



## The Influence of Member States Domestic Determinants on the Implementation of Pillar Two of the 2021 Australia - UK - U.S. Trilateral Security Partnership (Aukus)

Petrasia Depe Gani<sup>1,\*</sup>, Indra Alverdian<sup>2</sup>

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received 30 Apr 2025;  
in revised from 01 Aug 2025;  
accepted 28 Aug 2025.

#### Keywords:

Domestic Determinants, AUKUS,  
Advanced Military Capabilities,  
Indo-Pacific.

### ABSTRACT

This article provides insight into how distinct domestic determinants of AUKUS Member Countries may influence the implementation of Pillar Two of AUKUS. By utilising qualitative research methods, this article would like to provide a preliminary analysis of how the domestic determinants play an equally pivotal role in the effective implementation of pillar two. In particular, how and to what extent do these domestic determinants influence Pillar Two of AUKUS, centring on integrating advanced military capabilities. This article has three primary findings. First, the three-member states' domestic determinants are generally stable, regardless of their challenges. Second, domestic determinants are independent variables that influence the implementation of pillar two, which include the level of integration of military capabilities, progress, stability, and sustainability of this partnership. Third, the authors discover that pillar two can potentially contribute to a free and open Indo-Pacific region through integrated deterrence, defence and defence industrial base, and cutting-edge science and technology innovation.

© SECMAR | All rights reserved

### 1. Introduction.

On September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021, Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America announced their Trilateral Security Partnership (AUKUS), which aims to promote a free, open, secure, and stable Indo-Pacific. AUKUS, according to Moroney and Tidwell, is not a new alliance. Instead, it is the extension of the Defense Trade Cooperation treaty ratified in 2010 during the Bush administration. This announcement drew various responses from many parties, including those within the three member states. AUKUS received many responses during the early stages of its establishment since the narrative developed at the time was an attempt to counterbalance China's aggressiveness in the Indo-Pacific region. In recent decades, the

Indo-Pacific region has become crucial to almost every country, especially the United States and its allies. However, the Indo-Pacific is not an exclusive concept or framework. The Indo-Pacific has different geographical boundaries and meanings from major regional powers or countries. A modern interpretation of the Indo-Pacific originated in a 2007 address by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to the Indian parliament, titled "The Meeting of the Two Oceans." Abe proposed a partnership in which Japanese and Indian influence in the Pacific and Indian Oceans, in collaboration with the United States and Australia, could protect commerce routes while promoting regional independence and prosperity. Moreover, "Indo-Pacific" refers to more than just geography. Several states, including the United States, Australia, Japan, India, France, the United Kingdom, and Indonesia, have adopted the concept of "Indo-Pacific" as a policy symbol for regional engagement on defense and security issues.

As a geopolitical construct, the Indo-Pacific will always involve competition for superpowers like America and China.

<sup>1</sup>International Relations Department at President University.

<sup>2</sup>Maritime Safety and Security Policy Program at the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS).

\*Corresponding author: Petrasia Depe Gani. E-mail Address: [petragani08@gmail.com](mailto:petragani08@gmail.com).

Both want to maintain and expand their influence in the region. Given its strategic location between two oceans and countries experiencing increased economic activity, the Indo-Pacific environment indirectly benefits, challenges, and threatens neighboring countries. One of the examples of the rising tension and prolonged conflict in the Indo-Pacific. It is undeniable that there are currently many problems, escalation of tensions, and disputes taking place, such as terrorism, piracy, and territorial disputes, all of which jeopardise maritime security and good order at sea in the region, particularly for Australia, which is located at the nexus of the region. However, AUKUS's purpose goes beyond that. Research briefing by Louisa Brooke indicates that AUKUS mainly has two pillars. The first pillar is a significant part of the agreement to collaborate and help Australia acquire its first conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarine. Meanwhile, the second pillar focused on advanced military capabilities. The leaders are committed to fostering deeper security and defense-related science, technology, and industry integration. Australian Defense Minister Richard Marles stressed the importance of this pillar during his visit to the United States in July 2022.

AUKUS, therefore, can be considered a long-term investment in advanced maritime capabilities with a bigger purpose. With this ambitious project, Australia and the United Kingdom will be the only partners with access to the United States' highly classified nuclear-powered submarine technology and information. This will also improve the integration of defense-related science, technology, industrial base, and supply chains, focusing on underwater capabilities, artificial intelligence, and quantum technology (White House, 2021). The plan is becoming increasingly concerning because it has the potential to spark an arms race, which Indonesia predicted would occur. Many writings have strongly criticized the formation of AUKUS, claiming that it will not promote regional balance and security.

Dr Bec Starting, the Director of La Trobe Asia, argues that AUKUS's ambitious plan is "being described as high risk and potentially high reward." This means that if it fails, it will result in massive losses for all parties. On the other hand, if the project is successful, it will have a significant impact on the strategic environment and maritime defense system in the Indo-Pacific region and possibly the entire world. This takes military and maritime defense to another level of partnership. Its highly classified and high-risk nature necessitates that all member states first share a liberal value and a common perspective on this cooperation. It also requires consistent and long-term commitment from the three countries' leaders and politicians, as well as integration with other sectors such as technology and industry.

