

Canada in talks about joining expanded AUKUS, defence chief Blair says

TOKYO, Sept 13 (Reuters) - Canada is in discussions about joining an expanded AUKUS deal between the U.S., Britain, and Australia formed to counter China's growing military influence in the Asia Pacific region, Canadian Defence Minister Bill Blair said.

Canada has said it wants to join a second pillar of AUKUS that will collaborate on new military technologies, including artificial intelligence and quantum computing, but has not so far revealed any details of those talks.

"There have been important discussions about processes and platforms on a project-specific basis on where other nations, including Japan and ourselves, might participate," Blair said in an interview in Tokyo where he met his Japanese counterpart Minoru Kihara.

"I would respectfully wait until they've come to their determination, but I'm very optimistic," he said.

Blair said he and Kihara discussed AUKUS, which is already considering working with Japan. The initial phase of AUKUS involves the three founding members working on nuclear submarine technology for Australia.

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