

Contemporary Arms Race: AUKUS and the New Maritime Order in the Indo-Pacific

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Abstract

The article explores AUKUS, a trilateral security alliance between key powers Australia, United Kingdom and the United States, that has become the forefront of Indo-Pacific maritime security discussion. Australia's access to advanced nuclear powered submarines and defense technology reflects a shift from traditional warfare tactics to technologically driven solutions that permeate towards security driven competition. The analysis suggests that the alliance has accelerated militarization as a product of technological development, reflecting a contemporary arms race; where technology is a driving factor behind sociopolitical change. The analysis of China's response to the alliance, ASEAN's internal fragmentation and rise of regional power influence, suggests that AUKUS poses both possibility for deterrence and enhancement of insecurity. The paradox is explained through technological determinism, where artificial intelligence and cyberdefence have become determinants of regional power dynamics. The essay identifies that the growing tensions of Sino-American rivalry undermines ASEAN's stance as a neutral institution. While the alliance underpins western dominance in the Indo-Pacific, it also facilitates asymmetric capabilities. The paper recognizes AUKUS, ultimately as a disruptive mechanism but also one that highlights the inherent flaws of deterrence theory, highlighting the need for increased transparency, inclusive forums and regulatory guidelines to prevent fragmentation.

Keywords: AUKUS, Technological Determinism, Deterrence, Indo-Pacific, Maritime Security

1. Introduction

Contemporary global politics has gradually become a mirror to the Cold war, the epicenter of power shifting from Berlin to South China where the Indo-Pacific becomes not only a stream for trade but the backdrop of a new technological arms race. At its core, the emergence of AUKUS (Australia, United Kingdom and United States), a "trilateral security partnership formalized in 2021 between Australia, the United Kingdom and the United

States" marks a significant shift for the region's maritime security relations.¹

Analytically, the agreement provides Australia with nuclear-powered maritime technology, a tactical maneuver that openly militarized the nation's relationship with China and reconfigures contemporary power dynamics.

¹ Lana Lam, "What Is Aukus, the Submarine Deal between Australia, UK and US?," *BBC*, June 12, 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cgr589k5yleo>.

Notably, altering force projection capacities, enabling Australia to deploy and sustain forces outside of national waters and reinforce their role within the Indo-Pacific, arguably, further expanding western power and raising concerns of a post-colonial, colonial agenda. The threat therefore, is two-fold: a reframing of maritime power and a challenge to existing political hegemonies.

The dynamic reflects that of the Cold War with the nuances that arise within a technologically complex reality. Patterns of dependence, deterrence and escalation suggest a silent arms race within the Indo-Pacific region driven by a need for geopolitical dominance. Both international and regional actors including India, Japan and Vietnam serve as proxies for the continued competition between global powerhouses in superiority for the development and accumulation of military recourse.

The rise of Sino-American tensions, motivates the paper to analyze the trend of growing military spending as an indicator of a surfacing arms race. Positing a significant shift from a unipolar world order to the surfacing protagonist of middle powers (E.g., Australia) asserting autonomy. More critically aiming to establish the extent to which the AUKUS alliance redefines maritime security and technology as a form of deterrence in the Indo-Pacific region. For the purpose of the essay, maritime security refers to the protection of territorial waters, trade routes, infrastructure and threats both of traditional or hybrid nature.

Ultimately, AUKUS represents not only a shift in alliances but the formation of a new maritime reality,

defined by a nuanced technological approach to deterrence and potential for greater innovative capacity. Geopolitics is defined broadly as a concept that “transcends temporality and ventures into technological innovations, interdependence, demographic shifts, transnational threats, and the involvement of non-state actors”.² In accordance with that view, AUKUS becomes thus, the link between, security, technology and global governance, thereby raising the question, to what extent has the establishment of AUKUS become a determining factor for an Indo Pacific Arms race and adopted security frameworks?

2. Background Analysis

2.1 *The Indo-Pacific as the Successor of Global Governance*

The growth in geopolitical importance of the Indo-Pacific has been attributed to, “(1) the shifting strategic center of gravity to the East, (2) the growing military and economic importance of the Indian Ocean, (3) the United States’ strategic demand to maintain influence in the Pacific, and (4) regional countries’ pursuit of elevated status through U.S. support.”³ The shift towards indo-pacific governance is key in understanding the emergence of AUKUS. The indo-pacific becoming the epicenter of international dispute is driven largely by China’s rapid military and maritime expansion. As such,

² Chetan Singai, Owri Dixit, and Krutika Reddy, “The Gambit of Geopolitics in the Indo-Pacific: A Critical Analysis,” *Journal of Contemporary Politics* 2, no. 4 (December 15, 2023): 107–14, <https://doi.org/10.53989/jcp.v2i4.6.chetan>.

