

## SOVEREIGN GUIDED WEAPONS ENTERPRISE TIMELY: FORMER US DoD OFFICIAL

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF a AUD\$1 billion Sovereign Guided Weapons Enterprise by the Australian Government is not only a smart decision for the nation but one that has obvious benefits for the US, former US Government Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment and now NIOA Advisory Board member, Ellen Lord, said today.

On the 70th anniversary of the signing of the Australia, New Zealand and United States (ANZUS) Treaty, Ms Lord said the raising of the Enterprise coincides with ongoing instability in the Indo-Pacific and a subsequent need to reset Australia's approach to the region including through upgrades to its sovereign defence capabilities.

This revised approach "can only benefit the US which wants its trusted ally in Australia to be as agile, capable and innovative as possible", Ms Lord told DTR.

The closeness of the Australia-US relationship was perhaps summed up, Ms Lord suggests, earlier this year following a meeting of the Australian Defence Minister and the US Secretary of Defence, with Australia noting that the friendship between the countries had "never been more important".

With 1 September marking the anniversary of the ANZUS Treaty, which was born out of the mutually dependent relationship realised during fighting in the Pacific in World War Two, the relationship between the US and Australia has evolved and matured, typified by the accepted benefits of Australia's Sovereign Guided Weapons Enterprise.

Last year's AUSMIN consultations committed to opportunities that would encourage bilateral defence trade and develop initiatives to diversify and harness industry co-operation.

"A guided weapons manufacturing capability can benefit both countries, providing a second source of supply for



**ABOVE: The 70th anniversary of the ANZUS Treaty coincides with Australia's increasing co-operation with the US Government, military and defence industry.**

America's production requirements via the US National Technology and Industrial Base framework," Ms Lord said.

"The US has great respect for Australia's expertise and innovation, evidenced by American interest in partnering with the Australian Missile Corporation [AMC]."

Established this year by NIOA, the AMC is a 100% Australian-owned corporation that to date has signed on more than 250 partner organisations that are capable across all elements of the Enterprise.

"Importantly," Ms Lord said, "AMC understands the capability challenge of scaling up guided weapons inventory in shorter timeframes and providing stock

surety going forward. The approach of broadly partnering with so many organisations and gauging their capabilities in such a short timeframe has confirmed the highly credible existing capability in the Australian manufacturing base for guided weapons and explosive ordnance."

NIOA sees its tenancy at the Benalla munitions facility in Victoria as having scope to rapidly scale-up for mass production capability, underpinned by a modern and flexible approach to industrialisation.

According to Ms Lord, the AMC is "viewed favourably in the US and regarded highly for its ability to work efficiently and effectively in this field. This capability for Australia comes at a time when instability in the region requires bold thinking, agile response and technical excellence". **DTR**

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