



## **PRESS RELEASE:**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

16 June 2025

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## **ASPI USA, Knudsen Institute, and Oklahoma Institutions Align to Operationalize Oklahoma Chair**

Washington, DC and Oklahoma City, OK — Building on a series of strategic partnerships across Oklahoma, the [Knudsen Institute](#) and [ASPI USA](#) have formally launched the ASPI USA Oklahoma Chair for Strategic Policy and International Engagement. This announcement was made public during [DIBCON25](#) and reflects a growing ecosystem of Oklahoma-based institutions mobilizing to support allied deterrence.

The Oklahoma Chair—housed in ASPI USA’s Washington, DC office—will serve as a permanent bridge between Oklahoma’s industrial base and the allied policy ecosystem shaping AUKUS cooperation and Indo-Pacific strategy. This partnership helps ensure the state’s industrial and academic expertise informs the future of allied deterrence and dual-use technological cooperation.

This initiative complements ASPI’s existing partnership with the University of Oklahoma (OU) and its close coordination with the Oklahoma Aerospace and Defense Innovation Institute (OADII), as well as a growing working relationship with the Oklahoma Defense Industry Association (ODIA). These partnerships ensure the Chair is grounded in Oklahoma’s real-world capabilities and research priorities.

“Formalizing this fellowship is a meaningful step in elevating Oklahoma’s role in advancing global security priorities, including efforts like AUKUS,” said Adam Leslie, Executive Director of ASPI USA. “By partnering with the Knudsen Institute—and deepening our ties with OU, OADII, and ODIA—we’re forging a robust industrial-policymaking pipeline that ensures Oklahoma plays a decisive role in shaping allied deterrence.”

The fellowship’s operational framework includes biannual strategic reports, stakeholder convenings, and industrial matchmaking with Small and Medium Sized Manufacturers (SMMs). It also creates a pathway for workforce innovation in collaboration with OADII and leverages OU’s research infrastructure to better inform policy on Indo-Pacific deterrence.

“The Oklahoma Chair formalizes a regional-to-national-to-allied model of engagement,” said Michael Morford, Chairman and CEO of the Knudsen Institute. “It creates a policy-ready posture for Oklahoma’s industrial stakeholders and connects them to funding, intelligence, and influence in ways that haven’t been possible until now.”

ASPI USA’s convening power, research capabilities, and international networks position Oklahoma not just as a supplier to AUKUS, but as a strategic contributor—bringing the state’s industrial strengths into alignment with key allied technology and security objectives.

The Chair is funded through a tiered contribution model and managed by the Knudsen Institute with ASPI USA providing institutional hosting and integration into defense policy networks. It is expected to become a major node of influence for Indo-Pacific strategy, particularly as AUKUS Pillar II and DPA Title III authorities expand.

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For details on partnership opportunities, visit [www.knudseninstitute.org](http://www.knudseninstitute.org) or [www.aspiusa.org](http://www.aspiusa.org).