

## AUKUS Announcement Dip Corps Briefings – 14 March

### s 33(a)(iii)

Brunei s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F

Cambodia s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F

Indonesia s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F

Laos s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F

Malaysia s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F

Philippines s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F

Singapore s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F

Thailand s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F

Vietnam s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F

~~Timor-Leste~~ s33(a)(iii), s33(b)

### s 33(a)(iii)

~~Fiji~~ s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F

Nauru s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F

New Zealand s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F

Papua New Guinea s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F

Samoa s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F

Solomon Islands s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F

~~Tonga~~ s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F

~~Vanuatu~~ s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F

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Canada s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F

EU s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F

France s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F

Germany s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F

India s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F

Japan s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F

New Zealand - s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F

ROK s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F

Diplomatic Corps Briefing on AUKUS – s 33(a)(iii)			
✓/✗	Mission	Representative/s	Additional Attendees
✓	Algeria	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Argentina	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✗	Austria	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✗	Azerbaijan	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Bangladesh	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✗	Bhutan	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Botswana	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Brazil	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Bulgaria	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Chile	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	China	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓		s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Colombia	s33(a)(iii), s33(b),	
✓	Denmark	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Ecuador	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Egypt	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	El Salvador	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Finland	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Georgia	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Greece	s33(a)(iii), s33(b),	
✓	Israel	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Jordan	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Kenya	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Kuwait	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Lithuania	s33(a)(iii), s33(b),	
✓	Malta	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Mauritius	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Morocco	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Nigeria	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	North Macedonia	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Pakistan	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓		s33(a)(iii), s33(b),	
✓	Peru	s33(a)(iii), s33(b),	
✓		s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Portugal	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Qatar	s33(a)(iii), s33(b),	
✗		s33(a)(iii),	
✓	Romania	s33(a)(iii), s33(b),	
✓	Serbia	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✗	South Africa	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✗		s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Sri Lanka	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Sweden	s33(a)(iii), s33(b),	
✗	Turkiye	s33(a)(iii), s33(b),	
✓	UAE	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓		s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Ukraine	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Uruguay	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Zambia	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	

Total: ~~42~~ 38 Countries (~~48~~ 42 Attendees)

Diplomatic Corps Briefing on AUKUS – s 33(a)(iii)			
✓/*	Mission	Representative/s	Additional Attendees
✓	Afghanistan (Islamic Republic)	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Albania	s33(a)(iii), s33(b),	
✓	Bhutan	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Bosnia and Herzegovina	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Brazil	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Croatia	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Cyprus	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Estonia	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Ghana	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Hungary	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Israel	s33(a)(iii),	
✓		s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
*	Iraq	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Ireland	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Italy	s33(a)(iii), s33(b),	
✓		s33(a)(iii), s33(b),	
✓	Latvia	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Lebanon	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Netherlands	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓		s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Norway	s33(a)(iii),	
✓	Paraguay	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Poland	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Saudi Arabia	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Slovenia	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Spain	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓		s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
✓	Sweden	s33(a)(iii), s33(b),	
✓	Switzerland	s33(a)(iii), s33(b),	
✓	Uganda	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	
*	Zimbabwe	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F	

RSVPs for first session that did not attend	
Austria	s33(a) s33(a)(iii), s33(b),
Azerbaijan	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F
South Africa	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F
	s33(a)(iii), s33(b), s47F

Total: 26 24 Countries (30 29 Attendees)





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# AUKUS Optimal Pathway Announcement: Diplomatic Corps briefing

Wednesday 15 March 2023 | 10-10:45am

## Q&A

With respect to Australia's acquisition of 3-5 US-made Virginia class submarines, s33(a)(iii)

FAS AUKUS Taskforce (Sarah deZoeten) responded that Australia wouldn't pre-empt Congress on these decisions, but was hearted by the level of support for AUKUS received from both sides of Congress, and all three AUKUS partners shared bipartisan commitment to the endeavour. Australia would continue to work with the US and UK to secure requisite approvals. Australia would continue to engage with the US on the matter of new versus re-used Virginia class submarines, but in all scenarios these boats would have the highest standards of quality and safety.

