



TRUE NORTH

Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies Monthly Bulletin

MARCH 2024



TSC's Arctic Fellowship program prepares future leaders for Arctic challenges and opportunities

In its inaugural year, the Ted Stevens Center's Arctic Fellowship program is aimed at cultivating a cadre of security practitioners with a nuanced understanding of Arctic security dynamics. The program, in partnership with the University of Alaska, is designed to equip military leaders with the expertise required to navigate the complex geopolitical and geophysical landscape of the Arctic.

Currently, the program has three fellows: two from the U.S. Air Force, on track to graduate this May after a one-year program, and one from the U.S. Coast Guard, who has one more year remaining in the two-year program. Upon completion of the fellowship, all participants will earn a master's degree, but most notably they will have gained valuable firsthand

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NATO's welcome enlargement in the North

Op-ed by Dr. Matthew Rhodes

The ceremonial raising of Sweden's flag at NATO Headquarters March 11 marked the culmination of a dramatic two-year process. Sweden's and Finland's accessions bring all Arctic states minus Russia into the Alliance and boost deterrence and defense across NATO's Northern Flank. Their entries are rightful cause for celebration, but fully achieving "day after" benefits also means addressing potential challenges.

It is first worth recalling the swiftness of these countries' shift toward membership. Sweden had been officially neutral or militarily non-aligned since the early nineteenth century, as had Finland since the late 1940s. Both had still become active NATO partners, but Russia's all-out invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 crystallized the benefit of

full collective defense. Public opinion swung from as little as one-quarter to as much as four-fifths in favor of accession, and the two governments submitted applications in May the same year. Finland completed accession in April 2023, but reservations from Turkey and Hungary pushed Sweden's finalization to this month.

As others have pointed out, these new Allies will be immediate providers as well as consumers of security. Simply by geography, they consolidate NATO presence across the Baltic and High North. Their militaries possess advanced fighter jets and submarines as well as substantial numbers of active-duty and reserve troops with cold-weather training and equipment. Experience with "total defense" resilience, support for effective NATO-EU cooperation, and ability to bridge

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Raising of the NATO flag of Sweden during the Accession Ceremony. Left to right Axel Wernhoff (NATO Permanent Representative, Sweden); Ulf Kristersson (Prime Minister of Sweden); NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg; Victoria, Crown Princess of Sweden; General Micael Bydén (Chief of Defence, Sweden) | Images courtesy of NATO

East-West gaps in security perspective within the Alliance present additional intangible contributions.

The paired enlargement brings strong value both to the countries themselves and the Alliance as a whole, but risks should also be recognized. President Vladimir Putin dismissed the accessions as “meaningless” in the days following Sweden’s entry, but elsewhere he and other Russian officials have threatened “military-technical” counter-measures. The bulk of Russian ground forces remain committed to the war against Ukraine, but air and naval assets in the Kola peninsula and Barents Sea regions east of Scandinavia remain largely in place. Despite Russia’s heavy losses of men and materiel, NATO experts assess it could “reconstitute” its military within three to five years.

Nuclear saber-rattling remains another Russian tactic. As part of failed efforts to dissuade accession, in spring 2023 Russia’s ambassador in Stockholm warned that NATO membership would make Sweden a “legitimate target.” Later that summer, prominent scholar Sergei Karaganov, honorary chair of Russia’s Council on Foreign and Defense Policy, published a widely-discussed article suggesting preemptive nuclear strikes against countries in Europe to “restore” deterrence and block further aid to Ukraine.

Additional hybrid threats have appeared in the meantime. Finland has blamed Russia for damage to its undersea Balticconnector natural gas pipeline with Estonia in October 2023 as well as for orchestrated waves of would-be migrants from the Middle East across the Russian-Finnish

border. Russia-based hackers also seem behind disruptive ransomware attacks against public and private targets in Sweden since January.

Such challenges, which are not limited to Russia, are cause for neither panic nor complacency. Versions of many predate 2022, and a chief benefit of joining NATO is greater overall security against them. As part of the ongoing adaptation that has furthered the Alliance’s longevity, NATO leaders recently looked deeply at such issues through the NATO 2030 reflection process and new Strategic Concept. Along with continued unity, effective implementation and resourcing of resulting plans will be most important going forward.