Although this trilateral security partnership sounds promising, its implementation is still a work in progress for the three member countries. A contributing element to the adequate progress of the second pillar is domestic political factors and its subjective orientation towards pillar two of AUKUS within the overall Indo-Pacific strategic environment. The possible influence that domestic determinants may have on the longevity of the second pillar of AUKUS implies a necessity to conduct further academic insights into how and why these domestic determinants

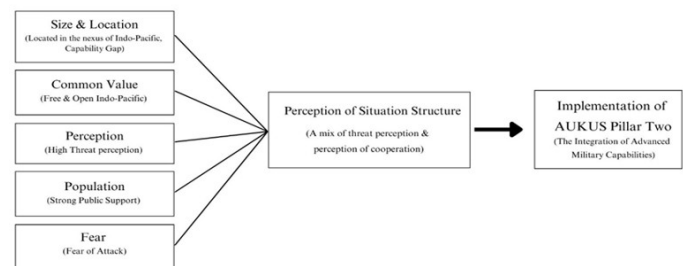
may influence the implementation of AUKUS pillar two. Understanding this domestic impetus may provide a better understanding of why and how domestic determinants may affect the implementation of agreements within the framework of security alliances.

## 2. Australia's Domestic Determinants on the Implementation of AUKUS Pillar Two.

Australia is an important actor and unit of analysis in implementing the AUKUS Partnership. This is because Australia will be the member state most impacted by the success or failure of this agreement. Furthermore, Australia is very passionate and involved in this partnership, as seen by the effort and funding allocated to achieve the promise of the second pillar, advanced military capabilities. This, in turn, gives them more pressure and homework to complete and deal with.

For Australia, AUKUS represents the acquisition of America's world-class submarines and a new chapter in its relationship with America and Australia. AUKUS is Australia's progressive, assertive, and decisive approach toward addressing the dynamics of the strategic environment in the Indo-Pacific region. According to one Australian official, AUKUS will completely restructure the country's defense system and strategic thinking. Nonetheless, it cannot be denied that the second pillar in achieving this ambitious aim is influenced by domestic political dynamics or internal drivers of the Australian state, such as geography, population, everyday values, perception, and fear. These domestic elements influence one another, and their dynamics affect the implementation of the AUKUS pillar two agreement, as shown in the figure below.

Figure 1: Australia's Domestic Determinants.



Source: Authors.

The chart above indicates that Australia's size and geographical location influence how it perceives the current strategic situation in the Indo-Pacific and what action it should take in response. Geographically, Australia is in the centre of the Indo-Pacific region, bordering the Indian Ocean to the west, the Pacific Ocean to the east, and ASEAN countries to the north. Since 2012, the Indo-Pacific concept has served as the framework for the Australian government in determining the country's foreign and security policy priorities. Based on Lentner's theory, Australia's size and location are independent variables that not only create a sense of security but also contribute to the country's identity. Additionally, the countries strategically

located at the Indo-Pacific nexus are highly exposed to future escalation and other strategic threats, such as China’s growing aggressive activities in the region. This, in turn, gives them concern of being attacked, which leads to a threat perception and, ultimately, fear for Australia.

According to Lentner, there are two essential fears in foreign policy: attack and disintegration. The fear of attack usually stems from the insecurity of capabilities compared to neighbouring countries. This will lead to alliance-seeking and resource mobilisation within the country. In addition, fear of attack is related to threats, although they are not the same. Fear of one’s security implies that there is a threat to it. Australia explicitly outlined in the 2016 Defense White Paper the potential threats that led it to enter or form alliances with partners.

Despite its strategic geographic location and immense size, Australia’s isolation leaves it particularly vulnerable to regional crises or tensions. Despite discussions and ideas that Australia should be more independent, due to its long relationship with the US and its isolated geographical location, Australia continues to rely on America as a security guarantor. The aggressive and modern militaries of countries in the Indo-Pacific area, including China, undoubtedly create instability and fear of attack or violence in the region. When fears become overwhelming, a country may launch an attack or take countermeasures. Given the continuously changing character of dangers and worries, this circumstance can be considered unstable determinants.

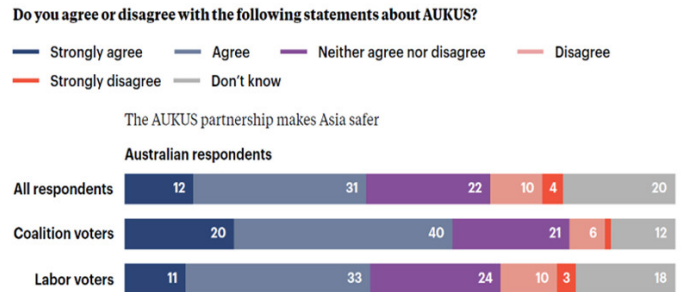
On the other hand, common values and population contribute to Australia’s more positive perspective, namely the perception of cooperation, which leads to initiatives to engage with other parties, in this case, AUKUS collaboration, particularly Pillar two. Typical values are embedded in a country’s political culture. In contrast, Australia, like the United States and the United Kingdom, adheres to liberal values. Furthermore, as a sovereign nation, the government prioritizes security, as evidenced by the Defence White Paper. Australia’s DWP 2016 shows how the government is investing in defence capabilities to bolster Australia’s security in the increasingly complex strategic environment it will face in years to come. While shared values are a stable part of political culture, I would argue that in the case of AUKUS, this domestic aspect is a stable determining factor. This is because common values are not new to Australia. Liberal values have been around for a long time and particularly in the case of AUKUS, Australia has something in common with the American concept of a free and open Indo-Pacific. This is evidenced in the country’s DWP which states that the stability of a rules-based global order is vital to Australia’s security and prosperity.

This universal value is deep-rooted, and concerning the second AUKUS Pillar, Australia is supported by its strong public opinion and/or growing population. Lentner argues that concerning domestic determinants, population is not just a matter of statistical data but rather the integration of numbers of people in a cohesive society and skills. In addition, many narratives about AUKUS spread across political parties and the Australian government have created pros and cons. Despite these criticisms, a surprising fact comes from Australian citizens, who support this defense cooperation. Based on a survey from the

United States Studies Centre on November 1, 2023, 43% of Australians support and agree that AUKUS will make their region safer, as seen below.

