



TRUE NORTH

Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies Monthly Bulletin

JANUARY 2025



Arctic Regional Security Orientation Course

TSC achieves milestone with Arctic Regional Security Orientation Course

The Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies celebrated a significant achievement last month as it hosted the Arctic Regional Security Orientation Course (ARSOC) from Dec. 9-13. This marked the first course since a temporary pause in programming to enhance the center's technology infrastructure. These upgrades enabled the center to broadcast a course live from its multimedia studio for the very first time ever.

The five-day virtual course drew 122 participants, including representatives from Canada, France, and Portugal, as well as key members from the Office of the Secretary of Defense. Designed to provide an entry-level baseline knowledge of Arctic security issues, ARSOC featured lectures, breakout discussions, and a culminating capstone exercise, all aimed at equipping participants with a comprehensive understanding of

[Continue on Page 3](#)



TSC Alumni event highlights the geopolitical stakes in the Arctic

The Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies hosted an engaging virtual event on Dec. 3 titled "Russia, China, and the Geopolitics of the Arctic." Approximately 60 TSC alumni attended the discussion, which featured Canadian geopolitical analyst and TSC alumnus Alexander Dalziel, offering a deep dive into the strategic challenges shaping the Arctic region.

"This event underscores the value of our alumni network as a forum for advancing Arctic security conversations," said Doug Hulsey, the Alumni Specialist at TSC, during his introduction. "You represent a growing cohort of Arctic-minded professionals who are comprised of past, present, and future leaders, experts, and practitioners in and around the Arctic."

Moderated by Dr. Matt Rhodes, Professor of International Security at the TSC, and Dr. Kate Friedman, North

American Arctic Policy Advisor to the TSC, the discussion spanned issues such as Arctic cooperation, strategic competition, and the intersection of geopolitics and economics in the region.

Dr. Brian Houghton, Deputy Dean of the School of Arctic and Climate Security Studies, praised the session for highlighting alumni contributions. "Events like this directly support our mission to build strong, sustainable, domestic, and international networks of security leaders like you," he said. "I'm really excited that today's event is being provided by a Ted Stevens Center alum for fellow alumni."

During the discussion, Dalziel emphasized the Arctic's significance in global geopolitics, particularly in the context of Russia and China's activities. "The Arctic has really become kind of a strategic existential

[Continue on Page 2](#)



question [for Russia],” he said. He explained that while the Arctic is a top priority for Russia due to its resource potential and strategic location, it is a secondary but still important priority for China. “The Arctic is not a primary priority for the People’s Republic of China,” he noted, “but not being a top priority doesn’t mean it’s not a priority.”

Dalziel also addressed the transactional yet impactful relationship between Russia and China in the Arctic. We underestimate pretty systematically Russia-China relations, he said, adding that while the two nations often lack mutual trust, their cooperation is rooted in shared strategic goals. It’s not a no-limits partnership, but the relationship is strengthening in practical terms, and that’s a factor for us, he continued.

The conversation explored economic and security challenges, with Dr. Friedman cautioning about the geopolitical maneuvering in the region. “We have to remain concerned about influence operations, joint influence operations, in the Arctic,” she said. “Russia and China are on the same page with regard to painting NATO as an aggressor.”

The session included a live poll asking participants about the greatest threats facing the Arctic. Climate change topped the list, followed by concerns about China, Russia, and expansionism. Hulse encouraged attendees to reflect on the discussion in light of these concerns. “Compare that to the discussion today and see if maybe that shaped your perception of what is indeed the greatest threat to the Arctic,” he said.

The event concluded with actionable takeaways for participants. Dalziel underscored the importance of collaboration among Arctic nations, Indigenous communities, and international allies. “You can’t have security in the Arctic without the people who live there on board,” he said. “This isn’t just about weapons and deterrence; it’s about building nations.”

The TSC Alumni Program continues to provide meaningful opportunities for engagement and collaboration. For more information on future events, visit the center’s GlobalNet alumni page, the True North monthly bulletin, social media, and the Ted Stevens Center website.

