



# Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament

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Rt Hon Liz Truss  
Secretary of State for Foreign and  
Commonwealth Affairs  
Foreign & Commonwealth Office  
King Charles Street  
London  
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19 January 2022

Dear Foreign Secretary,

I am writing to you about the Australia–United Kingdom Ministerial Consultations (AUKMIN) 2022 which you and the Secretary of State for Defence, Ben Wallace will attend this week.

News reporting suggests that AUKMIN will be dominated by the recent AUKUS pact and in particular the delivery of a nuclear submarine fleet for Australia as part of that agreement. It is also suggested that the discussions will include the possible temporary basing of British nuclear submarines in Australia.

I have two very specific concerns about these developments. Firstly, with regard to stability in the region, When AUKUS was launched in September 2021 the joint governments' statement asserted that AUKUS will 'promote stability in the Indo-Pacific'. It is hard to see how that can possibly be the case given the significance of nuclear-powered submarines, as well as a build up of British military assets in Australia; this very much increases the likelihood of intensifying tensions with China. Not surprisingly a number of states in the region have expressed that concern.

Secondly, that although the participants claim to be maintaining the international rules-based order, the provision of nuclear technology to Australia breaches international law in the form of the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

The British Prime Minister stated in Parliament in September that the AUKUS agreement does not contravene the NPT – because it involves nuclear power not nuclear weapons. But the fact is the agreement will provide weapons grade enriched uranium to a non-nuclear weapons state to power military submarines undertaking provocative action in a very fraught area of the world.

The NPT does not stop the exchange of civil nuclear technology but it stipulates it must be 'for peaceful purposes'. Sending war-fighting subs to potential conflict in the Indo-Pacific region is hardly that. This is a clear breach of international law.

I urge you to step back from the AUKUS agreement and rethink your approach to security. Our government must comply with the NPT and work through diplomatic means to reduce tensions in the Indo-Pacific region. The course that the government is currently following – and which I fear AUKMIN will reinforce – will only increase tensions and the risk of nuclear proliferation and war.

Yours sincerely

Dr Kate Hudson  
General Secretary  
Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament