

## **Australian Department of Defence - U.S. Department of Defense Statement on Defense Cooperation in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

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### **Our History**

The Australia–U.S. Alliance reflects the unique shared history and common strategic interests of our two nations. For more than 70 years, our defense cooperation has contributed to growth and stability across the Asia-Pacific region and beyond. Australian and U.S. forces have shared the battlefield in every major conflict since World War I, and our Alliance has proven itself to be capable, adaptable, and resilient.

Cooperation between the Australian Department of Defence and the U.S. Department of Defense traverses the full spectrum of defense activities. Our ability to work together has been developed over decades of joint and coalition operations; training and exercising; intelligence cooperation; and capability development. Our military forces are capable of generating, sustaining, and projecting force in the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions and in other parts of the world. Together, we have been able to address our shared global interests and responsibilities effectively, from responding to natural disasters and humanitarian crises to complex operations in contested environments.

### **Our Future Vision**

We will face an increasingly uncertain security environment in the future. Greater competition for resources and territorial disputes will increase the possibility of miscalculation and the potential for conflict in the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions. At the same time, challenges to the rules-based global order threaten prosperity and security in these regions. These threats include those in cyber and space, as well as terrorism, threats to global trade routes, and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

In the face of such challenges, our two nations commit to deepening our already close defense partnership and to think creatively and to work cooperatively to achieve our mutual interests in promoting peace and stability. We understand that our collective security is our shared responsibility, and we re-affirm our commitment to working together and with partners to help shape a rules-based international order that promotes peace, security, and opportunity for all.

To achieve this vision, we commit to pursuing closer and deeper Alliance cooperation across the following themes.

### ***Deeper Interoperability***

Interoperability is critical to our capacity to work effectively and safely together in joint and coalition operations. By pursuing new and innovative opportunities to exercise and train together, we preserve and build on the high levels of interoperability achieved through more than a decade of close operational cooperation, as is currently seen in Iraq and Afghanistan. Enhancing these practical forms of cooperation will help to ensure that our forces remain among the best trained, equipped, and led in the world.

In this effort, we intend to make specific efforts to leverage the Australia-U.S. Force Posture initiatives and the unique exercising and training opportunities they create. These initiatives demonstrate our commitment to deepening our practical defense cooperation and to enhancing our joint ability to support regional security.

### ***Strengthened Policy Collaboration***

In managing our cooperation into the future, we also commit to expanding our consultation on the policies and priorities underlying our defense engagements, to build a deeper understanding of our individual perspectives and mutual interests. We look to strengthen security in the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions through more deliberate coordination of the policies and priorities underlying our regional engagements. Improving these ties and mechanisms also enhances our ability to coordinate strategic policies on security issues around the world.

### ***Enhanced Defense Intelligence Cooperation***

We have a long-established defense intelligence partnership, which strengthens our situational awareness and capability and enhances our ability to operate together in support of regional stability and the global rules-based order. We commit to deepening our defense intelligence partnership through cooperation on new technologies and by strengthening relationships with other allies and partners as appropriate, including through the regular exchange of information and assessments.

### ***Increased Collaboration in Science and Technology, Capability Development, and Defense Industry Engagement***

We are committed to investing in our armed forces to ensure that we have the capabilities we need to address current and future threats and challenges. We already partner effectively to develop, test, and acquire new defense capabilities. Agreements such as the Defense Trade Cooperation Treaty facilitate the interoperability, industry collaboration, and innovation necessary to meet our common security interests. Our aim now is to develop further opportunities for collaboration, including in cyber, space, and the defense science and technology domains. We also intend to explore new models of development, acquisition, and sustainment as we continue to transform our defense organizations and processes to maximize efficiency and effectiveness and to harness world-leading innovation for the benefit of our combined capability.

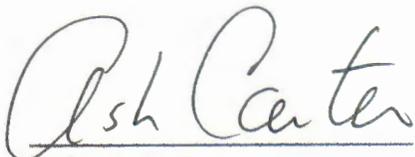
### ***Coordinated Multilateral Engagement***

Overall, the success of our Alliance will increasingly be defined by our ability to work not only with each other, but together with other governments and multilateral institutions in the maintenance of peace and security. Within the Asia-Pacific region, we commit to develop a comprehensive and sustainable program of exercises and practical cooperative activities for our forces in the region. This will allow us to coordinate our presence in the region and to respond faster to regional crises, such as natural disasters, either independently, together, or in cooperation with other countries. We further commit to expanded trilateral defense cooperation with key partners, particularly with Japan, where our cooperation enhances practical interoperability across our militaries and continued collaboration in regional capacity-building efforts.

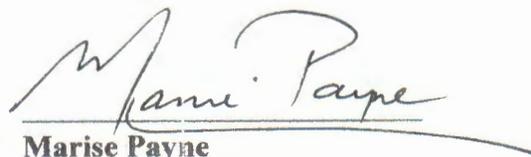
We commit to continuing to build the capacity of regional States to respond to challenges independently. We also commit to supporting the Asia-Pacific region's security architecture and the work of initiatives such as the East Asia Summit, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum, and the ASEAN Defense Minister's Meeting Plus. It is this architecture that enables a community built on shared interests to thrive, and we commit to work together and with our partners to promote transparency, stability, and respect for international law, including freedom of navigation and overflight, and the peaceful resolution of disputes. In doing so, we recognize our commitment to building trust and promoting cooperation with allies and partners.

### **Conclusion**

The Australia-U.S. relationship is characterized by an unparalleled depth and diversity of diplomatic, defense, economic, academic, and cultural ties. We share common values and world views, as well as closely aligned defense and strategic interests. We pledge to continue to increase our work together to strengthen the rules-based order that underpins the security of both Australia and the United States and our partners in the region. We commit to building on the hard-earned interoperability of our armed forces, seeking innovative ways to adapt to new threats, and collaborating to ensure the security of our region into the future.



**Ashton B. Carter**  
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**Marise Payne**  
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