ICE-PPR

International Cooperative Engagement Program for Polar Research

Nav/ISR WORKSHOP

Navigation, Intelligence, Surveillance, & Reconnaissance Workshop

The ICE-PPR Nav/ISR Research Workshop will bring together researchers, operators, and planners from the US joint force and partner nations to share current research, identify research priorities, and examine proposed international project arrangements for Arctic situational awareness challenges at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels.

29 APRIL - 1 MAY 2025

Co-hosted by the Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies and the Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory (CRREL) at the CRREL facilities in Hanover, New Hampshire

Please direct questions to matthew.schell.6@us.af.mil or john.p.nugent15.mil@us.navy.mil.

Join ICE-PPR this spring for the Nav/ISR Workshop

Get ready for the International Cooperative Engagement Program for Polar Research (ICE-PPR) Navigation, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Workshop—an exciting opportunity to collaborate with experts from the U.S. and partner nations to address Arctic security challenges! Taking place from April 29 to May 1, 2025, in Hanover, New Hampshire, this event is co-hosted by the Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies and the Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory (CRREL) at the CRREL facilities. Join us as we work together to share knowledge, foster innovation, and explore the unique opportunities and challenges in Arctic research. Please direct questions to matthew.schell.6@us.af.mil or john.p.nugent15.mil@us.navy.mil.





Continued from TSC achieves milestone ARSOC story on Page 1

historical, environmental, geopolitical, and strategic dynamics in the Arctic region.

The course opened with remarks from Randy “Church” Kee, Director of the TSC, setting the stage for an engaging week of learning and dialogue. Matthew Bell, Dean of the School of Arctic and Climate Security Studies, provided an introductory presentation outlining the objectives of ARSOC: preparing Department of Defense personnel for Arctic assignments, fostering collaboration among Arctic security practitioners, and proposing cooperative solutions to regional security challenges. “Our intention is to build intellectual curiosity and critical thinking for the Arctic Circumpolar region,” Bell explained.

Throughout the week, participants explored the intricacies of Arctic security. The first two days focused on foundational topics such as defining the Arctic region, understanding its physical environment, and examining the impacts of climate change. Subsequent sessions addressed natural resources, maritime shipping,

and the legal frameworks governing the Arctic. The agenda also highlighted the contributions of Indigenous Peoples and explored the roles of allied and partner nations, with a panel discussion on NATO enlargement and its implications for Arctic stability drawing particular interest.

Integrated deterrence emerged as a key theme, with in-depth discussions on U.S., Russian, and Chinese strategies in the Arctic. Participants were encouraged to engage critically and collaboratively during breakout sessions and panel discussions, which provided opportunities to analyze security dynamics from multiple perspectives. By midweek, the course shifted to address the operational challenges of managing risk and complexity in multi-domain Arctic operations.

As the course concluded, Carisa Nietzsche, Arctic Policy Advisor for the Office of Arctic Global Resilience, delivered closing remarks. Nietzsche’s reflections offered a comprehensive overview of the Department of Defense’s Arctic strategy and the broader opportunities and challenges facing the region. Bell praised her contributions, saying, “Carisa provided an exceptional recap of the challenges we’re working to address and the opportunities we have moving forward. Her insights were intellectually stimulating and valuable for all participants.”

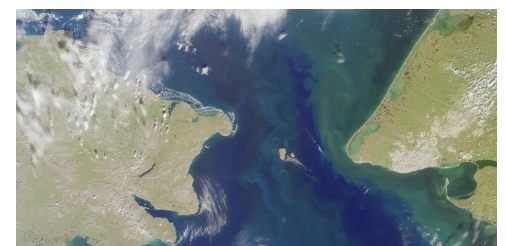
On the final day, participants showcased their newfound knowledge during the capstone

exercise, where they presented actionable solutions to Arctic security dilemmas. Bell commended the group’s enthusiasm and dedication: “Your passion, candor, and curiosity were evident throughout the week. The presentations were some of the best we’ve seen, bringing together geophysical and geostrategic elements with remarkable clarity and depth.”

