

Chairman Gallagher Keynote Address
Address to the American-Australian Leadership Dialogue
8.11.23
as prepared for delivery

Thank you Phil, Julie, Tony, and everyone at AALD for making this weekend happen. Most importantly, thank you to Prime Minister Albanese for graciously hosting us earlier.

It's a privilege to have the opportunity to stand between you and drinks here at the first OZ-based AALD since Perth 2019. I was there in Perth in 2019. It was there I attended my first rugby game, the first game of the Bledisloe cup, and the fact that every Aussie in the stadium was wearing Green and Yellow as a tribute to my beloved Green Bay Packers was a touching diplomatic gesture for which I'm still grateful.

Three months ago my good friend and former deputy national security advisor Matt Pottinger described the West's multi-decade pursuit of engagement with the Chinese Communist Party colorfully. Quoting Matt: "We saw a baby shark and thought that we could transform it into a dolphin. We kept feeding the shark and the shark got bigger and bigger. And now we're dealing with a formidable, Great White."

I keep thinking about this image. It's hard to get it out of your mind because, let's face it sharks are scary. They've killed 61 New South Welshmen, 51 Queenslanders, and 16 Sandgropers alone. They're an apex predator.

Luckily, in my exhaustive research for this speech, which consisted of purchasing an in flight wifi pass and googling "apex predators" I discovered that there is one predator that even Great Whites fear. Does anyone know what that is? That's right: Orcas. Killer whales. Don't be fooled by your memory of Free Willy or Shamu, Orcas are killers. Just ask anyone who went boating off the coast of Portugal and Spain this year, you do not want to mess with Orcas.

To cite the seminal 2015 children's book entitled "Who Would Win. Killer Whale vs. Great White Shark": "In combat that we know of, the killer whale has always emerged victorious. Even smaller female killer whales, seem to have no trouble taking out a larger great white shark that has strayed too close to their calf." I texted that to my wife and she responded: "Of course that's true. And when you left your wet close in the dryer yesterday I almost Orca'd you."

My point is that orcas are a powerful, intelligent species, that often hunt in packs, leveraging their shared culture (true story=Orcas are the only known non-human animal to have evolved based on culture) and seamless communication.

And here's the other crazy thing, if I say it with an Australian accent, which as Chair of the Friends of Australia caucus I often do speak with an Australian accent on the floor of the US House of Representatives, "ORCAS" sounds like AUKUS.

AUKUS. You see my friends, the CCP may be a fearsome Great White, cruising the ocean depths solo, but they fear AUKUS, the strength of which is in our partnerships, in our cunning, and in our coordination.

With AUKUS, we have the potential to strengthen deterrence, to bring this region from the brink of war. To do so, we're going to need to turbocharge the partnership through three key lines of effort.

Let's start with my good friend Joe Courtney's favorite topic: submarines. I can't think of a single issue that generates more bipartisan goodwill in Congress than AUKUS. I mean that. Nothing in Washington is unanimous, but support for the US-Australia Alliance, for AUKUS, and for the submarine deal is as close as it comes. I know there has been some handwringing on this point so I want to be clear: AUKUS will be successful, and America will fulfill its commitment to its friends.

That said, I realize discussions surrounding Pillar 1 in DC generate waves here in Canberra, so I want to put the headlines into context. Putin's war of aggression in Ukraine has exposed the fact that, when it comes to defense industrial capacity, the entire democratic world has been shirking

its responsibilities for the better part of 30 years. The result is that the US defense industrial base is severely under resourced and ill-equipped to meet surge production requirements. Despite the US Navy's requirement for 66 attack submarines, we're at 49, going down potentially to 46 and the latest 30-year shipbuilding plan does not even get us to 60 SSNs until the 2050s. In fact, our SSN inventory is slated to bottom out around the end of the decade—precisely when so many of our military leaders have warned that Xi Jinping may attempt to take Taiwan by force.

To fulfill our AUKUS commitments, we must expand our submarine industrial capacity. This will take considerable resources. Australia's multi-billion-dollar AUKUS contributions to the US submarine industrial base are very much appreciated. But it's going to take billions more in investment by the US—far beyond the Biden administration's \$2 billion request. But freedom has never been cheap and most members of Congress understand that it is much better to settle the bill in dollars than in lives. There is no choice between fulfilling our Navy's requirements and delivering subs for Australia. We can and must do both.

Now, turbocharging AUKUS defense industrial cooperation does not just flow in one direction. Nowhere is that more evident than in the second area I'd like to touch on, critical munitions. The importance of joint munitions production in Australia, aided by long-overdue ITAR reform and Pillar II cooperation on hypersonic capabilities, cannot be overstated. Just imagine explaining to John Curtin at the peak of the Pacific War that eighty years later, Australia would be readying to export critical munitions to the United States because of shortfalls in our own domestic production.

Recent deliverables from AUSMIN involving co-production of Guided Multiple Launch Rocket Systems and announcements surrounding artillery shells, MK-48 torpedoes, and SM-2 missiles are all welcome. But Ukraine has taught us how quickly we can go Winchester in modern war. When the Select Committee on the CCP held an unclassified Taiwan wargame earlier this spring, the US side exhausted most of its key munitions after only six days. Consequently, as much as Australia is relying on the US for submarine delivery, the US is likewise going to rely on Australia to codevelop and supplement our munitions stockpiles.

With that in mind, we must prioritize the trilateral co-production of next generation long-range missiles under Pillar 2 of AUKUS, particularly with the help of next-generation energetic materials that can make our weapons more lethal and our defense supply chains less reliant on China. An AUKUS crash program on long-range precision fires, with the associated effort to forward base and operate these fires in concentric rings of fire throughout indo-pacom, could supply our near-term deterrent as we await longer-term deliverables like nuclear attack subs.

Third and finally, for all the AUKUS focus on high-tech weapons systems and advanced capabilities, there is a huge opportunity when it comes to basic logistics and infrastructure. When the Select Committee conducted the wargame, it was set four years in the future and its designers gave us credit for hardening and dispersing US forces. However these posture enhancements are not preordained.

They are going to take hard work, diplomacy, and pouring concrete as if our lives depend upon it.

The good news is that AUSMIN continued several force posture enhancements at RAAF Darwin and Tindal, scoped upgrades at RAAF Scherger and Curtin, and paved the way for longer U.S. submarine deployments at HMAS Stirling. But we need to think even bigger. Eight decades ago, Australia played a critical role as a logistics hub and launching pad for operations. Investments from AUKUS partners in Australia's logistical infrastructure, prepositioned fuel and materiel, and enhanced basing could recall that history while helping create a more resilient shared regional posture. Not only could these investments better defend Australia's northern approaches, especially through enhanced sensing, they would reduce the odds of conflict in the first place.

The point is that the potential for AUKUS—from the undersea domain, to munitions and critical technologies, to logistics—is limited only by our willpower and our imagination. Which brings us to the paradox of the present day: to prevent war, AUKUS must in a sense adopt a war footing. We must wage peace with the same alacrity, creativity, and vigilance with which we have together waged past wars.

Here again we must be like Orcas, who (as I learned on a plane last night) sleep with just one half of their brain at a time so as to remain semi-awake at all times. Or to paraphrase John Curtin speaking to your nation in 1942, the task ahead for AUKUS is to “be perpetually on guard.” Such is the price of liberty. For together, we are the beating heart of the Free World, and if we don’t guard our god-given freedom from communist aggression, no one will.

Thank you for your friendship and your commitment to the cause of freedom. Here’s to a great conference, and here’s to Orcas and AUKUS.