³ Elliot S Ji, “Chinese Perspectives on the ‘Indo-Pacific’ as a Geostrategic Construct”, *Mapping China’s Strategic Space*, May 14, 2024 <https://strategicspace.nbr.org/chinese-perspectives-on-the-indo-pacific-as-a-geostrategic-construct/>.

traditional western dominance stands at a delicate balance. AUKUS is objectively a product of strategy to reinforce western influence, strengthen deterrence and prevent a unilateral definition of regional security.

Moreover, the rising centrality of the Indo-Pacific reflects broader coercive approaches to foreign policy. Prompting states to pursue and adopt tighter and perhaps, more aggressive, security agendas. AUKUS as a technological and military driven analysis embodies the contemporary power dynamic.

2.2 Geopolitical Determinism in the Indo-Pacific

Scholarship defines the trend as the “pivot towards Asia” characterized by enhanced geopolitical strategy, focusing on maritime trading routes. To expand, the strait of Malacca, “proximity to major regional and extra-regional economies, and a major sea route for the transportation of energy and goods”.⁴ is central in determining global dynamics. As mentioned by The National Bureau of Asian Research, “The strait of Malacca represents one of the most strategically, economically and politically significant checkpoints in the world.”⁵ Notably, over sixty percent of the world’s maritime trade use the strait. The stability of it

therefore is key for the economic prosperity not only of the region, but the global economy.

2.3 The Security Dilemma: Regional and International Perspectives:

Most states in the Indo-Pacific region recognize the alliance as both a risk for and a safeguard against nuclear proliferation. The tension exists between the strengthening of deterrence mechanisms along-side China, and increased fears of nuclear and technological dependency. However, the focus remains on whether technology, precisely that for maritime defense, is deterministic for conditions of peace or conflict. Internationally, AUKUS has surged as a counterweight to China’s growing capabilities in defense and a domestic tool to further US political and economic objectives.

Through an international lens, AUKUS represents a mechanism of deterrence and reinforcement of the United State’s role as a key security guarantor within an increasingly multipolar world order. The transfer of nuclear-proliferation technologies to Australia through the treaty, represents not only the US’s aim to expand security frameworks, but also as a direct strategy to counter China’s growing military presence in the Indo-Pacific and globally. As such, AUKUS acts primarily as an intervention force, but more than that, as a symbol of technological development, maritime dominance and the expansion of limits to non-proliferation norms. Apart from acting as a regional regulatory mechanism, the treaty reflects Washington’s persistent efforts to maintain precedence by

⁴ Adam Leon Kok Wey, “From Gallipoli to the Strait of Malacca: Why Maritime Choke Points Still Decide the Fate of Nations, *Lowy Institute*, *Lowyinstitute.org*, July, 4, 2020, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpretor/gallipoli-strait-malacca-why-maritime-choke-points-still-decide-fate-nations>.

⁵ Kaewkamol Pitakdumrongkit, “Goeconomic Crossroads: The Strait of Malacca’s Impact on Regional Trade,” *The National Bureau of Asian Research (NBR)*, October 5, 2023, <https://www.nbr.org/publication/geoeconomic-crossroads-the-strait-of-malaccas-impact-on-regional-trade/>.

incorporating alliances that advance long-term US objectives.

Conversely, at a regional level, Indo-Pacific states acknowledge that AUKUS acts as a broader deterrence mechanism that allows for the stabilization of conflict and governmental instability impelled by China. Regardless, the concern remains of a paradoxical effect whereby the alliances produce substantial risks of nuclear precedent, arms race and heightened dependence on United States power detracting from the independence efforts of regional states. The dichotomy primarily focuses on the idea that AUKUS promises increased maritime security, through increased submarine capabilities and technologies, while simultaneously raising key questions about regional security mapping.

Shifting focus towards indo-pacific states, multinational organizations such as ASEAN and member states like Vietnam, the Philippines, are concerned that the treaty will further displace power dynamics and decrease the relevance of such members through the creation of a new hierarchy, long-term dependency and as a result, constrain regional autonomy. AUKUS this may act as a catalyst for deeper strategic tensions.