The large-scale Nordic Response NATO exercise in Norway, Sweden, and Finland that coincided with Sweden’s NATO entry the first half of March presented a good example. It tested Alliance defensive action above the Arctic Circle across those countries’ northern reaches. NATO’s seventy-fifth anniversary in April and Washington summit in July offer similarly suitable opportunities for decisions on issues from the next NATO Secretary General to details of regional defense plans and further support to Ukraine that can help cement accession success.

Editor’s note: Dr. Matthew Rhodes is a professor at Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies, a U.S. Department of Defense Regional Center based in Alaska. The views expressed in this article only reflect his own views, not those of TSC or the U.S. Department of Defense.



Forging Arctic collaboration: Ted Stevens Center makes debut at ICE CAMP 2024

In a bold stride towards Arctic collaboration, the Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies ventured into uncharted territory as its staff embarked on an inaugural journey to Operation Ice Camp (ICE CAMP) 2024, located a brisk 200 nautical miles north/northeast of Prudhoe Bay, Alaska, March 19-20. This significant move not only marked a historic milestone for the TSC but also heralded a new era of cooperation in the frigid expanses of the Arctic.

ICE CAMP 2024, a rigorous three-week operation aimed at testing and evaluating operational capabilities in the Arctic, saw a convergence of military personnel and research teams from across the globe. This year's exercise served as a proving ground for the resilience and adaptability of all involved, amidst temperatures ranging from -5 to -15 Fahrenheit, with wind chills plummeting to -45.

Matthew Hickey, the associate director of the Strategic Engagement Division, and Courtney Guinan, an event

coordinator at TSC, spearheaded the center's maiden voyage into ICE CAMP. Their presence not only bolstered the logistical framework but also epitomized the TSC's commitment to fostering security cooperation efforts with Arctic allies and partners. Reflecting on their experience amidst the icy expanse, Guinan remarked, "Participating in ICE CAMP 2024 was an unparalleled opportunity to witness firsthand the dedication and ingenuity of all involved. Our engagement not only strengthens our bonds with Arctic allies but also sets the stage for future collaboration in this critical region."

The challenges posed by the Arctic environment were met head-on by the TSC team, as they braved blowing snow and winds of up to 35 knots, which led to flight cancellations and limited helicopter operations. Undeterred by the adversity, the team lent a helping hand to MIT Lincoln Laboratories in retrieving equipment

for studying digital wave responses to ice sheet movements.

Hickey ventured into the icy depths, digging through two meters of ice to deploy buoys for University of Washington's Applied Physics Laboratory. Meanwhile, Guinan assisted MIT with a groundbreaking underwater camera prototype, showcasing the TSC's versatility and adaptability in the face of extreme conditions.

ICE CAMP 2024, formerly known as Ice Exercise (ICEX), has evolved into a cornerstone of Arctic operations, aligning with the Navy's priority to maintain an enhanced Arctic presence and strengthen alliances and partnerships. The Arctic Submarine Laboratory (ASL), serving as the epicenter of Arctic research and coordination, facilitated the seamless integration of over 200 participants from five nations.

"It was really great to see ICE CAMP and to work with the researchers and our allies and partners," explained Guinan. "Next time we hope to integrate our School for Arctic Security Studies and members from our Research and Analysis Division to help further international security cooperation."

As ICE CAMP 2024 concluded, the Ted Stevens Center emerged as a beacon of collaboration in the Arctic, paving the way for future engagements aimed at bolstering security cooperation efforts and fortifying alliances in one of the most challenging environments on Earth.

knowledge and experience while engaging on a wide-range of Arctic security topics and issues.

The Arctic Fellowship program, developed in alignment with U.S. National Security and DoD strategic objectives, offers participants a comprehensive educational experience. Through engagement with the Ted Stevens Center and the University of Alaska, fellows gain expertise in areas crucial to the DoD mission(s) in the Arctic.

"Developing the future Arctic leaders through professional engagements, professional development, travel, research, and education is crucially important," explained Capt. Grant Thomas, U.S. Coast Guard Liaison and Arctic Fellows coordinator. He highlighted the program's significance in addressing critical issues outlined in national defense and security strategies, citing the Arctic's strategic importance in global geopolitics.

"Establishing relationships and understanding the various intersection of issues impacting the Arctic is crucial," Thomas remarked.

He emphasized the program's role in fostering trust and collaboration through interactions with civilian educators, government agencies, and international partners. "The essence of security cooperation is building trust and relationships," he stated. "This program is designed to do just that."

"The majority of Americans probably do not see the U.S. as an Arctic nation," Thomas noted. "We collectively need to change that narrative, and this program is a very important piece in doing so." This

program helps grow and shape future DoD leaders with the Arctic knowledge, networks of subject matter experts, and critical development in this rapidly changing region.