s33(a)(iii)

deZoeten noted the Australian Deputy Prime Minister's statement that Australia isn't seeking to prevent any states' legitimate military acquisitions, but rather we were seeking transparency from states as they engaged with that acquisition process. Australia had a long and proud history of non-proliferation advocacy; this had not changed. The rules of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) made clear that Australia's acquisition of nuclear-powered submarines (NPS) is allowed within the non-proliferation regime. AUKUS partners would ensure that the rules that NPT State Parties had agreed to were honoured, and that Australia would set the highest non-proliferation standards in its acquisition of NPS, including through safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and communications with the international community. Australia's Ambassador for Arms Control and Counter-Proliferation (Ian Biggs) added that Australian NPS would not carry fissile material – that is, no nuclear weapons content would be onboard Australian NPS. Regarding proliferation concerns, Biggs noted that Australia's acquisition of NPS would be difficult and expensive; it would not constitute a "breakout" because this was not a process that would be easy to replicate. Rather, it set a precedent. And in that respect, Australia was committed to setting the highest possible non-proliferation and safety standards, which other states bearing legitimate ambitions to acquire NPS would similarly have to meet. An Additional Protocol (AP) to said states' Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement (CSA) with the IAEA may be necessary to achieve this. The high non-proliferation standards set through AUKUS would apply to all states in the region, such that if replicated by others, their acquisition of NPS would not present a non-proliferation concern to us.

s33(a)(iii)

deZoeten said the SSN AUKUS model would be operated by both UK and Australian navies: SSN AUKUS ships built in the UK would be operated by the UK, and SSN AUKUS ships built in Australia would be operated by Australia. Virginia class submarines received by Australia from the US through AUKUS would be under Australia's complete sovereign control. Regarding US and UK nationals on Australia's SSN AUKUS boats, deZoeten said that nationals from multiple partners in the region are already positioned on Australian vessels s33(a)(i); this was not a new practice. That said, it would not be a "prerequisite" for future operations of Australia's NPS to have US or UK nationals onboard.

s33(a)(iii)

deZoeten noted the Australian Deputy Prime Minister's remarks that the region was experiencing the greatest scale of military modernisation since World War II – and this





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was not being undertaken by Australia. She said that Australia, as all states did, was looking at military acquisition in relation to this situation; but rather than acquiring an entirely new capability, Australia was instead replacing a capability that was retiring (i.e. the Collins class submarines). By contrast, others in our region were engaging in a much more rapid scale-up of military capabilities without transparency. Our acquisition of NPS was a sensible response to changing strategic circumstances, and would serve as a deterrent and contribution to regional equilibrium – and as the last 18 months showed, Australia remained genuinely committed to transparency in its pursuit of this endeavour.

s33(a)(iii)

s33(a)(iii)

deZoeten said the distinction pertained to the generation of power used to propel the submarine, and explained that where diesel was used as the power source for Australia's current submarines, NPS would instead use nuclear material. She said that the NPT had provisions for non-nuclear weapons states to use nuclear material for non-proscribed military purposes, including naval nuclear propulsion; this was reflected by conversations between NPT State Parties during the drafting process. Article 14 of Australia's CSA explicitly allowed for use of nuclear material in this manner, and all member states were permitted under the NPT to benefit from peaceful uses of nuclear technology. Biggs added that Australia would develop with the IAEA a safeguards agreement within Article 14 to ensure the IAEA was able to meet its technical objectives (no diversion of nuclear material; no misuse of nuclear facilities; and no undeclared nuclear activities or materials in Australia). Australia would continue to fulfil its non-proliferation obligations. s33(a)(iii)

s33(a)(iii)

deZoeten replied that these would be military assets, not civilian – but unlike the NPS being used by others in the region, Australia's NPS would not carry nuclear weapons. She said the Treaty of Rarotonga discussed definitions of explosive nuclear devices, and the NPT discussed definitions of nuclear weapons in general. She noted Australia did not have a more comprehensive knowledge of the inner workings of nuclear weapons because Australia is not a nuclear weapons state; but our NPS would not have any nuclear material onboard besides that which is used in sealed reactors to power the ships' propulsion systems. These sealed reactors were entirely unrelated to the ships' weapons systems.

s 33(a)(iii)



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s33(a)(iii)

s33(a)(iii)

s33(a)(iii)

s33(a)(iii)

deZoeten said Australia continued to enjoy strong and constructive relationships with countries across the region. She said the Foreign Minister's priority was to listen, and Australia's extensive conversations and consultations with countries was being undertaken at all levels. She said the consistent comments relayed to Australia in response were (1) gratitude for the transparency, and (2) an understanding of – and desire to have continued conversations with Australia about – the region Australia wished to see: open, stable, prosperous, and respectful of sovereignty. She said there was a sense of reassurance on the important topic of environmental safety. She also said the IAEA Director General's September 2022 report on AUKUS affirmed the IAEA's reassurance and satisfaction with AUKUS partners' engagements to date Australia would continue to demonstrate transparency. s33(a)(iii)