3. Discussion of Findings

3.1 AUKUS: Deterrence or Militarization

The idea of militarization in international relations is often framed under the guise of deterrence; the notion that security is effectively maintained through coercion or the threat of force to dissuade hostile actions. AUKUS

however, challenges the premise. Although the initiative is openly portrayed as a tool to preserve a “free and open Indo Pacific”, the alliance has instead intensified strategic competition and deepened mistrust in the region. Although it strengthens defense mechanisms amongst Western allies, it simultaneously catalyses counter-developments.

China, in particular, views AUKUS as part of a broader encirclement strategy, directly threatening nations of growing hegemony. Its Ministry of Foreign Affairs has suggested the alliance is an effort to contain its rise, a perspective shaped significantly “by China’s historical experience with Soviet alliances and its subsequent adoption of non-alignment policies”.⁶ Subsequently, China now holds a critical and pragmatic view of alliance, defining them as zero-sum games that threaten its national security.

Citing regional encirclement and alleged violation of non-proliferation norms, China has begun to expand its military maritime capabilities. This includes the deployment of Anti-Access, Area-denial strategy (A2/D2) which as Permal suggests, pose a broader security threat for the Asia-Pacific region.⁷

⁶ Bowen Yao and Mingjiang Li, “International Alliances,” *Security Order and Strategic Alignment in Europe and the Asia-Pacific*, no. 1 (2025): 130–50, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003503378-10>.

⁷ Sumathy Permal, “China’s Military Capability and Anti-Access Area-Denial Operations,” *Maritime Affairs: Journal of the National Maritime Foundation of India* 10, no. 2 (2014): 16–32, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09733159.2014.977598>.

Critically, AUKUS reveals the underlying mechanism of deterrence theory: measures intended to enhance one actor's security leads to the insecurity of another, ultimately inciting further militarization. This reflects the fundamental security dilemma, amplified by today's rapid technological developments.

3.2 *The Pressure Point for China and ASEAN*

AUKUS for many, notably China (who has expressed concern that the alliance threatens power dynamics with nuclear proliferation and strategic encirclement that acts as a serious counterweight to China's growing maritime influence. In essence, this represents a clear and direct threat to nuclear non-proliferation efforts. Beyond that, reinstating Western containment policies and producing fragmentation amongst ASEAN member states. Symbolically, the alliance represents a consolidation of Western-led coalitions designed to maintain primacy in the Indo-Pacific.⁸ Of course, there are tensions on what this means for power dynamics. Some view the alliance as a tool for the balance of power, whilst others consider it to be a catalyst for a complete disintegration of Southeast Asia's already non-aligned stance, security, and militarization framework.

This dichotomy reveals a frustrating conflict where deterrence stands as both a mechanism for stability and one for pragmatism. The alliance may not only alter

maritime security frameworks but persuade an arms race that erodes and questions multilateral governance.

For China, most importantly, the alliance presents a shift in western military strategy, from balanced to capability-based hard power. In order to strengthen long-term power projection, the US has deepened regional ties and shared nuclearly advanced technology suggesting the solidification of its approach. The US is substantially driven by its expansionary geopolitical ambitions.

In practice, having access to nuclear-powered submarines and technology, allows Australia to take a more active role as an actor within the South China Sea, East China Sea and even the Taiwan State, all strategic under a geopolitical perspective. Geopolitically, the expansion of the area is, according to existing scholarship "one of the world's most important shipping, trade and energy routes, a rich potential source of sub-sea oil and gas and a major fisheries area".⁹ As a result, the alliance does not only pose a threat militarily, but rather economically and socially. International interests and disputes in this area have therefore heightened.

The development of maritime technology, namely, submarines has complicated China's naval development, highlighting flaws in its A2/D2 strategy. From Beijing's perspective, AUKUS significantly undermines its efforts to assert maritime dominance within the area and legitimacy of its expansive territorial claims within the area,

⁸ Susannah Patton, "How South-East Asia Views AUKUS," *Lowy Institute*, February 24, 2024, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/how-south-east-asia-views-aukus>.

