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Department of Defense
OFFICE OF PREPUBLICATION AND SECURITY
REVIEW



*Protecting and Defending U.S. Arctic Maritime Sovereignty
Interests through Deterrence*



Maritime Risk Symposium

June 2025

Final Report





Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies
Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson Alaska
U.S. Department of Defense



7 July 2025

Memorandum for Maritime Risk Symposium 2025 (MRS25) Planning Team

From: Director

Subject: TSC Director's Opening Remarks for MRS25 Report

The following are the TSC Director's opening remarks for the MRS25 Conference Report.

“Dear and Distinguished Colleagues,

Greetings from the Ted Stevens Center (TSC) for Arctic Security Studies, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. The TSC was deeply honored to support, plan, and host the Maritime Risk Symposium 2025 (MRS 25), the 16th consecutive convening of the Maritime Risk Symposium and the first which was principally focused on the safety and security aspects of the pan-Arctic maritime region. From the Stevens Center vantage, MRS 25 provided a remarkable set of exchanges from across the community of maritime practitioners connected with the Arctic region. The event enhanced understanding of the unique operational challenges faced by U.S. and Arctic Allied Coast Guard teams as they navigate both the demands of a harsh geophysical environment and the complexities of geostrategic risk.

Since MRS 25 was planned to “deep dive” into Arctic maritime matters, the TSC conducted a one-day virtual “Arctic security primer” to familiarize MRS 25 participants with the associated fundamentals.

The theme of MRS 25 was “Protecting and Defending U.S. Arctic Maritime Sovereignty Interests through Deterrence,” which sharply focused on understanding what plans, programs, and activities are needed to deter, dissuade, and defend against the range of threats and threat actors encroaching on American sovereign interests across the Beaufort, Chukchi, Bering, and Northern Pacific regions. MRS 25 provided a thorough examination of effective Arctic waterways management, thereby enabling maritime commerce despite escalating regional tensions from America's adversaries. Further, MRS 25 gathered experts from across the U.S. maritime practitioner community to assess risks to commercial activities from threat actors, particularly oriented to gray zone actions, hybrid war, and cyber. Finally, MRS 25 conducted an in-depth examination of illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing, and the devastating negative effects of malign threats to this critical and renewable resource.

Maritime Risk Symposium 2025 was not what we at the Stevens Center had originally envisioned for this conference, which needed to transition from a multi-day, in-person event to a one-day hybrid activity (with a larger virtual participant presence) due to U.S. government travel austerity measures. Despite the need for this significant adjustment, the planning and execution team expertly accommodated this change and provided an impactful and meaningful program.

I would like to publicly thank CAPT Grant Thomas, USCG, the TSC U.S. Coast Guard Chair and Project Lead of the TSC Fellows and Intern program, for his leadership in the planning and execution of MRS 25, well done in every way.



I hope each of you will gain something from reviewing the enclosed report from MRS25.”

Please email at randy.kee.1@us.af.mil for questions or clarification.

Very respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Randy A. Kee".

RANDY A. KEE, Maj Gen, USAF (Ret)
Director



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Pictures from MRS25 and a public affairs summary of the event are available on the Defense Visual Information Distribution Service (DVIDS): <https://www.dvidshub.net/news/499351/mrs-2025-strengthens-maritime-risk-dialogue-and-deterrence-posture-arctic>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & KEY TAKEAWAYS:

The 16th annual Maritime Risk Symposium (MRS) convened experts from across the military, government, industry, academia, and Indigenous leaders to confront the evolving realities of Arctic maritime security. Participants examined the region's shifting geopolitical landscape, expanding operational complexity, and the urgent need for coordinated action. From this dialogue, four key themes emerged:

- Protecting U.S. Sovereign Interests in the Arctic - Peace Through Strength and Arctic Deterrence
- Securing Arctic Waterways in the Face of Evolving Security Challenges
- The Growing Strategic Importance of the Arctic
- Emerging Arctic Maritime Challenges, Risks, and Opportunities

each reflecting the pressing priorities and forward-looking strategies necessary to safeguard U.S. interests in the Arctic domain as further detailed below.

1. Protecting U.S. Sovereign Interests in the Arctic - Peace Through Strength and Deterrence:

Discussing Necessary Actions to Protect U.S. Sovereign Interests in the Arctic Region and Associated Maritime Risks

Overview: MRS25 emphasized that U.S. sovereign interests in the Arctic are increasingly under pressure from rising geopolitical tensions, hybrid threats, and competition for the vast natural resources within the Arctic region. To protect U.S. sovereign interests in the Arctic, the U.S. must take assertive, forward-looking actions that establish *a persistent deterrent presence*, build resilience across infrastructure and governance systems, and anticipate emerging maritime risks tied to geopolitical competition, increasing maritime activity in the Arctic, and the evolving nature of asymmetric threats. The Arctic plays a critical role in missile defense and the protection of the American homeland. Enabling all military assets in the region to function as Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Cyber, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (C5ISR) platforms—and to integrate into the Department of Defense's Sensor-to-Shooter network—is essential for achieving strategic, integrated deterrence.

Strategic Analysis: Securing U.S. sovereignty in the Arctic cannot be achieved through symbolic gestures. It requires tangible, sustained presence through defense assets, strategic partnerships, and infrastructure development. Allocating personnel, funding, and authorities to perform Arctic-focused DoD operations, activities and investments (OAI) is critical to building capability and capacity in this extremely harsh region of the world that requires very specialized skills, capabilities, and knowledge to operate effectively. As Arctic sea lanes grow more accessible, Russia and China are expanding their military, scientific, and commercial footprints in the region. The increased Russian and Chinese activity in the Arctic region were highlighted in Senator Sullivan's opening remarks and associated graphics (included in pages 12-13 of this report). These activities have the potential to challenge freedom of navigation, complicate governance in disputed zones, and maritime incidents in the Arctic region.

Participants stressed the importance of investing in dual-use infrastructure – such as Arctic deepwater ports, airstrips, and resilient undersea communication networks – as both economic enablers and instruments of sovereignty. Icebreaking capability remains a critical gap; without it, the U.S. cannot project power or enforce law in high-latitude maritime zones.

At the same time, legal gray areas, Illegal Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, cyber sabotage, and undersea cable interference pose asymmetric risks that threaten U.S. control over its Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Panelists emphasized the need for Intermediate Force Capabilities (IFC) and hybrid deterrents to address adversary activities below the threshold of armed conflict. Stronger legal mechanisms, domain awareness tools, and intelligence-sharing protocols are also required to manage risk without escalating tensions.

Crucially, protection of sovereign interests must go hand-in-hand with inclusion of indigenous communities, who possess unique domain knowledge and hold critical cultural and legal stakes in Arctic governance.

Key Takeaways:

- Persistent presence and multi-use infrastructure are necessary to uphold U.S. sovereignty and respond to emerging threats.
- Sovereignty enforcement should include indigenous leadership and legal frameworks sensitive to local governance and cultural contexts.
- Modernizing U.S. maritime law is essential to protect sub-sea infrastructure and support Arctic enforcement operations.
- Whole-of-government and allied coordination are vital to securing U.S. assets and managing escalating Arctic competition.
- Integrated force capabilities, such as IFC tools, offer non-lethal deterrents and improve operational flexibility in contested environments.
- The Arctic is a strategic domain requiring investment in surveillance, forward-deployed assets, and year-round operational capacity.
- Infrastructure gaps, limited ISR coverage, and the rise of hybrid threats make the Arctic a focal point for global competition.