The program's objective is clear: to develop leaders with a deep understanding of the Arctic's role in international security and civil-military affairs. By providing participants with opportunities for research, education, and engagement, the fellowship equips the participants to be knowledgeable regarding U.S., allied, and DoD Arctic security priorities effectively in their future roles.

As the program looks toward the future, efforts are underway to expand its reach to the Army and Marine Corps, in addition to the Space Force and Navy. The program's continued refinement aims to strike the right balance between civilian education and firsthand Arctic experiences as part of the Ted Stevens Center's Arctic Fellows program, ensuring that future leaders are well-prepared to navigate the complexities of the region.

"This program is a phenomenal opportunity for all of the service components," remarked Thomas. "It addresses a myriad of critical issues highlighted in our National Defense, National Strategy for the Arctic, and Security Strategies, underscoring the strategic importance of the Arctic in global geopolitics."

As the program moves forward, it will continue to evolve to meet the specific

needs of each service branch. With a commitment to refinement and growth, the TSC's Arctic Fellowship program is poised to become an indispensable resource for developing future Arctic leaders across the military spectrum.



West Point Security Seminar

Last month, strategic communications specialist Hannah Smith presented research at the West Point Department of Social Sciences (SOSH) Security Seminar. The seminar convened more than 250 Soldiers, scholars, diplomats, and other subject matter experts from around the world. The theme "States, Societies, and Security in the 21st Century" brought together 14 working groups to tackle the most critical challenges to international security. During the opening remarks, Sasha Baker, Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, emphasized the importance of leveraging partnerships and deepening relationships to the National Defense Strategy.

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New Arctic Crisis Logistics course in the works for later this year

We recently welcomed Maj. Gen. Constance Jenkins, director of Logistics and Engineering, North American Aerospace Defense Command and U.S. Northern Command, to the TSC. The purpose of this visit was to finalize the development of a new Arctic Crisis Logistics course launching later this year. The course will focus on educating civilian and military practitioners on the challenges of logistical operations in an Arctic operational environment with specific emphasis on infrastructure, operational environment conditions, and transportation in the Arctic.



Experiencing Arctic Security Dilemmas at the TSC

Recently, Rear Adm. Brendan McPherson, deputy commander, U.S. Coast Guard Pacific Area, and Brig. Gen. Robert Davis, director of Operations, U.S. Northern Command, visited the TSC to experience firsthand an Arctic Security Dilemma facilitated by Matt Bell, Dean of the School for Arctic Security Studies. ASDs are a valuable tool for senior leader education about the complexity of the Arctic region. The scenario-based discussion highlighted the strategic implications of Arctic and regionally associated security challenges and the value of strong interagency partnerships in the Arctic region.

UPCOMING COURSES

Arctic Regional Security Orientation Course (ARSOC) 24-03
Virtual, April 15, 2024

Arctic Multi-Domain Law Course (AMLC) 24-03
Virtual, May 7-9

Arctic Regional Security Orientation Course (ARSOC) 24-04
Virtual, July 15-19, 2024

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COFFEE TALKS

Our new Coffee Talk initiative is underway! In an effort to foster stronger community relationships and promote collaborative security solutions for the Arctic region this program aims to connect with stakeholders in the local community, facilitate discussions, and build a network of security leaders, both domestically and internationally. To schedule a Coffee Talk contact the TSC Public Affairs Office at: TSC.Arctic.PublicAffairs@groups.af.mil.



Supporting the NGB through Arctic education & research collaboration

We were honored to welcome representatives from the National Guard Bureau to the Ted Stevens Center as part of our new Coffee Talk Initiative. The NGB's commitment to defending our nation's interests is commendable, and we're eager to collaborate on enhancing security cooperation efforts in the Arctic. This meeting was an excellent opportunity to discuss how we can support the NGB through Arctic education, and research collaboration, while connecting them to our extensive national and international network of Arctic security practitioners. Together, we're building a stronger, more secure Arctic region.



Partnering with U.S. Army Corps of Engineer ERDC & CRREL

Earlier this month we were honored to welcome Orian Welling and Justin Putnam from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center (ERDC) to the center for a Coffee Talk. The conversation focused on how the TSC Research and Analysis Division could partner together with the Cold Regions Research Engineering Laboratory. The CRREL is charged with ensuring the Department of Defense and the nation are prepared to operate in cold, complex, and extreme environments. Through collaborative research efforts we will support innovative solutions for science and engineering challenges in the Arctic region.