The successful delivery of ARSOC was made possible by the hard work of the TSC’s IT and Multimedia teams, whose efforts ensured a seamless virtual experience. “This was an incredible milestone for us,” Bell said. “The enhanced technology infrastructure allowed us to connect participants from across the globe and set a new standard for our courses.”

Looking ahead, the TSC plans to build on this momentum with upcoming sessions of ARSOC scheduled for Feb. 10-14, April 21-25, and Oct. 27-31. As ARSOC continues to grow, the program remains dedicated to fostering collaboration among security practitioners and promoting peaceful, cooperative solutions in the Arctic.

For more information about ARSOC or to register for future sessions, visit www.tedstevensarcticcenter.org.





First U.S. Army Soldier joins TSC through Career Skills Program

When Lt. Col. Wesley Moerbe looked toward retirement after 20 years of service in the U.S. Army, he found the perfect opportunity to transition to civilian life at the Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies. On Dec. 4, Moerbe became the first U.S. Army Soldier to join the TSC through the Army's Career Skills Program (CSP).

The CSP allows Army service members to gain civilian work experience and training as they transition out of the military. For Moerbe, the TSC offered a unique blend of research, education, and Arctic expertise that aligned with his professional background and his family's desire to remain in Alaska after his retirement this spring.

"The Ted Stevens Center is the only organization that aligns with what I want to do long-term," Moerbe said. "It's the confluence of research and education, both of which relate to my professional background, and I get to do that in Alaska, which is amazing."

Moerbe's passion for scholarship and teaching made the TSC an ideal fit.

With prior experience teaching at West Point's history department and commanding the 2nd Battalion under the 196th Infantry Brigade at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, he relishes opportunities to combine research, writing, and working with eager learners.

"I've had chances to do research and writing throughout my career, and I find that really satisfying," Moerbe said. "Combine that with my love for Alaska and the Arctic, and it just made sense."

Expanding opportunities through SkillBridge and CSP

While Moerbe joined the TSC through the Army's CSP, the center recently secured a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department of Defense's SkillBridge program, valid through October 2027. This agreement will soon enable service members from all branches to apply for internships and training opportunities at the TSC via the SkillBridge website.

Sabrina Collins, the TSC's Human Resources Specialist, emphasized the value these programs offer transitioning service members.

"Both SkillBridge and CSP provide military members with critical knowledge and skills for transitioning from active duty to the civilian workforce," Collins said. "While we can't guarantee employment at the end of the program, these opportunities allow participants to gain invaluable experience and get

their foot in the door."

CSP is specific to the Army and tailored to Soldiers' needs, while SkillBridge is a Department of Defense-wide initiative applicable to all branches. Both programs bridge the gap between military and civilian careers.

Collins noted that the TSC is developing formal training plans for SkillBridge, which will be available on the program's website by early 2025.

Preparing for the next chapter

Moerbe will work in the TSC's Research and Analysis Division, where his extensive Arctic operational experience will enhance ongoing discussions and research on Arctic security. His background as both a military leader and a scholar uniquely positions him to contribute to policy and operational strategies.

"Developing deep expertise on Arctic security policymaking will be rewarding," Moerbe said. "I'm eager to bring my experiences to bear on research and policy discussions."

Moerbe's contributions will strengthen the TSC's mission to advance Arctic security knowledge while addressing emerging challenges in the region. His expertise bridges operational experience with academic analysis, enriching the center's efforts.

"We chose to retire here because it's Alaska," Moerbe said. "There's nowhere else like it, and I'm proud to contribute to this incredible community and region through my work at the Ted Stevens Center."



Ted Stevens Center launches multimedia studio to advance Arctic security dialogue

After 18 months of development, the Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies has unveiled its state-of-the-art multimedia studio, designed to amplify its mission through virtual courses, podcasts, and dynamic media content. The studio represents a significant leap in fostering Arctic security dialogue and strengthening ties among Arctic communities, allies and partners.