Figure 2: Australian Public Opinion on AUKUS.

Figure 18: While a third or more of American and Japanese respondents are undecided about AUKUS, only small minorities think it makes the region less safe



Source: United States Studies Centre (2023).

Despite the support from most Australians, the government and proponents of this deal cannot be satisfied. They still need to prove to the public that the AUKUS is worth the multi-billion-dollar cost. This means that the Australian government must provide transparency to the public regarding the funds used, rationalization, and strategic calculations in the event of a worst-case scenario. Thus, we can conclude that Lentner’s five domestic determinants all play a dominant role in Australia’s policy making and implementation. Despite the fear and threat perceived due to its geographical position, Australia still shows a positive attitude and strong political will for AUKUS pillar two. This political will and commitment are needed to make AUKUS an enduring defence cooperation.

### 3. The United Kingdom’s Domestic Determinants On The Implementation of AUKUS Pillar Two.

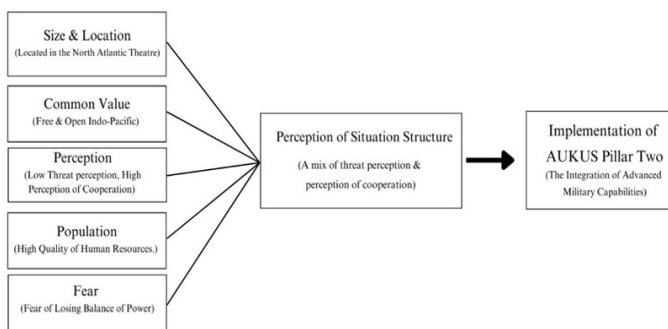
When we look at the country’s domestic determinants, we can see that the United Kingdom is one of the member states that fully supports this collaboration and is enthusiastic about and committed to pillar two, advanced military capabilities. According to the research findings, three of Lentner’s five domestic factors dominate the United Kingdom: standard value, perception, and population. This country upholds liberal values and rules-based order in the international system. This influences how they see the AUKUS as a defense pact that will support and embody these values. A positive outlook is shown by the UK’s enthusiastic attitude, which has a good impact on the implementation of AUKUS pillar two because the UK has a positive view, shown through its supportive attitude and enthusiasm regarding AUKUS pillar two.

The second dominant factor is Perception. Suppose Australia tends to have a perception of threats. In that case, the United Kingdom is more inclined to the Perception of Situation structure, which combines conflict, competition, cooperation, and integration. The United Kingdom is aware of the shifting strategic environment in the Indo-Pacific region, which makes

the region more vulnerable to challenges and threats. We can see this in the United Kingdom’s National Defense Strategy, reaffirming in 2023 that “conflict there (Indo-Pacific) can have greater global consequences”. Therefore, cooperation and integration of military capabilities are needed so that they can respond to these potential threats. AUKUS Pillar Two then becomes the perfect solution option for this. This is because Pillar Two of AUKUS is very much in line with the 2023 UK Refreshed Defense Command Paper. The UK Ministry of Defense shifts to a technology-centric mindset in the document. Leveraging new and emerging technologies is central to this shift. The MoD identifies AUKUS pillar two projects as capabilities that will “help the UK maintain technological and military superiority in an increasingly contested and volatile strategic environment.” The typical value and perception that the United Kingdom currently has is supported by the Quality or Human Resources is an essential aspect in the population. It is undeniable that the UK is still one of the most advanced countries in the field of research and innovation. This is also reinforced by the political will of the government which can be seen from the government’s Research and Development (R&D) Roadmap. In this roadmap, the UK government sets out its vision and ambitions for science, research and innovation.

If we combine these three domestic characteristics, we may conclude that the United Kingdom has a positive attitude and response to AUKUS pillar two. The rationale is clear: the objectives or vision of this pillar are very much in line with the country’s domestic interests. The positive trend toward AUKUS demonstrates that they are extremely committed and willing to go to any length to fulfil the cooperation potential of AUKUS pillar two. The figure below depicts the conclusion of the relationship between domestic determinants and AUKUS implementation.

Figure 3: United Kingdom’s Domestic Determinants.



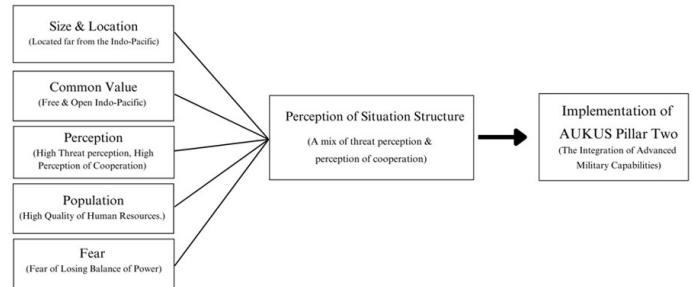
Source: Authors.

#### 4. The United States’ Domestic Determinants On The Implementation Of AUKUS Pillar Two.

The United States is crucial in this defense cooperation analysis, particularly the second pillar. This is due to its strategic interests in the Indo-Pacific, not to mention global competition with China. The author elaborates on these strategic interests in Chapter Two. Suppose we utilize Lentner’s domestic determinants in this section. In that case, we can see that at least four

domestic factors will influence the United States’ perception of the AUKUS and its implementation, particularly the second pillar. The figure below depicts the relationship between domestic determinants in the United States and the implementation of Pillar 2 of AUKUS cooperation. There are two categories of determinants: relatively stable (perception and fear) and stable (population and common values).