2. Securing Arctic Waterways in the Face of Evolving Security Challenges: *Assessing Operations, Activities, and Investments Needed to “Secure Arctic Waterways to Enable American Prosperity in the Face of Evolving Arctic Security Challenges and Associated Risks,” per the April 9, 2025, Executive Order*

Overview: The symposium emphasized that securing Arctic waterways is foundational to ensuring American prosperity, strategic sovereignty, and maritime dominance. Considering the April 2025 *Restoring America’s Maritime Dominance* Executive Order, participants assessed a broad array of required operations, activities, and investments to address increasingly complex Arctic security risks. These risks ranged from hybrid warfare and geopolitical tensions to safety, security, and regulatory issues, and the key Indigenous, international, interagency, and industry stakeholders.

Strategic Analysis: Securing Arctic waterways demands a proactive, multi-dimensional approach that includes persistent presence, interagency coordination, infrastructure modernization, and expanded domain awareness. Decreased sea ice has accelerated accessibility to Arctic waters, creating opportunities for commerce but also exposing risks to foreign surveillance, gray zone hybrid warfare tactics, and illicit activities. The U.S. must counter these emerging risks through deterrence-oriented operations that homeland defense/security, law enforcement, and international collaboration. Panelists highlighted the importance of investment in dual-use infrastructure such as deepwater ports, forward-operating airstrips, and surveillance systems to support both security and economic goals. Simultaneously, leveraging Indigenous Knowledge, industry expertise, and public-private partnerships was deemed essential for operational legitimacy and resilience.

Key tools identified by the event's participants include the acquisition of Arctic-ready icebreakers, deployment of autonomous surveillance technologies, and bolstered cybersecurity measures for critical maritime infrastructure. IFC – such as non-lethal energy and acoustic deterrents – were also flagged as effective instruments for conflict avoidance below the threshold of armed warfare.

Multilateral exercises and enhanced partnerships with Arctic NATO allies, especially Canada and European partners with operational Arctic assets, are necessary force multipliers. These alliances are crucial for overcoming U.S. capability gaps and ensuring interoperability across domains.

Key Takeaways:

- IFC provide scalable, non-lethal options to deter adversaries and protect sovereignty without escalation.
- Bolster Arctic cybersecurity to address vulnerabilities in critical maritime infrastructure and communications systems.
- Launch interagency tabletop exercises and live drills to prepare for real-world Arctic contingencies, such as mass rescue operations.
- Strengthen multilateral institutions like the Arctic Council and Arctic Coast Guard Forum to bolster governance and sustainable, responsible development.
- Develop Arctic infrastructure hubs that support defense, scientific research, community needs, and environmental monitoring.

3. The Growing Strategic Importance of the Arctic: *Evaluating the Geostrategic Importance of the Arctic and Implications for U.S. National Defense and Security*

Overview: The event underscored the Arctic's transformation into a high-stakes geostrategic arena. Driven by the effects of decreased sea ice, geo-politics, and expanded maritime accessibility, and competition for the world's limited natural resources, the Arctic Region now represents both a significant opportunity and a complex security challenge for the United States. As receding sea ice opens access to shipping lanes, energy reserves, and critical minerals, the Arctic is increasingly contested by global powers – most notably Russia and China – who are expanding their operational presence and testing the boundaries of international law and maritime sovereignty.

Strategic Analysis: The symposium emphasized that Arctic sovereignty cannot be maintained through rhetoric alone. Instead, a sustained U.S. presence – enabled by investment in infrastructure, icebreaking capabilities, and maritime domain awareness – is essential. Participants identified persistent threats from hybrid and gray zone warfare, including cyber intrusions, undersea cable sabotage, IUU fishing, and the strategic use of legal ambiguity to avoid conflict attribution.

Effective response strategies must be multifaceted. First, defense posture must be bolstered through enhanced presence, to include increased icebreaker capacity, forward-operating bases, and interoperable maritime technologies. Second, U.S. strategy must leverage partnerships with NATO Arctic allies, particularly those with existing Arctic-capable fleets and domain awareness infrastructure. Third, the integration of Indigenous Knowledge and place-based resilience into national planning processes is critical to ensuring operational success.

Key Takeaways:

- Maritime sovereignty must be backed by credible presence and deterrence measures, including investment in icebreakers and patrol assets.

- Multilateralism and inclusion of non-traditional actors are key to sustaining security and economic opportunity in the Arctic.
- Acquiring Arctic-capable icebreakers and security cutters is essential to ensure year-round U.S. presence and sovereignty enforcement in higher latitudes.
- Deploy satellite, sensor, and unmanned technologies to expand maritime domain awareness across remote Arctic areas.

4. Emerging Arctic Maritime Challenges, Risks, and Opportunities: *Evaluating Emerging Arctic Maritime Issues, Risks, and Opportunities Related to Protecting and Defending U.S. Arctic Maritime Sovereignty Interests*

Overview: The Arctic maritime environment is undergoing a fundamental transformation. As ice retreats and access expands, new maritime challenges and opportunities have emerged that directly impact U.S. sovereignty, economic security, and strategic posture in the region. Protecting U.S. Arctic maritime sovereignty requires a understanding of the evolving risk landscape – marked by geopolitical tensions, a changing Arctic operational environment, and technological change – and a coordinated strategy to harness opportunity while managing uncertainty.

Strategic Analysis: Emerging challenges in the Arctic are multifaceted. The region is increasingly exploited by adversaries employing gray zone tactics, including cyber-attacks, IUU fishing, undersea cable interference, and illegal surveillance. These activities blur the line between peacetime operations and conflict, posing complex policy, legal, and operational challenges.

Simultaneously, the U.S. faces infrastructure and readiness deficits – including a shortage of icebreakers, limited domain awareness tools, and outdated regulatory frameworks – which undermine the ability to respond to crises or enforce maritime law. The fragility of undersea cables and pipelines, combined with a lack of redundancy, has created critical vulnerabilities that adversaries have already begun exploiting.

The Arctic also presents unique opportunities. It offers new trade routes, critical mineral resources, and economic potential for coastal communities. There is also a strong case for strategic cooperation – with indigenous stakeholders, Arctic allies, and private industry – to co-develop solutions that are resilient, culturally grounded, and operationally effective.

Participants emphasized that a modern Arctic strategy must prioritize resilience, interoperability, and proactive deterrence—particularly through investment in technology, alliances, and regulatory reform.

Key Takeaways:

- Cyber threats are accelerating in sophistication; Arctic maritime systems must prioritize robust public-private cybersecurity defenses.
- Gray zone activities are on the rise in the High North; international collaboration, especially with NATO allies, is critical to counter hybrid threats and enhance Arctic resilience.
- To deter hybrid warfare, the U.S. must partner with allies to improve infrastructure, domain awareness, and communication systems.
- Understanding adversary perspectives on hybrid warfare is essential to crafting effective countermeasures that avoid escalation.
- Subsea cables, pipelines, and oil rigs are key vulnerabilities. A visible presence is necessary to deter sabotage and ensure maritime domain awareness.

- The lack of legal mechanisms to prevent unauthorized cable laying in EEZs highlights the need to modernize the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).
- Search and Rescue (SAR) and oil spill response must be synchronized with efforts to combat IUU fishing, given the intertwined nature of Arctic maritime threats.
- Local fishermen and Arctic communities offer valuable intelligence; community-based monitoring should be integrated into Arctic security strategies.
- Defense-science partnerships can anticipate future fisheries conflicts by combining ecological, migration, and conflict data.
- Improving fisheries tracking and enforcement is essential to combating IUU activity and securing food security in the Arctic.

