade project is expected to cost over \$40 billion in the first 10 years and generate 20,000 jobs, according to the Australian government's projections. Albanese emphasized that Australia had just surpassed Britain as the sole nation to have access to American naval nuclear secrets. The globe, he continued, "where peace, stability, and security promise greater wealth" is what binds us most. The sale of three nuclear-powered, conventionally armed Virginia class ships will take place "over the course of the 2030s," with the "possibility of going up to five if that is needed," according to Jake Sullivan, Biden's national security adviser. Thereafter, Britain and Australia will start construction on a new design known as the SSN-AUKUS, which will also be nuclear-powered and carry conventional missiles. According to Sullivan, there would be "major investments in all three industrial bases" and this will be a British design using US technology.

While Australia has ruled out using nuclear weapons, the submarine proposal represents an important new development in the conflict with China, which has developed a highly advanced naval fleet and transformed man-made islands in the Pacific into offshore bases. Britain is also taking steps to strengthen its military capabilities in response to the Chinese challenge and Russia's invasion of pro-Western Ukraine. Office of Sunak said. According to Downing Street, almost \$6 billion in additional funds over the next two years will be used to restock and strengthen crucial ammunition stores, update the UK's nuclear programme, and finance the AUKUS submarine program's next stage. Australia had originally planned to purchase a \$66 billion package of French warships with conventional engines to replace its outdated fleet of diesel-powered submarines.