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Chairman McCaul, Ranking Member Meeks, and distinguished Members of the Committee – thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today on the AUKUS partnership. The United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom took a monumental step forward in March when we announced the optimal pathway for Australia to acquire a conventionally-armed, nuclear-powered submarine capability that will set the highest nonproliferation standard. The impact of our three nations seizing this opportunity is already being felt, and it will enhance our security in the years to come. Submarine technology is only one part of the AUKUS trilateral partnership, and, in line with the President’s vision, we are actively pursuing cooperation under AUKUS on a range of advanced capabilities, sending a strong message to the world in favor of a free and open Indo-Pacific region.

Today, I hope to reinforce three main topics as they relate to AUKUS: (1) how AUKUS fits into the 2022 National Defense Strategy; (2) how we are seizing the generational opportunity AUKUS presents; *and* (3) why we need to expand defense cooperation with our closest allies and partners.

**AUKUS and the National Defense Strategy of the United States**

In framing the security environment, the 2022 National Defense Strategy (NDS) describes the People’s Republic of China (PRC) as our most consequential strategic competitor for the coming decades and underscores how new and fast-evolving technologies are complicating escalation dynamics.

The NDS describes integrated deterrence as a holistic response to the strategies that our competitors are pursuing and directs the use of campaigning – the conduct and sequencing of logically-linked activities to achieve strategy-aligned objectives over time – to gain military advantage. It calls on the Department to build enduring advantages across the Defense ecosystem to shore up our foundations for integrated deterrence and campaigning – and describes allies and partners as a center of gravity for the strategy.

What is needed now, more than ever before, is an approach that enhances our AUKUS partners’ conventional military capabilities, opens support to a more integrated defense industrial base, increases information sharing, and implements cooperative policies that reflect the concepts laid out in the National Security Strategy. What cannot be overstated enough is this: we cannot do this alone, and our AUKUS partners stand shoulder to shoulder with the United States – as they have for many decades.

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AUKUS is a mutually beneficial partnership that has been designed to address and implement the goals laid out in the 2022 National Security Strategy, the 2022 National Defense Strategy, and the related strategies of our British and Australian partners.

### **Generational Opportunity**

As President Biden and Secretary Austin have said, AUKUS is a generational opportunity, and I want to thank this Committee for its broad bipartisan support. Your work and support is vital to make AUKUS a success. Conventionally armed, nuclear-powered submarines are just one key part of the opportunity that AUKUS is enabling.

Together with our AUKUS partners, we have identified several advanced capability opportunities in areas that range from artificial intelligence and quantum to hypersonics. Over time, the work we do will advance our own capabilities, as well as our partners, and will enable us to address the challenges that we will collectively face. We have reached a point in the global security environment and technology landscape where there is not only a benefit, but also an imperative to expand our defense technology sharing practices. The national security costs of failing to expand defense collaboration with our closest allies and partners is too high. AUKUS is the beginning of a path that will lead to a more integrated and open defense ecosystem that balances the threats of strategic competition by harnessing the strengths of our collective capabilities.

We must embrace defense cooperation across myriad of advanced technologies as a tool to enhance integrated deterrence and to implement strategic and systemic changes to that end. Secretary Austin stated we will “use existing capabilities...build new ones...and use all of these in networked ways – hand in hand with our allies and partners.” AUKUS is one example of this promise in action.

### **Expanding Defense Cooperation with Allies and Partners**

Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC) last March, I stated that the U.S. network of alliances and partnerships is a strategic advantage that competitors cannot match – and that maintaining these requires an active, whole of government approach. We have supported our Ukrainian partners against Russia’s illegal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine without putting a single U.S. servicemember on the front lines of that conflict. Responsible states of the world united in our response, which was only possible through strategic and novel uses of defense cooperation. There remains a strategic imperative that we not remain static in our technology collaboration. As our response to Russia’s invasion has proven, we must maintain the ability to cut off bad actors from dangerous capabilities – but we must also maintain the tools and vision to share and collaborate with our allies and partners. Preparation for future conflicts – or deterring them from occurring in the first place – will rely on our ability to expand and enhance military partnerships before any shots are fired.

In addition to the security benefits the partnership provides, AUKUS also requires us to rethink how we work with our allies and partners, just as the National Security Strategy and

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National Defense Strategy demand. American business is one of the strongest and most resilient assets in the national toolkit. We need to widen the aperture, foster collaborative defense innovation, advance military interoperability with our closest allies and partners, and leverage our collective strengths as a force multiplier. Our discussions with AUKUS partners have provided a lens into not only what military capabilities our closest allies need, but also what barriers exist that hamper the pursuit of our integrated security strategy – and how we need to adapt our approach to meet our national security objectives. We are closely aligned with the State Department on this, and working together collaboratively to pursue novel, rapid, and open ways of enhancing defense cooperation through AUKUS.

The Secretary of Defense has tasked the Department to pursue a series of “sprint teams” to ensure seamless and secure information sharing and capability cooperation with AUKUS partners. As we identify opportunities to streamline our processes, we commit to sharing the results with Congress.

Even as the Administration makes changes through current authorities, we will also work with our AUKUS partners on trilateral standards for secure defense trade. By increasing confidence in our security frameworks, we will facilitate unprecedented integration and responsible streamlining of our export control and information sharing laws, regulations, processes, and policies.

In tandem, the Administration plans to consult closely with Congress and propose legislative changes to meet the ambitions of AUKUS Leaders. To that end, we will seek legislative changes that would allow increased exemptions to licensing requirements for AUKUS partners and expanded to permit transfers of both unclassified and classified defense articles and services. This bold approach is critical to ensuring the AUKUS partnership continues to innovate and progress to meet the challenges of the global security environment.

### **Conclusion**

Mr. Chairman, today I discussed the value of AUKUS as a generational opportunity, how this trilateral military partnership connects to the 2022 National Defense Strategy, and why we need to expand U.S. defense cooperation with our close allies and partners – particularly as it relates to AUKUS. The success of integrated deterrence will take a whole-of- government approach if we are to respond to and overcome the challenges of today and tomorrow with the power of American resolve with our allies and partners by our side. I appreciate the Committee’s leadership on this issue and for the opportunity to speak with you today. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

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