Figure 4: United States Domestic Determinants.



Source: Authors.

Lentner’s main idea regarding perception is that how elites perceive events determines how they define a problem. This will then lead to and influence policymaking. According to Lentner, there are at least two types of perception: threat perception and perception of situational structure. The United States explicitly views China and Russia as threats. In the National Security Strategy 2022, the US clearly states that the strategic challenges most threatening its vision are authoritarian governments and the rise of revisionist states. This is because, according to the US, these behaviors can threaten the stability of international security.

From the point of view of threat perception, America sees that China and Russia pose different challenges. Russia poses more of a clear threat to the open international system by the values upheld by America. China, on the other hand, poses a threat to international order with its intentions and ambitions to change the current status quo. In addition, we can also look at the perception of situation structure. According to Lentner, this view is more of a combination of conflict, competition, cooperation, and integration. The United States, although they seem very worried about the activities and behaviour of China and Russia, America can still see that the current situation and strategic environment provide not only challenges and conflicts but also opportunities. It is this view that also ultimately encourages them to find progressive steps to respond to these challenges. If they do not take proactive steps, it is feared that the window of opportunity to shape the desired future of the international system will be closed.

Therefore, AUKUS, especially pillar two, can be seen as an initiative resulting from the American elite’s perspective on the current strategic environment. AUKUS pillar two is an affirmative initiative of the United States to maintain world security and peace while protecting American strategic interests in the Indo-Pacific region. Most importantly, AUKUS is a vital strategy for the United States to address regional challenges and threats while simultaneously strengthening collective strength

with its closest partners, in this case, the United Kingdom and Australia.

However, the perception of America is not a stable domestic determinant but moderately stable. This is due to its dynamic nature, which can change with the global and regional strategic environment. Furthermore, while the AUKUS does not lack support from many quarters in the US government, there are differing views and debates over its implementation. One stems from American concerns about sharing nuclear-powered submarine technology for the first time since sharing with the UK half a century ago. There are also concerns about the capacity of US submarine yards to support the provision of Virginia-class submarines.

Fears, on the other side, are also critical for U.S. Foreign policy. Together with perception, it creates a more complex situation regarding AUKUS. According to Lentner, two types of fears are critical in foreign policy. Fear of attack and fear of disintegration, including balance of power disintegration. In the case of the United States, we can see that they tend to fear losing influence and dominance in the international system more than being attacked. In the National Security Strategy 2022, the US explicitly says that countries like Russia, China and other revisionists threaten the balance of power in the system. The US sees China as having strong intentions and ambitions to influence the Indo-Pacific and become a significant power. More than that, China also wants to change the international system by using its economic, military, diplomatic and technological power.

The rapid increase in investment in the economic sector and military modernisation is causing fear and concern for Washington. America, on the other hand, also recognizes China's capabilities in the Indo-Pacific and globally. This is seen by America as a form of China's efforts to erode American influence both regionally and globally. Russia, on the other hand, shows and chooses an imperialist foreign policy intending to subvert essential elements of an open, free and secure international order. Regarding stable determinants, the United States has typical values and its population. According to Lentner, all countries value their safety and security and strive to achieve a certain self-respect and defense. According to Lentner, these values will be embodied in the sovereignty and security goals of the state. This indicates that there are many ways to achieve these values and goals.

For the United States, security is a widely shared value regardless of the dynamics and changes in government leaders. We can see this in speeches and official documents, including the National Security Strategy 2022. In this document, the US explicitly emphasises their goal of a free, open, prosperous world and a secure international order. Fundamentally, this goal stems from the democratic values that they have always upheld. Therefore, achieving this requires a holistic effort, including investment in the sources and tools of American power and influence. Not only that, but building the most potent coalition to increase collective influence, as well as modernizing and strengthening the military, is also one of the ways to achieve the goals and values of the American state. In addition, Americans believe that they must proactively shape the international order

in accordance with their interests and values. Concerning the AUKUS, especially pillar two, we see that this trilateral agreement is an effort that is in line with the values and strategic goals of the United States. Therefore, we can conclude that shared values are one of the determinants of domestic stability for the United States. This is because the values of democracy and security are deeply embedded in the country's foreign policy. Even a change in leadership in the domestic government will not change these fundamental values.

These fundamental values are deeply rooted in the history of its people. Lentner highlights the importance of public support in population studies when discussing population. According to a USSC survey, half or more of Americans presently believe that the US alliances with Australia (53 per cent), Japan (52 per cent), and NATO (54 per cent) keep the US safer, which is slightly lower than in 2022 but still significantly higher than in 2021. Not only that, but the US public believes that AUKUS might make the region more secure from attacks. America's population expansion is about more than just the number of people; it is also about integrating that population into the skills required today. There is no denying that the United States leads many innovations and rapid developments in technology, information, and communication. This is why the population aspect is one of the determining factors for a stable domestic for the United States.

Therefore, we can conclude that while there are two moderately stable determinants in fear and perception, the United States also has stable determinants in standard value and population. Despite the pros and cons and other constraints within the domestic US, this has not lessened their enthusiasm and ambition to achieve a free and open Indo-Pacific region. Their deep-rooted fundamental values and shared view of the strategic environment in the Indo-Pacific region have given them a strong commitment and political will to this agreement. This is also supported by the quality of human resources and technological sophistication they now have. AUKUS, especially pillar two, fits perfectly with their vision and is one of the ways to achieve the foreign policy objectives of the United States.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the above analysis is that stable domestic determinants dominate over unstable determinants. This indicates that implementing the second pillar of the AUKUS is feasible. It also suggests that this collaboration is likely to be long-lasting and will result in favorable transformations in the Indo-Pacific maritime strategic environment. One example is the emerging naval coalition and moving towards alliance.