TSC welcomes first National Guard liaison to center

Ryan Richard was appointed to the Ted Stevens Center as the National Guard liaison beginning in February 2024 and continues to serve as the intelligence officer for the Alaska National Guard Joint Forces Headquarters at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson. Richard is a native of Pennsylvania and in August of 2001 was commissioned in the Army National Guard. He holds a B.A. in Political Science from Penn State University and a M.A. from the University of Alaska in Public Administration.

In 1995, after graduation from Penn State University, Richard accepted a position in Washington DC. working for Senator Ted Stevens for several years. In 2003, Richard became the protocol officer at Fort Greely, Alaska helping to reestablish the installation as it returned from Base Realignment and Closure status and became the home of the National Missile Defense System. As part of the Alaska National Guard joint staff, Richard maintains Arctic strategy as part of his portfolio and he continues to lead the National Guard Arctic Interest Council, a collaboration of National Guard States with Arctic and cold weather expertise.

Richard has over 24 years of experience as a Signal Corps and Air Defense officer with intelligence and operations experience.



Deputy director Craig Fleener: a career of Arctic service

Born and raised eight miles north of the Arctic Circle in Fort Yukon, Alaska, Craig Fleener has dedicated his entire career to enhancing Arctic security at the local, tribal, state, federal, and international levels. Fleener's extensive career across the Arctic demonstrates a passion for service and leadership, spanning from Alaska Air National Guard intelligence officer to wildlife biologist.

When asked about why Fleener joined the Stevens Center, he explained, "The Stevens Center is the perfect melding of all the things I've done."



Director's Monthly Note



Dear and Distinguished Colleagues,

Greetings from the Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies.

March was an important month on our center's journey towards Full Operational Capacity. We were honored to host Iris Ferguson, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Arctic and Global Resilience, along with U.S. Navy Rear Adm. Scott Robertson,

Director of Strategy, Policy, and Plans, North American Aerospace Defense Command and United States Northern Command, at the Stevens Center to discuss our progress: past, present, and future.

DASD Ferguson and Rear Adm. Robertson had the opportunity to meet the exceptional professionals of our Anchorage-based team and hear from our associate directors on processes, initiatives, and scholarship emerging from the Center. On behalf of the Stevens Center team, we are immensely grateful for DASD Ferguson and Rear Adm. Robertson's time and insights during the visit.

With spring just around the corner here in Alaska, we look forward to a busy few months convening partners and Allies in and across the Arctic.

The Stevens Center will be contributing a panel at this year's Arctic Encounter Symposium, as well as engaging with many of you in valuable dialogue throughout the week. Our concurrent Arctic Practitioner Engagement Course will provide an immersive orientation through a series of visits providing a practical foundation for the unique geophysical and geostrategic characteristics of the North American Arctic.

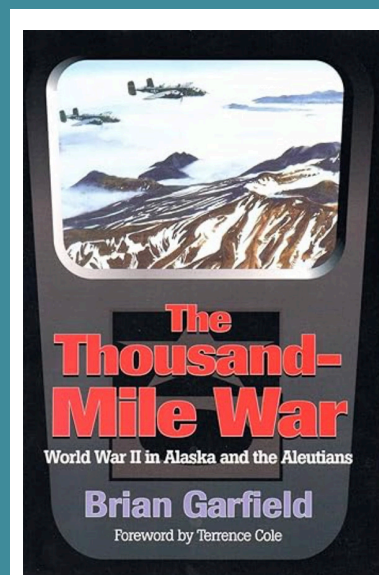
I am truly honored to work with the champions here at the Stevens Center. The extraordinary work of the Stevens Center team in this developing DoD Regional Center is collectively advancing security across the Arctic region.

Very respectfully,
Church

DIRECTOR'S MONTHLY READING RECOMMENDATION

Thousand-Mile War: World War II in Alaska and the Aleutians

The Thousand-Mile War, a powerful story of the battles of the United States and Japan on the bitter rim of the North Pacific, has been acclaimed as one of the great accounts of World War II. Brian Garfield, a novelist and screenwriter whose works have sold some 20 million copies, was searching for a new subject when he came upon the story of this "forgotten war" in Alaska. He found the history of the brave men who had served in the Aleutians so compelling and so little known that he wrote the first full-length history of the Aleutian campaign, and the book remains a favorite among Alaskans.



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