Innovate Experiment Educate Analyze Engage

TED STEVENS CENTER
FOR ARCTIC SECURITY STUDIES

Journal of Arctic Security

Vol. 1 No. 1 Spring 2023

Journal of Arctic Security

From the Center

Senior Leader Perspectives

Arctic Backdrop

Arctic Backdrop

Arctic Resources

Arctic Tensions

Letter from the Senior Advisor

Dear Reader,

Greetings from 61+ Degrees North, 149+ Degrees West, the home of the US Department of Defense's new and growing Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. It's my distinct honor to introduce the first issue of the Stevens Center's *Journal of Arctic Security*, the TSC's flagship professional publication.

This edition marks a starting point for the Center as we embark on our mission to educate practitioners, analyze matters of Arctic and regionally oriented climate security, in-form decision makers, and engage Allies and partners about the region…across the region. Our nascent Center joins the field of Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic groups, scholars, and security professionals at home and abroad who are concerned about challenges and risks across the High North, while also seeing opportunities to improve the overall security equation. This first edition represents a limited glimpse at the field of study as it stands today.

In this issue, we chose to include articles representing a broad set of viewpoints. Senior leader reflections offer strategic context to growing Arctic security challenges. Perspectives on policy, strategy, and history offer a snapshot in time for Arctic experts and also serve as a primer for readers who are Arctic-curious. Submissions from Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic as well as Allies and partners represent our commitment to a diverse and networked approach to support broad and multidisciplined Arctic and regionally oriented climate security. Finally, articles written by and for operators embody our goal of linking strategy to the realities of operating in the harsh Arctic environment.

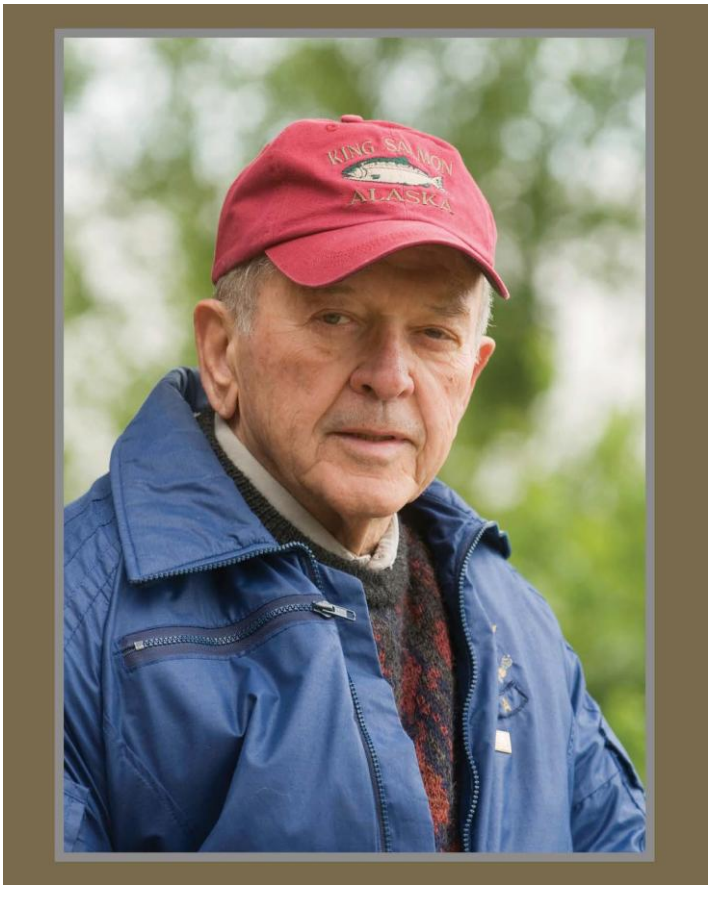
We respectfully offer our sincerest thanks and appreciation to our authors for the time and effort they invested in our center and the Arctic security community.

We hope this edition gives a preview of what's ahead. In publishing our inaugural edition with a wide array of viewpoints, we've attempted to create a structured mosaic to which we will add many more facets over time. Through experimentation and innovation, we know this journal will evolve and contribute important insights to our reader community. Accordingly, we at the TSC believe this edition is a starting point and, we hope, a satisfactory initial illustration of valuable research and reflections to come.

Very best wishes and very respectfully,

Randy "Church" Kee, Maj Gen, USAF (Ret)
Senior Advisor, Arctic Security Affairs
Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies
US Department of Defense

Family Statement



Senator Ted would be so proud of the strong beginning of the Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies. Throughout his 40-year tenure serving Alaska in the United States Senate, Ted raised awareness of the importance of Alaska as a strategic location for national, economic, and energy security. Constantly fighting for resources to support pioneering research and defense programs, he frequently traveled throughout the Arctic to understand the land and its people. We are grateful to Maj Gen Randy "Church" Kee, Lt Col Craig Fleener, and the entire team at the Center for their extraordinary efforts to create the foremost center on Arctic policy and security in the world. We are confident the Center will use existing knowledge and initiatives and collaborate with diverse groups to develop solutions for difficult issues, harnessing the innovative spirit of Alaskans.

A New Center and Journal to Help Guide the Future of the Arctic

Senator Lisa Murkowski

Senator Lisa Murkowski is the senior Senator from the State of Alaska having held that seat since 2002.

In 2018, I received a briefing from Admiral Harry Harris, the commander of what was then US Pacific Command (PACOM) in Hawai'i, about the latest developments in the South China Sea. At one point, Admiral Harris referenced the good work of the Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, which is in Honolulu and part of the US Department of Defense. It made me stop and think: why didn't we have something like that in Alaska for the Arctic?

I turned the concept over in my mind for several months, increasingly convinced that a regional center for the Arctic was both timely and necessary. When I raised it with Pentagon leaders, I was frequently met with pushback, with many concerned it would become a Taj Mahal in the far north. But I was also buoyed by the occasional "Yes! We need that!" from a handful of officers and generals.

At a dinner hosted by General David Goldfein in 2019, I raised the idea to a group of defense leaders who had gathered to discuss the Arctic. And that night, proving again that good things happen over a good meal, I received the encouragement I needed to move forward with a legislative proposal.

At the time, the Department of Defense had five regional centers for security studies: for Europe, Africa, the Near East and South Asia, the Western Hemisphere, and the Asia-Pacific. Those centers focus on research, analysis, education, engagement, and diplomacy to advance transnational relations while furthering our understanding of regional threats and opportunities. I thought that if a similar center for the Arctic ever made sense, surely this was the moment.

With the help of my partners in Alaska's congressional delegation, Senator Dan Sullivan and the late Congressman Don Young, we built bipartisan consensus and successfully added our language to the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021. I secured seed funding in that same year's appropriations process, moving everything another step forward.

To its credit, the Department of Defense moved quickly to create its newest center. The Pentagon smartly selected retired Major General Randy "Church" Kee to lead it in September 2021, and soon after announced that it would be located

at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in Anchorage. This latest point on the Arctic policy map officially came online in August 2022 as the Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies—named for the legendary Alaska Senator who first embraced America's "Arctic-ness."

The rapid approval and establishment of this center is a microcosm of the global attention and resources being devoted to the Arctic. From the lonely days of traveling solo to the few international meetings that paid attention to the region, and trying not to cringe at seven-slide PowerPoints that served mainly to show what an afterthought the Arctic was for most federal agencies, we've come a long way in a short time.

Fifteen years ago, it was mostly those of us who live in Alaska who would have known that America is an Arctic nation. Today, many more do, especially those who serve in our federal government. The effort has been painstaking, but worth it.

We started the Senate Arctic Caucus, growing its membership year after year. We have gone from dreaming about icebreakers to authorizing six and fully funding two, so far. We have begun to invest in some of the very basic infrastructure—like ports and broadband—that the contiguous US already has and takes for granted. Every branch of the military has developed a fully formed Arctic strategy, and we are bringing vital security assets to the US portion of it.

We have also pushed to focus attention and get personnel in place to implement Arctic policy. The Arctic Executive Steering Committee convenes the Deputy Secretaries of each Cabinet-level Department and several other key agencies. We reconstituted the US Department of Energy's Arctic Energy Office and have opened a consulate in Nuuk, Greenland. The US State Department agreed to my request to create an Ambassador-At-Large for the Arctic that will have a staff, a budget, and clear authority—and President Biden recently nominated an Alaskan, Dr. Mike Sfraga, to be the first to hold that post.

The recent timeline is filled with positive actions and initiative on Arctic matters. Yet, this is only the end of the beginning, as Churchill might say. We have a lot of work left ahead to maintain the region as a zone of peace, to do right by its people, and to protect its magnificent natural environment amid dramatic and accelerating change.

That's where the Stevens Center comes in. Its mission is to "build strong, sustainable, domestic and international networks of security leaders and promote and conduct focused research on Arctic security to advance Department of Defense security priorities in the Arctic region." It is tasked with "building while doing" as the future of the far north rapidly unfolds.

As part of that, the Stevens Center will help turn ideas into concepts, concepts into action, and action into results. It will help shape and support Arctic leaders and pioneers and advance our nation's interests in the one of the most important regions in the world. With Allies across the Arctic and around the world, it will work together in a spirit of cooperation, just as Ted Stevens and Dan Inouye always did.

This new *Journal of Arctic & Climate Security Studies* will be central to those efforts. My hope is that it will serve as a venue for Arctic policy with ideas and arguments flowing across and through its pages:

- What kind of presence does the US need in Arctic skies and waters?
- How can we build consensus for the ratification of the Law of the Sea Treaty?
- How can we ensure food security for those who live in the Arctic, especially as fish and wildlife migration patterns change, making it harder and more dangerous to find traditional sustenance?
- How can we build out core infrastructure to improve transportation, communication, and quality of life in the Arctic?
- How can we ensure maritime security, and safeguard waters that will have far greater vessel traffic as the Arctic opens?
- How should we interact with non-Arctic nations who value the far north for its resources and geostrategic location?
- How should we respond to the Arctic's changing climate, including through adaptation and community relocation, and what does a "just transition" for energy look like in the region?
- How should we deal with another Arctic power, Russia, stepping back from its Arctic leadership and cooperation to wage war against innocents in Ukraine?

Years from now, after many editions featuring contributions from many authors, I hope that we'll look back at this journal as a robust repository of productive dialogue that identified and helped us address the questions above, along with many other regional needs and priorities. That it will be a living library showing where we've come from, where we are now, and where we're going.

I also hope that this journal will be a platform for all who have interest in the Arctic—from expert practitioners to novice newcomers, whether they live in

Nome or Utqiaġvik or Rovaniemi or Longyearbyen—to share their best ideas with the world.

It's a privilege to help welcome you to these pages for the first time. Thank you for your interest in the Arctic and the Stevens Center. I hope you enjoy the commentaries that follow—in this edition and many yet to come.

Coordinating US Arctic Policy

AMBASSADOR DAVID BALTON

Ambassador David Balton served as the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Oceans and Fisheries in the Department of State, attaining the rank of Ambassador in 2006. He coordinated US foreign policy concerning oceans and fisheries, as well as issues relating to the Arctic and Antarctica, and oversaw US participation in international organizations dealing with these issues. Ambassador Balton functioned as the lead US negotiator on a wide range of agreements and chaired numerous international meetings. During the US Chairmanship of the Arctic Council (2015-2017), he served as Chair of the Senior Arctic Officials. He also co-chaired Arctic Council Task Forces that produced the 2011 Arctic Search and Rescue Agreement and the 2013 Arctic Oil Pollution Agreement. He separately chaired negotiations to produce an Arctic fisheries agreement.

Introduction

The United States has profound and enduring interests in the Arctic Region. One way to measure our nation's involvement in the Arctic is to consider the sheer number of federal departments and agencies with roles and responsibilities relating to the region—some 20 in all, as well as a number of components of the Executive Office of the President. The Executive Branch carries out its work on the Arctic in partnership with Congress and with a broad array of other entities, including the State of Alaska, Alaska Native Tribes and other organizations, foreign governments, and stakeholders of many kinds. With so many "chefs in the kitchen," coordinating US Arctic policy presents significant challenges. Over the past decades, the federal government has sought to enhance coordination of US Arctic policy in two basic ways. First, it has articulated a series of overarching Arctic policy statements, the most recent of which is the 2022 *National Strategy for the Arctic Region* (NSAR 2022).[1] Second, it has established a pair of White House-led coordinating bodies—the Arctic Executive Steering Committee[2] and the Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee.[3]

This article describes how this coordination is working in practice. It will begin with a brief review the evolution of US Arctic policy statements culminating in NSAR 2022. It will next outline the main work of the Arctic Executive Steering

[1] The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region* (Washington, DC: The White House, October 17, 2022), https://www.whitehouse.gov/.

[2] The Arctic Executive Steering Committee was created pursuant to Section 2 of Executive Order 13689, January 21, 2015.

[3] The Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee was created pursuant to Section 107 of the Arctic Research and Policy Act of 1984, as amended, PL 98-373.

Committee and the Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee. The article concludes with some thoughts about the future of US Arctic policy.

US Arctic Policy Statements

In 1994, the Clinton Administration issued a brief paper, entitled "United States Policy on the Arctic and Antarctic Regions,"[4] setting forth six principal objectives of the United States in the Arctic region:

1. Meeting post-Cold War national security and defense needs
2. Protecting the Arctic environment and conserving its biological resources
3. Assuring that natural resource management and economic development in the region are environmentally sustainable
4. Strengthening institutions for cooperation among the eight Arctic nations
5. Involving the Arctic's Indigenous Peoples in decisions that affect them
6. Enhancing scientific monitoring and research into local, regional and global environmental issues

The ensuing years brought considerable change to the Arctic Region, including the establishment of the Arctic Council, a growing awareness of the effects of climate change in the Arctic, and greater concern about the effects of Arctic climate change on the rest of the planet. Just before leaving office, the George W. Bush Administration completed an extensive review of US policy in the Arctic, which yielded a much more detailed statement of US Arctic policy.[5] The new "Arctic Region Policy" sought to take account of these developments, but nevertheless left essentially unchanged the six principal objectives of the United States that the Clinton Administration had set forth 15 years earlier.[6]

The Obama Administration, which reshaped US policy on many fronts, also sought to put its stamp on the Arctic. In 2013, it issued the first *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*,[7] produced after intensive interagency discussions and consultations with many stakeholders outside the US Executive Branch. The 2013 document presented three "lines of effort" that the United States would pursue with respect to the Arctic:

[4] Presidential Decision Directive/NSC-26, June 9, 1994.

[5] National Security Presidential Directive 66/Homeland Security Presidential Directive 25, January 9, 2009.

[6] The only change in these six objectives was to replace the phrase "post-Cold War national security and defense needs" with the phrase "national security and homeland security needs relevant to the Arctic region."

[7] The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region* (Washington, DC: The White House, May 23, 2013), https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/.

- Advance United States security interests
- Pursue responsible Arctic region stewardship
- Strengthen international cooperation

In pursuing those lines of effort, four "guiding principles" would inform US actions:

- Safeguard peace and stability
- Make decisions using the best available information
- Pursue innovative arrangements
- Consult and coordinate with Alaska Natives

The 2013 National Strategy and its subsequent Implementation Plan[8] reflected a growing emphasis on environmental protection in the Arctic, an emphasis that became even more pronounced in the final years of the Obama Administration, as President Obama sought to highlight the growing threat of climate change in the Arctic in support of efforts to bring the negotiation of the Paris Agreement to a successful conclusion. Notwithstanding this concerted change in emphasis, much of the Obama-era Arctic policy reinforced the basic principles articulated in the Clinton and Bush policy statements.

Shortly after assuming office, President Biden embarked on the most recent review of US Arctic policy, which resulted in a new National Strategy—NSAR 2022, released in October 2022.[9]

Unlike the earlier policy statements, NSAR 2022 needed to take account of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine that began in February 2022, which has fundamentally altered relations between Russia and Western nations, including with respect to the Arctic Region. NSAR 2022 also addresses the climate crisis with greater urgency and directs new investments in sustainable development to improve livelihoods for Arctic residents, while conserving the environment.

NSAR 2022 begins with a vision for the Arctic: "The United States seeks an Arctic region that is peaceful, stable, prosperous and cooperative." That sentence, drafted before Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, and also reflected in the 2022 *National Security Strategy*, remains the desired end-state, notwithstanding the challenges resulting from Russia's war in Ukraine.[10] In pursuit of this end-

[8] US Arctic Research Commission, *Implementation Plan for the National Strategy for the Arctic Region* (Washington, DC: US Arctic Research Commission, January 2014), https://www.arctic.gov/.

[9] *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*.

[10] The White House, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, October 12, 2022), https://www.whitehouse.gov/.

state, NSAR 2022 is organized around four mutually reinforcing pillars, spanning both domestic and international issues.

- Pillar 1—Security: This pillar focuses primarily on actions to deter threats to the US homeland and our Allies and reaffirms our nation's commitment to protect the American people and defend our sovereign territory.
- Pillar 2—Climate Change and Environmental Protection: This pillar describes steps that the federal government will take in partnership with Alaskan communities and the State of Alaska to build resilience to the impacts of climate change and to reduce emissions from the Arctic as part of broader global mitigation efforts.
- Pillar 3—Sustainable Economic Development: This pillar includes a wide range of initiatives to spur development of Alaska's economy on a sustainable basis and to improve livelihoods in Alaska, including for Alaska Native communities. The pillar also addresses efforts to work with other nations in advancing sustainable development throughout the Arctic.
- Pillar 4—International Cooperation and Governance: This pillar lays out steps that the United States will take to sustain institutions for Arctic cooperation, including in response to the threats to cooperation resulting from Russia's war in Ukraine.[11]

Implementation of NSAR 2022, which will guide US Arctic policy in the coming decade, will require significant effort and collaboration. To assist in that process, and to lend greater specificity to each of the high-level objectives contained in NSAR 2022, the federal government is developing an Implementation Plan that will identify next steps (with appropriate targets and timetables), lead and supporting agencies, and external partners. The Implementation Plan will also include metrics for assessing progress and a regular review process.