CONCLUSION: The four MRS 2025 panels addressed sovereignty through maritime deterrence, balancing national security, economic viability and sustainability, the growing gray zone, hybrid warfare and cyber threats to the Arctic, and IUU fishing. Panels and discussions emphasized that, to ensure maritime deterrence effectively protects U.S. sovereignty, presence is key. In addition, maritime deterrence must be integrated with diplomacy, local engagement, infrastructure development, stable funding, and actionable implementation plans. Symposium participants noted that national security itself is bolstered by economic strength and sustainable environmental conditions that promote continued resource availability. Thus, military presence must accompany infrastructure development and resilience, multilateral partnerships and local community involvement that must incorporate the vast Indigenous knowledge in the Arctic region.

An integrated, consistent, and responsive approach should look globally and locally, and involve private sector and local Indigenous expertise. Gray zone, hybrid warfare, and cyber threats are increasingly threatening U.S. interests and security in the Arctic. Due to the harsh environmental conditions, tyranny of distance, and lack of infrastructure and redundancy, the Arctic is unlike many other operational environments. Consequently, detecting, deterring, and countering threats within this region of the world, and mitigating risks, is more complex and challenging. Addressing the hybrid or “gray zone” and threats within the electromagnetic spectrum – cyber, jamming, spoofing, etc. – requires partnership with allies, careful stewardship of resources, fortifying security, enhancing rapid response, and appropriate deployment of tools such as IFC.

IUU fishing poses a threat beyond just security and defense. Holistic efforts to combat it require enhanced domain awareness and protection of EEZ sovereignty rights through presence and enforcement. IUU fishing involves wide ranging stakeholders and combatting it requires a multifaceted and multilateral response. With China in the crosshairs as the top IUU threat in the Arctic and globally, efforts to combat IUU are not just bolstering U.S. economic interests and resource sustainability but also constitute an essential and cost-effective tool of the U.S. defense strategy.

MRS25 Final Report Compiled By:

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MRS 2025 FINAL REPORT: ADDITIONAL PANEL AND KEYNOTE SPEAKER POST-EVENT MATERIALS



MRS 2025 Objectives:

- 1) Assess what operations, activities, and investments are needed to, “Secure Arctic waterways to enable American prosperity in the face of evolving Arctic Security challenges and associated risks,” as set forth in the *Restoring America’s Maritime Dominance* Executive Order issued on April 9, 2025.
- 2) Evaluate the growing geostrategic importance of the Arctic and the implications for U.S. National Defense and Security.
- 3) Discuss what actions are necessary to protect U.S. sovereign interests in the Arctic Region and what maritime risk(s) are associated with these changes.
- 4) Evaluate emerging Arctic maritime issues, risks, and opportunities related to protecting and defending U.S. Arctic maritime sovereignty interests and how they might be addressed.

Event 5Ws:

WHO: Maritime industry partners, researchers, academics, international Arctic allies, and other interested federal, state, local, and tribal entities.

WHAT: To foster dialogue and develop recommendations to address the strategic, economic, and sovereignty complexities of the Arctic Region.

WHEN: Tuesday, May 13, 2025, from 8 AM to 4 PM Alaska Daylight Time AKDT, 12-8 PM Eastern Daylight Time (EDT).

WHERE: Virtually via Zoom events, or in-person in Anchorage, Alaska on Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER) at the Arctic Warrior Events Center (AWEC).

WHY: To assess the multitude of Indigenous, International, Interagency, Industry, Investment, Infrastructure, Sovereignty, Security, and Scientific considerations; as well as the challenges, opportunities, and equities involved with protecting and defending U.S. Arctic maritime sovereignty interests.

Event Agenda:

0800-0830: Keynote opening remarks, Mr. Sean Plankey, Senior Advisor to the Secretary for the U.S. Coast Guard, and pre-recorded remarks from U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan:

<https://www.sullivan.senate.gov/about/bio>

0830-0930: **PANEL 1 → *Protecting U.S. Arctic Sovereignty Through Maritime Deterrence***

0945-1045: **PANEL 2 → *Arctic Maritime Transportation: Balancing National Security, Economic Viability and Environmental Sustainability***

1045-1130: Breakout Sessions with Question & Answer (in-person and virtual)

1230-1300: Afternoon Speaker: VADM Fred Midgette, USCG (Ret.):

<https://chertoffgroup.com/vice-admiral-fred-m-midgette-uscg-ret/>

1300-1400: **PANEL 3 → *Addressing U.S. Arctic Region Maritime Transportation System Gray Zone, Hybrid Warfare, & Cyber Threats***

1415-1515: **PANEL 4 → *Arctic Sovereignty and IUU Fishing: What's the Catch?***

1515-1600: Breakout Sessions (in-person and virtual)



Opening Keynote: Mr. Sean Plankey, Senior Advisor to the Secretary for the U.S. Coast Guard

Key Takeaway: Mr. Plankey's remarks reflect a shift toward sustained, well-funded U.S. leadership in Arctic maritime security, grounded in modernization, manpower, and interagency coordination.

1. Aggressive Coast Guard Modernization Is Underway
 - A major initiative, *Force Design 2028*, is guiding structural and strategic reform.
 - Focus areas include organization, acquisitions, technology, and personnel.
 - The Coast Guard is being repositioned as a more agile, better-resourced force capable of meeting 21st-century demands—especially in the Arctic.
2. Dramatic Expansion of Arctic Capabilities
 - The administration is backing the acquisition of:
 - 3 heavy Polar Security Cutters
 - 3 Arctic Security Cutters
 - 18 smaller icebreakers
 - This marks a significant leap from the Coast Guard's current limited icebreaking capacity (~2.5 operational polar icebreakers).
 - The new assets aim to ensure year-round access and presence in the Arctic.
3. Institutional and Legislative Reform
 - A new *Secretary of the Coast Guard* position is proposed to ensure political advocacy and parity with other armed services.
 - Legislation has been introduced to secure approximately \$20–25 billion in additional funding to correct historic underinvestment.
 - Executive Orders and budget proposals show strong interagency and White House support for these initiatives.
4. Personnel Crisis and Workforce Expansion
 - The Coast Guard is facing a 10% workforce shortfall, undermining operations.
 - Plans are in motion to dramatically expand recruitment and training—pushing 5,000 new members through basic training in 2025 alone.
 - Over 15,000 new personnel are projected to join over the next four years.
5. Modernizing Technology to Match Mission Needs
 - Efforts are underway to shift from outdated tech to state-of-the-art systems.
 - Specific focus on overhauling the *Rescue 21* network to enhance maritime domain awareness, especially in remote regions like Alaska.
6. Strategic Posture in the Arctic
 - The U.S. is adopting a Monroe Doctrine-like approach to deter adversarial activity in Arctic waters.
 - Coordination across federal, state, tribal, and allied partners is seen as essential.
 - Growing adversary (e.g., China, Russia) presence in the Arctic is being monitored and addressed with urgency.

Mr. Sean Plankey
Senior Advisor to the Secretary for the Coast Guard



One of the nation's foremost global cybersecurity experts who has advised leaders at the White House, U.S. Cyber Command, Silicon Valley, and some of the world's largest global corporations. A U.S. military veteran with a distinguished career across government and industry, he serves as a key leader in the maritime community and driving national cybersecurity and infrastructure strategy.

Mr. Plankey currently serves as the Senior Advisor to the Secretary for Homeland Security for the U.S. Coast Guard (SASCG) and is the nominee to be Director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA). As SASCG, he is leading the establishment of the Coast Guard Service Secretary and the USCG's Force Design 2028 initiative. Force Design 2028 is the Coast Guard's largest organizational change and revitalization effort to date to prepare the Service for the evolving challenges and missions of the future. Prior to DHS, Mr. Plankey served as the Global Leader for Cybersecurity Software at WTW, a world leader in insurance brokering and consulting. He previously served in multiple Silicon Valley start-ups, leading Go To Market and technology for public and private sales.

