

# 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

27 December 2021  
English  
Original: Chinese and English

New York, 4–28 January 2022

## **Nuclear submarine cooperation among Australia, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America**

### **Working paper submitted by China**

1. The United States (US), the United Kingdom (UK) and Australia announced the creation of a trilateral security partnership called AUKUS, under which they decided to begin cooperation on nuclear-powered submarines. The trilateral cooperation on nuclear-powered submarines undermines regional peace and stability, constitutes serious risks of nuclear proliferation in contravention of the object and purpose of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and will damage the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty and the efforts of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region. China expresses its deep concern over and strong opposition to such cooperation.
2. The trilateral cooperation on nuclear-powered submarines would be the first incident involving the transfer of naval nuclear propulsion reactors and weapon-grade highly enriched uranium from nuclear-weapon States to a non-nuclear-weapon State. The naval nuclear propulsion reactors and their associated nuclear material to be transferred by the US and the UK to Australia cannot be effectively safeguarded under the current International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards system. And therefore there is no guarantee that the nuclear material thus transferred will not be diverted by Australia to the production of nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.
3. The trilateral cooperation on nuclear-powered submarines fully exposes the double-standard of the US, the UK and Australia on non-proliferation issues, and will have far-reaching negative implications on the on-going efforts to address Iranian and Korean Peninsula nuclear issues as well as other regional nuclear hotspots. Such cooperation may open the “Pandora’s box” and stimulate other countries to follow suit, severely undermining the international nuclear non-proliferation regime.
4. The issue of safeguards on the naval nuclear propulsion reactors and their associated nuclear material of a non-nuclear-weapon State has a direct bearing on the integrity and effectiveness of the NPT, and thus is closely related to the interests of all IAEA member States. It stands to reason that all IAEA member States should



participate in the discussion of this issue, in order to seek a solution that is acceptable to all sides.

5. For that purpose, China proposes that a Special Committee open to all IAEA member States be established, to deliberate on the political, legal and technical issues related to the safeguards on naval nuclear propulsion reactors and their associated nuclear material of a non-nuclear-weapon State, and submit a report with recommendations to the Board of Governors and the General Conference of the IAEA. Pending the adoption of the above-mentioned report, the US, the UK and Australia should not commence cooperation on the nuclear-powered submarines, and the IAEA Secretariat should not engage with the three countries on the safeguards arrangements for the cooperation in question.

6. China proposes that the Tenth Review Conference of the NPT support the launch of the Special Committee process by the IAEA, in order to improve and strengthen the safeguards system of the IAEA.

7. China urges the three countries to revoke the wrong decision, faithfully fulfil international non-proliferation obligations, and make more conducive efforts for regional peace and stability.

---