- Taken as a whole, the four US Arctic policy statements reflect both some real evolution, as our nation has sought to meet the changing circumstances of the Arctic region, as well as a remarkable degree of continuity. As noted at the outset of this article, the fundamental interests of the United States in the Arctic are enduring. The six principal objectives set forth in our nation's

[11] NSAR 2022 also includes five guiding principles to be applied across all four pillars: (1) consult, coordinate, and co-manage with Alaska Native Tribes and communities; (2) deepen relationships with allies and partners; (3) plan for long lead-time investments; (4) cultivate cross-sectoral coalitions and innovative ideas; and (5) commit to a whole-of-government, evidence-based approach.

first Arctic policy statement and echoed in each of the later policy documents reflect our basic underlying interests in the region, and could be restated in a general way as follows:

- We seek to keep the region peaceful and stable.
- We seek to protect the Arctic environment.
- We seek to promote sustainable development in the region.
- We seek to uphold our commitments to Arctic Indigenous Peoples.
- We seek to better understand the region.
- We seek to enhance international cooperation in the region.

The Arctic Executive Steering Committee

As noted above, the creation of the Arctic Executive Steering Committee (AESC) occurred during the second term of the Obama Administration. Recognizing that the rapid changes taking place in the Arctic would require an effective White House-led mechanism to oversee the Nation's efforts to implement its strategic priorities in the region, President Obama issued Executive Order No. 13689 in January 2015, *Enhancing Coordination of National Efforts in the Arctic*. This Executive Order established the AESC, with a mandate to "provide guidance to executive departments and agencies and enhance coordination of federal Arctic policies across agencies and offices, and, where applicable, with State, local, and Tribal governments and Alaska Native organizations, academic and research institutions, and the private and nonprofit sectors."

Over the next two years, the AESC produced a number of noteworthy accomplishments, including:

- Assisting with the preparation and launching of the US chairmanship of the Arctic Council in May 2015.
- Organizing the Conference on Global Leadership in the Arctic in Anchorage, Alaska in August 2015, which brought together President Obama and many other world leaders to strengthen cooperation on Arctic and climate change issues.[12] Following the conference, President Obama's stops else-

[12] See US Department of State, Conference on Global Leadership in the Arctic: August 30-31, 2015, https://2009-2017.state.gov/.

where in Alaska made him the first sitting President in US history to travel to the Arctic.

- Convening the White House Arctic Science Ministerial in September 2016,[13] which set in motion a series of such ministerial meetings convened in other nations in subsequent years.

The AESC fell largely dormant during the Trump Administration, though one of its subgroups continued to facilitate information exchange among departments and agencies.

The Biden Administration reactivated the AESC during its first year in office. The Director of the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy, who chairs the AESC, and the National Security Advisor, who serves as vice-chair, convened the first principals' meeting of the reactivated AESC in December 2021; as of this writing, four such meetings have taken place. During this period, the AESC has:

- Launched eight multi-agency initiatives to address pressing issues in the Alaskan Arctic and throughout the circumpolar region;
- Through its subgroup known as the Task Force on the Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area,[14] embarked on an innovative partnership with Tribal organizations to tackle problems arising in the Northern Bering Sea region. President Biden made this effort possible when, on his first day in office, he reinstated an Executive Order creating the Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area. It is worth noting that, on the same day, the federal government and Tribal Nations issued "Memorandum on Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships"[15] that seeks to enhance their ability to work together effectively; and
- In partnership with the National Security Council, initiated work on an Implementation Plan for NSAR 2022.[16]

[13] See United States Arctic Research Commission, "Supporting Arctic Science: A Summary of the White House Arctic Science Ministerial," https://www.arctic.gov/.

[14] Arctic Executive Steering Committee, *Northern Bering Sea Climate Resilience Area* (Washington, DC: The White House, n.d., https://www.whitehouse.gov/.

[15] Joseph R. Biden Jr., President, to heads of executive departments and agencies, memorandum, subject: Tribal Consultation and Strengthening Nation-to-Nation Relationships, 26 January 2021, https://www.whitehouse.gov/.

[16] For further information about the work of the AESC, see https://www.whitehouse.gov/.

Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee

Congress called for the creation of the Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee (IARPC) in 1984, as part of the Arctic Research and Policy Act. As one of its primary responsibilities under that Act, IARPC works with the US Arctic Research Commission[17] to "develop and establish an integrated national Arctic research policy that will guide federal agencies in developing and implementing their research programs in the Arctic."[18] The Director of the National Science Foundation chairs IARPC, which now includes 18 federal departments and agencies as members.[19]

Every five years, IARPC is required by law "to prepare and execute an Arctic Research Plan in coordination with the US Arctic Research Commission, the Governor of the State of Alaska, residents of the Arctic, the private sector, and public interest groups." The plan outlines a vision for federal agencies to address emerging research questions about the Arctic, and provides pathways to strengthen relationships between federal agencies and Indigenous communities, academia and other non-federal researchers, the State of Alaska, nonprofits, and private sector organizations.

The most recent Arctic Research Plan, released in December 2021, covers the years 2022-2026.[20] This plan represents a bold step forward. It moves beyond disciplinary-specific goals to four interdisciplinary priorities that address critical research needs in the Arctic. Those goals are:

- **Community Resilience and Health**: Improve community resilience and well-being by strengthening research and the development of tools to increase understanding of interdependent social, natural, and built systems in the Arctic.
- **Arctic Systems Interactions**: Enhance our ability to observe, understand, predict, and project the Arctic's dynamic interconnected systems and their linkages to the Earth system as a whole.

[17] US Arctic Research Commission, website, n.d., https://www.arctic.gov/.

[18] See footnote 3, supra.

[19] In July 2010, a presidential memo established IARPC as an interagency working group of the National Science and Technology Council Committee on Environment. IARPC now reports directly to the Committee on Climate and Environment.

[20] Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee, "Arctic Research Plan 2022-2026: Implementation," n.d., https://www.iarpccollaborations.org/.

- **Sustainable Economies and Livelihoods**: Observe and understand the Arctic's natural, social, and built systems to promote sustainable economies and livelihoods.
- **Risk Management and Hazard Mitigation**: Secure and improve quality of life through an understanding of disaster risk exposure, sensitivity to hazard, and adaptive capacity.

The current Arctic Research Plan also acknowledges the importance of several activities that are foundational to research and by their nature will extend beyond the five-year period of this plan. These are (1) data management; (2) education, training, and capacity building associated with Arctic research; monitoring, observing, modeling, and prediction; participatory research and Indigenous leadership in research; and (5) technology application and innovation.

Finally, the 2022-2026 Plan was developed through a highly inclusive process involving extensive consultation with Alaska Native Tribes, as well as engagement with the State of Alaska and numerous others. The plan recognizes the importance of equity and inclusion, especially with respect to Indigenous Peoples. It acknowledges the contributions that Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous knowledge bring to an improved understanding of the Arctic system and to the effort to respond to those changes.

Conclusion: The Future of US Arctic Policy

Our nation's efforts to enhance coordination of US Arctic policy have certainly grown significantly since the end of the Cold War, with the issuance of four overarching Arctic policy statements and through the work of both the AESC and IARPC. While the substance of US Arctic policy itself has shown a great deal of continuity in this period, there is another sense in which US Arctic policy has changed—and will need to continue to change—to meet two distinct challenges. First, climate change has risen to crisis levels in the Arctic, and is demanding urgent attention and action by the United States and others. Second, the disruption in relations between Russia and the other Arctic nations stemming from the ongoing war in Ukraine has given rise to serious uncertainties about the future of international cooperation in the region. Our nation's ability to respond effectively to these twin developments is surely the main test of US Arctic policy today.

To meet this test, we will need to deploy all tools at our disposal. Using NSAR 2022 and the 2022-2026 Arctic Research Plan as roadmaps, the AESC and IARPC can strengthen coordination of our Nation's activities and aspirations in the Arctic, in partnership with many others who care about the region. The federal Government also has one promising new tool—the Ted Stevens Center for Arctic

Security Studies, which is quickly developing the capacity to train the next generation of Arctic leaders, to conduct focused research in advance of US security interests in the region, and to engage with domestic and international partners in promoting understanding of the Arctic.

Challenging Our Conventional Thinking in the Arctic

JAMES A. HURSCH

Mr. James A. Hursch, a career member of the Senior Executive Service, was appointed as Director of the Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA) on January 2, 2022. DSCA's mission is to advance US defense and foreign policy interests by building the capacity of US Allies and partner nations to respond to shared challenges. DSCA oversees Security Cooperation programs including: Foreign Military Sales, Foreign Military Financing, International Military Education and Training, and DOD Humanitarian Assistance. DSCA's component organizations include the Defense Institute of International Legal Studies, the Defense Security Cooperation University, and the Institute for Security Governance. The agency also serves as the Executive Agent for the six Department of Defense (DOD) Regional Centers for Security Studies.

For many people, the Arctic remains a distant land transfixed in time: a monolith of sea, rock, and ice—a foreboding landscape shaped by nature and its narrative formed through the heroics of scientific exploration. Untouchable, unreal.

My impression of the Arctic stands in contrast to this and comes from personal experience. It is this experience—as well as an appreciation for this dynamic and very tangible region—that continues to inform my work today.

An Outing to Mount Dundas

Nearly three decades ago, I had the good fortune of being the Nordic desk officer for the Office of the Secretary of Defense. It required frequent travel to Greenland and the High North of Europe and of all these excursions, there was one journey in particular that stood out.

In the late 1990s, I traveled with the Greenland Permanent Committee to Thule Air Base, now Pituffik Space Base, the United States' northernmost military installation, located approximately 1,200 kilometers (750 miles) north of the Arctic Circle. The base, a result of defense agreements between the United States and the Kingdom of Denmark, supports missile warning, missile defense, and space surveillance missions. We were there to assess the feasibility of returning part of the base to the native inhabitants.

After finishing dinner late on a summer evening, we found ourselves engaging in a rite of passage: we set out to climb the nearby Mount Dundas, a 724-foot-high landmark of shale slabs. The terrain was steep and inaccessible to motor vehicles or other land transportation, and to navigate the final 50-foot climb, we ascended—

one person at a time—using a fixed rope. When we finally reached the top of the mountain, the Air Force delivered supplies to our group using helicopters.

Despite the challenge involved in the climb, the view from the summit made it worth the effort. I recall standing atop the mountain overlooking three independent glaciers across a magnificent Arctic landscape. Ice caps or smaller glaciers cover more than 80 percent of Greenland's 840,000 square miles. We happened to make the trip at an opportune time; the sea ice thins just enough for supply ships to reach the base during a brief window each summer.

Amidst the permafrost and frigid weather, this experience and countless others since have struck me on a visceral level, expanding my appreciation for the beauty, fragility, and scale of this region. I have observed its complexities, as well as the adaptiveness and resilience required for our forces to operate there. Thus through a practitioner's lens, I have come to appreciate the strategic importance of the Arctic to the United States and to our Allies and partners. And now, as I lead our nation's Defense Security Cooperation Agency (DSCA)—an organization charged with encouraging and enabling Allies and partners to respond to shared challenges—the Arctic remains close to mind, as it should for all those interested in preserving our national security.

The Changing Conditions of the Arctic Drive National Strategy

In October, the White House produced its *National Strategy for the Arctic Region* (NSAR), which outlined four pillars of interest to the United States over the next ten years: security, climate change and environmental protection, sustainable economic development, and international cooperation and governance.[1] The strategy is informed by the urgency of changing conditions in the Arctic, namely challenges and opportunities resulting from climate change; new corridors of strategic interactions, as they are referred to in the *National Defense Strategy* (NDS);[2] and the imperative to work cooperatively in addressing and responding to these circumstances.

The President's strategy describes how climate change is uniquely affecting the region, yielding "unstable terrain, vulnerable coasts, changing ecosystems, and a

[1] The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region* (Washington, DC: The White House, October 17, 2022), https://www.whitehouse.gov/..

[2] The NDS further states that climate change "...will increase demands, including on the Joint Force, for disaster response and defense support of civil authorities, and affect security relationships with some Allies and partners." US Department of Defense, 2022 *National Defense Strategy of the United States*, October 27, 2022, 6, https://media.defense.gov/.

worsening biodiversity crisis."[3] Indeed, according to the latest report card from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Greenland ice sheet is in its 25th consecutive year of ice loss, and the region is continuing to "warm more than twice as fast as the rest of the globe."[4] While changes like these yield access to once-frozen waters, thawing permafrost and other physical changes can create challenges, including to physical infrastructure across the region.

Why is this important to the Department of Defense and DSCA? In October 2021, in response to Executive Order 14008, "Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad,"[5] the Department of Defense released its Climate Risk Analysis (DCRA), describing the risks of climate change to Department strategies, plans, capabilities, missions, and equipment, as well as those of US Allies and partners.[6] In the publicly-released version of this analysis, the Department illustrated representative climate change hazards in the Arctic, including sea and glacial ice retreat, as well as sea level rise. It further identified potential security implications to "transport, communication, and monitoring capabilities to operate in harsh environments," as well as an "altered, limited, or constrained environment for military operations."[7]

Climate change and its effects inherently extend beyond political boundaries. At a global level, and as described in the DCRA, climate change can contribute to instability and conflict, stressing conditions that, for example, can give arise to shifts in regional balances of power, which "may affect US national interests directly or indirectly," and may result in Allies or partners requesting US assistance.[8] As further provided by the DCRA, in the Arctic, climate change is affecting the

[3] US Department of Defense, 2022 *National Defense Strategy of the United States*, 10.

[4] US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, M.L. Druckenmiller, R.L. Thoman, and T.A. Moon, Eds. Arctic Report Card 2022, December 13, 2022, https://www.arctic.noaa.gov/.

[5] E.O. 14008 elevated climate considerations to be "an essential element of United States foreign policy and national security" and highlighted the urgency of tackling climate change to "avoid the most catastrophic impacts." The White House, "Tackling the Climate Crisis at Home and Abroad," E.O. 14008, January 27, 2021, https://www.federalregister.gov/.

[6] "DCRA" refers to its full title, the Department of Defense Climate Risk Analysis. US Department of Defense, Office of the Under Secretary for Policy (Strategy, Plans, and Capabilities), Department of Defense Climate Risk Analysis, Report Submitted to the National Security Council, 2022.

[7] Department of Defense Climate Risk Analysis, 10.

[8] Department of Defense Climate Risk Analysis, 8; US House of Representatives Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Committee, Testimony of Vice Admiral Peter Gautier, Coast Guard Deputy Commandant for Operations, "US Coast Guard Leadership on Arctic Safety, Security, and Environmental Responsibility," December 7, 2022, 1. Consistent with section 103(d) for E.O. 14008, the DCRA calls out "security cooperation programs" as an example of areas where climate considerations will be incorporated. US Department of Defense, Office of the Under Secretary for Policy, 7.

natural environment and forming "a new frontier of geostrategic competition,"[9] competition that the US Coast Guard has observed firsthand and recently reported to Congress.[10]

Together, these elements create opportunity for uncertainty and promise. Accordingly, both the NSAR and the NDS emphasize that the Arctic region should be governed by internationally-agreed upon rules and norms, stressing the importance of strategic cooperation in this domain.[11]

The Role of Security Cooperation

Secretary of Defense Austin has said that "for half a century now, DSCA has been bringing together the United States, our Allies, and our partners to build a unified front, to extend our strengths, and to deepen our security."[12] The security cooperation activities of DSCA are not unlike many instruments the United States employs (such as diplomacy) to leverage shared interests, fend against instability, and bolster a rules-based order.[13] Deepening relationships with Allies and partners in the Arctic is one of the NSAR's five guiding principles, which includes seeking to maximize our unity of effort, increasing cooperation, and improving interoperability and information-sharing.[14]

DSCA's role forms an important and unique nexus between US foreign policy and defense policy. Our agency has long been responsible for administering security assistance programs on behalf of the US Department of State, and we also execute and administer several Department of Defense security cooperation authorities, such as Institutional Capacity Building (ICB) programs, as well as activities funded by the Overseas Humanitarian, Disaster, and Civic Aid (OHDACA) appropriation, among others. OHDACA and our ICB programs (such as DSCA's Institute for Security Governance and our Defense Institute of International Legal Studies) are in fact named by the DCRA among examples of tools, funds, and programs that can help support international partner climate resilience.[15] Our

[9] US Department of Defense, Office of the Under Secretary for Policy, 6.

[10] US House of Representatives, 3.

[11] *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*, 7. 2022 *National Defense Strategy of the United States*, 16.

[12] US Secretary of Defense, "DSCA Birthday Message from the Secretary," July 20, 2022, https://www.dsca.mil/.

[13] It is important to note that cultivating strong international relationships and building coalitions among Arctic partners through the Department of Defense can and does go beyond traditional security cooperation activities, such as those recently outlined in US Coast Guard testimony. See: US House of Representatives, Testimony of Vice Admiral Peter Gautier, 2022.

[14] *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*, 8-9.

[15] US Department of Defense, Office of the Under Secretary for Policy, 18.

agency's hallmark is furnishing full-spectrum capabilities to partners, an effort that goes beyond typical defense articles and services. Our people-to-people programs—such as education, specialized training, and advising activities—can yield tremendous benefits in areas like the Arctic.

Testament to this approach is the Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies (TSC). As the Department's executive agent for Regional Centers, DSCA has supported the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy in standing up the TSC. In partnership with the US Department of the Air Force, existing Regional Centers, and local Alaskan partners, DSCA has been proud to help build the administrative and logistical backbone to drive the Department's newest Regional Center to full operational capability. The fruits of this work—sound business practices, a world-class leadership team, and early integration with other security cooperation implementers—will prepare the TSC and security cooperation enterprise for long-term success. Importantly, the TSC and its achievements will help support one of the NSAR's five guiding principles in cultivating cross-sectoral coalitions to advance expertise and cooperation in the Arctic. I was proud to be present at the TSC's opening ceremony in Alaska in August 2022 and I look forward to watching their continued growth and activity working on Arctic issues.

Conclusion

Lewis Pugh, a renowned distance swimmer dubbed the "Sir Edmund Hillary of swimming," completed in 2007 the first long-distance swim across the North Pole to highlight the retreat of Arctic sea ice. As someone else who has a personal connection to the Arctic, he said this about the region: "We need to save the Arctic not just because of the polar bears, and not because it is the most beautiful place in the world, but because our very survival depends on it."[16]

The arc of US history has taken us far from our nation's purchase of Alaska, which at the time was criticized as "Seward's Folly." Much has changed since 1867, and we now recognize the Arctic's importance through a concerted national agenda that promotes a peaceful, stable, prosperous, and cooperative region. As DSCA, the TSC, and other Department of Defense organizations tackle the challenges presented by this ever-changing setting, I am confident that these efforts—in concert with our Allies and partners—will help meet common interests while preserving a sustainable and resilient environment for the Arctic and its people. In many respects, our very survival depends on it.

[16] Gregory M. Lamb, "An Icy Plunge to Save the Melting Arctic," *Christian Science Monitor*, January 10, 2008, https://www.csmonitor.com/.