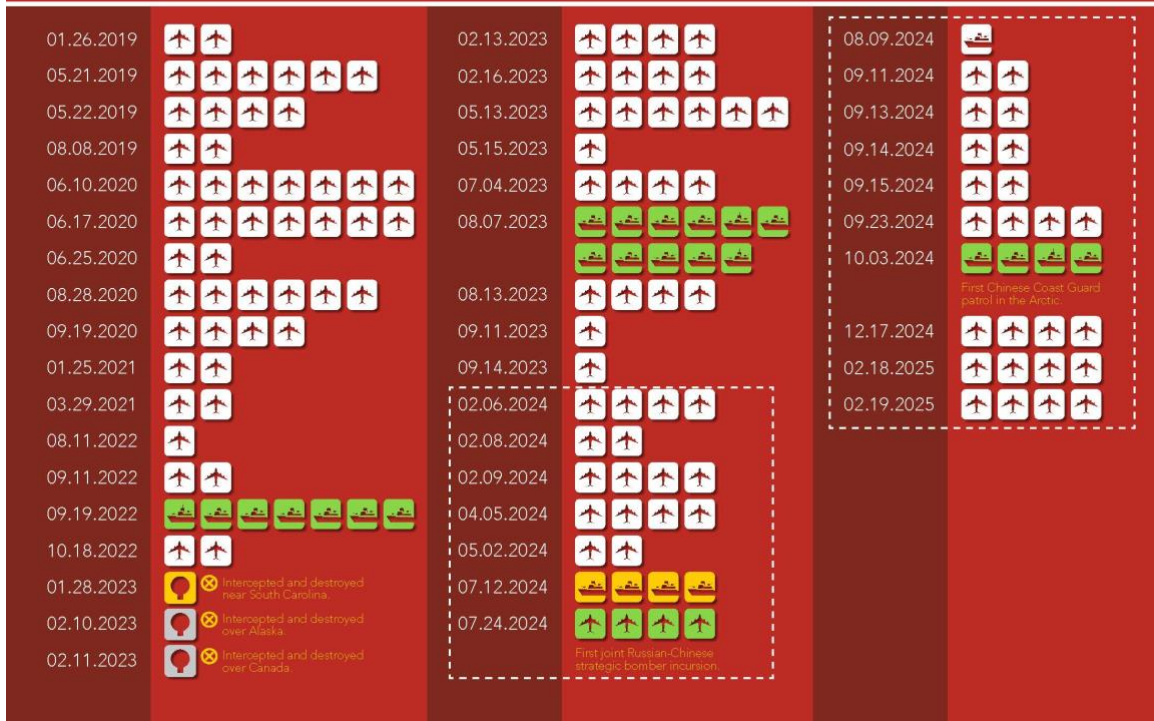
Earlier, Mr. Plankey was the Chief Technology Officer for Public Sector at Data Robot, the industry leading AI platform. He also served as the Global Cyber Intelligence Officer for BP where he provided BP global corporate and business interests with threat assessments, cyber intelligence, and due diligence. In government, Mr. Plankey served at the U.S. Department of Energy as the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Office of Cybersecurity, Energy Security and Emergency Response. Here he led energy sector engagement, preparedness and response activities and research development in cybersecurity and physical security to better protect the U.S. energy infrastructure.

Earlier Mr. Plankey worked for the National Security Council as the Director for Maritime and Pacific Cybersecurity Policy, where he co-authored the National Maritime Cybersecurity Plan and multiple Presidential Directives on Offensive Cyberspace Operations signed by the President.

Mr. Plankey is a veteran, serving after twenty-two years in the Pennsylvania National Guard and U.S. Coast Guard, including providing cybersecurity leadership at the U.S. Cyber Command and deployed with U.S. Forces Afghanistan. Sean has a Master of Science, Computers and Information Technology from the University of Pennsylvania and graduated from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy.



Russian & Chinese Incursions into Alaska ADIZ/EEZ (2019-Present)



Panel 1: Protecting U.S. Arctic Sovereignty Through Maritime Deterrence

PANEL 1:

Protecting U.S. Arctic Sovereignty Through Maritime Deterrence

Panel Speakers

- **Vice Admiral Thomas G. Allan Jr.**, U.S. Coast Guard, Acting Deputy Commandant for Operations
- **Rear Admiral Scott Robertson**, U.S. Navy, Director of Strategy, Policy and Plans, North American Aerospace Defense Command and U.S. Northern Command
- **Mr. Nagruk Harcharek**, President of the Voice of Arctic Inupiat
- **Matt Sweetsir**, President and owner of Ruby Marine

Chaired by **Captain Joseph "Grant" Thomas**, U.S. Coast Guard





Maritime Risk Symposium 2025
Tuesday 13 May – Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska



Panel One: Protecting U.S. Arctic Sovereignty Through Maritime Deterrence



VADM Tom Allan, USCG
Acting Deputy Commandant for Operations



RADM Scott Robertson, USN
Director of Strategy, Policy & Plans,
NORAD and USNORTHCOM



Mr. Nagruk Harcharek
President of the Voice of Arctic Inupiat



Mr. Matt Sweetsir
President and owner of Ruby Marine

Protecting and Defending U.S. Arctic Maritime Sovereignty Interests through Deterrence

OVERVIEW: Panel One examined the evolving challenges and opportunities surrounding U.S. sovereignty in the Arctic, with a focus on maritime deterrence amid increasing geopolitical competition. Speakers from the military, Indigenous leadership, and maritime industry highlighted the urgent need for sustained presence, infrastructure development, and coordinated interagency and cross-sector collaboration to ensure regional stability. The panel began with indigenous perspectives, emphasizing the cultural and economic importance of subsistence practices like whaling and fishing, which are increasingly threatened by rising vessel traffic and offshore activity.

Panelists additionally stressed the strategic necessity of presence to counter growing Russian and Chinese activity, outlining ongoing efforts to modernize Coast Guard capabilities and expand Arctic infrastructure. Industry leaders supported the goals of recent executive orders but underscored the need for stable funding and realistic implementation plans. The discussion collectively pointed to a comprehensive approach to Arctic sovereignty—one that integrates deterrence with diplomacy, local engagement, and actionable policy execution.

Panel Chair: CAPT Joseph “Grant” Thomas, USCG

PANELISTS:

1. Vice Admiral Thomas G. Allan, Jr., U.S. Coast Guard, Acting Deputy Commandant for Operations
<https://www.uscg.mil/Biographies/Display/Article/1676911/vice-admiral-thomas-g-allan-jr/>
2. RADM Scott Robertson, U.S. Navy, Director of Strategy, Policy & Plans, NORAD and USNORTHCOM
<https://www.navy.mil/Leadership/Flag-Officer-Biographies/Search/Article/2236477/rear-admiral-scott-f-robertson/>
3. Mr. Nagruk Harcharek, President of the Voice of Arctic Inupiat
<https://voiceofthearticinupiat.org/about/meet-our-staff/>

4. Matt Sweetsir, President and owner of Ruby Marine

PANEL ABSTRACT: As sea ice in the Arctic diminishes, the region is becoming more accessible. There are a multitude of Indigenous, International, Interagency, Industry, Investment, Infrastructure, and Sovereignty, Security, and Scientific (6I3S) challenges and opportunities to address. This panel will examine what public and private operations, activities, and investments are needed to “Secure Arctic waterways to enable American prosperity in the face of evolving Arctic Security challenges and associated risks,” as set forth in Section 18 of the *Restoring America’s Maritime Dominance* Executive Order issued on April 9, 2025. As interest in Arctic investment, economic development, and infrastructure projects grows, it is critical to work with sovereign tribal nations, allies, and partners to promote Arctic security and protect U.S. sovereignty. Projecting a deterrent presence while performing U.S. Homeland Security and Homeland Defense missions in the Arctic enables the desired end-state of peace through strength. This panel will examine what actions are needed to achieve this objective.