“The TSC studio serves as a multimedia hub to produce courses, interviews, podcasts, and content critical to Arctic security,” said Jason Roe, Multimedia Specialist for the center. “We aim to promote Arctic literacy and improve coordination across stakeholders.”

Over the past year and a half, the multimedia team tackled challenges such as defining technical requirements and installing professional yet portable equipment. The studio’s capabilities will support

the School of Arctic and Climate Security Studies, strategic engagement initiatives, and research efforts.

The team rigorously tested the studio’s setup through courses and episodes of Arctic Connections, a podcast and webinar series. With the studio now fully operational, Arctic Connections will feature interviews with external partners and highlight key Arctic research.

“In 2025, we’ll provide content that emphasizes the Pan-Arctic through in-person and hybrid discussions,” Roe said. “This includes interviews with scientists, community leaders, Indigenous representatives, and operators, as well as new virtual programming to connect allies and partners.”

The studio is a major investment in TSC’s mission to enhance Arctic professionalism, foster security

cooperation, and boost Arctic literacy. It will help bridge geographic and logistical gaps, advancing dialogue on the unique challenges faced in the region.

“This studio allows us to spotlight Arctic issues, encourage robust conversations, and grow our digital programming,” Roe added. “We look forward to expanding its capabilities to better serve Arctic stakeholders and promote understanding in this vital region.”

With this new platform, the Ted Stevens Center is poised to deepen engagement, connect remote communities, and advance Arctic security in a rapidly changing environment.

Stay connected with the Ted Stevens Center through the website, True North, or on social media for the latest broadcasts and updates from the new TSC studio.



HDI, CASP, and TSC launch ARCTIC EDGE research workshops

The Homeland Defense Institute (HDI), the Center for Arctic Study & Policy (CASP), and the Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies have partnered to execute a series of ARCTIC EDGE research workshops: “Deepening Understanding, Expanding Collaborations.” The three organizations seek to deepen understanding of the Arctic operating environment and expand collaboration with allies and partners across academia, think tanks and research institutes. Exercise ARCTIC EDGE is the Department of Defense's premier annual Arctic Field Training Exercise, focused on enhancing joint force capabilities, interoperability, and mission effectiveness in executing full-spectrum Homeland Defense operations across all domains in the extreme Arctic environment.

On Dec. 12–13, 2024, the inaugural workshop of the series was held in Colorado Springs, Colorado. This foundational event provided an in-depth overview of U.S. and Canadian defense policies, Arctic challenges and priorities, and the objectives of the ARCTIC EDGE exercise. More than 50 participants, representing 25 multi-national research organizations shared current gaps and seams in the security environment and deliberated solutions to DOD Arctic research priorities. Incorporating the insights and resources of these organizations allows the DOD to conduct more robust, forward-looking, and strategically relevant exercises and wargames.

The second workshop will center on Arctic wargame scenarios and lessons learned, examining identified gaps and seams to contribute to the development of effective Arctic operations and strategies. The final workshop will culminate in a seminar and research presentations during the execution of Exercise ARCTIC EDGE in Anchorage, Alaska, in 2025.



UPCOMING COURSES

Arctic Regional Security Orientation Course (ARSOC)

- Virtual, February 10-14, 2025
- Virtual, April 21-25, 2025

Arctic Multi-Domain Law Course (AMLC)

- Virtual, March 4-6, 2025

SCAN
TO
REGISTER
FOR
THESE
COURSES





NEW RESEARCH AVAILABLE

New research is now available on the Ted Stevens Center website! This month, the research team has released a new special report: "Identifying Community-Level Indicators of Arctic Maritime Health Security: Results from a Pilot-Test Workshop." Discover how these findings pave the way for more resilient and inclusive health security tools. Scan the QR code to explore this cutting-edge research today!