Deepening Arctic Literacy

An Introduction to the Ted Stevens Center

MELISSA G. DALTON

Melissa G. Dalton was sworn in as the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Hemispheric Affairs on March 4, 2022. She is responsible for advising the Secretary of Defense and other senior defense leaders on defense continuity and mission assurance; homeland defense and defense support of civil authorities; Arctic and global resilience; and US defense and security policy for Canada, Mexico, Central America, the Caribbean, and South America.

On 9 June 2021, Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III established the Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies (TSC)—the Defense Department's first new Regional Center in twenty years. Now ten months later, with the People's Republic of China (PRC) making increasing inroads into the Arctic and with Russia's unprovoked, further invasion of Ukraine now in its second year, it's worth reflecting on the changes to the strategic environment that gave rise to the Secretary's historic decision.

Peace and security in the Arctic region are being threatened by a convergence of environmental, technological, and geostrategic trends, including a rapidly changing climate, accelerating economic development, and deployment of new technologies such as hypersonic weapons that create new threats to the United States and our Allies and partners from and through the Arctic. Increasing challenges to the rules-based international order, from both the PRC and Russia—the former being the pacing challenge for the DOD—have brought an end to the era of "Arctic exceptionalism." Arctic nations are no longer willing to set aside their differences to cooperate on Arctic issues. The Arctic is now at an inflection point, as international tensions from outside the Arctic now threaten to undermine stability within the region and the Arctic is rapidly becoming a venue of increasing strategic competition.

The changing geostrategic environment means that the Arctic region is once again an important operating environment, as it was during the Cold War and World War II. However, two decades focused on expeditionary operations in the Middle East have atrophied the US military's wherewithal to operate in extreme cold weather environments. The geopolitical landscape also has changed profoundly because of Russia's further invasion of Ukraine beginning in February 2022, which hastened Sweden and Finland's historic decision to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Once they are full members, NATO will have new populations and territory to defend—as well as two more highly capable Allies to help

deter further Russian aggression. At the same time, the PRC has been attempting to insert itself in Arctic regional governance, despite not being an Arctic state. The PRC also is working to advance its understanding of the region through dual-use research activities and is increasingly seeking to leverage financial investments in Arctic communities to gain influence in strategic locations. These actions by the PRC have not gone unnoticed by our Allies and partners, and likeminded Arctic states are coalescing around this shared concern. This changed strategic environment necessitates a deepened literacy of the Arctic region, and the TSC will play a vital role in ensuring that the United States and our Allies and partners have the training and understanding of the Arctic required to compete there, and fight and win if necessary.

As the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense and Hemispheric Affairs, I have oversight responsibilities for the TSC, and I gave the organization's leaders some foundational guidance to help it chart its course during its first year. I prioritized three lines of effort: Executive Education, Outreach and Engagement, and Research and Analysis. Through these lines of effort, the TSC will support all four strategic pillars of the 2022 National Strategy for the Arctic Region (NSAR), which focus on Security, Climate Change, Sustainable Economic Development, and International Cooperation and Governance.

Executive Education

I have charged the TSC to educate DOD's senior leaders on the gamut of complex Arctic issues, from the impacts of climate change to the logistical challenges of sustaining Arctic operations. I am pleased with the menu of courses the TSC has assembled, from executive-level seminars and tabletop exercises to its flagship Arctic Region Security Orientation Course (ARSOC). I also applaud the innovative way the TSC is leveraging our pandemic "lessons learned" to make those courses widely available in virtual and hybrid formats. Some of my own staff, particularly new hires into our new Office of Arctic and Global Resilience Policy, participate in these courses to improve their own "Arctic literacy" and establish connections with the growing Arctic security community of interest.

I have also asked the TSC to educate the next generation of leaders, not only from the United States, but also from Allied and partner countries. I want these young leaders to engage in robust dialogue about the future of an increasingly accessible and strategic Arctic region and to develop a common perspective about the opportunities and challenges presented by this unique moment in history. I have also asked the TSC to invite personnel from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to their events as feasible to ensure course participants benefit from a range of external perspectives. I look to the TSC to gather lessons learned from

Arctic military exercises and to incorporate them into its educational and outreach activities to make sure the education it is offering is grounded in operational experience and relevant to the core business of the Department of Defense.

Outreach and Engagement

One of the TSC's real advantages is its location in Alaska. It is uniquely positioned to help engage critical stakeholders with respect to US policy in the Arctic, particularly Alaska Native communities. Of course, the Defense Department has a significant operational presence in Alaska as well, and I've asked the TSC to invest in its working relationships with US Alaska Command and NORAD-USNORTHCOM as well. I've also urged the TSC to engage our European Allies and partners, in concert with the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, and to remain engaged with the Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center given the growing challenge posed by the PRC in the Arctic region. Our Allies and partners are our center of gravity, and the TSC's role in continuing to build strong relationships among like-minded states is important to advancing US national security objectives in the Arctic.

Research and Analysis

The final thing I've asked the TSC to develop is a research program to improve the Department's understanding of the Arctic region. I've asked the TSC to build a collaborative network with other institutions to link their research with policy development. The scope of this research will likely range from the geophysical to the geostrategic to support the Department's operations in the Arctic, as well as elsewhere in the world. Their research will inform our work in developing and advocating for the Arctic capabilities most needed by the Joint Force.

I envision the TSC's three lines of effort as mutually supporting. The TSC's educational mission will increase understanding among DOD senior leaders (and future leaders) of the complexities of campaigning in the Arctic region and the risks posed by both the changing Arctic environment and the activities of our strategic competitors in the Arctic. This Arctic literacy will improve DOD's strategic decision-making and operational effectiveness as we implement the NSAR and update the Department's own Arctic strategy. The TSC's outreach and engagement will extend and strengthen the network of Allies and partners that is our strategic strength. This cooperation will result in more innovative problem-solving and better-coordinated implementation of those solutions. The TSC's research and analysis efforts will help us partner more effectively with other research organiza-

tions to understand changes in the Arctic operating environment, identify capability gaps, and focus the search for solutions that meet the Department's needs. I am honored to contribute to this first edition of the Ted Stevens Center's *Journal of Arctic and Climate Security Studies*. I look forward to continued partnership with the TSC in 2023 and beyond. 

The Changing Arctic Brings a New Theater for Strategic Competition

GEN GLEN D. VANHERCK, USAF

Gen Glen D. VanHerck is Commander, United States Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) and North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), Peterson Space Force Base, Colorado.

As the Commander of North American Aerospace Defense Command and US Northern Command, I see the superb efforts of our men and women every day to defend the homeland and North America. Our partnerships make our work possible—the unrivaled strength of the United States military, NORAD's unique bi-national relationship with Canada, and the strategic advantage of our alliances and partnerships around the world. However, strategic competitors continue to challenge the long-standing rules-based international order while eroding our competitive advantage, as they develop advanced capabilities to place North America at risk. As I look towards the future, I believe the greatest risk facing our nation is an inability to change at the pace the strategic environment demands. Nowhere is this more evident than in the Arctic.

We know the Arctic is strategic terrain, as it links partners in Europe and Asia to North America and is becoming increasingly accessible to those countries that seek military and economic advantages. Recent events show an increased level of commitment to the region from the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Russia, which brings potential threats much closer to home. The US has a vested interest in leading efforts to shape the Arctic's future as a stable region governed by established international rules and norms. We must act now, lest we concede the region to strategic competitors who could jeopardize a peaceful, stable, and prosperous future for the Arctic and place North America and our Allies and partners at increased risk.

As changing environmental conditions make the Arctic more accessible, the PRC and Russia have declared, and are demonstrating through action, their interest and intent to pursue its vast resources. Current estimates indicate the Arctic contains approximately one-third of the world's undiscovered natural gas reserves, over ten percent of the world's oil reserves, vast fisheries, and more than one trillion USD in rare earth minerals. These economic opportunities bring strategic

competitors in close proximity, as the PRC and Russia look to defend their access to the region with military presence.

The People's Republic of China aims to expand its influence in the northern latitudes, and Xi Jinping has stated his goal of becoming a great polar power. Over the past decade, the PRC has dramatically increased its Arctic activities, extending its regional influence through economic exploitation to secure vital natural resources. In September 2021, China completed its twelfth Arctic naval expedition under the auspices of Arctic research. However, analysts describe the true purpose of these operations is to "map" the region for future military operations to support their broader Arctic objectives. The PRC has also increased military cooperation with Russia in the North Pacific and the Arctic. In the fall of 2022, both nations conducted their first-ever combined naval transit of the Aleutian Islands. The PRC's actions indicate they are laying the foundation to increase military capability and presence in the region to support strategic objectives as a near-Arctic state.

Russia considers the Arctic a top strategic priority as it aims to strengthen its territorial sovereignty over Arctic approaches to its homeland and capitalize on the region's natural resources. Russia continues to enhance its military capabilities in the Arctic, bolstering air and coastal defense systems and upgrading infrastructure. The nation's Northern Fleet provides a credible assured second-strike capability and demonstrates its abilities through the conduct of naval exercises in and near Arctic waters routinely. Their strategic bomber force continues to rehearse simulated attacks on North America from Arctic airspace. Russia has also strengthened its approach to Arctic waterways and territory in line with Putin's stated in-tent to interfere with foreign vessels transiting the Northern Sea Route. Russia's ongoing conflict in Ukraine has not affected these naval and strategic forces. The nation maintains and continues to exercise strategic capabilities globally, including fielded nuclear forces and air and sea-launched cruise missiles, while maintaining extensive cyber capabilities used around the globe to advance its interests. These actions overtly challenge the international rules-based order, and we should anticipate Russia would seek to coerce and deter the actions of other nations in the Arctic for its benefit.

The US is not standing idly by as the PRC and Russia pursue their strategic Arctic goals and challenge the rules-based international order. The nation's strategic documents articulate the importance of US interests in the region. The White House released an Arctic Strategy in October 2022 that states the objective of deterring threats to the US and Allies by improving capabilities to defend our Arctic interests. The 2022 National Defense Strategy also established the goal of a stable Arctic through a "monitor and respond" approach that relies on the Department of Defense's ability to deploy forces globally at the time and place of

our choosing to deter competitor actions. As the commander of US Northern Command, I am the advocate for our military presence and capabilities in the Arctic. I have adopted a campaigning approach for NORAD and USNORTHCOM missions to deter strategic competitors, shape their perceptions and behavior, and sustain our enduring advantages. The dynamic pursuit of campaign goals allows us to stay in com-petition and deter conflict with strategic competitors.

Through activities such as Operation NOBLE DEFENDER and annual exercises in the High North, we demonstrate our intent and capabilities to deter com-petitors and assure Allies and partners, as well as convey the need for trained and ready forces to support national security objectives in the Arctic. During Opera-tion NOBLE DEFENDER in January 2023, NORAD and USNORTHCOM conducted sustained operations in Alaska, Canada, and Pituffik Space Base, Green-land, employing US and Canadian forces to counter simulated long-range aviation threats to North America. This operation tested our capabilities and demonstrated our readiness. Moving forward, we will seek to expand participation in these events to Arctic nation mission partners, to put into action the concept of globally-inte-grated, layered, homeland defense. Our competitors do not have the asymmetric advantage of these invaluable relationships.

While we have made significant progress in Arctic campaigning, much work remains to match our capabilities to mission. First, we need improved domain awareness to see threats in real time to expand deterrence options and increase senior leader decision space. Recent budget commitments in the US and Canada for Over the Horizon Radar systems will modernize legacy NORAD warning systems and greatly improve Arctic domain awareness. However, we should also pursue data sharing between Arctic partners to leverage existing sensors for near-term improvements to domain awareness.

We also need to invest in upgrades to military infrastructure in the Arctic to support persistent and sustained operations at the time and place of our choosing. Investment must include physical and communications capabilities to ensure re-siliency in harsh Arctic conditions and compatibility with current and future force systems. By extension, the military services need to invest in the equipment and training required to provide ready forces capable of Arctic operations year-round. Much as the Arctic benefits from the combined efforts of our Joint Force, Ca-nadian, and international partners, NORAD and USNORTHCOM benefit from the work of the Ted Stevens Center to increase understanding of Arctic priorities and challenges. Established a little over one year ago, the Ted Stevens Center has increased cooperation and built an extensive network of Arctic-minded interna-tional security practitioners to help shape a stable and cooperative future for the

region. The Ted Stevens Center also provides critical advocacy with industry and academia for the development of novel concepts and solutions to expand our ability to conduct sustained operations under Arctic conditions.

The Arctic represents an increasingly complex strategic environment, driven by the effects of environmental change and the aggressive stances of both the PRC and Russia in the region. As such, we must accelerate our work to ensure the High North remains governed by a rules-based international order and is peaceful, stable, and prosperous for all Arctic nations and peoples. We are in a decisive decade and must act now, in concert with our vast network of Allies and partners, to positively shape the Arctic's future and maintain strategic stability—which in doing so, will ensure the defense of our homeland and North America. 

The Significance of Alaska in Homeland Defense

Lt Gen David S. Nahom, USAF

COL Russell W. Vanderlugt, USA

Lt Gen David S. Nahom is the Commander, Alaskan Command, United States Northern Command; Commander, Eleventh Air Force, Pacific Air Forces; and Commander, Alaskan NORAD Region, North American Aerospace Defense Command, located at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska. He is the senior military officer in Alaska, responsible for the integration of all military activities in Alaska, synchronizing the activities of more than 21,000 active-duty and reserve forces from all services.

COL Russell W. Vanderlugt currently serves on Lieutenant General Nahom's staff as Director of Plans, Policy, and Programs (J5), Alaskan Command, United States Northern Command, and Alaskan NORAD Region, North American Aerospace Defense Command.

In testimony before the US Congress in 1935, air power advocate Billy Mitchell boldly proclaimed that Alaska was the most strategic place in the world. Today, as climate change and warming accelerate at the top of the globe faster than any place on earth, the Arctic is decisively transforming from a barrier to an approach to the North American continent. The uniqueness of Alaska's geographic position straddling the Arctic increasingly demands a global focus for Homeland Defense in 2023 and beyond.

Two years after the American Civil War, and two years prior to completion of the trans-continental railroad, the United States purchased Alaska from Russia. During this period of expansion in the late 1860s, America strengthened its union, connected its coastline from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and emerged as a permanent stakeholder in the Arctic. Meanwhile, in 1867, the same year William Seward negotiated the Alaska Purchase, the British North American Act established self-government for Canada. The United States had not only gained a share in the Arctic but also a new neighbor in a shared North American homeland. Upon acquiring Alaska, a region formerly known as Russian America, the United States attained its current geographic shape on the North American continent. Yet the American people were slow to embrace the significance of Alaska and their new identity as an Arctic Nation. The Alaska Purchase was more of a surprise than a protracted national effort. In fact, "Seward's Icebox" was considered so marginal in value that its very acquisition caused derision: the appropriation needed to purchase Alaska languished in Congress for sixteen months. While public opposition to the Alaska Purchase began to subside following the Klondike Gold Rush in the late nineteenth century, it would take a World War to truly place Alaska on the map.

During WWII, our adversaries invaded and occupied portions of the Aleutian Islands, the only occupation of US soil in North America during the twentieth century. The US military surged to defend Alaska and by 1943 stationed over 120,000 troops in the region. The United States cooperated with Canada to build a logistics lifeline to Alaska, branded the Alaska-Canadian or "ALCAN" highway—the most expensive construction project during WWII. Aircrews ferried nearly 8,000 planes via the Northwest Staging Route through Canada and Alaska for transfer to the Russian front to defeat a common enemy. During the Cold War, the United States and Canada further agreed to construct the Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line, consisting of a string of continental defense radar sites stretching from Alaska to Greenland intended to detect bombers. The BMEWS, or Ballistic Missile Early Warning System, including systems at Clear Space Force Station and Pituffik Space Base (formerly Thule Airbase), was later added to detect ballistic missiles across the North American Arctic and linked to Ground-Based Midcourse Defense (GMD) interceptors positioned in interior Alaska—providing the cornerstone of missile defense for the continent.

In addition to serving as a nucleus for Arctic cooperation and military presence, at the heart of Alaska lies support from Alaska Native Peoples, tribes, and communities, who have called this land home since time immemorial. For millennia, Alaska functioned as a Beringian gateway between Asia and North America, resulting in linguistic and cultural connectedness among Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic and sub-Arctic across Russia, Alaska, Canada, and Greenland. Alaska Native people possess countless generations of Arctic knowledge and expertise in extreme cold weather survival. Incorporating this knowledge and expertise in our military operations is essential in ensuring resilience and adaptability to the Arctic environment. Alaska Natives have a tradition of patriotic service, support for the military, and commitment to defending the homelands. The legacy of Alaska Native service in the military, including 6,300 volunteers in the Alaska Territorial Guard from 107 Alaskan communities during WWII, remains strong. Today, the Alaska Native rate of service in the US Armed Forces is among the highest of any ethnic group.

Positioned at this historical crossroads between Eurasia and the Americas, Alaska maintains a strategic role in the defense of North America and is critical to a stable Arctic. The Alaskan NORAD Region (ANR), a subordinate regional headquarters under North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), and Alaskan Command (ALCOM), a subordinate unified command under US Northern Command (USNORTHCOM), together comprise the Alaska military headquarters within the USNORTHCOM Area of Responsibility (AOR) focused on homeland defense. Part of Alaska's strategic transformation includes establishment

of the DOD's newest Regional Center, the Ted Stevens Center (TSC) for Arctic Security Studies, which marks the convergence of the best minds on Arctic strategy.

Though few Americans have visited the Arctic, the United States is awakening to its Arctic identity—its role as an Arctic state and key stakeholder in the Arctic region. The recently published *National Strategy for the Arctic Region* (NSAR) articulates a vision and strategy unfolding over the next ten years, addressing the urgency of development, investment, and partnerships given the rapidly changing environment and increasing strategic competition. With guidance from NORAD and USNORTHCOM—and support from the TSC—ANR and ALCOM will play a vital role in implementing the NSAR, integrating Arctic capable forces supported by an Area Development Plan (ADP) for homeland defense, and protecting critical defense infrastructure. To be successful in support of the homeland defense mission, we must globally integrate across combatant commands bordering the Arctic to maximize effects near the top of the globe.