Panel 2: Arctic Maritime Transportation: Balancing National Security, Economic Viability, and Environmental Sustainability

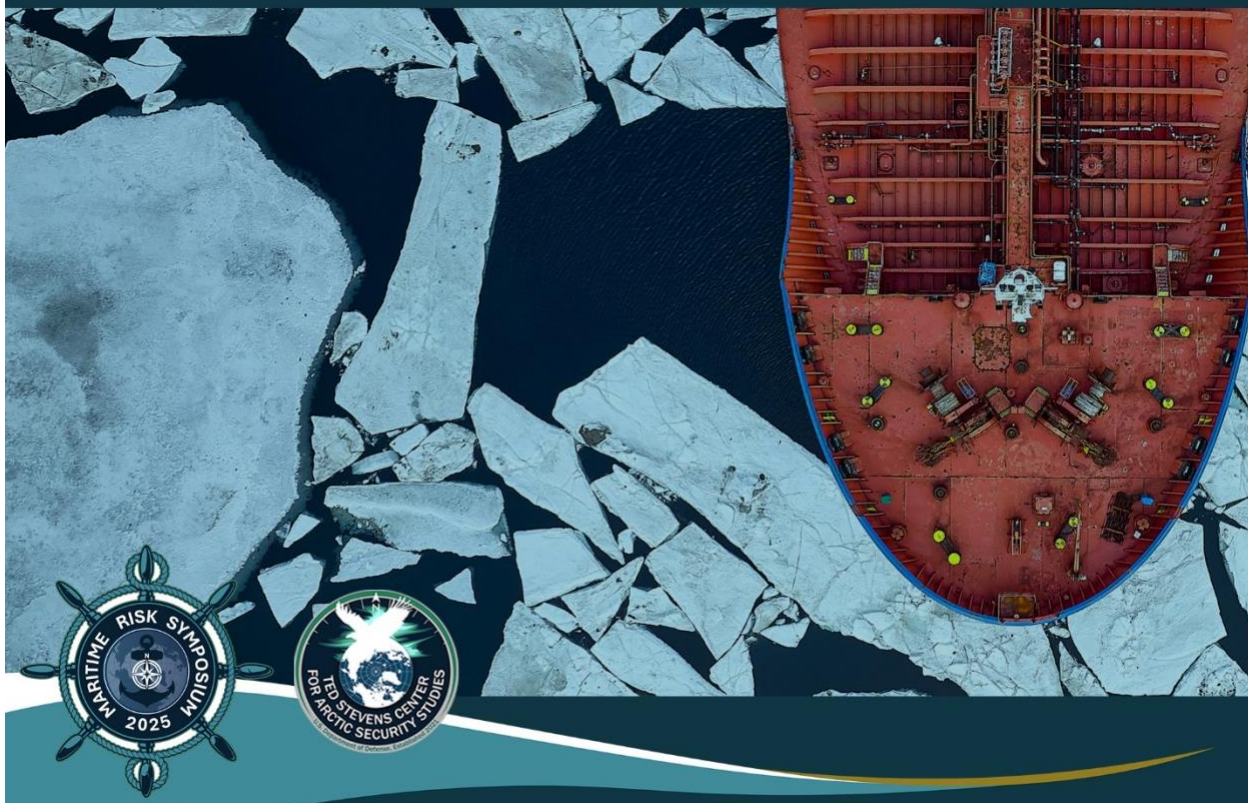
PANEL 2:

Arctic Maritime Transportation: Balancing National Security, Economic Viability, and Environmental Sustainability

Panel Speakers

- **Ambassador Michael Sfraga**
- **Vice Admiral** Nate Moore, Commander, U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area
- **Mr. Jim Butler**, JD, Legal Counsel with Holmes Weddle & Barcott
- **Ms. Rachel Kallander**, Founder & CEO of Arctic Encounter Symposium and Kallander Associates

Co-chaired by **Mr. Stan Gold** and **Captain Buddy Custard**, U.S. Coast Guard (ret.)





Maritime Risk Symposium 2025
Tuesday 13 May – Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska



*Panel Two: Arctic Maritime Transportation: Balancing National Security,
Economic Viability and Environmental Sustainability*



Amb. Michael Sfraga, PhD



VADM Nate Moore, USCG
Commander, U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area



Mr. Jim Butler, JD
Legal Counsel with Holmes Weddle & Barcott



Ms. Rachel Kallander
Founder & CEO of Arctic Encounter Symposium

Protecting and Defending U.S. Arctic Maritime Sovereignty Interests through Deterrence

OVERVIEW: Panel Two explored the complex and rapidly evolving dynamics of Arctic maritime transportation, emphasizing the need to balance national security, economic development, and environmental sustainability. Speakers from diplomacy, military leadership, industry, and indigenous organizations highlighted how increasing geopolitical interest, particularly from Russia and China, combined with the retreat of sea ice and shifting U.S. foreign policy, is reshaping Arctic governance and elevating the region's strategic significance. Panelists stressed that presence in the Arctic is not just about defense, but also about building infrastructure, fostering multilateral partnerships, and ensuring local communities have a seat at the decision-making table.

Discussions emphasized that Arctic solutions must be inclusive and forward-thinking. Industry leaders underscored the importance of adapting regulations to Arctic realities and leveraging private-sector experience in logistics and emergency response. Indigenous perspectives reinforced the need for trust, representation, and cultural sensitivity. Speakers also called for continuity in government engagement, investment in multi-use infrastructure, and the creation of convening platforms that produce actionable outcomes. Across the board, there was a shared recognition that Arctic policy must be integrated, consistent, and responsive to both global and local forces.

Panel Chairs:

Mr. Stan Gold

CAPT Buddy Custard, USCG (Ret.)

PANELISTS:

1. Ambassador Michael Sfraga, PhD
<https://2021-2025.state.gov/biographies/michael-sfraga/>
2. VADM Nate Moore, USCG, Commander, U.S. Coast Guard Atlantic Area
<https://www.uscg.mil/Biographies/Display/Article/1739529/vice-admiral-nathan-a-moore/>
3. Mr. Jim Butler, JD, Legal Counsel with Holmes Weddle & Barcott
<https://hwb-law.com/james-butler/>
4. Ms. Rachel Kallander, Founder & CEO of Arctic Encounter Symposium and Kallander Associates
<https://www.arcticencounter.com/aes-leadership>

Panel Abstract

The region's harsh and unpredictable environment presents significant obstacles to maritime transportation and logistics operations to support trade and resource extraction. The presence of sea ice, extreme weather conditions, and limited infrastructure necessitate specialized ships, equipment, and crew training, which can be costly and technically challenging. Furthermore, the remote and isolated nature of the Arctic Region limits access to emergency response services, search and rescue operations, and medical care, exacerbating the risks associated with maritime operations.

The economic viability of Arctic maritime trade is also a critical concern for U.S. economic security interests. The region's limited infrastructure, lack of economies of scale, and high operating costs make it challenging to establish profitable shipping routes and logistics networks. Moreover, the Arctic Region's sensitivity to environmental damage and the need to protect indigenous communities and their traditional ways of life require careful consideration of the social and environmental impacts of maritime transportation and logistics activities.

Regulatory frameworks play a crucial role in shaping the Arctic maritime transportation and logistics landscape. The region is subject to a complex array of national and international regulations, including those related to environmental protection, safety, and security.

Advances in ship design, materials, and propulsion systems, as well as the development of new logistics and supply chain management technologies, offer significant opportunities for improving efficiency, reducing costs, and enhancing safety and security. The use of autonomous systems, drones, and other emerging technologies also hold promise for enhancing situational awareness for homeland security and defense, improving search and rescue operations, and reducing the environmental impacts of maritime activities.

