

# **Britain is betting its security on distant deterrence: Why 2040s technology will not stop Indo-Pacific threats in 2026**

- **The United Kingdom and its allies are heavily reliant on massive industrial projects like AUKUS and the Global Combat Air Programme (GCAP) to anchor their security in the Indo-Pacific, creating a dangerous strategic paradox.**
- **By focusing resources on advanced capabilities that will not arrive until the mid to late 2030s, Britain risks creating a window of opportunity for adversaries to strike now.**
- **New Primer calls for an end to conceptual overreach, urging HM Government to separate defence industrial stamina from deterrence and to close immediate readiness gaps connecting the Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific theatres.**

**The Council on Geostrategy has today published a new Primer, entitled ‘Assessing the contribution of defence industrial base collaborations for Britain’s deterrence posture’. The analysis explores the deterrence gap currently opening up in British grand strategy. It argues that while HM Government increasingly views industrial power as a central component of national security, the delayed delivery of collaborative projects risks inviting aggression today to pay for security tomorrow.**

The Primer warns that the conceptual muddling of deterrence is a fundamental strategic misalignment. HM Government is using deterrence as a catch-all marketing term for industrial policy. Building a submarine that launches in 2037 does very little to stop a conflict in the Taiwan Strait or Eastern Europe in 2027. While initiatives like AUKUS and GCAP permanently tie British security to the Indo-Pacific, serving as vital geopolitical glue, their delayed timelines undermine immediate combat credibility. We are confusing industrial stamina with deterrence.

Furthermore, the Primer notes that current logistics and production initiatives are fundamentally reactive. Frameworks focusing on Indo-Pacific resilience concentrate heavily on how to fix things and sustain a war once the shooting starts. The analysis argues that if a strategy relies entirely on having a massive industrial base to win a war of attrition, deterrence has already failed, as it is essentially about ensuring the first shot is never fired.

To address these challenges, the paper outlines several immediate priorities. On GCAP, the United Kingdom needs to stop window shopping for new financial partners and commit fully, as speed of delivery is itself a form of deterrence. Additionally,

Britain and Australia must utilise their deep historical ties to pressure each other publicly into increasing immediate defence spending, closing current gaps in ammunition and readiness. Finally, the Ministry of Defence must treat the private sector as a sixth warfighting domain, involving prime industry contractors in regular wargames so they understand the geopolitical stakes, rather than just the profit margins.

Dr Euan Graham and Patrick Triglavcanin, authors of the Primer, write:

‘Deterrence has been explicitly linked to AUKUS as an objective since its foundation in September 2021, but there is a tension between the long timelines for delivering the SSN-AUKUS class submarines and the potential for a military crisis to occur in the Indo-Pacific beforehand.’

‘The People’s Republic of China could even be perversely incentivised to make a military move on Taiwan sooner rather than later if Beijing perceives that investments in long-term capability development by close US allies are drawing resources away from important gap areas, such as Integrated Air and Missile Defence, current readiness levels, and ammunition stocks.’



## Council on Geostrategy **INDO-PACIFIC PROJECT**

Representatives of the Council on Geostrategy are available for interview.

### CONTACT

Luke Baker-Cowling, Media Officer, [luke@geostrategy.org.uk](mailto:luke@geostrategy.org.uk)

### Notes to editors:

1. The Council on Geostrategy was launched on 2nd March 2021. More information can be found on our [website](#), including our [mission statement](#).
2. The Council on Geostrategy has an [Advisory Board](#) of 16 individuals with experience in politics, the military, diplomacy and academia.

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