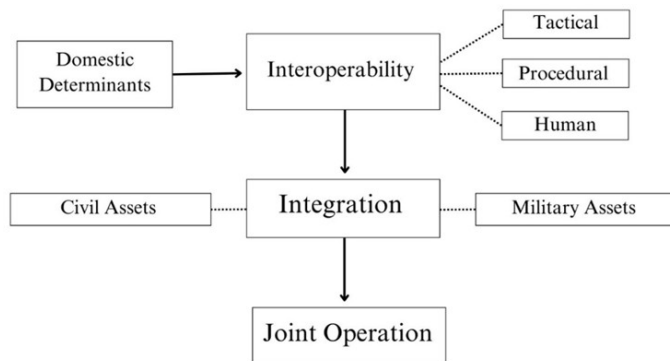
## **5. Development and Integration of Advanced Military Capabilities: In What Ways Domestic Determinants Influence It?.**

In the previous section, we discussed the dynamics or relationship between the domestic determinants of each member country and the second Pillar of AUKUS cooperation. In this section, we will look at what aspects of this pillar are influenced by these domestic factors. In other words, how do the domestic determinants affect Pillar two of the AUKUS agreement?

### 5.1. Degree of Integration in Military Capabilities & Resources.

This section will concentrate on two concepts: "integration" and "interoperability". These two components are interconnected and critical in the scheme or process of military capabilities integration, as seen in the figure below.

Figure 5: Degree of Integration Scheme .



Source: Authors.

The image above demonstrates that the essence of this cooperation is the integration of the nation's advanced military assets. It implies that the three member states of Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States will pool their capabilities, resources, and policies to develop a new capacity that achieves integrated deterrence and provides cross-sector and cross-domain benefits. The following section fully explains each component in the above concept and how it relates to the second pillar of AUKUS partnership.

#### 5.1.1. Domestic Determinants.

Domestic determinants are variables that can influence the other components in the previously given chart. Given their dynamic nature, the three member nations must closely observe internal trends inside their own countries. This allows each member state to anticipate and manage potential domestic circumstances that may hinder the development and progress of the Corporation's second pillar. In this regard, we discovered from the previous part that the member countries' domestic elements are relatively stable, despite challenges that exist. This is seen in the positive attitudes, strong political will, and commitment demonstrated by Australia, the United States, and the United Kingdom. Thus, the more stable the domestic determinants of these member countries, the higher the level of interoperability will be discussed in the following section.

#### 5.1.2. Interoperability.

According to John Nisser, interoperability is the ability to combine systems, forces, and planning across services. Interoperability is one of the most important aspects of advanced military capabilities. This is because, without maximum interoperability, there will be no integration of capabilities and or effective deterrence. Seamless integration demands maximum interoperability. To realize this, effective cross-dominance and cross-national cooperation is needed, including systems, units,

personnel, and other resources. In the context of the second pillar of AUKUS, interoperability means the ability to work with partners across coalitions to achieve common strategic, procedural, or tactical objectives.

In addition, we can identify three significant dimensions of interoperability: technical, procedural, and human. Technical interoperability can be defined as the ability to integrate technical capabilities with partners across the services. For example, information-sharing systems must be able to communicate with one another. Another example is a Command and Control (C2) system, which must be able to receive and transmit information across many domains (land, sea, and water) and borders. Procedural interoperability, conversely, refers to a partnership between services or countries to ensure that all staff follow the same working procedures. This frequently involves planning strategies. The third component is the human aspect, which includes culture and understanding. Both indicate that to achieve a maximum level of interoperability, member states also need cultural sensitivity and knowledge of the differences of each cooperating organisation, organisation or unit. Thus, interoperability is the cornerstone of capability integration which will be discussed in the next point.

#### 5.1.3. Integration.

If interoperability is the ability to work together, integration is the actual process of merging forces and capabilities before undertaking joint operations. In military terminology, integration can be defined as the "combining of forces, capabilities, and systems to enable their employment in a single, cohesive operation rather than a set separate operation". This primary doctrine may overemphasise the integration of military assets that are attempting to achieve the same end-to-end operational objectives. In contrast, the United States sees explicitly the concept of integration as a joint force and inter-organizational partner effort to achieve common objectives by integrating and aligning non-military activities or assets of sufficient scope, scale, simultaneity, and duration across multiple domains.

This indicates that military means or forces alone are not enough to face future challenges, hence the need for civilian involvement as well, in other words, this concept addresses the integration of civilian and military assets into campaign planning. These two conceptualizations are somewhat different. Nonetheless, both focus on combining forces and capabilities. This can be seen in the second pillar of AUKUS Cooperation where leaders open spaces and opportunities for collaboration with civilians through one of the industry forums and Investors network. Thus, we can conclude that to achieve integrated deterrence as desired by member states, civil-military relations are an important aspect that must be the focus. This is because integrated deterrence is the key to an optimal joint operation in the Indo-Pacific.

#### 5.1.4. Joint Operation to Maintain Free and Open Indo-Pacific.

Joint operation is the actual conduct where forces capabilities from different agencies and countries are used to pursue a joint goal. This conduct, therefore, according to John Nisser

required all the previous steps. Joint operations are activities that member states will carry out after successfully integrating their advanced capabilities under AUKUS pillar two. Joint actions in the Indo-Pacific maritime theatre will be conceivable if member states have achieved integrated deterrence. This is expected to sustain regional stability while addressing the region's traditional and non-traditional maritime security challenges. It sounds like a lengthy process that demands long-term commitment, strong political will, and patience. However, this is not impossible.