In addition to these technical and regulatory challenges, we must consider the importance of international cooperation and collaboration in promoting the safe and sustainable development of Arctic maritime trade and activities. The Arctic Council, the International Maritime Organization (IMO), and other regional and international organizations play critical roles in facilitating cooperation while protecting sovereignty among Arctic states, indigenous communities, and other stakeholders.

There is a critical need for a comprehensive and integrated approach to address the challenges of Arctic maritime transportation and logistics. This requires careful consideration of the environmental, economic, social, and regulatory factors that shape the region's shipping landscape, as well as a commitment to responsible and sustainable development practices. By leveraging technological innovation, international cooperation, and regulatory frameworks, it is possible to navigate the uncharted waters of the Arctic and unlock the region's vast economic and social potential while minimizing its environmental and social impacts. Ultimately, the future of safe and secure Arctic maritime trade and resource extraction on the Outer Continental Shelf depends on our ability to balance economic development with protecting U.S. sovereignty, environmental protection, and social responsibility, ensuring that the benefits of this emerging trade route and resource development opportunities are shared equitably among all stakeholders.



Afternoon Keynote: VADM Fred Midgette, USCG (ret.)

Key Takeaway: VADM Midgette’s remarks reflect the need to shift a mindset within the U.S. Coast Guard as it pertains to the Arctic to be more defense operations focused, as the Coast Guard was during World War II with the “Wind Class” cutters and the need for “Ice Breaking Warriors.”

1. The U.S. needs significant enhancement to its shipbuilding capabilities.
 -
 - Must reconstitute a robust production line capability
 - U.S. lacks skilled labor, supply chain, and national policies and regulations for shipbuilding
 - New technologies are needed to restore America’s maritime dominance
 - The acquisition process is full of delays and dysfunction
2. To address the shipbuilding deficit and restore America’s maritime dominance requires:
 - New technologies
 - Effective supply chains
 - Support from friends and allies to speed up process of acquiring new ships
 - Streamlining the acquisition process
3. The Arctic is becoming more contentious
 - The region has become more accessible as sea ice decreases, increasing the potential for conflict for the abundant natural resources in the region
 - The growing relationship and connections between Russia and China have increased the potential for risk in the Arctic
4. Way ahead
 - The U.S. must rectify its icebreaking deficit
 - Icebreakers should be equipped for mission sets that support defense readiness
 - New icebreakers can become a national security cutter, a modern version of the World War II Wind Class icebreakers; this will better align the USCG with defense missions

Panel 3: Addressing U.S. Arctic Region Maritime Transportation System Gray Zone, Hybrid Warfare, & Cyber Threats

PANEL 3:

Addressing U.S. Arctic Region Maritime Transportation System Gray Zone, Hybrid Warfare, & Cyber Threats

Panel Speakers

- **Colonel Doug Peterson**, U.S. Marine Corps, Director of the Joint Intermediate Force Capabilities Office
- **Captain William “Bill” Woityra**, U.S. Coast Guard, 2025 Council on Foreign Relations International Affairs Fellow at the Canadian Global Affairs Institute & previous Coast Guard Cutter POLAR STAR Commanding Officer
- **Mr. Nate Toll**, Mandiant, Google Cloud
- **Commander Rachael Gosnell**, U.S. Navy, George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, Department of Strategic Security Studies

Co-chaired by **Colonel Randy Pugh**, U.S. Marine Corps (ret.) and **Mr. Scott Blough**





Maritime Risk Symposium 2025
Tuesday 13 May – Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska



Panel Three: U.S. Arctic Region Maritime Transportation System Gray Zone, Hybrid Warfare, & Cyber Threats



Col Doug Peterson, USMC
Director of the Joint Intermediate Force Capabilities Office



CAPT Bill Woityra, USCG
2025 Council on Foreign Relations
International Affairs Fellow at the Canadian Global Affairs Institute



Mr. Nate Toll
Mandiant, Google Cloud



CDR Rachael Gosnell, USN
George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies

Protecting and Defending U.S. Arctic Maritime Sovereignty Interests through Deterrence

OVERVIEW: As the Arctic’s strategic importance rapidly escalates, the security of the Arctic portion of the U.S. Maritime Transportation System (MTS) faces ever more complex threats from gray zone tactics, hybrid warfare and cyber vulnerabilities. Increasingly open Arctic sea lanes intensify the threat and opportunity for gray zone activity and hybrid warfare and blurs the lines between peace and conflict. Adversaries and malign actors exploit the Arctic’s vastness, complexity and legal gray areas. Panel 3 examined how state and non-state actors leverage ambiguous actions below the threshold of traditional conflict to threaten U.S. interests in, and challenge the security of, U.S. Arctic waterways. Concurrently, panelists considered how to mitigate, counter and respond to these growing security threats.

Panelists pointed out that the Arctic poses vulnerabilities due to its fragile ecology, limited communications networks, and increased geopolitical tension. Sea cable security is a particularly acute challenge in the Arctic, compounded by lack of redundancy and limited military presence. Cyber-attacks have become more sophisticated, rapid acting, and persistent, thus complicating efforts at timely detection and protection. While some attacks are financially motivated, others are linked to nation states conducting espionage and seeking long term persistence in networks that can then be exploited.

The panel posited that we face a perfect storm of asymmetric maritime threats that include drugs, trafficking in persons, illegal fishing, illegal immigration, and emerging risks and threats to U.S. infrastructure and economy. This includes sinister and pervasive cyber threats, as well as gray zone or hybrid warfare to include sabotage to seabed floor pipelines and cables, interference, and denial of GPS transmissions. All these threats have a common thread of aggressively avoiding attribution and our adversaries are engaging from the shadows. While not necessarily acts of war, they are threats to both peace and security.

The panel highlighted the critical role of partners and allies and the need for joint action with a bedrock of effective information sharing. Panelists also analyzed effective counter-gray zone strategies such as enhanced maritime domain awareness, persistent presence, and proactive deterrence. NATO Arctic allies have demonstrated that presence accompanied by rapid response is necessary to deter both Russia

and China. This becomes a more complex challenge in the North American Arctic given the vast size, difficult and rapidly changing operational environment, and dearth of maritime assets available. Our current lack of vessels and icebreakers means we must work with allies to increase presence. The Canadian Coast Guard and Royal Canadian Navy have icebreakers and Arctic offshore patrol vessels that are in the water now. Linking with these assets can provide vital information needed for maritime domain awareness.

Panelists emphasized that the U.S. must concurrently counter the threat of hybrid warfare while developing tools that can help secure Arctic waterways. The use of Intermediate Force Capabilities (IFC) provides strategic risk mitigation and allows warfighters to seize the initiative while campaigning below the level of armed conflict. IFC can work to de-escalate tactical flashpoints, prevent miscalculation, and avoid strategic crises. Furthermore, IFC employment can also facilitate U.S. and allied control of the narrative and success in the information space. Utilizing technology will be an important component of combating gray zone activity. This could include sensors such as satellites and unmanned vessels. Furthermore, our efforts need to be a whole of government effort.

Both the gray zone threat and an effective response are complex problems. Countering this problem set requires interoperability with partners and allies, as well as consideration of policy, law, capacity, and competing priorities for limited resources. Additionally, attacks on AI systems could affect our ability to deploy technology to combat some of our current physical asset shortfalls. To address all these challenges, we must fortify digital and physical security, intensify cooperation amongst partners, and enhance rapid response capabilities. Finally, IFC capabilities also can offer tailored solutions but ones that must navigate technological and legal complexities.

Panel Chairs:

Col. Randy Pugh, USMC (Ret.)