⁹ Hui Zhong and Michael White, "South China Sea," *Asia-Pacific Journal of Ocean Law and Policy* 2, no. 1 (2017): 9–24, <https://doi.org/10.1163/24519391-00201003>.

specifically, “the controversial “nine-dash line” and its overlap with exclusive economic zones and other Southeast Asian nations”.¹⁰

This development has reinforced China’s perception of the alliance as an “encirclement”. Particularly with the presence of powerful global actors including; Japan, India, Australia and the United States. Increasing NATO discourse with reference to the Indo-Pacific has reasserted the project of maritime dominance. In essence, AUKUS is perceived as a greater coalition designed deliberately to limit China’s rise as an economic and military global power. The Chinese response to the alliance, naval modernization, development of hypersonic missile programmes, tangibly demonstrates AUKUS’s contribution to a cycle of counter-deterrence and technological escalation.

One dimension that must not be overlooked is ASEAN; the Association of South East Asia Nations. The cornerstone of ASEAN lies in “pursuing neutrality through institutional strategies of hedging and balancing.”¹¹ In essence, the group focuses on maintaining neutrality and especially within multilateral alliances. However, AUKUS presents a new threat to the

equilibrium in the Indo-Pacific region forcing signatory states to confront growing Sino-American tensions, especially within the domain of maritime security where, geopolitically, they are most vulnerable. The militarization threat creates fragmentation with ASEAN with states like Vietnam and Singapore benefit from AUKUS as a deterrence mechanism for Chinese coercion. However, other states with pacific views, show concern about the nuclear scope of it, risking erosion of order within South East Asian governance. From a security perspective, the fragmentation of member states weakens cooperation capability, and further increases the threat for a regional arms race.

Divergent perspectives on the significance of AUKUS are counterbalanced through the need for security against extra-regional threats, primarily from China. Nations, including Singapore, Vietnam and the Philippines view AUKUS as a key component in deterrence of further Chinese dominance in the Indopacific. Though as Rizky and Santoso suggest, an essential dimension “concerns ASEAN’s organizational dilemma, and the strategic potential of its regional frameworks to respond to AUKUS”.¹²

Looking at these two frameworks, the approach to regional logics is two-fold. On the one hand, the approach for deterrence promoted by Western powers who adopt the view that by increasing their military capabilities other

¹⁰ Frank A. Rose, “AUKUS Will Be Worth the Work. China’s Alarm Shows Why Trump Should Get Onboard”, *Lowy Institute*, Lowyinstitute.org, July, 17, 2025, <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/aukus-will-be-worth-work-china-s-alarm-shows-why-trump-should-get-onboard>.

¹¹ Darpan Gautam, Zhang Guoshuai, and Li Xing, “Unveiling ASEAN’s Neutrality an Analysis of ASEAN’s Institutional Strategy,” n.d., https://projekter.aau.dk/projekter/files/531484570/MASTERS_THESIS_DARPAN.pdf.

¹² Ahmad Rizky and Yulida Nuraini Santoso, “AUKUS and Southeast Asia’s Ontological Security Dilemma,” *International Journal* 78, no. 3 (2023): 435–53, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00207020231197767>.

actors are dissuaded from pursuing coercive action. On the other, actors like ASEAN adopt a pragmatic stance to militarization, favouring neutrality based autonomy, to prevent encirclement by great-power tensions.

The coexistence of both perspectives of deterrence through militarization and neutrality increases uncertainty. Although AUKUS may incite China's deterrence, multilateral organizations may be negatively affected, increasing regional tensions. Undoubtedly, for both China and ASEAN, the alliance represents more than a national and regional security challenge but rather a full redistribution of strategic alignments, threat perception and long-term security frameworks.

In context, although Beijing publicly frames and interprets AUKUS as an "encirclement" mechanism, this cannot be overstated and must be analyzed within broader Chinese policy doctrines. China, as a rising global power, contesting with the United States, has consistently accused the US of being a systematic constraint on the development of regional powers, further entrenching an anti-west narrative founded on postcolonial attitudes. As such, the definition of encirclement is not limited to AUKUS but rather a broader system of norms that reinforce historical vulnerabilities. It becomes evident that Beijing favors this narrative to justify its own militarization efforts, as political tools to counter western dominance, and entrench domestic policies and support. Ultimately, AUKUS intensifies already existent tensions rather than introducing a new encirclement dynamic, rather, it adds to

China's persistent use of US security decisions as the backbone of their own militarization agendas.