### 5.2. *Domestic Determinants and Influence on Implementation of Pillar Two of AUKUS.*

Domestic determinants of member countries will affect the effectiveness of this trilateral defence cooperation, especially the second pillar. Effective implementation also includes progress in each working group under pillar two. Due to the lack of details and activities related to pillar two, some people argue that this pillar has failed. This leads to incorrect assumptions about what pillar two's success entails. According to reports from ASPI, AUKUS pillar two has made substantial progress from harmonising rules or policies to joint exercises by the three member countries. For example, in March 2024, AUKUS experts successfully deployed an autonomous sensing and artificial intelligence (AI) system. The test occurred during a global Convergence Project exercise organized by the United States Army. Military personnel from the three AUKUS nations tested advanced autonomous sensing and AI-enabled sensing capabilities in a multi-domain battlespace (land, maritime, air, and cyber) to reduce the time between sensing enemy targets, deciding how to respond, and responding to threats.

This trial marks tremendous progress since the first AUKUS RAAIT footprint in the UK in April 2023, and it highlights the real effects of AUKUS' Pillar II commitment to making our troops more deadly on the battlefield. Once mature and integrated into the national platform, this new sensing system will generate more reliable data, allowing commanders to make better decisions and service members to respond faster to kinetic threats - all while enabling seamless joint and combined military operations involving multiple services and nations.

### 5.3. *Stability and Sustainability of Partnership.*

The stability and sustainability of this cooperation are two aspects that the domestic determinants of member countries will greatly influence. From the previous explanation of domestic determinants, we can see that the positive trend shown by each member country will also have a positive impact on the sustainability of this cooperation. Moreover, Elleman (2022) argues that, unlike formal alliances, naval coalitions involve temporary groupings of states that combine military power, including naval assets, to achieve common goals. On the other hand, the second pillar of AUKUS is a clear example of this. According to Elleman, the current type of naval coalition is no longer exclusive and involves only significant powers. Still, it has become more inclusive by including other countries in the coalition, resulting in a more heterogeneous environment. If

we relate it to AUKUS, then it is true that the Naval Coalition is increasingly inclusive, which can be seen with Australia's involvement as one of the member countries in this cooperation. Elleman justified this by saying that countries with different capacities work together to improve the asymmetry of their naval power.

In addition, according to Elleman, this type of Naval Coalition, as demonstrated by AUKUS, also allows its member states to share the burden and responsibility in dealing with a regional maritime issue, in this case in the Indo-Pacific region. Let's look at the latest development of the implementation of the second pillar of AUKUS. Each member state is working on its own tasks, such as regulatory adaptation and gaining public trust. This may still be far from burden sharing as stated by Elleman. However, this does not mean that it is impossible, especially when the integration of the three countries' military forces is successful.

According to Elleman, the stability of coalition membership is crucial in determining the success or failure of the coalition. Speaking of stability, the author believes that this membership will be maintained. This is because, fundamentally, AUKUS is built on mutual trust. Mutual trust between member countries is the foundation of the sustainability of this cooperation. In addition, we need to know that a shared vision or common goal is also an important indicator that affects the stability of membership in this coalition. On the other hand, Elleman argues that although coalition members usually share the same key strategic objectives, conflicts of interest can shorten the existence of naval coalitions. Many naval coalitions disband after their primary strategic objectives have been met. Therefore, Elleman argues that the more specific objectives, the stronger the coalition. This is still the case.

Although AUKUS has clear objectives for its two pillars, the three-member states must harmonize the instruments used to achieve these shared objectives. If we look at the current development of AUKUS, the three-member states are harmonizing their approaches and policies. This will undoubtedly have a positive impact and influence the common goal. The author believes this coalition will survive if the member states continue to show strong commitment and political will as they are currently doing.

### 5.4. *Advanced Military Capabilities: Strengthen and Reinforcing the Existing Mechanism.*

Domestic determinants influence other big goals and ambitious missions, including the grand maritime alliance. This is because this agreement pushes the Australia-UK-US alliance to the level of a closer military, scientific and industrial community and forms a prototype for a new "maritime alliance". The closer the alliance's internal ties, the more it distances China. The alliance seeks to create a "de-sinicized" defence industry chain and thus become the forerunner of the restructuring of international relations. The "integrated deterrence" strategy that the alliance is building will change the strategic deterrence structure in the Indo-Pacific region and some essential features of the US alliance system's deterrence strategy.

Structurally, the current Indo-Pacific security architecture is still based on US-led alliances. However, the importance of US allies (“spokes”) concerning the US (“hubs”) is increasing. This applies both at the bilateral level and to new multilateral formats, such as the security pact between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States (AUKUS) and the revived strategic dialogue between Australia, India, Japan and the United States (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, “Quad”). This leads to the preliminary conclusion that the Indo-Pacific security architecture will not be a mere re-creation of the hub-and-spokes system but will be accompanied by a strengthening of the role of “spokes” and like-minded regional partners under the threshold of formal US allies. Therefore, this trilateral defence cooperation will allow allied countries to strengthen the maritime defence architecture in the Indo-Pacific region.

### Conclusions.

The Indo-Pacific maritime strategic environment will continue to shift in the coming decades. Given its strategic location between two oceans and countries experiencing increased economic activity, the Indo-Pacific indirectly provides benefits, challenges and threats to neighbouring countries. It is undeniable that there are currently many problems, escalating tensions and disputes, such as terrorism, piracy and territorial disputes, and conflicts of interest. All these issues are considered to jeopardize maritime security and order at sea in the region, especially for Australia, which is located at the region’s nexus. Unfortunately, solutions to address and respond to these threats and problems are lacking. Diplomatic approaches through dialogue and multilateral forums are insufficient to deter “adversaries” or “potential adversaries” in the region. To respond to this, the United States and its allies, in this case, Australia and the United Kingdom, consider it time for them to act decisively and take transformative steps to face, resolve and respond to problems in the Indo-Pacific region.