Once a barrier to our adversaries, the Arctic operational environment is rapidly changing. Sea lanes are opening, permafrost is thawing, coastlines are eroding, glaciers and ice sheets are melting. Access to hydrocarbons, strategic mineral deposits, faster shipping routes, and fisheries is increasing. As the Arctic opens, competition will accelerate as our adversaries continue to increase activity and build capability in the region. Today's Arctic is characterized by borders shared with an increasingly hostile Russia. Russia's unjustified invasion of Ukraine has limited engagement within the Arctic Council—the premier intergovernmental forum for Arctic cooperation on issues ranging from emergency preparedness to wildlife conservation. Rather than a zone of peace, the Arctic is rapidly becoming a theater for resource competition, malign influence, and potential instability. In addition to Russia, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea poses a proximate threat in the Arctic given its continued development of strategic nuclear weapons. The People's Republic of China (PRC), a self-declared near-Arctic state, is heavily investing in Arctic capabilities and scientific research that advance both civilian and military goals. The PRC will likely continue to pursue malign activities throughout the region, including close cooperation with Russia in the Arctic. Our adversaries are attempting to set an Arctic theater where we now face peer threats.

The military must counter emerging all-domain threats to the homeland, specifically those from Arctic avenues of approach. Icebreakers and nuclear submarines ply the Arctic seas or travel beneath the receding sea ice, further increasing Arctic access to our homelands. If sea ice loss continues as predicted, a true Northwest Passage—once the dream of the British Empire—will become a reality with potential to alter global trade routes. The PRC and Russia are increasingly cooperating to set conditions for grey zone competition, operating vessels in and around

US waters in the Bering Sea and conducting joint patrols with Long-Range Aviation assets from areas adjacent to the Alaska Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ). The most likely path of missiles and high altitude balloons capable of targeting the contiguous United States trace an arc over Alaska and northern Canada. This requires us to work with Allies and partners to maintain a modern North Warning System with effective detection and domain awareness facilities positioned in and near the Arctic to ensure adequate response time and decision space for senior leaders.

Alaska is unique because it is both our homeland, a place we must defend, as well as a forward theater from which we project joint forces to the Pacific, Eurasia, and the Arctic. In Alaska, these critical regions intersect. Therefore, we must simultaneously posture for defensive and offensive operations in Alaska. We must *protect* to *project*, while leveraging the region as a nexus for sustainment and logistics. From Alaska, we must globally integrate to project power into the Pacific, Eurasia, and the Arctic, and be able to defend ourselves from threats coming from these regions to North America. Posturing ourselves and preparing for climate changes that will impact the future require a strong presence oriented towards the Arctic. We will continue to leverage our strategic advantage through a strong network of Arctic Allies and partners, relationships that our competitors lack. With the accession of Finland and Sweden to NATO, all eight Arctic states—except Russia—will be NATO members, further securing the United States and its Allies in the region. Our Allies look to Alaska, home to world's highest concentration of fifth-generation fighters, to leverage Arctic training opportunities and the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex (JPARC), the largest training area in North America.

If we focus on our future, the Arctic conditions that for centuries served as a barrier along our continent's icy flank will no longer exist. Alaska is becoming a primary approach to North America for our adversaries and continues to increase in significance as a key location for force projection. We cannot view Alaska in a vacuum or as an appendage, as we have in the past. Alaska's geostrategic position within the Arctic demands global integration. Given its proximity to Asia, Alaska is uniquely situated to protect the people of the United States and Canada. Americans and Canadians are together recognizing the Arctic's role in our shared homelands, and Alaska's strategic position in the defense of North America.

Building Readiness through Alaska Native Partnerships

MG Brian S. Eifler, USA
Natalie M. Hardy

Major General Brian S. Eifler is Commanding General, 11th Airborne Division, Deputy Commander, United States Alaskan Command, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska.

Natalie M. Hardy is Strategic Initiatives Specialist for the Commander's Initiatives Group, 11th Airborne Division, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska.

Introduction

Studying history can offer important lessons to maximize our combat readiness with minimal risk. We also gain competitive advantage by following the professional guidance in military policies and strategies. A third mechanism for collaborative learning is respectful engagement with subject matter experts, who can offer valuable tactics, techniques and procedures. At 11th Airborne Division, we take advantage of all three approaches simultaneously through our relationships with Alaska Natives, who bring rich experience, informed problem-solving, and cultural currency to our formations.

Lessons Learned from History

The US Army has conducted operations in Alaska for more than 155 years, with an integral role in establishing state-wide infrastructure and military posts after Russia's accession of Alaska to the United States in 1867.[1] The Army has built a historic legacy of Arctic and cold-weather field craft, not only predicated on the ingenuity and tenacity of its Soldiers, but in large part due to the tremendous knowledge imparted by the Indigenous People of Alaska, who have populated these lands for tens of thousands of years.

The contributions of the Alaska Native community were mostly transparent to the American public during World War II, when Japan invaded the islands of Unalaska, Kitka, and Attu in 1942. There was similarly little awareness outside Alaska of their efforts during operations like the Lend-Lease program from 1942-1945.

[1] Headquarters, Department of the Army, *Regaining Arctic Dominance – the US Army in the Arctic*, 19 January 2021, 5, https://www.army.mil/.

Despite the lack of publicity, their support to territorial defense across the state was critical to reinforce the nation's war efforts. Military pioneers like Major "Muktuk" Marston and Colonel Lawrence Castner recruited members of the Alaska Native community to serve as part of a volunteer homeland militia, later recognized as the Alaska Territorial Guard (ATG), while the Army focused on sending troops to protect Southwestern Alaska.[2]

Although the ATG was only activated for a relatively short time, it was spread across 107 communities, and had more than 6,300 members during the war.[3] Serving without pay, ATG Soldiers were trained on wartime military tactics and subterfuge techniques, and safeguarded strategic platinum stockpiles and terrain.[4] The contributions of these men and women were vital in securing America's Arctic interests, and scores continued to volunteer as scouts and observers after the Battle of the Aleutian Islands against the Japanese ended in August 1943.[5]

The ATG's immense network of Arctic-capable personnel helped the Army overcome a serious lack of staff and cold weather expertise. The ATG was especially needed for real-time observation and defense capabilities across Alaska's vast coastline. Without their support, and that of other volunteers and subject matter experts within the rural communities dotting the state, military operations in support of the war's effort would have suffered tremendously.

By the end of the war, the Army had learned a critical lesson, one that's worth repeating today: we have a lot to learn from the centuries-old communities and Indigenous People that surround us. Their experience in living and operating in Alaska, in some of the harshest climates and roughest terrain on the planet, remains invaluable. Today, we recognize that incorporating that knowledge into our operations in the Arctic Region, and in other austere cold-weather climates across the globe, could significantly enhance our ability to conduct military operations at echelon in support of the nation's homeland defense and defense support to civil authorities.

Alaska Native Cooperation in Strategic Guidance

Today, Alaska and the Arctic are again making headlines. In June 2022, US Army Alaska was re-designated as the 11th Airborne Division, with two subordi-

[2] The Alaska Veterans Foundation and Alaska Military Heritage Museum, "Top Secret: OPERATION Defend Homeland," 2.

[3] Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, https://americanindian.si.edu/.

[4] Sean Kimmons, "Alaska Natives Defended Their Territory 75 Years Ago," Army News Service, 16 November 2017, https://www.nationalguard.mil/.

[5] Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, https://americanindian.si.edu/.

nate brigade combat teams. Russia's military build-up in the region coupled with their ongoing wartime efforts in Ukraine underscore the importance of an Arctic-ready ground force. China's bold interest in expanding their global economic dominance via their Polar Silk Road initiatives has elevated issues that permeate across the diplomacy, development, industrial strategy, economic statecraft, intelligence and defense spectrum. Chief among them is how the US will address homeland defense in the future while respecting the region's history of cooperation. Additionally, climate change and private sector exploration of minerals and fisheries may stress already limited or inadequate infrastructure, and increase the frequency of search and rescue operations. While these concerns are just a few of the challenges, it's clear that these issues could potentially impact the Indigenous People of Alaska from an economic and security perspective. Recognizing and incorporating their interests in discussions at all levels will be a critical component of ensuring that the region remains "peaceful, stable, prosperous, and cooperative."[6]

The US Army, the Department of Defense (DOD), and the White House have all issued strategic guidance on the Arctic within the last three years, signaling a more holistic approach that reconfirms their commitment to protecting US national security interests in the region. While each of them has different strategic objectives and lines of effort, they all articulate the importance of consultation and collaboration with Indigenous partners to strengthen domain awareness, increase interoperability, and promote regional security.

In June 2019, the DOD published an Arctic strategy that outlined its approach for protecting US security interests, with building Arctic awareness, enhancing Arctic operations, and strengthening the rules-based order in the Arctic as its key lines of effort.[7] The strategic end state is a "secure and stable region where US national interests are safeguarded, the US homeland is defended, and nations work cooperatively to address shared challenges."[8] In order to attain those ends, the DOD reiterated its commitment to conducting routine consultation with Alaska Natives concerning their equities and views on DOD activities and investments in the region.[9]

Building on the DOD's strategy, the Department of the Army issued its first strategy for the region, *Regaining Arctic Dominance – The US Army in the Arctic,* in

[6] The White House, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, October 2022), 44.

[7] The White House, *National Security Strategy*, 1.

[8] Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Report to Congress: Department of Defense Arctic Strategy, June 2019, 2, https://media.defense.gov/.

[9] Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Report to Congress: Department of Defense Arctic Strategy, June 2019, 8.

January 2021. Largely focused on the Army's efforts to rebuild its cold weather, high latitude, and mountainous environment capabilities, it lays out strategic and operational approaches for Alaska and across the Arctic. Central to those efforts was charging Alaskan-based units with reinvigorating their cold weather individual and collective training capabilities to adapt how they "generate, posture, train, and equip" forces to conduct operations in extreme cold weather at home and abroad.[10] Additionally, it recognized that in order to compete in the region, the Army must remain committed to working with local populations to incorporate Indigenous knowledge as they "know the environment, wildlife, and terrain better than anyone," having "thrived in Alaska and Arctic territory for millennia."[11]

National policy has echoed these same themes. In October 2022, the White House issued guidance on the Arctic region as part of the *National Security Strategy* (NSS), which states that it will uphold a "commitment to honor tribal sovereignty and self-governance through regular, meaningful, and robust consultation and collaboration with Alaska Native communities."[12] Almost immediately following the publication of the NSS, the White House issued its *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*, featuring a multi-pronged approach to address four key pillars: security, climate change and environmental protection, sustainable economic development, and international cooperation and governance.[13] Essential to each is conducting regular and meaningful consultation with Alaska Native tribes, communities and organizations on matters in which they may be affected or have equities in as their "experience and knowledge is essential to the success" of the strategy.[14]

While each of these strategies emphasizes varying levels of cooperation with our Indigenous partners across a range of military and national security objectives, the reality is that engagement at the operational level from a military perspective requires persistent communication and meaningful discussion to achieve positive results.

Engagements with Indigenous Partners

Establishing and maintaining a partnership with the Indigenous Peoples of Alaska requires consistent, sincere effort. The Alaska Native community is dispersed across five historically distinct sectors. Within those five areas, there are

[10] HQDA, *Regaining Arctic Dominance*, 20.
[11] HQDA, *Regaining Arctic Dominance*, 36.
[12] The White House, *National Security Strategy*, 45.
[13] The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region* (Washington, DC: The White House, October, 2022), 3
[14] The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*, 3.

eleven unique cultures with numerous subcultures with differences in dialect, cultural activities, and traditional ways of life. Among the eleven major cultures, over 20 different languages are spoken.

The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 (ANCSA) divided the state into twelve different regions, each with a private for-profit Alaska Native regional corporation, and more than 200 for-profit Native village corporations.[15] ANCSA also allocated more than 44 million acres of land previously owned by the federal government to these newly formed organizations to run as they saw fit. Today, each regional corporation, and the associated village corporations, tribal health programs, and non-profit entities are individually unique and based on the needs of the community.

Of the 574 federally recognized tribal governments in the United States, forty percent (229 tribes) are in the state of Alaska. They are domestic sovereigns within the borders of the United States. The federal government and all of its subcomponents have a trust responsibility to tribal governments that results in the provision of services and the fostering of government-to-government relationships. In addition to government-to-government relationships, 11th Airborne Division manages a Native Alaskan outreach program to broaden partnerships, share information, and deepen connections. Outreach is ongoing year-round and prioritizes opportunities to collaborate and reinforce mutual support. The objective is to build partnerships and engage in meaningful dialogue in advance of friction or conflict; the focus is shared knowledge leading to understanding.

The 11th Airborne Division, as the Army's lead proponent for cold weather and high-altitude operations, has worked diligently over the last several years to build relationships with Indigenous organizations across Alaska to broaden our knowledge of their people. We have intensified engagement efforts across multiple lines of effort to impart Indigenous knowledge on our Soldiers and Civilians to build awareness and mutual respect, and expand our ability to operate globally and regionally in support of our missions through increased collaboration. Working with organizations like the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN), the largest statewide Native organization in Alaska, has been crucial in helping us recognize the uniqueness of each community, and identifying those that we may need to engage with to conduct military operations around Alaska in a way that synchronizes with their interests, priorities and challenges.

According to Julie Kitka, President of AFN, seeking out strategic engagements with military leadership has also been a top priority for their organization. Rou-

[15] ANCSA Regional Association, "About the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act," https://ancsaregional.com/.

tine communication and collaboration has enhanced the Indigenous community's understanding of the military's role in the region, helped to build mutual trust and respect, and provided platforms for them to share their knowledge and expertise. She notes that "the Alaska Native community and the military in Alaska should be considered strong, strategic partners. AFN has sought to understand the build-up in the state, and get to know the military leaders who have responsibility for protecting our part of the world. AFN understands that a strong partnership with the military in Alaska has many benefits."[16]

AFN's commitment to working with the military in Alaska has been extremely beneficial, and we recognize that in order to sustain these bonds, it's inherent upon the 11th Airborne Division to continue seeking out engagements along several avenues of approach to ensure that these relationships remain enduring. Senior leaders frequently participate in Alaska Native conferences and formal meetings, and AFN in particular has been instrumental in helping bring together military leaders from the 11th Airborne Division, Alaskan Command and the Alaska National Guard during their annual convention and regional roundtables. While these forums give leadership an opportunity to provide updates on our missions and priorities, they have been extremely valuable in garnering feedback and developing deeper relationships as 11th Airborne Division looks to expand its out-of-sector mission capabilities.

Leadership teams engage directly with Alaska Native leaders to learn about each other's cultures and increase mutual cooperation to solve potential issues. At these events, battalion and brigade command teams and division leaders build relationships with the added benefit of professional development. In March 2021, we hosted a Native immersion event in which Ms. Kitka provided an orientation to Alaska Native tribes, villages, and corporations; followed by four Native leaders exploring Native culture and discussing potential concerns with the Army. Last November, the Denakkanaaga Native elders group invited Army leader teams to join them for a lunch of traditional foods followed by presentations and discussions with Native elders. Both engagements resulted in stronger organizational bonds with increased mutual respect and cooperation.

Building on AFN's partnership, we have had follow-on engagements with organizations like the Tanana Chief 's Conference (TCC), which includes 39 villages and 37 federally recognized tribes located throughout the interior of Alaska.[17] In November 2022, TCC hosted a community-wide potlach at Fort Wainwright, AK, which was attended by over two thousand Soldiers, family members, and Alaska

[16] Julie Kitka, President of the Alaska Federation of Natives, to the author, email, 29 Nov 2022.

[17] Tanana Chiefs Conference, https://www.tananachiefs.org/.

Native guests, veterans and elders. The event showed our personnel some of the traditional customs, norms and foods that are prevalent in the region while celebrating the activation of the 11th Airborne Division.

Units of the 11th Airborne Division routinely invite Native leaders to change of command, change of responsibility, and deployment ceremonies, maintaining good neighbor relationships with leaders from nearby tribes and villages. The protocol is to treat them as the dignitaries they are, providing purposeful relationship-building within the larger context of a military ceremony. We had to suspend our community embed program due to COVID concerns, but we anticipate reinvigorating this aspect of community outreach soon. Community embed events feature Soldiers and leaders visiting remote villages and building relationships while sharing information. A typical event would include a small-group training event followed and/or preceded by interaction with the local community. The training curriculum is driven by relationship knowledge with mission needs in mind.

Future Engagements

At the division's activation ceremony last summer, Army Chief of Staff General James C. McConville charged us with three expectations:

1. To live up to the heroic legacy of those who came before us.
2. To be masters of our craft in Arctic warfare, not just to survive but to thrive in extreme cold weather and mountainous terrain.
3. To be innovative and on the leading edge in developing tactics, techniques and equipment for this harsh environment.

In order to fulfill our assigned mission as the most highly trained, disciplined and fit, Arctic warfighting unit in the world, ready to fight and win, we will continue to strengthen our cold weather and high-altitude skillsets. We recognize the importance of seeking out subject matter expert (SME) exchanges and opportunities for hands-on instruction from Alaska Native experts from across the state to incorporate into our formal training programs at the Northern Warfare Training Center (NWTC), and within our formations during our annual winter training event, Joint Pacific Multi-National Readiness Center–Alaska (JPMRC–AK). NWTC is the Army's premier cold weather school, and provides individual and small unit level, cold weather and mountain warfare training.[18] While it is steeped in history and staffed with some of the best Soldier instructors in the nation, the division wants to incorporate Alaska Native SMEs into our cold weather courses

[18] HQDA, *Regaining Arctic Dominance,* 11.

to help refine our tactics, techniques and procedures. This will go a long way in deepening our understanding of the environment and improving our ability to withstand extreme cold and its effects across the warfighting functions.

The 11th Airborne Division conducted JPMRC in Alaska in early 2023, and roughly 10,000 Soldiers operated in winter conditions for an extended duration. JPMRC is a combat training center exercise that stresses our ability to operate at echelon in a realistic cold weather environment. JPMRC 22 and previous exercises resulted in units identifying critical capability gaps related to cold weather injuries, and equipment and sustainment challenges. While we continue to eradicate those gaps by identifying and procuring the appropriate cold weather clothing and equipment required for the environment, we are cognizant that its equally important that our Soldiers work to physically condition themselves to develop cold weather resiliency. As the Indigenous People of Alaska, especially those north of the Arctic Circle, live and operate in some of the most extreme weather on the planet, SME engagement in advance of JPMRC, and within NWTC's course curriculum gives our Soldiers tremendous insight on how to build personal resiliency to overcome the elements.