Identifying Community-Level Indicators of Arctic Maritime Health Security: Results from a Pilot-Test Workshop

Health is one of the seven areas identified by the UN Development Program (UNDP) as a critical pillar of human security. The human security mindset of health is focused on addressing the root causes of insecurities and strengthening local capacities. Conventional approaches to assessing health security, however, remain dominated by national-level frameworks focused on identifying vulnerabilities of the State as a whole, and not on strengthening the communities that form those systems. This scale is particularly problematic in the Arctic, where a substantial portion of the region's population is characterized by small, remote communities. The dynamics of health security differ greatly in these communities when compared to health security at the national scale, the nuances of which cannot be captured by conventional national-level health security frameworks. At the same time, maritime traffic is increasing in the Arctic, compounding the health security of the region. More community-level, human-security-minded tools are needed to provide situational awareness, identify existing gaps, and provide baselines for enhancing resilience and capabilities in the Arctic region. With that in mind, the Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies (TSC) conducted a pilot test workshop to assess the use of human-centered design (HCD) methodologies for identifying community-level indicators of Arctic maritime health security. The workshop identified 55 indicators categorized into 12 themes. Our thematic analysis revealed that existing health security tools are focused largely on indicators relevant to the human medical and public health fields, while the indicators identified in the pilot-test workshop catered more towards a One Health mindset. These findings revealed that HCD methodologies offer a promising, people centered approach towards the development of new tools to assess Arctic maritime health security.



SCAN TO READ THE LATEST SPECIAL REPORT



TSC staff gain insights at Arctic SAR Personnel Recovery Workshop

Staff members from the Ted Stevens Center attended the Arctic Search and Rescue Personnel Recovery Workshop held Dec. 10-11 at Peterson Space Force Base, Colorado. Organized by U.S. Northern Command's J33 Joint Personnel Recovery Center, the workshop brought together experts to discuss Arctic survival training and equipment. The primary goal of the workshop was to educate and share expertise and experience on Arctic survival training and equipment to better inform the process of writing accurate personnel and recovery training and equipment requirements for units deploying to the Arctic environment within the USNORTHCOM area of responsibility.

By participating in the workshop, Ted Stevens Center researchers gained valuable first-hand knowledge about the unique operating challenges military members face in the Arctic region. The sessions offered insights into the complexities of Arctic survival, from extreme weather to equipment limitations, enabling researchers to better understand and address these issues. This experience will inform ongoing studies at the center, supporting efforts to develop innovative strategies and solutions for Arctic operations while strengthening the collaboration between military and academic institutions focused on Arctic security.

How 11 Soldiers are implementing the Department of Defense’s New Arctic Strategy in a remote Alaskan village

By U.S. Army Capt. Sarah Plantamura

In August, 11 Soldiers from the 11th Airborne Division traveled to the remote Village of Ouzinkie, located on Spruce Island in the Kodiak Archipelago in southern Alaska. The village has around 110 residents of mostly Russian Aleut ancestry, and it is only accessible by air or water. Due to the remoteness of the village, there has historically been no access to fiberoptic internet. This need led to a partnership between the Spruce Island Development Corporation “SIDCO” and the small team of Soldiers through Innovative Readiness Training (IRT). SIDCO is a 501(c)(3) non-profit made up of members of the Tribe of Ouzinkie, the Ouzinkie Native Corporation, and the City of Ouzinkie. The Corporation’s stated mission is to “[work] to develop and implement community-based strategies to promote economic opportunity, develop community infrastructure, and preserve [their] Alutiiq heritage.” IRT is a Department of Defense program that authorizes military training opportunities that benefit American communities. Through IRT, SIDCO requested construction of a gravel pad to serve as the foundation for a future internet café to connect to the village’s new fiberoptic line, which was installed over the summer. As part of this request, SIDCO provided lodging, equipment, and materials for the project, while the Soldiers provided skilled labor and project management. This project serves as a possible template for active duty military units across Alaska to implement the DOD’s Arctic Strategy by engaging with Alaska Native Tribes, communities, and corporations while simultaneously providing a benefit to communities while gaining valuable Arctic proficiency.