Mr. Scott Blough

PANELISTS:

1. Col Doug Peterson, USMC, Director of the Joint Intermediate Force Capabilities Office
<https://www.ppo.marines.mil/Leaders/Biography/Article/3648573/colonel-douglas-k-peterson/>
2. CAPT William “Bill” Woityra, USCG, 2025 Council on Foreign Relations International Affairs Fellow at the Canadian Global Affairs Institute and previous U.S. Coast Guard Cutter POLAR STAR Commanding Officer. <https://www.usni.org/people/william-woityra>
3. Mr. Nate Toll, Mandiant, Google Cloud
4. CDR Rachael Gosnell, USN, George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, Department of Strategic Security Studies
<https://www.marshallcenter.org/en/directory/commander-rachael-gosnell-us-navy>

PANEL ABSTRACT: The U.S. Arctic Region's strategic importance is rapidly escalating, facing complex threats to its Maritime Transportation System (MTS) from gray zone tactics, hybrid warfare, and cyber vulnerabilities. This panel will examine how state and non-state actors leverage ambiguous actions below the threshold of traditional conflict, including strategic infrastructure disruption, information warfare, and economic coercion, to undermine U.S. and allied interests. We will explore the critical role of partners and allies in building Arctic resilience through collaborative domain awareness, joint exercises, and information sharing, while analyzing effective counter-gray zone strategies such as enhanced maritime domain awareness, persistent presence, and proactive deterrence.

Furthermore, the panel will address evolving legal and policy frameworks, including international law and sovereignty issues, alongside the escalating cyber threats targeting the Arctic MTS, encompassing critical infrastructure and communication networks, and the development of robust cyber defense and incident response protocols.



Panel 4: Arctic Sovereignty and IUU Fishing: What's the Catch?

PANEL 4:

Arctic Sovereignty and IUU Fishing: What's the Catch?

Panel Speakers

- **Johan Bergen**, Senior Vice President, Oceans, World Wildlife Fund
 - **Ms. Katherine Anania**, Policy Researcher, RAND Corporation
 - **Lieutenant Commander Mike Burke**, Living Marine Resources & Marine Protected Species Enforcement Division (CG-MLE-4), U.S. Coast Guard
 - **Demian Schane**, Chief, Alaska Section, NOAA General
- Co-chaired by **Rear Admiral Scott Clendenin**, U.S. Coast Guard (ret.) and **Captain Tony Russell**, U.S. Coast Guard (ret.)





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Panel Four: Arctic Sovereignty and IUU Fishing – What's the Catch?



Johan Bergenas
Senior Vice President, Oceans, Word
Wildlife Fund



Ms. Katherine Anania
Policy Researcher, RAND Corporation



LCDR Mike Burke, USCG
Living Marine Resources & Marine Protected
Species Enforcement Division (CG-MLE-4)



Demian Schane
Chief, Alaska Section, NOAA General
Counsel

Protecting and Defending U.S. Arctic Maritime Sovereignty Interests through Deterrence

OVERVIEW: The U.S. government has employed significant efforts to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing. However, countering IUU is a complex problem set, and in addition to the USCG, it involves a wide range of entities to include NGOs, joint, interagency, state, and tribal stakeholders, think tanks, and conservancy groups. The IUU mission is not limited to enforcement actions at sea, it encompasses diplomatic, regulatory, unclassified releasable intelligence sharing, and law enforcement efforts. This panel looked at broader efforts to combat IUU, how this supports U.S. defense efforts in domain awareness and deterrence, and steps to establish a rules-based order so our U.S. fishing fleet can compete.

Panelists acknowledged the multifaceted threats emanating from IUU activity. This includes illicit maritime traffic engaged in narcotics, arms, human trafficking, terrorism, and piracy. Frequently, IUU fishing provides revenue for bad actors and those tied to other crimes, to include the Mexican-based Gulf cartels. IUU fishing is also associated with corruption, fraud, money laundering, and labor rights abuses, to include forced labor. The lack of oversight on tracking and in the safety of IUU vessels results in more dangerous SAR conditions and potential for collisions and catastrophic spillage. Protecting the ocean where the fishing vessels are operating is just as important as protecting the fishing itself.

Panelists pointed out that conflict follows fish, as exemplified in the South China Sea, a hotbed for competition and conflict. They expressed concern that migration of fish stocks to and through the Arctic has the potential to drive confrontation and conflict. From a defense perspective, IUU fishing and the illicit activity it engenders increasingly jeopardizes the security of U.S. Arctic maritime approaches. IUU's inclusion in Executive Orders and National Security documents highlights the threat.

Panelists emphasized the importance of an interagency approach to coordinate broad U.S. anti-IUU efforts. The Maritime Security and Fisheries Act (Maritime SAFE) was established in 2019 to ensure all federal funding done in coordination supports a unified whole of government effort to address national priorities and effectively coordinates DoD, DHS, and Department of Treasury efforts to prevent Mexican cartels from flooding the U.S. market with IUU fish. Coordinated regulatory efforts are also needed. For example, NOAA's Office of Law Enforcement opened 1,599 incident reports in 2024.

As proper management of Arctic fisheries and fishing in the Central Arctic Ocean is foundational for a secure and economically viable and ecologically sustainable fisheries future, panelists called for scientific understanding and collation of trends that is thorough and longstanding. Protecting domestic markets, communities and U.S. security interests will require comprehensive collection and analysis of baseline data. NGOs, such as the WWF with its Oceans Futures Program, have played an important role in gathering critical data on this problem set. NOAA's yearly "Alaska Seafood Snapshot" highlights that seafood competition is high, particularly from Russian supplied fish. This has hit the U.S. hard with a loss of \$1.8 billion and 38,000 jobs in one year.

To optimize efforts and ensure the most cost-effective deterrent options, panelists advocated for a broad-based approach. Groups such as the WWF have data critical to domain awareness and connections across the globe. This provides a cost-effective tool and can provide deterrence to prevent expensive, kinetic engagement. Deterrence doesn't have to always be steel in the water; communicating about IUU and then publicizing through public and government channels can name and shame bad actors and influence future behavior. This is an approach that can assist in dealing with China, the top IUU threat in the Arctic. Panelists proposed that supporting counter IUU helps build partnerships, promote maritime domain awareness, food security, support local communities and economies, and is a relatively inexpensive tool for the U.S. to deploy.

Panel Chairs:

RADM Scott Clendenin, USCG (ret.)

CAPT Tony Russell, USCG (ret.)

PANELISTS:

1. Johan Bergenäs, Senior Vice President, Oceans, World Wildlife Fund
<https://www.worldwildlife.org/leaders/johan-bergenas>
2. Ms. Katherine Anania, Policy Researcher, RAND Corporation
<https://www.hstoday.us/author/katenixonanania/>
3. LCDR Mike Burke, Living Marine Resources & Marine Protected Species Enforcement Division (CG-MLE-4), U.S. Coast Guard
4. Demian Schane, Chief, Alaska Section, NOAA General Counsel