Closing Thoughts

In June 2022, during the Division's reactivation ceremony, we were honored to receive a traditional Alaska Native blessing. A first in our history, it highlighted the important strides that the Army in Alaska has made in making real and lasting connections that further our understanding of a proud Alaska Native population. The historical contributions of the ATG during World War II spurred future generations to join the military during the Korean and Vietnam Wars, at some of the highest percentage rates seen across the US.[19] As the Arctic region continues to grow in significance, we remain committed to collaborating with our Indigenous partners to ensure stability in the region, recognizing that the nation's security objectives are as equally important to them, as they are to the 11th Airborne Division.

[19] Live Stories Catalog, "Alaska Veterans Demographics and Statistics," https://www.livestories.com/.

US Arctic Policy since Nixon

Continuity and Incremental Change

Jeremy M. Mckenzie

Jeremy M. McKenzie is a retired US Coast Guard officer. His last military assignment was at the US Coast Guard Academy's Center for Arctic Study and Policy, where he was a researcher.

Abstract[1]

This article is a survey of US Arctic policy from the Nixon administration to the Biden administration. The Nixon administration laid the foundation for US Arctic policy during the height of the Cold War in 1971 in National Security Decision Memorandum (NSDM) 144. Examining the last fifty years of Arctic policy in the US is helpful for three primary reasons. First, the six themes established by the Nixon administration remain the basis of US policy today. Second, there is an inherent tension in US Arctic policy—specifically between environmental protection, development, and security. Finally, US Arctic policy highlights how climate change, and its tendency to act as a threat multiplier, impacts US policy.

Introduction

The United States has been an Arctic nation since the 1867 purchase of Alaska. The military significance of the region became apparent during the Russo-Japanese War, and later during World War II when the region was used to ship supplies pursuant to the Lend Lease Act of 1941. During the Cold War, the region became the primary attack avenue for the potential use of nuclear weapons. Today the region continues to grow in strategic importance as climate change makes what was inaccessible accessible.

After World War II the Truman administration's State Department released a policy statement on the Polar Regions primarily focused on the US positions for territorial claims and the freedom of navigation.[2] The Nixon administration wrote the first modern-era policy for the Arctic region, laying the foundation for current US policy in the Arctic during the height of the Cold War. The Nixon policy was

[1] Adapted from: *Understanding and Teaching Contemporary US History Since Reagan* Edited by Kimber M. Quinney and Amy L. Sayward. Reprinted by permission of the University of Wisconsin Press. © 2022 by the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System. All rights reserved, https://uwpress.wisc.edu/.

[2] "Department of State Policy and Information Statement-Polar Regions," US Department of State, January 27, 1947, https://history.state.gov/.

published in National Security Decision Memorandum (NSDM) 144 in 1971.[3] NSDM 144 focused on the following:

- Environmental protection;
- International cooperation;
- Security interests;
- Science; and
- The establishment of an Interagency Arctic Policy Group (IAPG).

There are three main reasons that examining the last 50 years of US policy in the Arctic is insightful for current policy makers. First, the six policy threads have remained the key pillars of US policy in every presidential administration from Nixon to Biden. Second, there is clearly tension between some of the pillars. Advancing economic development may harm environmental protection; likewise, it could also be detrimental to national security. Finally, political goals, the changing physical environment, and the geopolitical situation have informed each administration's Arctic policy, but in 2009 there was a clear turning point. The impacts of climate change (which can be seen as a threat multiplier), coupled with international attention from both China and Russia, forced the US government to pay attention to the Arctic.

A Contextualization of the Arctic from a US Policy Perspective

The Arctic today is experiencing extraordinary and unprecedented environmental change due to anthropogenic and natural drivers—warming twice as fast as the lower latitudes.[4] An area that was once thought to be the domain of polar bears and permanent pack ice is now experiencing prolonged periods of open water—with ice free summers projected by the 2030s.[5] The rapid pace of climate change in the Arctic brings both potential costs and benefits. The recent US Air Force *Arctic Strategy* alluded to climate change as a threat multiplier asserting that, "The Arctic's capacity as a strategic buffer is eroding, making it an avenue of threat to the home-

[3] "National Security Decision Memorandum 144--United States Arctic Policy and Arctic Policy Group," December 22, 1971, https://www.hsdl.org/.

[4] R. K. Pachauri, Leo Mayer, and Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, eds., *Climate Change 2014: Synthesis Report* (Geneva, Switzerland: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, 2015); National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, "Arctic Report Card 2018," accessed December 3, 2020, https://arctic.noaa.gov/.

[5] The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region* (Washington, DC: October 2022), https://www.whitehouse.gov/.

land, due to advancements by great power competitors."[6] Other threats include food security and Indigenous villages in Alaska that are "threatened by a combination of thawing permafrost, flooding, and coastal erosion."[7] The US Army's Arctic strategy identifies four primary drivers of great power competition in the Arctic: "(1) military developments, (2) energy resources and minerals, (3) transportation, and (4) food security."[8] Potential benefits include new shipping routes and access to rare minerals and energy resources, including 13 percent of the world's oil, 30 percent of its natural gas, and approximately $1 trillion in rare earth minerals.[9]

Amidst these dramatic environmental changes and increased interest, the Russians planted a flag on the seabed at the North Pole on August 2, 2007. Several articles quickly declared that a new "great race" was beginning for the freshly opening Arctic.[10] The flag planting, coupled with the rapid pace of climate change in the region, which made previously inaccessible natural resources accessible, served as a focusing event for US policy makers. In January 2009, just days before his final day in office, President Bush signed NSPD 66, a document that built upon the foundations of Nixon's Arctic policy, NSDM 144.[11] NSPD 66 was a watershed moment for US policy in the Arctic, with the US government issuing three times more Arctic policy documents in the last fourteen years than it did in the preceding four decades.

Interestingly, all the policy statements created since President Nixon's NSDM 144 contain the same six areas of focus for US policy in the Arctic including sustainable development, environmental protection, international cooperation, security (including the preservation of the freedom of navigation), the establishment of an Interagency Arctic Policy Group, and scientific exploration.

[6] Department of the Air Force, *The Department of the Air Force Arctic Strategy*, July 2020, https://www.af.mil/.

[7] Rachel Waldholz, "Feds Approve $1.7M to Buy out Homes in Newtok," *KTOO* (blog), March 20, 2018, https://www.ktoo.org/; Zachariah Hughes, "In Doomed Alaska Town, Hunters Turn to Drones and Caribou as Sea Ice Melts," *Guardian*, March 2, 2018, http://www.theguardian.com/.

[8] Headquarters, Department of the Army, *Regaining Arctic Dominance-US Army in the Arctic*, January 2021, https://api.army.mil/.

[9] HQDA, *Regaining Arctic Dominance*; United States Coast Guard, *The United States Coast Guard Arctic Strategy*, May 2013, https://www.uscg.mil/.

[10] Scott G Borgerson, "Arctic Meltdown: The Economic and Security Implications of Global Warming," *Foreign Policy* 87, no. 2 (2008): 15; Zoë Schlanger On 09/03/15 at 5:18 PM EDT, "An International Race for the Arctic? Try a Slow, Science-Driven Crawl," Newsweek, September 3, 2015, https://www.newsweek.com/.

[11] National Archives, ed., "NSPD-66/ HSPD-25 White House Records," January 13, 2009, George W. Bush Library(LP-GWB), https://catalog.archives.gov/id/26082871; "National Security Decision Memorandum 144-United States Arctic Policy and Arctic Policy Group."

The Foundation of US Arctic Policy—President Nixon's NSDM 144

President Nixon's National Security Council wrote the then-secret NSDM 144: *United States Arctic Policy and Arctic Policy Group* on December 22, 1971. NSDM 144 notes that:

> The President has decided that the United States will support the sound and rational development of the Arctic, guided by the principle of minimizing any adverse effects to the environment; will promote mutually beneficial international cooperation in the Arctic; and will at the same time provide for the protection of essential security interests in the Arctic, including preservation of the principle of freedom of the seas and superjacent airspace.[12]

NSDM 144 further states that the Under Secretaries Committee shall review plans for increased international cooperation in the Arctic to include "exploration, scientific research, resource development and the exchange of scientific and technical data..."[13] NSDM 144 also includes the establishment of an Interagency Arctic Policy Group (IAPG) and calls for the coordination of Arctic scientific research.[14] The Nixon administration reaffirmed its Arctic interests in NSDM 202 on January 22, 1973. In this memo Henry Kissinger writes, "The President has noted the progress by the IAPG and has reaffirmed his desire that the United States actively develop and pursue programs for increasing bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the Arctic, particularly in the areas of scientific research, resource development, and environmental protection."[15] Later in 1973 the United States signed the *Agreement on the Conservation of Polar Bears* along with Canada, Denmark, Norway, and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.[16] This cooperative agreement fulfilled two of the Nixon Arctic policy objectives—international cooperation and environmental protection.

Carter's Arctic Policy—Balancing Environment and Development

President Carter's administration did not write any new Arctic strategy documents, however, his administration did play a major role in strengthening environmental protection for parts of the Alaskan Arctic. Presidential Proclamations 4614,

---

[12] "National Security Decision Memorandum 144."

[13] "National Security Decision Memorandum 144."

[14] "National Security Decision Memorandum 144."

[15] "National Security Decision Memorandum 202: Arctic Program Review and Recommendations," January 22, 1973, https://fas.org/.

[16] "Agreement on the Conservation of Polar Bears," November 15, 1973, http://pbsg.npolar.no/.

4617, 4621, 4624, and 4627 created five new national monuments.[17] He also signed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act protecting more than 157 million acres. President Carter's National Security Advisor also reconstituted the IAPG in 1979, after it went dormant for a few years.[18] Responding to both economic and hard-security concerns, Carter also called for legislation to increase domestic oil and gas production by opening the National Petroleum Reserve for private leases.[19] Thus the Carter administration's Arctic policy highlighted the tension between the various pillars of Arctic policy—specifically the goal of environmental protection versus development and security.

The Arctic Is a "Critical Interest"—Presidents Reagan and George H.W. Bush

The Reagan administration reaffirmed US interests in the Arctic, asserting that, "It is clear that the United States has unique and critical interests in the Arctic region related directly to national defense, resource and energy development, scientific inquiry, and environmental protection."[20] National Security Decision Directive (NSDD) 90 continues by asserting that the region "warrants priority attention by the United States."[21] NSDD 90 is notable because it changed the focus of US policy. National defense is listed first while environmental protection is last. The Reagan administration took real action establishing the both the Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee (IARPC) and the Arctic Research Commission.[22] Reagan's emphasis on security, coupled with changes in the Soviet Union, allowed further developments in international cooperation. In 1987 President Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev released a joint statement following their December summit which stated, "The two leaders exchanged views on means of encouraging expanded contacts and cooperation on issues relating to the Arctic. They expressed support for the development of bilateral and regional coopera-

[17] The vast majority of the land in these five monuments is in the Arctic. The five monuments included Gates of the Arctic, Bering Land Bridge, Kobuk Valley, Noatak, and Yukon Flats.

[18] Samuel Frye, "Feature: The Arctic and US Foreign Policy, 1970-90," *Department of State Dispatch* 2, no. 14 (1991): 242–46.

[19] "National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska Statement on Proposed Legislation. | The American Presidency Project," January 28, 1980, https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/.

[20] "National Security Decision Directive Number 90: United States Arctic Policy," April 14, 1983, https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/.

[21] "National Security Decision Directive Number 90: United States Arctic Policy."

[22] "Arctic Research and Policy Act of 1984, NSF - National Science Foundation," July 31, 1984, https://www.nsf.gov/; "Executive Order 12501 -- Arctic Research," Ronald Reagan Presidential Library - National Archives and Records Administration, January 28, 1985, https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/.

tion among the Arctic countries on these matters, including coordination of scientific research and protection of the region's environment."[23] Then during the Bush administration, the United States worked with the other seven Arctic countries (Finland, Sweden, Iceland, Norway, Denmark, Canada, and Russia) to establish the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS), the precursor to today's Arctic Council, with a mandate for environmental protection.[24] The AEPS was signed in Rovaniemi, Finland during the Bush administration. On June 1, 1990 President Bush and President Gorbachev signed a US-USSR Maritime Boundary Agreement resolving the maritime boundary in the Bering Sea—plac-ing 70 percent of the Bering Sea under US control.[25]

Environmental Focus—President Clinton's Arctic Policy

The end of the Cold War provided an opportunity for the Clinton administration to continue to move Arctic policy in the more cooperative direction initiated under the Reagan and Bush administrations. The 1994 policy, Presidential Decision Directive/NSC-26 ("Directive"), states:

> The end of the Cold War, however, allows a significant shift of emphasis in US Arctic policy. The new atmosphere of openness and cooperation with Russia has created unprecedented opportunities for collaboration among all eight Arctic nations on environmental protection, environmentally sustainable development, concerns of indigenous peoples and scientific research. In turn, cooperation in these areas will help reduce the risk of a resurgence of traditional threats.[26]

The Directive was clearly driven by environmental policy but contains each of the original elements of the US Arctic policy that were in Nixon's NSDM 144. The Clinton policy adds the policy goal of "involving the Arctic's indigenous peoples in decisions that affect them" to include including Indigenous Peoples in international delegations to Arctic forums.[27] NSC-26 also clarified that the United States would treat the freedom of navigation principles in the 1982 Law of the Sea Treaty as "customary law."[28]

[23] "JOINT STATEMENT BY REAGAN, GORBACHEV," *Washington Post*, 1987, https://www.washingtonpost.com/.

[24] Jennifer Cook, "A Brief History of the Arctic Council," 2019, https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/.

[25] Frye, "Feature: The Arctic and US Foreign Policy, 1970-90."

[26] "Presidential Decision Directive/NSC-26 United States Policy on the Arctic and Antarctic Regions," June 9, 1994, https://fas.org/.

[27] "Presidential Decision Directive/NSC-26."

[28] "Presidential Decision Directive/NSC-26."

The changed security environment led to real opportunities for increased cooperation. In 1996, the Clinton administration signed the Ottawa Declaration which established the Arctic Council as a high-level intergovernmental forum replacing the AEPS agreement.[29] The Arctic Council was established to "provide a means for promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States, with the involvement of the Arctic Indigenous communities and other Arctic inhabitants on common Arctic issues, in particular issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic."[30] In October of 1998 the Clinton White House made the first mention of the Arctic in a US national security strategy, making it a goal to continue to "work with the Nordic countries and Russia to mitigate nuclear and non-nuclear pollution in the Arctic, and continue to encourage Russia to develop sound management practices for nuclear materials and radioactive waste."[31]

President George W. Bush's NSPD-66—A Response to New Threats

The beginning of the Bush administration was dominated by security concerns in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. Additionally, energy concerns were important while public concerns about climate change also increased. At the same time, a resurgent Russia began to flex its might, planting a flag on the seabed at the North Pole in 2007. The Bush administration began to refocus the US government on the Arctic at the end of its second term.

In spring 2008 the Bush administration was a party to the Ilulissat Declaration in which the "five coastal States bordering on the Arctic Ocean" adopted a declaration in which they agreed that the United Nations Convention for the Law of the Sea "provides a solid foundation for responsible management" of the Arctic Ocean and that there was no need for a separate treaty regime like in Antarctica.[32] As McKenzie and Krenicki assert, "The Illulissat Declaration can be seen as a preemptive move by the five Arctic coastal States to ensure that a new treaty regime would not be imposed that could limit their rights in the region."[33] Then, just days

[29] "Ottawa Declaration," September 19, 1996, https://oaarchive.arctic-council.org/. Cook, "A Brief History of the Arctic Council."

[30] "Ottawa Declaration."

[31] The White House, *A National Security Strategy for a New Century* (Washington, DC: The White House, October 1998), http://nssarchive.us/.

[32] "2008 Ilulissat Declaration," May 28, 2008, https://cil.nus.edu.sg/.

[33] Jeremy M. McKenzie and Laura Krenicki, "Arctic Nation: Climate Change Changes Policy," in *Understanding and Teaching Contemporary US History since Reagan*, ed. Kimber M. Quinney and Amy L. Sayword,

before his second term ended the Bush administration published a significant new Arctic strategy that is still guiding US policy today. *National Security Presidential Directive/NSPD-66, Homeland Security Directive/HSPD-25--Arctic Region Policy* is a watershed document (NSPD-66). In the fourteen years since the publication of NSPD-66, the Executive Branch has published at least 30 documents concerned with Arctic Strategy. For comparison, there were only eight Arctic strategy-related documents in the 38-year period prior to NSPD-66.

NSPD-66 can be seen as a reaction to changes in both the political and physical environment. According to Steinberg, NSPD-66's "drafting was spurred by the realization that climate change, technological advances, and rising energy prices might in the near future lead to new economic opportunities and political challenges in the region."[34] Huebert largely agrees with Steinberg's assessment noting that, "The core Arctic issues facing the US are resource development and international circumpolar relations." NSPD-66 can also be seen at least partially as a reaction to the Russian flag planting at the North Pole in 2007.[35] Climate change, acting as a threat multiplier, had opened a region that was previously closed due to its harsh environment and sea ice. This opening created the potential for several new threats, from great power competition to an environmental disaster.

NSPD-66 starts off with a strong statement asserting that, "The United States is an Arctic nation, with varied and compelling interests in that region."[36] The policy continues noting that the directive is driven by "several developments" which include "altered national policies on homeland security and defense, the effects of climate change and increasing human activity in the Arctic region, the establishment and ongoing work of the Arctic Council, and a growing awareness that the Arctic region is both fragile and rich in resources."[37] Thus, NSPD-66 is the first US Arctic strategy document that mentions climate change as a driving force for US policy interest. Other notable changes from the previous Nixon and Clinton Arctic policies include anti-terrorism efforts, a call for Senate to ratify the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea, and a paragraph noting that there is no need for a separate Arctic treaty regime. The Bush administration effectively balanced

The Harvey Goldberg Series for Understanding and Teaching History (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2022), https://uwpress.wisc.edu/.

[34] Philip Steinberg, "Maintaining Hegemony at a Distance: Ambivalence in US Arctic Policy," in *Polar Geopolitics?: Knowledges, Resources and Legal Regimes*, ed. Richard C. Powell and Klaus DODds (Edward Elgar Publishing, 2014), 113–30.

[35] Rob Huebert, "United States Arctic Policy: The Reluctant Arctic Power," *University of Calgary, The School of Public Policy Briefing Papers* 2, no. 2 (May 1, 2009), https://www.researchgate.net/.

[36] National Archives, "NSPD-66/ HSPD-25 White House Records."

[37] National Archives, "NSPD-66/ HSPD-25 White House Records."

security with other US interests, including economic development and international cooperation.