3.3 Technological Determinism in the Indo-Pacific:

The defining feature of AUKUS is the depth of its technological scope. While the principal focus is naval and submarine technology development, the alliance also represents a revolutionary dynamic of emerging disruptive technologies. These expand to both traditional and hybrid warfare domains, including cyber-defense, artificial intelligence, robotics and hypersonic missile development. The multifaceted approach signals a redefinition of security and defence within the Indo-Pacific, and reflects the wider trend of technological determinism where technological developments shape strategic political decisions, strategic behaviour and the trajectory of society. The introduction of this concept helps explain how AUKUS operates.

"Geopolitics as a concept transcends temporality and ventures into technological innovations, interdependence, demographic shifts, transnational threats, and involvement of non-state actors".¹³ In its simplest form, technological determinism argues that technology is not merely a geopolitical mechanism. Geopolitics increasingly transcends traditional power balances and extends into technological innovation, interdependence, demographic shifts, transnational threats, and the actions of non-state actors.

¹³ Chetan, Dixit and Reddy, "The Gambit of Geopolitics in the Indo-Pacific, 1.

The uniqueness of AUKUS as a security framework lies not in its maritime focus but rather on how its technological agenda defines policy. Technological determinism argues that technological development directly shapes political decisions, alliances and threat perceptions. AUKUS is a clear example of this. Reinforcing the idea that technology is structuring the regional order.

Within the Indo-Pacific context, maritime security technology increasingly determines security dynamics; escalation rages, balance of naval capacities and hostile power's interpretation of western commitment to the region. Through the Framing technology as a central force in contemporary international relations, helps in revealing why alliances like AUKUS emerge and why they evolve so rapidly in response to technological developments. Although technological determinism presents a persuasive perspective, its predictable nature is also countered with the dynamism of technology. The world is observing a shift towards militarization, perhaps due to the opposite effect of deterrence theory. As such a paradigm is proposed; whether technology drives strategy or whether strategy increasingly drives technological innovation.

3.4 Implication of AUKUS in a Multipolar World

Existing scholarship and global politics trends show that AUKUS has become a key driver in shaping security approaches within the Indo-Pacific. Beyond recalibrating power dimensions amongst global actors, the alliance affects a broader maritime and strategic landscape of the region.

AUKUS has accelerated competition primarily by deepening the imbalance in military and technological capabilities. Australia's access to nuclear powered naval technology, signals an expansion of Western strategic dominance within the indo-pacific region. For China, this represents continued U.S projection of power but also the alignment of other Western states which undermines and constrain East Asian influence, regionally and globally.

In response, the People's Liberation Army Navy has increased militarization efforts. As O'Donnell suggests, such a reaction reflects perception of great-power threat, rooted in "China's continuing quest to recover lost territories in the South and East China Seas, [and] the reduction of political interference in military affairs".¹⁴ This shift can be understood as a form of counter-deterrence, emphasizing China's pragmatic assessment of long-term AUKUS implications.

Other regional alliances such as ASEAN; whose identity lies in political neutrality, have been significantly influenced by the alliance. Faced with growing uncertainty and divergent power projections both from Western actors and a rising China, some member states, notably nations like Vietnam and Singapore, have forcefully considered an alternative stance, viewing AUKUS as a balancing force and counterweight to current geopolitical tensions. In contrast, others like Indonesia and Malaysia, view it as undermining diplomatic norms and eroding ASEAN's

¹⁴ John R O'donnell, "An Analysis of Major Developmental Influences on the People's Liberation Army - Navy and Their Implications for the Future.," Dtic.mil, June, 2, 1995, <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/html/tr/ADA299253/>.

primary meditative function. From this perspective, enhanced maritime security simultaneously enhances ASEAN fragmentation.

Within an increasingly multipolar international system, AUKUS represents a dual significance— both a threat and asset to deterrence. Multipolarity is defined by the distribution of power amongst multiple actors, enhancing complexity of deterrence mechanisms; threats, alignments and technological capabilities not concentrated in a single bipolar rivalry. Pursuant to this, AUKUS becomes relevant because its influence transcends the redistribution of power between U.S and China, extending to regional and extra-regional players. Although it has enhanced western influence in the region, it has also introduced risk management.

By introducing advanced military technologies, AUKUS strengthens the nexus of Western-aligned power simultaneously to the growth of China, India and middle powers such as South Korea are simultaneously strengthening influence.