PANEL ABSTRACT: Sovereignty, in its essence, is the symbiotic exercise of domestic political power and governance, national security, and foreign relations. Therefore, domestic and international fisheries management and enforcement, particularly countering IUU and the over-exploitation of global and domestic fisheries resources, is a clear issue of sovereignty. IUU is becoming an increasing problem worldwide. Many expect that the Arctic may become a rare region in which fish stocks could potentially increase and diversify (with loss of some existing species or populations). Commercial fishing fleets could increasingly take interest in Arctic and sub-Arctic waters in coming decades, and there could be more illegal activity in and around Arctic nations' Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs). New surveillance, management, and law enforcement approaches may be needed to manage the threats and hazards associated with IUU. This panel addresses questions about the potential drivers of IUU growth in the Arctic and sub-Arctic, where the locations of potential IUU hotspots are, which actors will



need to work together to counter IUU, and what role precautionary fisheries management could have. Furthermore, panelists reflect on economic, technological, operational, and policy interventions that can help Arctic states, communities, and non-governmental organizations manage potential legal fisheries, and deter and prevent IUU in the Arctic and sub-Arctic. Fisheries in the U.S. Arctic, the waters and EEZ surrounding the State of Alaska, is big business and the entire nation benefits from its productivity. U.S. Arctic fisheries represent ~60% of U.S. seafood harvest nationally, and if Alaska were a country, it would rank 9th in wild seafood harvest with an economic output of \$15.8 billion.¹

But not all is well in the region's historically productive waters. Since 2022, Alaska's fisheries have grappled with the dual threats of rising costs and declining catch, with a net result of a 50% drop in gross profits in 2023 alone.² The causes of this drop are many and complex, including economic factors, market competition and conditions, environmental factors, and ecological shifts from warming Arctic waters. It is within this already challenging domestic context that increasing international attention may be turning to the Arctic Region's fisheries, including the Central Arctic Ocean, in the coming years.

The future of commercial Arctic fishing is a complex intersection of opportunity and risk. While warming waters may open new areas for fishing and boost economic growth, rapidly changing environmental conditions also threaten the delicate balance of marine life, which could lead to the depletion of key fish stocks. The key to a sustainable future for Arctic fisheries will be strong international cooperation, effective governance, innovative technology, and a focus on the rights of local Indigenous communities. Sustainable practices will be crucial in ensuring that fishing in this fragile region remains viable for generations to come. Action must be developed and managed against the region's overlapping geopolitical tensions and frosty relations with Russia as an Arctic nation and China's global power aspirations and global fishing fleets.

Panelists will share their expertise and discuss potential approaches to international collaboration toward managing and enforcing a future Arctic fishery, including how to filter the licit from illicit using legal frameworks, advanced technology, international collaboration, and operational enforcement.

In the Arctic, where the environment is harsh and vast, these strategies are essential to ensure the protection of the ecosystem while allowing for sustainable and legal fisheries operations. By addressing these complexities in a coordinated way, we can minimize the impact of illicit activities like IUU fishing on the Arctic's delicate marine resources and reduce the potential for fisheries conflicts to contribute to geopolitical friction in the region.

¹ https://www.alaskaseafood.org/wp-content/uploads/MRG_ASMI-Economic-Impacts-Report_2023_WEB-PAGES.pdf

² <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/alaskas-fisheries-and-those-who-depend-them-are-sea-troubles>

NON-INTERNET LINKED PANELIST BIOGRAPHIES

PANEL ONE:

Matt Sweetsir, President and owner of Ruby Marine – Matt began his maritime career as a Merchant Mariner in 1979 with Black Navigation out of St. Michael, Alaska in Norton Sound. Between 1979 and 2005, he worked for Black Navigation and Yutana Barge Lines as an Engineer, Tankerman, 1st Mate, Chief Mate, Captain, Port Captain, Operations Manager, and President. Between navigation seasons on various tugs, he fished commercially as a seiner in the Gulf of Alaska, Cook Inlet, Prince William Sound, the Alaska Peninsula, and Bristol Bay. He is currently operating tugs on the Yukon and Tanana rivers for Ruby Marine Incorporated out of Nenana, Alaska. The vast majority of his sea time has been in Alaskan waters.

Between 1990 and 1995, from February until early May, he worked for Polar Associates providing logistical support for the Naval Research Laboratory San Diego at various ice camps for the Area Projects in the Arctic Ocean, basing out of Alert, Canada and Station Nord and Thule, Greenland. He was a Station Leader at an ice camp for several years and was focused primarily on the deployment of acoustic arrays for the tracking of Soviet and Russian Federation submarines. Those projects involved myriad national and international parties, including the U.S. Air Force, U.S. Navy, Navy Labs, and various university research groups, as well as the Canadian Forces, the Danish Air Force, and the Sirius Patrol.

Sweetsir graduated from Yale University in 1986 with a BA in History and from Cambridge University in 1993 with an MPhil in Polar Studies. He is a licensed Merchant Mariner, with Master of Towing Vessels, Near Coastal, and AB Unlimited/Tankerman Barge PIC DL endorsements. He has been a licensed airplane pilot since 1989.

He is currently a Board Member of the Alaska Chadux Network, and since 2006 has been the owner/operator of Ruby Marine Incorporated out of Nenana, Alaska.

PANEL THREE:

Nate Toll, Manager, Mandiant/Google Cloud – Mr. Toll is a Manager in the Mandiant Security Transformation Services Cyber Defense Team. Mr. Toll provides guidance to clients on building and operationalizing security operations centers, including detection, response, logging, and threat hunting.

With over 2.5 years of experience at Mandiant, Mr. Toll has served as an incident response remediation advisor for multiple large-scale ransomware incidents, a SOC management advisor, purple team lead and instructed for Mandiant's educational Threat Space engagements. Mr. Toll was a co-contributor to 'The Defender's Advantage' book, released in 2024 by Mandiant.

A Coast Guard Officer for 9 years prior to coming to Mandiant, Mr. Toll led their Enterprise Cybersecurity Operations Center and played a key role in building the first and second specialized Coast Guard Cyber Protection Teams to provide penetration testing, threat hunting and incident response capability to maritime critical infrastructure providers.

His experience is highlighted by leading teams that identified and responded to nation-state adversary activity on critical infrastructure networks and identifying broader ongoing intrusion campaigns featured in U.S. government public emergency alerts. He also has previous experience in maritime law enforcement and operations as an Executive and Operations Officer aboard U.S. Coast Guard cutters.

EDUCATION

- BS Operations Research, United States Coast Guard Academy, 2013
- MS Cybersecurity, Northeastern University, 2018
- Certificate in Cyber Intelligence, National Intelligence University, 2022

PROFESSIONAL TRAINING & CERTIFICATIONS



- ISC2, Certified Information System Security Professional (CISSP)
- GIAC Certified Cloud Threat Detection (GCTD)
- GIAC Certified Response and Industrial Defense (GRID)
- GIAC Certified Critical Infrastructure Protection (GCIP)
- GIAC Certified Forensic Analyst (GCFA)
- GIAC Certified Incident Handler (GCIH)

PANEL FOUR:

Mike Burke, LCDR, U.S. Coast Guard – Mike has served on four ships in both the Pacific and the Atlantic completing a myriad of missions that have predominantly included fisheries law enforcement. Mike first served onboard as a boarding officer and deck watch officer onboard CGC THETIS in Key West, FL from 2011-2013, then as Commanding Officer of CGC STURGEON in Grand Isle, LA from 2013-2015. Mike later served as Operations Officer onboard CGC SENECA in Boston, MA from 2018-2020, and his most recent afloat assignment was as Commanding Officer of CGC MUSTANG in Seward, AK from 2020-2022. Mike is currently serving as the IUU Division Chief in the Office of Maritime Law Enforcement Policy at USCG Headquarters. Mike will depart in his role in D.C., as he is in receipt of orders to be the Executive Officer onboard CGC ALEX HALEY in Kodiak, AK.

Demian Schane, NOAA – Demian is the Chief of the Alaska Section for the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Office of General Counsel where he advises the National Marine Fisheries Service on the management of natural resources under its jurisdiction in the North Pacific Ocean, including commercial fisheries and marine mammals. Demian also currently serves as the Head of the U.S. Delegation to the Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean. Demian is a 1993 graduate of Dartmouth College and has a J.D. from the College of William & Mary School of Law (1997) and an LL.M from Georgetown University (1998).