

# Kaine Discusses AUKUS Agreement During SASC Hearing

From the Office of Senator Tim Kaine, D-Virginia, April 21, 2026

WASHINGTON – Today, during a Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) hearing on U.S. posture in the Indo-Pacific, U.S. Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA) asked Admiral Samuel J. Paparo, Jr., USN, Commander of United States Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM), about the progress of the Australia-U.K.-U.S. (AUKUS) agreement.

“I was in Australia recently ... 37 events in seven days in four cities,” **said Kaine**. “I heard a lot. Answered some tough questions on our end. And I was impressed, but I wonder – are you satisfied with the pace of upgrades to [HMAS] Stirling that could support the increased rotational presence of *Virginia*-class submarines?”

**Admiral Paparo responded**, “From a shore power standpoint and for the capability that they have, with a tender and Marine Security Detachment, we could move submarines to Stirling today. That’s been the progress at Stirling. I laid eyes on it multiple times. The commitment is there. The progress is there. The place where we have to make the most progress is in the defense industrial base to deliver the capability, but our partners in Australia [and the] U.K. through Pillar One and Two ... has been full throttle. It’s now as much up to industry as anyone else to deliver.”

During the hearing, Kaine also discussed today’s [announcement](#) that the Japanese government will allow the sale of more weapons abroad and the benefits to U.S. defense agreements with Japan and security in the Indo-

Pacific.

**Full video of the exchange is available [here](#).**

Kaine, who is Ranking Member of the SASC Subcommittee on Seapower and also a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (SFRC), has been a strong champion of AUKUS in Congress. In February, Kaine held a [series of bilateral meetings](#) with Australian local, state, and federal lawmakers and defense industrial base partners in Sydney, Adelaide, Perth, and Darwin to discuss the AUKUS partnership. Kaine has helped get signed into [law](#) provisions to [implement](#) and [strengthen the AUKUS agreement](#). He has played a key role in securing more resources for the [submarine industrial base](#), including additional funding for the [Virginia-class submarine program](#).