President Obama Highlights a Warming Arctic

President Obama's Arctic policy was firmly planted upon the foundation built by his predecessors—particularly President Bush's NSPD-66. During the Obama administration we begin to see just how important the Arctic is becoming as we begin to see Arctic strategies "diffusing throughout the federal national security bureaucracy."[38] At the same time, the Obama administration charted its own path—using the Arctic to highlight climate change. Demonstrating the region's importance, the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review ("QDR") mentioned the Arctic an incredible eight times. In comparison the QDR contains four mentions of Russia and eleven mentions of China.[39] The May 2010 *National Security Strategy* asserted:

> The United States is an Arctic Nation with broad and fundamental interests in the Arctic region, where we seek to meet our national security needs, protect the environment, responsibly manage resources, account for indigenous communities, support scientific research, and strengthen international cooperation on a wide range of issues.[40]

During Obama's first term he designated the National Science and Technology Council to coordinate the activities of the Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee.[41] Then, in May of 2011, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton signed the first of three major Arctic Council Agreements--the 2011 *Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic*.[42] At the same time the Department of Defense (DOD) released a *Report to Congress on Arctic Operations and the Northwest Passage*.[43] This DOD report is notable for its tone, stating that, "Although some perceive that competition for resources and boundary disputes may result in conflict in the Arctic, the opening of the Arctic also presents

[38] McKenzie and Krenicki, "Arctic Nation: Climate Change Changes Policy."

[39] "Quadrennial Defense Review Report" (Department of Defense, February 2010), https://archive.defense.gov/.

[40] The White House, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, May 2010), https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/.

[41] "Presidential Memorandum--Arctic Research and Policy Act," July 22, 2010, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/.

[42] "Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic." (Arctic Council, 2011), https://oaarchive.arctic-council.org/.

[43] "Report to Congress on Arctic Operations and the Northwest Passage" (Department of Defense, May 2011), https://archive.defense.gov/.

opportunities to work collaboratively in multilateral forums to promote a balanced approach to improving human and environmental security in the region."[44]

Then, during Obama's second term, concurrent with the lead up to and chairmanship of the Arctic Council, there was a flurry of activity. First, in May of 2013 the administration released the first US *National Strategy for the Arctic Region* written "to meet the reality of a changing Arctic environment, while we simultaneously pursue our global objective of combating the climatic changes that are driving these environmental conditions."[45] The strategy laid out three lines of effort including "advance United States security interests, pursue responsible Arctic region stewardship, and strengthen international cooperation."[46] The strategy also reaffirmed the importance of consulting with Alaska Natives that was first emphasized by the Clinton administration.[47] Later in May, the administration signed the second Arctic Council Agreement--the *Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic*.[48] The month closed with the United States Coast Guard's release of its first *Arctic Strategy*.[49] The Coast Guard strategy document provides three strategic objectives for the service in the Arctic: 1) improving awareness, 2) modernizing governance, and 3) broadening partnerships.[50] The Coast Guard's *Arctic Strategy* also sounded the alarm on the decrepit state of the nation's icebreaker fleet.[51] The DOD released its first *Arctic Strategy* in November of 2013, closing out a productive year of US moves in the Arctic. The DOD strategy set a goal of an Arctic that was a "secure and stable region where US national interests are safeguarded, the US homeland is protected, and nations work cooperatively to address challenges."[52]

The Obama administration authored eight more Arctic strategy documents from January 2014 until the end of its second term.[53] These documents did two things. First, the documents clarified the whole-of-government effort underway in the Arctic. At the same time, the policies demonstrated a real commitment by the administration to the changing environmental and security picture in the Arctic. The

[44] "Report to Congress on Arctic Operations and the Northwest Passage."

[45] The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region* (Washington, DC: The White House, May, 2013), https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/.

[46] The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*, 2013.

[47] The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*, 2013.

[48] "Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic." (Arctic Council, 2013), https://oaarchive.arctic-council.org/.

[49] *The United States Coast Guard Arctic Strategy*.

[50] *The United States Coast Guard Arctic Strategy*.

[51] *The United States Coast Guard Arctic Strategy*.

[52] "DOD Arctic Strategy" (Department of Defense, November 2013), https://DOD.defense.gov/.

[53] McKenzie and Krenicki, "Arctic Nation: Climate Change Changes Policy."

documents were from across the range of the Executive Branch—from the DOD to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).[54] The flurry of activity required the administration to take action to ensure that activities were coordinated across the federal bureaucracy. In July 2014, the former Commandant of the US Coast Guard, Admiral Robert J. Papp, was named as the US Special Representative for the Arctic.[55] Then the administration created the Arctic Executive Steering Committee and appointed Ambassador Mark Brzezinski, the former US Ambassador to Sweden, as its Executive Director.[56] Finally, joining Canada, Denmark, Norway and Russia, the administration also was a party to the *Declaration Concerning the Prevention of Unregulated High Seas Fishing in the Central Arctic Ocean*.[57]

President Obama also demonstrated his administration's strong commitment to both the Arctic and combating climate change by becoming "the first US President to travel to Arctic Alaska."[58] The stated goal of the trip was to "shine a spotlight on what Alaskans in particular have come to know: Climate change is one of the biggest threats we face, it is being driven by human activity, and it is disrupting Americans' lives right now."[59] The visit was not without criticism. The *New York Times* argued that the visit highlighted the incongruity in Obama's policy which encouraged energy exploration while at the same time trying to reduce the nation's dependence on fossil fuels.[60] The Obama administration's ultimate legacy in the Arctic is one of increasing the importance of the Arctic as a whole-of-government effort, while clearly building upon his predecessors' strategies.

America First—Trump's Reprioritization of the Pillars of US Arctic Policy

The Trump administration's Arctic policy can be seen as a policy that reordered the core pillars of US policy that had been in place since the Nixon administra-

[54] McKenzie and Krenicki.

[55] "Retired Admiral Robert Papp to Serve as US Special Representative for the Arctic," US Department of State, July 16, 2014.

[56] "Ambassador Mark Brzezinski Appointed Executive Director of the Arctic Executive Steering Committee," whitehouse.gov, August 13, 2015, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/; "Executive Order 13689 — Enhancing Coordination of National Efforts in the Arctic," January 21, 2015, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/.

[57] "Declaration Concerning the Prevention of Unregulated High Seas Fishing in the Central Arctic Ocean," July 15, 2015, https://oceanconservancy.org/.

[58] McKenzie and Krenicki, "Arctic Nation: Climate Change Changes Policy."

[59] "President Obama's Trip to Alaska," The White House, 2015, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/.

[60] "Obama's Alaska Visit Puts Climate, Not Energy, in Forefront," *New York Times*, August 30, 2015, https://www.nytimes.com/.

tion. The "administration's Arctic policy can be summarized as a policy that focused on security, national defense, and resource extraction above all else; it effectively removed the Obama administration's mitigation of climate change as a goal."[61] Both Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic and environmental protection were no longer a priority, rather, "Trump's Arctic policy was based on confronting potential great power competition from China and Russia, extracting natural resources, and achieving 'better outcomes' in international forums—it could be said that all of this was about seizing the potential opportunities for exploitation of the region, due to climate change."[62]

The year 2017 was a busy time for US Arctic policy with the Trump administration shifting to an "America First" focus. First, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson signed the *Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation*, the third major agreement created under the auspices of the Arctic Council.[63] The May 2017 Arctic Council meeting also provided the first window into the new administration's thinking with regards to the Arctic. It was reported that the United States asked for six last-minute changes to the agreement that had the intent of watering down climate change related language.[64] Then, in December of 2017, the first written strategy document foreshadowing a shift in the US Arctic policy, or at least in how the Arctic is used in the fulfillment of other policy objectives, was published. The 2017 *National Security Strategy* mentions the Arctic only once, under a section titled "Achieve Better Outcomes in Multilateral Forums."[65] The section starts out with a relatively positive tone affirming that international institutions establish "the rules for how states, businesses, and individuals interact." It then closes with what could be seen as a warning, asserting that, "All institutions are not equal, however. The United States will prioritize its efforts in those organizations that serve American interests. "[66]

The DOD and the Department of the Navy provide an interesting example of the Arctic's priority, or lack thereof, during the early days of the Trump administration. First, in 2018, the Navy reinstated the 2nd Fleet with a goal to "counter

[61] McKenzie and Krenicki, "Arctic Nation: Climate Change Changes Policy."

[62] McKenzie and Krenicki; The White House, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, December 2017), https://www.hsdl.org/.

[63] "Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation" (Arctic Council, May 11, 2017), https://www.state.gov/.

[64] Sabrina Shankman, "Leaked Draft Shows How US Weakened Climate Change Wording in the Arctic Declaration," *InsideClimate News*, May 19, 2017, https://insideclimatenews.org/.

[65] The White House, *National Security Strategy*, 2017.

[66] The White House, *National Security Strategy*, 2017.

Russia in the North Atlantic and the Arctic."[67] Then, the Harry S. Truman Carrier Strike Group deployed north of the Arctic Circle. This was the first time that a carrier strike group operated in the Arctic since the fall of the Soviet Union.[68] Both of these moves demonstrated a real commitment by the Navy, but then in January of 2019 the Navy released their *Strategic Outlook for the Arctic*.[69] This document was immediately the butt of jokes, with one observer noting, "It looks like some commander was told to type this up on a Sunday night…"[70] At the same time the DOD released an unclassified summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy that failed to mention the Arctic or climate change.[71] The cumulative impact of these documents led Congress to order the DOD to update its Arctic strategy in the John S. McCain National Defense Act for Fiscal Year 2019.[72] Heather Conley, an Arctic policy expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, notes that the "DOD wouldn't have done this on its own if hadn't been a requirement."[73] Interestingly, the resulting 2019 DOD Report to Congress does not mention climate change, but instead refers to a "changing physical environment."[74]

The Coast Guard's April 2019 *Arctic Strategic Outlook* provides a stark contrast and is noteworthy because it is "a professionally polished document that still clearly shows a shifting US Arctic policy."[75] The document lays out three completely new lines of effort with a harder security tack including:

1. Enhance capability to operate effectively in a dynamic Arctic domain,
2. Strengthen the rules-based order, and
3. Innovate and adapt to promote resilience and prosperity.[76]

[67] McKenzie and Krenicki, "Arctic Nation: Climate Change Changes Policy."

[68] McKenzie and Krenicki; Meghan Eckstein, "Truman Carrier Strike Group Operating North of Arctic Circle; First Time for US Navy Since 1991 - USNI News," *USNI News*, October 19, 2018, https://news.usni.org/.

[69] Department of the Navy, "Strategic Outlook for the Arctic" (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 2019).

[70] Melody Schreiber, "The US Navy's New Arctic Strategy Is Limited in Scope and Details, Say Critics," *ArcticToday* (blog), April 29, 2019, https://www.arctictoday.com/.

[71] "Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy" (Department of Defense, 2018), https://DOD.defense.gov/.

[72] Melody Schreiber, "Congress Calls for a New US Arctic Defense Strategy," *ArcticToday* (blog), August 9, 2018, https://www.arctictoday.com/.

[73] Melody Schreiber, "US Arctic Defense Strategy Ramps up Rhetoric without Committing Resources, Experts Say," *ArcticToday* (blog), June 11, 2019, https://www.arctictoday.com/.

[74] "2019-DOD-Arctic-Strategy" (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, June 2019), https://media.defense.gov/.

[75] McKenzie and Krenicki, "Arctic Nation: Climate Change Changes Policy."

[76] United States Coast Guard, The United States Coast Guard Arctic Strategic Outlook, May 2019, https://www.uscg.mil/.

The document's introduction describes the "resurgence of nation-state competition."[77] The document also demonstrates the independence of the Coast Guard in its full-throated call for resources—specifically the newly rebranded Polar Security Cutter.[78] This call for resources was supported by the President, with President Trump proclaiming at the US Coast Guard Academy that:

> Out of the five branches of our Armed Services, it's only the Coast Guard that has the power to break through 21 feet of rock-solid Arctic ice, right? You're the only ones. And I'm proud to say that under my administration, as you just heard, we will be building the first new heavy icebreakers the United States has seen in over 40 years. We're going to build many of them. (Applause). We need them. We need them.[79]

In June of 2020, the administration provided its most full-throated support of the Polar Security Cutter acquisition program with the release of a memorandum from the President proclaiming that "the United States requires a ready, capable, and available fleet of polar security icebreakers that is operationally tested and fully deployable by Fiscal Year 2029."[80]

The Trump administration applied its America First theme to US relations with other Arctic states. In May of 2019 the Arctic Council failed to issue a joint declaration for the first time in its history, the result of the Trump administration objections to "language on climate change and the Paris Agreement."[81] The Statement of the Chair issued by Timo Soini, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Finland, makes it clear that the Trump administration's opinion was in the minority asserting that, "A majority of us regarded climate change as a fundamental challenge facing the Arctic…"[82] Then in August the media reported that President Trump was thinking about purchasing Greenland from Denmark. Trump responded to reporters' questions about the reporting stating, "It's just something we've talked about."[83] This discussion led to a diplomatic row after the Danish Prime Minister

[77] *The United States Coast Guard Arctic Strategic Outlook*.

[78] Andreas Østhagen, "What the New US Coast Guard Strategy Tells Us about the Arctic Anno 2019," *The Arctic Institute* (blog), April 25, 2019, https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/.

[79] "Remarks by President Trump at United States Coast Guard Academy Commencement Ceremony," The White House, May 17, 2017, https://www.whitehouse.gov/.

[80] "Memorandum on Safeguarding US National Interests in the Arctic and Antarctic Regions," The White House, June 9, 2020, https://www.whitehouse.gov/.

[81] McKenzie and Krenicki, "Arctic Nation: Climate Change Changes Policy."

[82] "Statement by the Chair," May 6, 2019, https://arctic-council.org/.

[83] Scott Neuman, "No Joke: Trump Really Does Want To Buy Greenland," NPR.org, August 19, 2019, https://www.npr.org/.

Mette Frederiksen called the idea "absurd."[84] President Trump then responded via tweet calling the Prime Minister "nasty" and arguing that, "All she had to do was say 'No, we wouldn't be interested.' She's not talking to me, she's talking to the United States of America."[85] The whole incident served to highlight the strategic importance of Greenland as well as the real security concerns resulting from Greenland's pursuit of independence.[86]

Greenland remained a focus point for the Trump administration, even as it eventually decided to take a softer approach. In April of 2020 the US provided $12 million of economic development aid resulting in both "praise and suspicion in Denmark" after the President's earlier calls to purchase the island.[87] Later in 2020, the Department of State reopened its Greenland consulate in an effort to counter Chinese regional moves.[88] This softer, more cooperative, diplomatic strategy in Greenland continued in November of 2020 when the US Coast Guard Cutter *Campbell* had a serendipitous encounter with the Greenlandic Prime Minister. A junior member of the ship's crew bought the Prime Minister dinner by chance which resulted in what the US Consulate in Greenland called the "unplanned pinnacle of the Coast Guard's 2020 summer activities with Greenland and Denmark."[89]

As the administration came to a close there was a flurry of activity in DOD, with the US Air Force, the US Navy, and the US Army all releasing new high-quality Arctic strategies in the final six months of the term. As a group these strategies reflected the new strategic reality in the Arctic—that "the Arctic's capacity as a strategic buffer is eroding"[90] and that the Arctic is a "contested space" for "great power competition."[91] As the 2021 Navy strategy bluntly asserts, "Without sustained American naval presence and partnerships in the Arctic region, peace and prosperity will be increasingly challenged by Russia and China, whose interests

[84] Reuters Staff, "Danish PM Says Trump's Idea of Selling Greenland to US Is Absurd," *Reuters*, August 18, 2019, https://www.reuters.com/.

[85] Scott Neuman and Sasha Ingber, "Trump Skips Visit To Denmark, Calls Danish Leader 'Nasty' For Greenland Sale Rebuff," *NPR.org*, August 21, 2019, https://www.npr.org/.

[86] McKenzie and Krenicki, "Arctic Nation: Climate Change Changes Policy"; Jeremy McKenzie, "Instead of Buying Greenland, Enhance Security & Cooperation," Pacific Council on International Policy, November 26, 2019, https://www.pacificcouncil.org/.

[87] Martin Selsoe Sorensen, "US Aid for Greenland Prompts Praise and Suspicion in Denmark," *New York Times*, April 23, 2020, sec. World, https://www.nytimes.com/.

[88] "Reopening of US Consulate Nuuk," US Embassy in Denmark, June 12, 2020, http://dk.usembassy.gov/.

[89] Chad Garland, "A Coast Guardsman Bought Dinner for a Stranger in Greenland; He Turned out to Be the Prime Minister," *Stars and Stripes*, November 30, 2020, https://www.stripes.com/.

[90] *Air Force Arctic Strategy*.

[91] HQDA, *Regaining Arctic Dominance*.

and values differ dramatically from ours."[92] At the same time the Army received guidance from the Senate Appropriations Defense Subpanel to "pursue equipment and vehicles necessary for Arctic and cold weather operations."[93] Thus we see the beginnings of a sustained effort by DOD to refocus the Department onto potential great power competition, to include the Arctic as a potential theater of operations.

The Trump administration's Arctic policy demonstrates the continuity and tension that has long been a part of US Arctic policy. First, the six pillars established by President Nixon remained the six pillars of Arctic policy under Trump. The difference lies in emphasis. The Trump administration was focused on both resource extraction and hard security concerns. These concerns are often in conflict with US Arctic policies' long held goals of environmental protection and sustainability. Interestingly, climate change played a critical role in Trump's Arctic polices, because if the environment was not changing the Arctic would still have the capacity to serve as a strategic buffer and the extraordinary natural resource wealth would remain inaccessible.

President Biden—A Continuation of both Obama and Trump Era Policies

The Biden administration's Arctic policy has been shaped by the geopolitical reality in the Arctic. This reality included the fact that climate change in the Arctic is accelerating, and we are likely to see ice-free summers in the Arctic by the 2030s.[94] At the same time, great power competition is continuing to increase as well, and there are very real concerns about both China and Russia's moves in the Arctic and around the world. Thus, we see elements of both the Obama and Trump era policies in the Biden Arctic strategy.

Immediately after assuming office in January of 2020 the Biden administration made it clear that the US was returning to a strategy to both mitigate and combat climate change—from the appointment of former Secretary of State John Kerry as a Special Envoy for Climate to an executive order calling for a moratorium on drilling in certain US Arctic waters.[95] In May of 2021, Secretary of State Antony

[92] Department of the Navy, *A Blue Arctic: A Strategic Blueprint for the Arctic*, January 2021, https://media.defense.gov/.