Principally, the criticism and implications of AUKUS lie in the consequences of this for sovereignty, interdependence, military encirclement and the risk of both nuclear proliferation and nuclear waste disposal. The alliance presents an increasingly complex and nuanced view of security that is technologically driven where emerging methods act as independent vectors of power and influence.

Ultimately, the Indo-Pacific needs to balance both possible outcomes: contributing to peace and regional stability through deterrence or intensifying security dilemmas that heighten the risk of militarized conflict.

4. Policy Recommendations

Analysing the findings it is evident that the conflict with AUKUS as an alliance for deterrence, is based on its dual nature: its capacity to provide both stability in the Indo-Pacific while also fostering insecurity and heightened threat perceptions. The principal goal, then through policy, is to preserve its role as a tool for conflict de-escalation and deterrence while preventing institutional fragmentation in an increasingly multipolar region.

Firstly, establishing transparency mechanisms should be prioritized to address the uncertainty that many nations, notably ASEAN members face, in regards to nuclear-powered submarines. These would be implemented jointly by AUKUS members in accordance with the International Atomic Energy Agency. The goal, to develop region specific guidelines and frameworks. This would need to be short-term, one to three years aligning with Australia's preparatory evolution for submarine technology. The concern for the normalization of nuclear programmes, within a region that has been historically neutral or opposed to militarization. However, considering the increasingly militarized environment and growing geopolitical tensions both by western and asian powers, transparency within these systems can prevent political backlash or miscalculation that undermine deterrence mechanisms. The aim, to frame AUKUS as a defensive

and regulatory project, rather than a programme for nuclear proliferation.

Second, to avoid a more comprehensive system, not entirely exclusionary to western nations, AUKUS should adopt a broader stance, directly involving ASEAN states. This should be carried out through the ASEAN regional forum and the East Asia Summit that are already built to address security concerns. Through this, create a comprehensive maritime system that accounts for region-wide effects.

Beyond that, AUKUS could push forth structured collaboration plans for missions such as disaster response, humanitarian aid, to reduce perception of exclusivity and isolated western dominance. This should be implemented once transparency structures are incorporated and political trust is reestablished. This stance would allow ASEAN to remain neutral, and not directly engage in militarization. However, maintain relevance as a diplomatic actor. The aim would be to avoid the emergence of parallel security frameworks that would increase fragmentation instead create a system of broader regional understanding.

Third, the regulation of military capabilities and limitation of development of advanced technology should be codified within existing institutions. AUKUS, alongside ASEAN Defense Ministers and UN Governmental experts, would establish guidelines that enhance the framework's value as a contributor to stability, and as a deterrence mechanism rather than a tool for the proliferation of arms-race dynamics.

Lastly, in order to expand AUKUS's framing as a military initiative, instead of a broader security framework, the alliance should expand investment towards non-military security collaboration where issues related to illegal maritime activities such as illegal maritime activities, climate or environmental monitoring, diversifying the group's influence beyond its position as fuel for great-power competition. Though primarily a tool for military deterrence, this would widen scope of cooperation within the Indo-Pacific region, perhaps increasing its perception as a pacific alliance rather than one aimed at conflict. This could be implemented through organizations like the Pacific islands forum on a short term timeline to allow for the perception of collective security.

In essence, these policy recommendations aim to redefine AUKUS from simply a naval militarization operation to a broader security framework that focuses on integrational dialog, de-escalation and inclusion. AUKUS can be reframed as a mechanism for stability and not a catalyst for geopolitical tensions.

5. Conclusion

To conclude, the AUKUS alliance has become central in the Indo-Pacific's maritime security discourse, redefining not only naval technologies but also its broader policy strategy. While strengthening deterrence, simultaneously, it exacerbates China's counterdeterrence measures, through the subsequent militarization. Ultimately, fueling a technological arms race. Though, the influence extends beyond great-power rivalry, and extends

to regional organizations, including ASEAN who recognize both risks and benefits.

Most importantly, AUKUS marks an important shift towards technological determinism, and the incorporation of technology into international policy. Fundamentally, AUKUS delivers both stability and strain within global politics, the key lies in maintaining assertiveness, whilst addressing institutional fragility and fostering continued regional dialogue to ensure maritime security in the Indo-Pacific remains simply a deterring force and not the trigger for further escalation of conflict.

Looking further, the future of Indo-Pacific security is dependent on the use of emerging technologies whether for cooperation or conflict.

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