The DOD released its 2024 Arctic Strategy in June of this year, setting out three lines of effort to improve its ability to monitor and respond to new challenges in the Arctic Region: 1) enhance the Joint Force’s Arctic capabilities, 2) engage with our Allies and partners, and 3) exercise presence in the Arctic by training both independently and alongside Allies and partners. The efforts of the 70th BEB, 1/11th Airborne Division Soldiers aligned directly with this second line of effort, where the DOD calls on the military to “engage with...Alaska Native Tribes and communities ...in order to strengthen integrated deterrence and increase our shared security.” The Arctic Strategy also calls on the military to “consult and coordinate with Alaska Native Tribes, communities, and Alaska Native Corporations. Further, the DOD will work to incorporate Indigenous Knowledge about the Arctic to inform and improve our ability to effectively operate in the region and to increase our understanding about potential DOD impacts on subsistence culture and ways of life.” Participating in IRT projects in Alaska’s remote Arctic environment is a way for military units to train in the Arctic and build connections with, and learn from, Native communities across the state of Alaska.



**SCAN
TO READ
THE REST
OF THE
STORY**

Arctic Warrior Insights: Share your expertise on Arctic security

The Ted Stevens Center invites Arctic operators and security professionals to contribute to Arctic Warrior Insights, a new op-ed series. This platform highlights the voices of those shaping the future of Arctic security through operational experience and strategic insights.

Share your perspectives on the challenges, opportunities, and innovations in the Arctic. Submit your ideas to TSC.Arctic.PublicAffairs@groups.af.mil and join the conversation driving Arctic resilience and collaboration.

Director's Monthly Note



Dear and Distinguished Colleagues,

As we welcome 2025, the Arctic remains a region of increasing strategic importance. Rapid environmental change, emerging security dynamics, and growing international interest make our mission more vital than ever.

At the Ted Stevens Center, we remain committed to addressing these pressing issues through innovative research, executive education, and strategic engagement. In the year ahead, we will strengthen partnerships with academic institutions, Indigenous communities, the interagency, and our Arctic Allies to deepen our understanding of Arctic security dynamics. Our team is already working on a number of exciting initiatives to provide actionable insights and strategies that enhance regional security and stability.

Thank you for your continued support and dedication to Arctic security. Whether through participation in our courses, sharing your expertise, or collaborating on research, our network plays a vital role in advancing our shared mission. We look forward to working with you throughout the coming year.

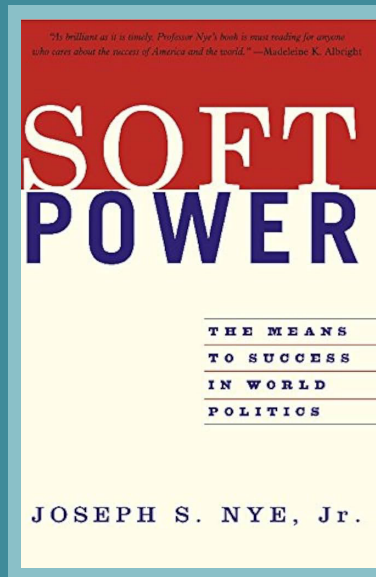
Very Respectfully,
Maj. Gen. (ret.) Randy "Church" Kee
Director, Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies

DIRECTOR'S MONTHLY READING RECOMMENDATION

Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics

Joseph Nye coined the term "soft power" in the late 1980s. It is now used frequently - and often incorrectly - by political leaders, editorial writers, and academics around the world. So, what is soft power? Soft power lies in the ability to attract and persuade. Whereas hard power - the ability to coerce - grows out of a country's military or economic might, soft power arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies.

Hard power remains crucial in a world of states trying to guard their independence and of non-state groups willing to turn to violence. It forms the core of the Bush administration's new national security strategy. But according to Joseph Nye, the neo-conservatives who advise the president are making a major miscalculation: They focus too heavily on using America's military power to force other nations to do our will, and they pay too little heed to our soft power. It is soft power that will help prevent terrorists from recruiting supporters from among the moderate majority. And it is soft power that will help us deal with critical global issues that require multilateral cooperation among states. That is why it is so essential that America better understands and applies our soft power. This is our guide.



Follow us online