[93] Jen Judson, "Lawmakers Want US Army to Quicken Purchase of Arctic-Capable Vehicles," *Defense News*, November 15, 2020, https://www.defensenews.com/.

[94] The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic* Region (Washington, DC: The White House 2022).

[95] "Executive Order on Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis," The White House, January 21, 2021, https://www.whitehouse.gov/; "Fmr. Secretary John

Blinken emphasized a return to cooperation.[96] Later in September of 2021 we see an Executive Order calling for the reactivation of the Arctic Executive Steering Committee established by President Obama.[97] The press release declared, "Fundamental to every aspect of the Biden-Harris administration's Arctic policy is sound science and strong collaboration and cooperation with Indigenous Peoples to ensure that those who are impacted most – and whose ways of life are most threatened by rapidly changing living conditions – have a seat at the table."[98]

Then on February 24, 2022 the Russian Army invaded Ukraine. In March the Department of State issued a joint statement with Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden ending all activities of the Arctic Council until June, when activities resumed without Russia.[99] Also in June, the US Army, demonstrating its commitment to following through with its Arctic strategy, reactivated the 11th Airborne Division at Fort Wainwright, Alaska.[100]

In October of 2021, the Biden administration released its *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*, which replaces the 2013 Obama era strategy. The new strategy is remarkable in how it combines elements of both the Obama and Trump era policies in an effort to meet the reality of what the US is currently facing in the Arctic. The strategy is also a direct response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine and speaks to a new geopolitical reality. The strategy opens proclaiming that, "The United States seeks an Arctic region that is peaceful, stable, prosperous, and cooperative."[101] It goes on to acknowledge, "increasing strategic competition in the Arctic since 2013, exacerbated by Russia's unprovoked war in Ukraine and seeks to position the United States to both effectively compete and manage tensions."[102]

Kerry, Special Presidential Envoy for Climate," President-Elect Joe Biden, accessed December 5, 2020, https://buildbackbetter.gov/.

[96] Antony J. Blinken, "Secretary Antony J. Blinken Intervention at Arctic Council Ministerial," *United States Department of State* (blog), May 20, 2021, https://www.state.gov/.

[97] "Biden-Harris Administration Brings Arctic Policy to the Forefront with Reactivated Steering Committee & New Slate of Research Commissioners," The White House, accessed July 16, 2022, https://www.whitehouse.gov/.

[98] "Biden-Harris Administration Brings Arctic Policy to the Forefront with Reactivated Steering Committee & New Slate of Research Commissioners."

[99] "Joint Statement on Arctic Council Cooperation Following Russia's Invasion of Ukraine," *United States Department of State* (blog), accessed January 25, 2023, https://www.state.gov/; "Joint Statement on Limited Resumption of Arctic Council Cooperation," *United States Department of State* (blog), accessed January 25, 2023, https://www.state.gov/.

[100] "Army Re-Activates Historic Airborne Unit, Reaffirms Commitment to Arctic Strategy," www.army.mil, accessed January 25, 2023, https://www.army.mil/.

[101] The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*.

[102] The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*.

The Biden *National Strategy for the Arctic Region* is based on "four mutually reinforcing pillars spanning both domestic and international issues."[103]

- Pillar 1—Security
- Pillar 2—Climate Change and Environmental Protection
- Pillar 3—Sustainable Economic Development
- Pillar 4—International Cooperation and Governance

The order is telling—the Biden administration is facing a much different reality in the Arctic than previous administrations due to both Russia and China's increasing activity as well as the accelerating impacts of climate change. Therefore, the Biden policy to date has ultimately been a combination of the Obama era's focus on environmental protection and climate change combined with the Reagan and Trump era's focus on hard security concerns.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, there are three primary reasons for studying US Arctic policy over the ten administrations from Nixon to Biden. First, the six themes established in President Nixon's NSDM 144 have remained the foundation of US policy for more than half a century. Second, there is an inherent tension in US Arctic policy—specifically between environmental protection, development, and security. Finally, in 2009, it became clear that the Arctic's environment is rapidly changing—the once inaccessible is now accessible. Thus, policy makers were forced to increase the US focus on the region.

The Arctic will continue to grow in geo-strategic importance as climate change accelerates. The Biden administration's Arctic policy asserts that the Arctic Ocean may be ice-free in the summer by 2030.[104] Meanwhile, China and Russia continue to assert themselves in the Arctic—expanding their presence and making long-term investments. US policy makers have taken the first step to demonstrate their commitment to the Arctic by writing a plethora of policy statements since 2009. Yet, while written policies are important, the ultimate measure of commitment is allocating resources. If the US wants to compete in the era of great power competition, it must begin to make real investments in both civilian and military infrastructure and capabilities. Many of these investments, like airfields, deep water ports, and icebreakers, could be dual use. At the same time, policy makers must

[103] The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*.
[104] The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*.

continue to balance sustainability and environmental protection against other urgent needs like security. The United States is an Arctic nation, and henceforth it is going to have to increase its investment in the region if it wants to "realize an Arctic region that is peaceful, stable, prosperous, and cooperative."[105] 

[105] The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*.

Reclaiming Arcticness

The Writing of an Arctic Chapter in the US Autobiography

Lin A. Mortensgaard

Lin A. Mortensgaard is a PhD Candidate at the Danish Institute for International Studies at the Department of Political Science, University of Copenhagen. Lin researches the interplay of Arctic climate research and international politics.

Abstract

US Arctic policy has shifted dramatically from regarding the Arctic region as a non-subject for American security policy to a pronounced focus on Arctic security dynamics. The article argues that this reorientation is not only a reaction to (Russian) strategic developments in the Arctic. Key to understanding how and why this policy change is happening now is the US self--understanding as superpower, and how this identity is being challenged in an Arctic context by designated strategic competitor China. By employing insights from Ontological Security Studies, the article finds that narratives of 'distance and proximity' and 'continuity and rupture' are key to how the national security community instantiates this policy shift. The article contributes a reading of US Arctic policy as a quest for the US to be(come) assured of its own Arcticness. This effort points at least as much inwards as outwards; to be ontologically secure in the Arctic, the US needs to be sufficiently convinced of its own Arcticness.

Introduction

In the first two decades after the Cold War, the Arctic did not appear to be a region of interest or concern of US foreign policy.[1] A policy advisor to President George W. Bush rejected the idea of a northern or Arctic policy, labelling it a non-subject: "A northern foreign policy? We don't do north in our foreign policy – unless you're talking about relations with the polar bears, walrus or caribou."[2] Nevertheless, near the end of the Bush administration in 2009 the US formulated a national security directive for the Arctic – a directive which

[1] Victoria Herrmann and Lillian Hussong, "No UNCLOS, No Icebreakers, No Clue? US Arctic Policy Through the Eyes of Congress," in *Handbook on Geopolitics and Security in the Arctic: The High North between Cooperation and Confrontation*, ed. Joachim Weber (Cham: Springer Cham, 2020), 25.

[2] Unidentified advisor cited in Douglas C. Nord, "Searching for the North in North American Foreign Policies: Canada and the United States," *American Review of Canadian Studies* 37, no.2 (2007): 207, doi: 10.1080/02722010709481855.

was adopted by the Obama administration the same year.[3] In contrast to these administrations, the Trump administration exhibited an explicit reorientation towards Arctic strategic issues, not least the role of Russia and China in the Arctic.[4] The Biden-administration has been continuing this focus, most recently explicated in the 2022 update to the 2013 National Strategy for the Arctic region, with the establishment of a new Department of Defense Arctic strategy office and the coming appointment of the first ambassador-at-large for the Arctic.[5]

With this policy shift US Arctic policy now—for the first time since the end of the Cold War—includes a pronounced and public focus on military threats to the US and Allies in or through the Arctic region. The military services, the Department of Defense, the State Department, the White House and the National Security Council, an increasing number of senators and Congressional Committees, key foreign policy think tanks and the media, identify Russian exercises and military build-up in the Arctic as threatening. Add to this a less tangible, but equally emphasized, concern about China's Arctic scientific and economic presence and China's co-exercising with Russia.[6]

What has been surprising about this policy shift is the concerted effort by a number of actors to utilize the shift to flag the US' 'Arcticness'. Within the US national security community, broadly understood, there seems to be a concern not only with Russian capability and intent in the Arctic, but also with the US' own credibility and credentials as an Arctic state. Why is the incumbent superpower concerned with appearing or becoming more 'Arctic'? This was not a concern dur-

[3] Herrmann and Hussong, "No UNCLOS," 28; Katherine A. Weingartner and Robert W. Orttung, "US Arctic policymaking under Trump and Obama," *Polar Record* 55, no.6 (November 2019): 404, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0032247419000810.

[4] Since then, a number of studies have examined US priorities and initiatives in and towards the region in order to elucidate the motivations and significance of the emerging Arctic foreign policy of the US. See in particular Annika E. Nilsson, "The United States and the Making of an Arctic nation," *Polar Record* 54, no.2 (March 2018): 95-107, doi: https://doi.org/; Elana Wilson Rowe and Helge Blakkisrud, The Arctic Council and US domestic policymaking, NUPI Policy Brief 8 (Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs, 2019). See also Elana Wilson Rowe, "A dangerous space? Unpacking state and media discourses on the Arctic," *Polar Geography* 36, no. 3 (2013): 232-244, doi: https://doi.org/; Weingartner and Orttung, "US Arctic Policymaking"; Lin A. Mortensgaard and Kristian Søby Kristensen, "The 'Icebreaker-gap' – How US icebreakers are assigned new, symbolic roles as part of an escalating military competition in the Arctic," Safeseas (blog), 5 January 2021, https://www.safeseas.net/.

[5] The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region* (Washington, DC: The White House, October 2022); US Department of State, "Establishing an Ambassador-at-Large for the Arctic Region," US Department of State, 26 August 2022, https://www.state.gov/; Jim Garamone, "DOD Establishes Arctic Strategy and Global Resilience Office," US Department of Defense, 27 September 2022, https://www.defense.gov/.

[6] Kristian Søby Kristensen and Lin A. Mortensgaard, Amerikansk Arktispolitik i forandring. Aktører og konfliktforståelser (Copenhagen: Djøf Forlag, February 2021).

ing the Cold War. For much of the latter half of the 20th century, the Arctic was a key strategic arena for the US, hosting a multitude of American military bases and installations such as the Distant Early Warning (DEW) line across the North American Arctic. What has changed so that the US must now be 'Arctic' in order to be secure in the Arctic, and for whom must the US become Arctic?

This paper argues that strategic developments in the Arctic only partially reveal what is at stake in the current US debate on the Arctic and the policy shift that this debate aims to instantiate. To understand the policy shift in US Arctic policy, which has been taking shape over the past five years, it is not enough to look narrowly at military developments and movements in the region. Key to understanding how and why this policy change is happening now is the US self-understanding as superpower, and how this identity is being challenged in an Arctic context.

The paper applies Ontological Security Studies' (OSS) understanding of security as both physical and ontological in order to decode narratives at play in the current debate, and to understand the kind of change these narratives seek to achieve.[7] Steele notes that "the ability of the narrative to organize the Self is integral to any understanding of ontological security."[8] Accordingly, narratives hold important clues towards uncovering what kind of self-understanding or identity a state curates and acts on the basis of. The below analysis substantiates this and shows that narratives can also reveal important aspects of physical (in)security. OSS' conceptualization of physical and ontological security as separate, but coupled, including Rumelili's insights on Self/Other dichotomies beyond the Friend/Enemy distinction reveal important aspects of what the change in US Arctic policy seeks to achieve.[9] But the policy change and the narratives that underpin it also trouble these clear-cut distinctions even further. This is particularly so in the US-Russia relation in the Arctic, where Russia is increasingly placed in the 'Enemy' category as a physical threat, but also forms a substantial part of the 'Us' which is used to distinguish the US and Russia as 'Arctic' in contrast to 'non-Arctic' China. Moreover, the quest for the US to be(come) assured of its own Arcticness, points at least as much inwards as outwards; to be ontologically secure in the Arctic, the US needs to be sufficiently convinced of its own Arcticness.

[7] Jennifer Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma," *European Journal of International Relations* 12, no. 3 (2006): 342, doi: 10.1177/1354066106067346; Brent J. Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations: Self-identity and the IR State* (London: Routledge, 2008), 17-20; Bahar Rumelili, "Identity and desecuritization: the pitfalls of conflating ontological and physical security," *Journal of International Relations and Development* 18 (1 January 2015): 52-74, doi: 10.1057/jird.2013.22.

[8] Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations*, 58.

[9] Rumelili, "Identity and desecuritization," 56.

This article first outlines the concept of ontological security, focusing in particular on Steele, Vieira and Rumelili's contributions to this literature.[10] It then goes on to analyze the change in US Arctic policy. This is done by identifying key narratives at play in a range of official statements, strategies and transcripts from government agencies and departments, congressional debates, think tank reports and public webinars between 2018 and 2022. These narratives draw lines between the Arctic and the US by explicating distance and proximity from a US perspective to the northernmost part of the globe, while also using continuity and rupture to write an Arctic chapter in the US autobiography. The concluding section reflects back on the current instability of Arctic Us-Them distinctions, not least in light of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Methodologically, the analysis thus follows Steel's approach of identifying key narratives circulating among a number of political agents within the state (in this case including also influential think tanks), in order to uncover simultaneously policy and self-identity creation.[11] This data was collected as part of a larger desk-study on the changing US Arctic policy, for which authoritative sources in the US national security community were analyzed.

Ontological Security, Physical Security, and Collective Identity

The conceptualization of ontological security centers on the notion that states, like individuals, strive for and need security in their being. Security-as-being draws on the notion that an individual needs to "experience oneself as a whole, continuous person in time – as being rather than constantly changing – in order to realize a sense of agency."[12] Scaling this idea up to states, ontological security studies[13] have explored how states seek ontological security and how it relates to notions such as physical security, the Other, change, and to theories such as securitization.[14] Scaling it up further, Vieira has shown that multilateral fora, such as the non-

[10] Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations*; Rumelili, "Identity and desecuritization"; Marco A. Vieira, "Understanding Resilience in International Relations: The Non-Aligned Movement and Ontological Security," *International Studies Review* 18, no. 2 (June 2016): 290-311, doi: 10.1093/isr/viw002.

[11] Lene Hansen, *Security as Practice: Discourse Analysis and the Bosnian War* (London: Routledge, 2006); Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations*, 17-20.

[12] Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics," 342.

[13] For a review of the ontological security literature and its conversation with foreign policy studies, see Jennifer Mitzen and Kyle Larson, "Ontological Security and Foreign Policy," *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of World Politics* (22 August 2017): doi: 10.1093/acrefore/9780190228637.013.458.

[14] Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics"; Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations*; Jelena Subotić, "Narrative, Ontological Security, and Foreign Policy Change," *Foreign Policy Analysis* 12, no. 4 (October 2016): 610-627, doi:10.1111/fpa.12089; Christine Agius, "Drawing the discourses of ontological security: Immigration and identity in the Danish and Swedish cartoon crises," *Cooperation and Conflict* 52, no. 1 (2017): 109-125, doi:10.1177/0010836716653157; Rumelili, "Identity and desecuritization".

aligned movement (NAM) can also be a source of ontological security in the form of collective identity and in-group recognition. Vieira argues that the NAM has constituted such a source of collective identity for a diverse range of member states, and that this has been an important element is the NAM's "political relevance and institutional endurance" in the face of structural changes, not least the end of the Cold War.[15]

This last insight speaks to studies of the Arctic Council as a source of region-making and identity-creation for those states considered Arctic according to the Council's definition.[16] Like the NAM, the Arctic Council also encompasses a diverse range of states, including two great/large powers, one of which is not a democracy (the US and Russia), one middle power, and a range of small states (Canada and the Nordic States, respectively).[17] These members are joined by six permanent participants, representing different Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic. Unlike the NAM, these members and participants have not come together in opposition to political ideologies of superpowers. Rather the formation of the Arctic Council and the Council's definition of who counts as an Arctic state, are founded in geography. Despite this difference between the NAM and the Arctic Council, the analysis below substantiates the notion that the Arctic Council functions as a collective, inter-state provider of ontological security for those states considering themselves and each other to be Arctic, including the US.

The Arctic Council, however, was established in 1996. Its existence and routinized practices may help explain the development of a distinction between Arctic and non-Arctic states, but it does not explain the much more recent change in US Arctic policy, nor the very clear identity markers that this reorientation involves. None of the other 'Arctic' states, including Russia, have been questioning the legitimacy of the US as an Arctic state. What has changed, is the US' own identifi-

[15] Vieira, "Understanding Resilience," 291.

[16] Keskitalo, Carina. "International Region-Building. Development of the Arctic as an International Region," *Cooperation and Conflict* 42, no.2 (2007): 187-205, doi:10.1177/0010836707076689; Page Wilson, "Society, steward, or security actor? Three visions of the Arctic Council," *Cooperation and Conflict* 51, no. 1 (2016): 55-74, doi: 10.1177/0010836715591711; Ingrid Medby, "State Discourses of Indigenous "Inclusion": Identity and Representation in the Arctic," *Antipode* 51, no. 4 (September 2019): 1276-1295, doi: 10.1111/anti.12542; Victoria Herrmann, "Strategic Communications of the Arctic Council: 20 Years of Circumpolar Imaging," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 35 (June 2022): 239-263, doi: 10.1007/s10767-020-09384-2; Mathias Albert and Andreas Vasilache, "Governmentality of the Arctic as an international region," *Cooperation and Conflict* 53, no. 1 (2017): 3-22, doi: 10.1177/0010836717703674.

[17] The Arctic Council defines Arctic states as those with territory north of the northern Polar circle. I.e. the US (through Alaska), Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark (through Greenland), Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia.

cation of Russia and China as near-peer competitors.[18] This change in national security orientation is relational in that it distinguishes a US-China relation and a US-Russia relation from all 'Other' US inter-state relations. This is a global re-orientation towards great power competition, which becomes tangible and specific in a regional perspective. The US pays close attention to Chinese developments and interests in the Arctic. But it is also in the Arctic that Russia is a significant player, perhaps the most significant, in terms geographical proximity, extent, and military capabilities. The US finds itself in a state of competition – a competition which ultimately threatens to destabilize the US' self-understanding as superpower. Couched in this general state of competition, the Arctic increasingly becomes a scene of and for competition with China and Russia. It is not directly 'superpowerness', which is the concern here, but more concretely 'Arcticness'. But do Russia and China each constitute the same type of 'Other' to the US in Arctic relations and what do they each threaten for the US?