Therefore, the trilateral defense cooperation between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States (AUKUS) answers their problems and concerns. AUKUS does not exist only to assist Australia in acquiring nuclear-powered submarines. Instead, AUKUS emerged due to the dynamics and shifts in the Indo-Pacific region. In addition, AUKUS was also formed to respond to threats and potential threats in the region through integrated deterrence, which shifts the military balance in the Indo-Pacific region away from China’s aggressive activities. Through integrated deterrence, AUKUS is expected to be capable of providing a deterrence effect for China or potential enemies in the region. In other words, this cooperation is expected to reduce the possibility of conflict in the region by strengthening credible deterrence.

Concerning Pillar Two, AUKUS offers much promise for Australia and maritime security in the Indo-Pacific region as a free and more open region. Pillar II fundamentally catalyses the development and delivery of advanced military capabilities. Pillar two of the agreement also fits well with the strategic alignment of the three member states’ national defense strategies and is underpinned by shared values. This cooperation

will facilitate unprecedented collaboration in advanced technologies.

Although the AUKUS case takes place in an international environment, domestic aspects and dynamics, which are then referred to as domestic determinants, are no less critical in analysing the feasibility of implementing this trilateral security partnership. Lentner’s foreign policy analysis explicitly explains how domestic aspects become determinants in decision-making, foreign policy, and then the implementation of the second pillar of AUKUS. The author firmly believes that the feasibility and effective implementation of this partnership will be driven by the long-term commitment and strong political will reflected in the foreign policies of each member state. Using Howard Lentner’s Domestic Determinants, we can conclude that domestic factors such as size and geographical location, population, shared value, perception, and fear are related to implementing pillar two, the AUKUS agreement.

For Australia, AUKUS is a significant and long-term deal for them. Australia’s domestic determinants, such as geography, contribute to the country’s perception of threats and fear. However, population and shared values, on the other hand, provide and generate positive feelings and perceptions for Australia and the second pillar, advanced military capabilities. Despite having moderately stable domestic determinants such as fear and perception, this does not diminish at all their commitment to pillar two as evidenced in the National Defense Strategy 2024. Thus, Australia’s five domestic determinants do provide and have the potential to continue to provide a positive impact or influence for the effective implementation of pillar two of the AUKUS cooperation.

The United Kingdom, on the other hand, has three main domestic determinants: population, shared values, and perception of situation structure. All three have a favorable impact on the second pillar of the trilateral collaboration. We can observe this from the progress in the paper’s second chapter. Furthermore, we observe it in the UK government’s enthusiasm and strong political will. This supportive attitude from the UK indicates that they will have a long-term commitment to AUKUS, ensuring that this partnership will endure and reach its full potential.

In addition, for the United States, AUKUS, especially the second pillar, is an investment that is both a solution and an answer to strategic challenges in the Indo-Pacific region. From the results of the analysis, we can see that there are at least four factors that dominate, including fear and perception, as well as shared values and population. Although there are many pros and cons and challenges faced by the US in this cooperation, this does not lessen their commitment to pillar two of AUKUS. Driven by a strong determination to create integrated deterrence in the Indo-Pacific region, the United States is increasingly committed and ambitious to fulfil pillar two, advanced military capabilities.

Thus, we can conclude that domestic determinants influence Pillar Two and have affected both the progress, practical implementation, big goals of this pillar, and most importantly, the degree of integration under Pillar 2. Domestic determinants, therefore, play a pivotal role in the interoperability and integration of advanced military capabilities. The author believes

that these domestic factors will remain an independent variable that will continue to influence the dynamics of AUKUS pillar two. The journey of AUKUS, especially pillar two, is still very long, and the three member countries will continue to work on it. This positive response and attitude from member countries signal that this trilateral cooperation is not just a short-term project. Pillar two is not just a visionary promise but a potential that can be realized. Dynamics, including progress and setbacks, are intriguing possibilities to look forward to. As Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs Jessica Lewis said, the success of AUKUS is not predetermined. It must be built. What happens and is done now by the three-member states will determine whether AUKUS succeeds in being an effective trilateral security partnership as they claimed or just an interesting footnote in a history of what could have been.

## References.

### Books and edited books.

Lentner, H. H. (1974). *Foreign Policy Analysis: A Comparative and Conceptual Approach*. Columbus, Ohio: A Bell & Howell Company.

Fraser, J., & Gleiman, J. (2022). *The AUKUS Briefing Book*. Phoenix: Arizona State University, p.7.

### Journals (online and printed)

Adamy, M. I. (2022). Aukus and Australia's nuclear - powered submarine: A reinforced strategic culture. *Jurnal Hubungan Internasional*, 15(1), 148–165. <https://doi.org/10.20473/jhi.v15i1.33817>.

Cuong, T. P. (2023). The role of the AUKUS alliance in counterbalancing China. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Growth Evaluation*, 04(01), 51–58.

Ding, R. (2023). An Exploration of the AUKUS Trilateral Partnership. *Studies in Social Science Research*, 4(1), p90. <https://doi.org/10.22158/sssr.v4n1p90>.

Fraser, J., & Gleiman, J. (2022). *The AUKUS briefing book*. Arizona State University, 7.