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## AUKUS Optimal Pathway Announcement: Diplomatic Corps briefing

Wednesday 15 March 2023 | 2-2:30pm

### Q&A

s33(a)(iii)

. FAS AUKUS Taskforce (Sarah deZoeten) said that per the Australian Prime Minister's recent statements, Australia would retain control of operational waste and spent fuel from its NPS program. Spent fuel would not have a chemical composition that could be turned into nuclear weapons without additional chemical processing, which would require facilities that Australia did not have and would not seek. The storage site for spent fuel and nuclear waste would also be subject to inspections and verification by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), thus ensuring the IAEA would be able to meet its technical objectives (no diversion of nuclear material; no misuse of nuclear facilities; and no undeclared nuclear activities or materials in Australia) at all stages of the NPS lifecycle. Ambassador for Arms Control and Counter Proliferation (Ian Biggs) added that while the NPS spent fuel was high enriched uranium, it was not fissile, meaning it could not be turned into nuclear weapons material without facilities that Australia did not have. Any attempt to build those facilities would be very obvious to the IAEA.

s33(a)(iii)

deZoeten said crews of NPS needed to have nuclear qualifications in order for Australia to appropriately uphold its responsibility as a nuclear steward. Biggs added that while Australia's NPS crews would have no reason to access the reactor cores, maintenance of the reactors throughout the NPS lifecycle would still be needed, so crew members needed nuclear qualifications to understand what they would be looking after.

s33(a)(iii)

deZoeten said that while it was true that this would still need to go through US congressional approval processes, the US Congress had consistently demonstrated strong bipartisan support for AUKUS. She said that while she would not speak for or pre-empt Congress, Australia was confident with where we stood on this agreement.

s33(a)(iii)

deZoeten replied that the Australian way was to engage with partners as much as possible. This had included outreach in multilateral fora and in capitals. She said that as Australia's Foreign Minister regularly emphasised, Australia's priority was to listen, and then to respond, provide reassurance, and recalibrate where necessary. deZoeten said Australia was very focused on environmental considerations: our maritime environment was critically important to us, and Australia was working through those issues domestically and through conversations with the Pacific family. Extensive conversations with partners were taking place at all levels, including between senior officials, ministers, and technical experts; Australia was taking every opportunity to discuss these topics. She acknowledged that Australia's would not be the first NPS in the region: others were already operational, and some of those were armed with nuclear weapons. She said Australia's acquisition of NPS constituted a modernisation of existing capabilities in response to these strategic circumstances, and Australia's NPS would not be nuclear-armed. She added that Australia's diplomacy had been productive and extensive, and feedback received had been consistent: partners were grateful for Australia's engagement and transparency, and for the useful conversation regarding Australia's strategic rationale.

**Title:** AUKUS: Optimal Pathway Announcement: Briefings to the Diplomatic Corps

**MRN:** s47E(d) 16/03/2023 07:47:05 PM ZE10

**To:** FAF Posts

**Cc:**

**From:** Canberra  
(CHCH/DFAT/AKD/MSB)

**From File:**

**EDRMS**

**Files:**

**References:** s47E(d)

**Response:** Routine, Information Only

## Summary

Following the 14 March leaders' announcement of the AUKUS optimal pathway, we briefed the Canberra-based diplomatic corps on announcement details and answered questions about next steps. The briefings helped to build further understanding of the strategic and technical details of the announcement, buttressing posts' in-country advocacy. s33(a)(iii)

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On 14 and 15 March FAS AKD, DFAT (deZoeten), AS NPSTF, Defence (s47F ) and FAS Quad, AUKUS and Naval Shipbuilding, PM&C (Wood) undertook a series of briefings for the Canberra-based diplomatic corps following the 14 March AUKUS leaders' announcement of the nuclear-powered submarines optimal pathway. Director-General ASNO (Shaw), Ambassador Arms Control and Non-Proliferation (Biggs) and AS NPSTF, Defence (s47F ) also joined the well-attended sessions which attracted strong Ambassadorial and Defence Adviser-level representation. A total of 62 missions attended.

2. We used the briefings to amplify key messages from leaders, to outline the phases of the optimal pathway and to reiterate key AUKUS messages on non-proliferation, environmental and safety regulation and our demonstrated commitment to transparency. Disinformation was also a key focus of our advocacy, with speakers encouraging those in attendance to engage with counterparts here and with Australian representatives in capitals to ensure the accuracy of information they were receiving. Copies of the 14 March leaders' statement and the Australian public report were distributed to all attendees.

s33(a)(iii)