

# ASU collaboration explores Indo-Pacific security during Hawaii?i forum

**PLuS Alliance, ASU's partnership with 2 international universities, brought together military, policy and industry leaders to discuss global defense challenges**

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Researchers and experts from Arizona State University and two other leading research universities explored the importance of maintaining global security and defense amid rapidly evolving challenges and threats ranging from environmental to political in a symposium that drew key leaders, academics and specialists.

[PLuS Alliance](#), ASU's global collaboration with King's College London and the University of New South Wales, was responsible for the second annual Security & Defence PLuS Indo-Pacific Security Forum, held in Honolulu on May 11.

The forum zoomed in on the Indo-Pacific region, a vast area encompassing the Indian and Pacific oceans and touching Africa to the U.S. West Coast. Over the decades, it has gained the identity as an epicenter of gray zone competition, trade and military strategy — positioning it as a vital economic driver.

ASU moderators<sup>1</sup> were responsible for navigating discussions among an elite cohort of senior military, policy architects, leading thinkers and industry innovators in exploring this year's theme, "Resilience, Force Posture and Readiness."

An effort of the three universities to take on a bevy of issues spanning social justice, health, innovation and sustainability, PLuS Alliance was formed in 2016. The partnership harnesses the knowledge and expertise of more than 15,000 staff, 150,000 students and more than \$1 billion in research funds.

This academic research and educational collaboration is aimed at advancing the AUKUS agreement between Australia, the United Kingdom and the U.S., with a mission to strengthen the ability of each country to support mutual security and defense interests by promoting deeper information and technology sharing.

With Hawai'i being smack dab in the middle of the Indo-Pacific region, it was a fitting location for the event, which featured Hawai'i Gov. Josh Green among the featured speakers in a fireside discussion with [Amanda Ellis](#), executive director in the Global Institute of Sustainability and Innovation.

Ellis led the interaction that tapped into Green's experience leading his state — from achieving the lowest COVID-19 fatality rates in the nation to being the first state to commit to 100% renewable energy by 2045, with other states following suit.

Ellis also explored the connection between climate change and threats brought on by recent floods and Maui wildfires that caused \$13 billion in damages, and how this taught Hawai'i to respond quickly and efficiently with military and civil integration in practice in the Indo-Pacific. Green and Ellis explained that these real-life, real-time procedures demonstrate what can be accomplished when faced with a crisis, whether it's brought on by a natural disaster or hostile action.

The importance of true partnerships, especially in this region that includes the vast and unsteady waters of the Pacific — which differs from other geographical areas in the news such as the Black Sea, Red Sea and Strait of Hormuz — was among the topics probed by [David Kilcullen](#), professor of practice in the Center on the Future of War, and Maj. Gen. George Rowell, director of strategic planning and policy for the United States Indo-Pacific Command.

They discussed how the collaboration among the U.S. and its allies in this region give them the upper hand over those among global competitors that are transactional in nature or based on leverage. This, Kilcullen explained, is where real open communication about "Great Power competition" is crucial.

"One of the great advantages we have on this side of the island chain is that the U.S. historically, has allies that China doesn't have. ... That's an incredible advantage when we consider what might be coming," Kilcullen said, referring to the relationship between the largest populated nation in the world and Iran, Russia and North Korea.

This concept was also examined in a panel discussion moderated by [Alicia Ellis](#), director of the global security master's degree program in the School of Politics and Global Studies, with top military leaders that focused on "Readiness in the Age of Volatility." In summary, Ellis stressed the importance of valuing allies and aligning exercises with multiple partners.

"The common theme here is that success depends on operating not as individual forces working in parallel but truly as a coalition," Ellis said.

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*This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).*

<sup>1</sup> They included: Ryan Shaw, managing director of strategic initiatives and senior university advisor to ASU President Michael Crow; Amanda Ellis, executive director, Asia-Pacific, for the Global Institute of Sustainability and Innovation, and senior director, global partnerships and networks for

the Julie Ann Wrigley Global Futures Laboratory; David Kilcullen, strategist, counterinsurgency expert and professor of practice in the Center on the Future of War and the School of Politics and Global Studies; and Alicia Ellis, director, Master of Arts in global security program for the School of Politics and Global Studies

## Main image



Alicia Ellis (left), director of the global security master's degree program in ASU's School of Politics and Global Studies, led a panel with top military leaders about "Readiness in the Age of Volatility" during the Security & Defence PLS Indo-Pacific Security Forum, held in Honolulu on May 11. Photo courtesy of Security & Defence PLS

## Text image(s)



Hawai'i Gov. Josh Green speaks during a fireside discussion at the Security & Defence PLS Indo-Pacific Security Forum, held in Honolulu on May 11. Photo courtesy of Security & Defence PLS



David Kilcullen (right), professor of practice in the Center on the Future of War, talks with Maj. Gen. George Rowell, director of strategic planning and policy for the United States Indo-Pacific Command, at the Indo-Pacific Security Forum. Photo courtesy of Security & Defence PLoS