Haruko, W. (2020). The “Indo-Pacific” Concept: Geographical Adjustments and Their Implications. *S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS)*, 1.

Lia Aulia Lubis, Anak Agung Banyu Perwita, & Rizerius Eko Hadisancoko. (2024). The Role of AUKUS in Australia's Military Capacity Building Strategy. *East Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 3(8), 3609–3618. <https://doi.org/10.55927/eajmr.v3i8.10608>.

Mondschein, J. (2023). One Year from the 2024 US Presidential Election: The Stakes for Australia and the Alliance. *United States Studies Centre*, p.4.

Mondschein, J. (2023). One year from the 2024 US presidential election: The stakes for Australia and the alliance. *United States Studies Centre*, p.22.

Moroney, J. (2022). *Making AUKUS Work*. Virginia: RAND Corporation, p.3.

Nisser, J. (2022). Integration is the New Black: Thoughts on Future Warfare in Academic and Military Discourses. *Scandinavian Journal of Military Studies*, 5(1), p.398-411. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31374/sjms.169>.

Parry, M. (2022). Australia's Strategic View of the Indo-Pacific. *European Parliamentary Research Service*, p.1.

Pan, C. (2014). The ‘Indo-Pacific’ and Geopolitical Anxieties About China's Rise in the Asian Regional Order. *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, p.462.

Priyanto Suharto, Fauzia Gustarina Cempaka Timur, & Suintanto, R. (2024). The development of AUKUS in the Indo-Pacific region and its influence on Indonesia's policy as a global maritime fulcrum. *Journal of Infrastructure Policy and Development*, 8(7), 4076–4076. <https://doi.org/10.24294/jipd.v8i7.4076>.

Shi, X. (2022). Beyond AUKUS: The Emerging Grand Maritime Alliance. *China International Strategy Review*, 4(2), p.248–267. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42533-022-00123-0>.

### Government Documents, Reports, Interviews, and Regulations.

Australian Government. (2016). Defense White Paper. *Department of Defense*, p.29.

Australian Government. (2016). Defense White Paper. *Department of Defense*, p.41.

Brooke, L. (2023) ‘AUKUS Pillar 2: Advanced capabilities programs’, House of commons Library Research Briefing, p.1.

Broinowski, A. (2024). *AUKUS Pillar 2*. Aph.gov.au. [https://www.aph.gov.au/About\\_Parliament/Parliamentary\\_departments/Parliamentary\\_Library/Research/FlagPost/2024/August/AUKUS\\_Pillar\\_2](https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_departments/Parliamentary_Library/Research/FlagPost/2024/August/AUKUS_Pillar_2).

State Government, U. S. (2024, June 20). *AUKUS: A Commitment to the Future - United States Department of State*. United States Department of State. <https://2021-2025.state.gov/aukus-a-commitment-to-the-future/>.

The United States Government. (2023, March 13). Joint leaders' statement on AUKUS. The White House Statements and Releases. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2023/03/13/joint-leaders-statement-on-aukus-2/>.

United States Department. (2019). *A Free and Open Indo-Pacific: Advancing a Shared Vision*. United States Department, p. 1–30.

United States Government. (2023). AUKUS Defence Ministers Meeting Joint Statement. *U.S. Department of Defence Immediate Release*.

United States Government. (2024). AUKUS Pillar II Milestones Hint at Future Integrated Autonomous, Artificial Intelligence Operations. *Immediate Release U.S. Department of Defence*.

United States Government. (2022). US National Security Strategy. *The White House*, p.8.

U.S Department of Defence. (2022, Oct 1). U.S., Australian Defense Leaders Stress Importance of Alliance System. Release. <https://www.defense.gov/News/News-Stories/Article/Article/3176948/us-australian-defense-leaders-stress-importance-of-alliance-system/>.

**Others (Websites and videos).**

Caples, A. (2023, June 5). *AUKUS: three partners, two pillars, one problem*. The Strategist. <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/aucus-three-partners-two-pillars-one-problem/>

Corben, T. (2024). Patience, please. AUKUS Pillar 2 is Indeed Making Progress. *Australian Strategic Policy Institute*.

Christianson, J., Monaghan, S., & Cooke, D. (2023). *AUKUS Pillar Two: Advancing the Capabilities of the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia*. Csis.org. <http://csis.org/analysis/aucus-pillar-two-advancing-capabilities-united-states-united-kingdom-and-australia>.

Lamb, K., & Costa, A. (2021, September 17). Indonesia warns against arms race after Australian Nuclear Sub Pact | Reuters. Reuters Asia Pacific. <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/indonesia-warns-against-arms-race-after-australian-nuclear-sub-pact-2021-09-17/>.

Luck, A. (2025, March 18). *All Or Nothing - Australia And Its AUKUS Submarine Dilemma*. Naval News. <https://www.na->

[valnews.com/naval-news/2025/03/all-or-nothing-australia-and-its-aucus-submarine-dilemma/](https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2025/03/all-or-nothing-australia-and-its-aucus-submarine-dilemma/).

Motwani, N. (2024, September 27). *Why informed discussion on AUKUS is good for everyone* | The Strategist. The Strategist. <https://www.aspistrategist.org.au/why-informed-discussion-on-aucus-is-good-for-everyone/>.

Stein, L., & Priadko, T. (2025, February 11). *Why the AUKUS deal is still a controversial and perplexing issue for most Australians*. Abc.net.au; ABC News. <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2025-02-12/aucus-criticis-explain-controversy-around-security-partnership/104883284>.

**Video.**

ABC News. (2023). What is Australia strategically buying into through the Aucus Submarine Plan? Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Tr3oFUSkgw> (Accessed: 01 February 2024).