

AUKUS: Are U Kidding Us?

AUKUS is a trilateral military agreement between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States, with a key component being Australia's acquisition of **nuclear-powered submarines**. New Zealand is considering membership. AUKUS introduces nuclear-powered submarines to a region where the U.S. government — with the aid of its allies and weapons customers — has long been engaged in provoking conflict with China. This could fuel an **arms race**, the further militarization of Australia, and the further incorporation of Australia into a global U.S. military. The arms race could lead to **actual war**.

Although the submarines will be nuclear-powered and not nuclear-armed, the transfer of nuclear propulsion technology raises concerns about nuclear proliferation. This precedent could **undermine international non-proliferation norms and treaties**, already in pretty weak condition, as well as Australian laws on nuclear power and nuclear proliferation.

Investment in military capabilities through initiatives like AUKUS (through which Australia will transfer upwards of \$365 billion Australian dollars to the U.S. and UK) **diverts critical resources away from pressing social needs**, including healthcare, education, and climate change mitigation, not to mention impeding global cooperation on climate, disease, homelessness, and other **non-optional crises**. Beyond those sorts of cooperation, Australia is putting at risk its economic relations with its largest trading partner, China.

Then there are the **health impacts and risks** of nuclear technology use — and the never-to-be-solved problem of what to do with permanent nuclear waste. And there is the risk to Australia — including its Indigenous people who've not been consulted — as it steps into the role of **sacrifice zone for the U.S. empire**. With U.S. troops, submarines, Tomahawk missiles, spy bases, and training grounds in Australia, a war with China might prove devastating to Australia, whether or not the United States itself remains unattacked.