In decoding US narratives in relation to security in the Arctic region and the policy change instantiated by these narratives, Ontological Security Studies' engagement with both physical and ontological security is revealing. For Rumelili, the pursuit of physical security "entails both the naming and identification of threats, and the development of measures to defend the Self against those threats."[19] Friend/enemy distinctions tend to be tied to physical security (or 'security-as-survival'), whereas the 'security-as-being' presupposes a Self/Other distinction, which need not be one of enmity. The pursuit of ontological security "entails practices that reproduce the stability of a Self/Other relation"[20] and does not "presuppose a threat to identity but underlines an ongoing concern with its stability".[21] Ontological security is not about countering an existential threat to the state, its population, territory, critical infrastructure, i.e., security-as-survival. Ontological security may be achieved without the securitization of the Other, but through the careful curation and maintenance of a stable Self/Other distinction. According to Steele, the pursuit of ontological security is the management and preferably the minimization of state anxiety about 'who' it is to itself and others, while the pursuit of physical security (what he calls 'traditional security') is to act on fears, tied

[18] See for instance The White House, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, December 2017); NATO, Brussels Summit Communiqé (Brussels: NATO, 14 June 2021).

[19] Rumelili, "Identity and desecuritization," 56.

[20] Rumelili, "Identity and desecuritization," 56.

[21] Rumelili, "Identity and desecuritization," 57.

to a specific threat.[22] Importantly, both security-as-survival and security-as-being motivate policy-making as states seek both.[23]

Inspired by Wæver, Rumelili assumes three states of security: *asecurity, security,* and *insecurity*. In terms of physical security, a state may be *asecure* if it experiences no threats of imminent harm. The quote from the Bush advisor, for example, expresses that security related to the Arctic region was a non-concern at the time. The state of *physical security* denotes the state's identification of risks of imminent harm, combined with an assurance that countermeasures exist to protect the state against these threats. The state of *physical insecurity* is *physical security* without countermeasures, i.e., a concern with imminent danger, and a realization of not being adequately able to counter or protect the state from this. According to Rumelili, the salient distinction in terms of the physical side of security lies between *physical asecurity* and *physical in/security*, more than between *physical security* and *physical insecurity* as the latter two are not final or exhaustive states. The analysis below, however, points somewhat to the opposite: that it is the state of *physical insecurity* and the effort to move towards *physical security* which partly motivates the policy change in/towards the Arctic.

The same three states apply to ontological security, although the idea of *ontological asecurity*, i.e., a state of no concern with the stability of identity, is arguably difficult to identify analytically.[24] Being *ontologically secure* is achieved when the Self "experiences a stable, certain and consistent social existence, where it remains in control about its identity and capacity for action."[25] Conversely, *ontological insecurity* is a state of disruption to the continuity of social existence and the consequent failure to "sustain a narrative and answer questions about doing, acting, and being"[26] – what Steele calls an "uncomfortable disconnect with the Self".[27]

The following analysis operationalizes these insights to explore key narratives and what they disclose about the kind of security the US national security community hopes to achieve in relation to the Arctic region. The debate on US Arctic security policy analyzed below includes both domestic fora, for instance congressional debates, but also international or bilateral fora such as Arctic Council ministerials. Consequently, the analysis does not presuppose a sharp distinction between externalist and internalist explanations of ontological security-seeking

[22] Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations*, 51-52.
[23] Rumelili, "Identity and desecuritization," 58.
[24] Rumelili, "Identity and desecuritization," 59.
[25] Rumelili, "Identity and desecuritization," 58.
[26] Rumelili, "Identity and desecuritization," 58.
[27] Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations*, 52.

(see Mitzen and Larson for a summary of these two strands) but assumes that the need for the US to become sufficiently Arctic is both a matter of continuity of the state's autobiographical narrative and a matter of relations to 'Arctic' as well as 'non-Arctic' states. [28]

As a consequence of the US' self-identification of being in competition with China, and to a lesser extent Russia, the analysis focuses mainly on these three states. More specifically, the focus is on articulations of the US' relation to these two states in the Arctic as well as 'self '-reflections on what kind of actor the US is or must become in/towards the Arctic region. Such self-reflecting narratives are approached in line with Steele: "In recalling past events, and in organizing those self-relevant events into a narrative, social agents not only provide particular interpretations of history, but are enlivening history by using it to create the basis for action".[29] Individual historical perceptions and assumptions are used to organize and understand the present, and these play into foreign policy formulation and strategic thinking, as Ehrhardt also argues.[30] As a consequence, to understand the formation and conduct of foreign policy, we need to interrogate the construction of such historical narratives and the extent to which they employ embedded assumptions about the inevitability of progress – especially when they are espoused by centrally placed decision-makers. The analysis below shows both the recalling of glorious Arctic moments of the past, and a harsh self-criticism of the present condition of the US as an Arctic state with Arctic skills. This functions both as a call to action (the US must become cognizant of its Arcticness and act according to it) and as a somewhat hastily written Arctic chapter in a larger US autobiography in which references to the Arctic/Arcticness has until now been dispersed across other chapters, or at most been an appendix to the Cold War chapter. In order to transcend the anxiety that comes from not being quite Arctic enough in its own self-perception, the US must construct a narrative of Arcticness that convincingly links the US to the Arctic as a specific region and to the Arctic's past, present and future. The quest to become Arctic enough, and the search for both physical and ontological security is evident in two main narratives which seek to establish what the US is relative to the Arctic in time and space.

[28] Mitzen and Larson, "Ontological Security and Foreign Policy".

[29] Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations,* 56.

[30] Ehrhardt, Andrew, "Everyman His Own Philosopher of History: Notions of Historical Process in the Study and Practice of Foreign Policy," *Texas National Security Review* 5, no.3 (Summer 2022): 11-32, doi: 10.26153/tsw/42077.

Distance and Proximity: Linking the Arctic to North America

The geographical continuity of the Arctic and North America, in particular the continental US, is underlined through geographical imagery, which establishes what the Arctic is relative to the US 'homeland'. The Arctic is "a critical domain to protect America's homeland" but also contains a number of "avenues of approach" to this same homeland. Warnings of the disappearing "protective mode [moat]" of North America (i.e., the melting sea ice of the Arctic Ocean) are issued by high-ranking generals, while the Arctic's role in power projection into other regions is also underlined, e.g. by naming Alaska the "most strategic place in the world" for its reach into the Arctic and into the Indo-Pacific.[31] In this way, the Arctic becomes significant because of its relation to North America; it is both a distant fortress wall and a central nodal point for the US' global reach, the latter being tied to US superpower identity. In the fortress logic, these statements express a concern with the *physical security* of the population and territory of the US, instigated mainly by Russian activity and military build-up in the Arctic. The Arctic is distant and proximate at the same time.

The threat from Russia is illustrated in congressional hearings with maps and charts of Russian Arctic airfields and ports, 'weaponized' icebreaker fleets and supporting infrastructure.[32] Russia's activities in the Arctic are referred to as "a great concern," a challenge "of a different magnitude" and an "eye-opener."[33] Specifically, Russia's Arctic military capabilities present a strategic concern to the protection and defense of the continental US and NATO Allies.[34] This includes the Northern Fleet's strategic submarines at the Kola Peninsula and new airfields capable of basing bombers and fighter jets on islands located far into the Arctic Ocean. It is

[31] C. Todd Lopez, "Air Force Reveals Cold Facts on New Arctic Strategy," US Department of Defense, 21 July 2020, https://www.defense.gov/; Heather A. Conley et al, *America's Arctic Moment: Great Power Competition in the Arctic to 2050* (Washington DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2020), 17-18; Senate, "Hearing to Receive Testimony on US Policy and Posture in Support of Arctic Readiness," 116th Cong., 2nd sess., 2020, 16, 23-24; Department of the Air Force, *The Department of the Air Force Arctic Strategy*, July 2020, , 10.

[32] Senate, Hearing to Receive Testimony on Posture of the Navy in Review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2021 and the Future Years Defense Program, 116th Cong., 2nd sess., 2020, 85.

[33] Senate, Hearing to Receive Testimony on United States European Command and United States Transportation Command in Review of the Defense Authorization Request for Fiscal Year 2021 and the Future Years Defense Program, 116th Cong., 2nd sess., 2020, 72; Senate, Expanding Opportunities, Challenges and Threats in the Arctic: A Focus on the US Coast Guard Arctic Strategic Outlook, 116th Cong., 1st sess., 2019, Heather A. Conley's statement, 4:https://www.commerce.senate.gov/; Senate, Department of Defense Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2020, 116th Cong., 1st sess., 2019, 59.

[34] Department of Defense, *2019 Department of Defense Arctic Strategy* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2019), 6.

the combination of Russian capabilities and their location relatively close to North America which is a concern.[35] Russia is considered a threat to the US' security-as-survival. The military build-up is described as "escalatory and non-transparent" and as something that "undermines global interests, promotes instability, and ultimately degrades security in the region."[36] In this narrative Russia lands directly in the 'Enemy' category, and its actions concern security in the Arctic region, security of North America, as well as distant (and undefined) 'global interests'.

Chinese military activity in the Arctic seems harder to locate and define. Then secretary of the Navy nominee Kenneth Braithwaite expressed a concern that most Americans are not attentive to the Arctic as a region because it is perceived to be remote and disconnected from the continental US. He simultaneously warned that "the Chinese and Russians are everywhere, especially the Chinese. You would be alarmed at the amount of Chinese activity off the coast of Norway in the High North. And we need to be vigilant to that."[37] Here, the idea that the Arctic is distant and disconnected from America and Americans is questioned, and the proximity is illustrated with reference to NATO ally Norway, and to the omnipresent 'Chinese and Russians'. But, in terms of immediate concern with physical security, Russia is identified as a current adversary in the Arctic with physical capability to harm the continental US, while China is considered elusively everywhere and nowhere.[38]

The community of national security experts and practitioners identify a clear and current threat to the physical security of the US, and as part of this, the relative geographical relation of the Arctic and the US 'homeland' is underlined repeatedly as both distance and proximity. But does the US see itself as capable of counteracting these threats? Is the US in a state of *physical security* or *physical insecurity* in relation to Russia and China in the Arctic?

Then Commander of USNORTHCOM and NORAD General Terrence O'Shaughnessy diagnoses the ability of the US to respond:

[35] See for instance conversation between Senator Manchin and nominee for Chief of Naval Staff, Michael Gilday in Senate, Hearing to Consider the Nomination of: Vice Admiral Michael M. Gilday, USN to be Admiral and Chief of Naval Operations, 116th Cong., 1st sess., 2019, 43; Department of Defense, Arctic Strategy, 6.

[36] Department of the Navy, *A Blue Arctic: A Strategic Blueprint for the Arctic*, January 2021, 7.

[37] Senate, Hearing to Consider the Nominations of: Honorable Kenneth J. Braithwaite to be Secretary of the Navy; Honorable James H. Anderson to be Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy; and General Charles Q. Brown, Jr., USAF for Reappointment to the Grade of General and to be Chief of Staff, United States Air Force, 116th Congress, 2nd sess., 51.

[38] U.S House of Representatives, "National Security Challenges and US Military Activity in North and South America, 116th Cong., 1st sess., 39.

> To meet this challenge, we need to invest in a capable and persistent defense that can deter adversaries, protect critical infrastructure, enable power projection forward, and prevent homeland vulnerabilities. (...) We need a layered sensing grid with sensors in all domains which can detect and track threats from their point of origin long before approaching our sovereign territory. In other words, it requires the ability to identify and eliminate the archers before the arrows are released.[39]

Elsewhere the general has hinted what these 'arrows' may be, remarking that cruise missiles constitute "one of the biggest threats that we face".[40] Others are equally worried about the US' capacity to detect and respond to threats emanating from the Arctic and coming toward the 'homeland.' The northern border is perceived to be "increasingly porous" and some warn that "it is clear that our homeland is not a sanctuary."[41] The cruise missile threat and the concern with overdue detection again relies on a distance-proximity narrative of what the Arctic is relative to North America and the US homeland; these missiles are long-range weapons, a distant threat in geographical terms, yet simultaneously the Arctic – in this case the Russian Arctic – is proximate, seeing that the shortest flight trajectory from Russia to the US is across the Arctic Ocean. Here, cruise missiles function as an illustration that the Arctic is simultaneously distant and proximate, and that the reference point for this narrative is the geographical location of the US territory and population.

The identification of imminent harm to the US, which comes about through this proximity-distance narrative, impels a sense of urgency. The Alaskan senators have for several years pointed to and criticized the Pentagon for being too hesitant regarding Arctic security issues, and the urgency increasingly functions as a call for policy change across a number of departments, agencies and services. [42] The Army's first ever Arctic strategy, for instance, identifies a need to increase experience with operating in extreme conditions.[43] Specifically, the Army must "regain," "restore," and "rejuvenate Arctic capability" in order to "increase the Army's ability

[39] US Senate, "Arctic Readiness," 17-18.

[40] Russ Read, "NORTHCOM commander warns the Arctic is an 'avenue of approach' for Russia," *Washington Examiner*, 22 July 2019, https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/.

[41] Heather Wilson and David Goldfein, "Air power and the Arctic: The importance of projecting strength in the north," *Defense News*, 9 January 2019, https://www.defensenews.com/; House, National Security Challenges, 7.

[42] US Senate, "Nominations of: Honorable Kenneth J. Braithwaite," 105th Senate, Posture of the Navy, 85-88.

[43] US Senate, "Hearing to Receive Testimony on Missile Defense Strategy, Policies, and Programs in Review of the Defense Authorization for Fiscal Year 2023 and the Future Years Defense Program," 117th Cong., 2nd sess., 60.

to operate in extreme cold-weather."[44] This is telling: the US once had this skillset, and now needs to relearn it. This further underscores the state of *physical insecurity* that the US seems to find itself in and motivates an overall policy effort to change this into a state of *physical security*. This physical security-seeking has already resulted in a number of new initiatives and capabilities, which are predominantly countermeasures to the Russian physical threat.

Continuity and Rupture: Historicizing US Engagement in the Arctic

The changing Arctic policy of the US also gains motivation from narratives of what the Arctic has been, currently is, and will be in the future. The debate includes narratives of unprecedented change, past political and military decisions to applaud, and lessons to learn from. Such narratives establish both continuity and rupture between the Arctic of the past, present and future in order to explicate what the role of the US in the Arctic needs to be currently.[45]

A sense that the Arctic is 'emerging' is prevalent. This emergence is a direct consequence of climate change and its effects in the Arctic according to one Senator: "The opening up of the Arctic Ocean is a world historical event. It is the equivalent of the discovery of the Mediterranean Sea. It is an entirely new water body that was unavailable for human use except for the indigenous peoples for all of human history."[46]

While this account of the rupture to geophysical sea ice dynamics has an optimistic and entrepreneurial ring to it, the diminishing sea ice cover necessitates a rethinking and reorientation from actors such as the Navy. The dramatic changes to the physical environment now requires a greater and more visible surface presence. Being visible and noted as present in the Arctic is not just a task for the US Coast Guard, who commands the icebreakers, but also for the Navy. This is a pronounced motivation in the Navy's Arctic blueprint, which seeks to prepare for a "blue Arctic", that is, a more navigable Arctic. [47] Despite the dramatic rupture – i.e. unprecedented changes to the climate caused by human activity – the Navy seeks continuity in its narrative of itself. Continuity and consistency between its past and future role is ensured by demarcating history into book chapters: "The

[44] Headquarters, Department of the Army, *Regaining Arctic Dominance—US Army in the Arctic* , January 2021, foreword.

[45] Cf. Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations,* 20.

[46] US Senate, Nominations of: Honorable Kenneth J. Braithwaite, 100.

[47] Department of the Navy, *A Strategic Blueprint for the Arctic*, front page.

time has come to write the next great chapter in the history of our Department, to prepare for an Alaskan Arctic and a Blue Arctic."[48]

The more navigable waterways expected in the Arctic are often linked to Chinese ambitions in the Arctic, and this motivates discussions of how the US must respond.[49] An authoritative account of this came from then Secretary of State Mike Pompeo the day before the Arctic Council ministerial in Finland, in 2019. His speech drew lines between the US' Arctic presence in the past (in the form of whalers and polar explorers) and its current engagement. He declared that the US is an Arctic nation and he dated the start of this Arctic identity to the purchase of Alaska in 1867 from Russia. Despite a continuous status as an 'Arctic' nation, Pompeo also sees rupture: "We're entering a new age of strategic engagement in the Arctic."[50] Such new developments then also require new engagement from the US: "This is America's moment to stand up as an Arctic nation and for the Arctic's future."[51] Despite the self-identification as an Arctic nation since 1867, this declaration of 'America's Arctic moment' also indicates that some degree of Arcticness or Arctic engagement has been missing, requiring, in turn, a current and concerted effort to become this Arctic nation fully by seizing 'the moment'.

The confluence of this 'moment' is caused – according to Pompeo – by China's identity infringements on the Arcticness of the Arctic states; "Beijing claims to be a "Near-Arctic State," yet the shortest distance between China and the Arctic is 900 miles. There are only Arctic States and Non-Arctic States. No third category exists, and claiming otherwise entitles China to exactly nothing."[52] This stands in contrast to Pompeo's description of Russia, whose behavior is dubbed "aggressive," yet whose status as 'Arctic' is confirmed as "fellow Arctic Council member, Russia."[53] Through historicizing the US' Arctic engagement, with reference to the Arctic Council's definition of the Arctic states, and by emphasizing China's geographical distance from the Arctic, the speech establishes a Self/Other relation of Arctic and non-Arctic states, the former including both the US and Russia.

Returning again to the identification of 'America's moment to stand up', this call to action entails a dissatisfaction with what the US is and what the US should be in relation to the Arctic. For the same reason, efforts to minimize anxiety are not only levied at China, but also inwards. References and parallels to past con-

[48] Department of the Navy, *A Strategic Blueprint for the Arctic*, 1.
[49] Senate, Nominations of: Honorable Kenneth J. Braithwaite, 100.
[50] Michael Pompeo, "Looking North: Sharpening America's Arctic Focus" (speech, Rovaniemi, 6 May 2019).
[51] Pompeo, "Looking North."
[52] Pompeo, "Looking North."
[53] Pompeo, "Looking North."

flicts with US participation in the region are drawn. The US' Arctic engagements in the Second World War and during the Cold War are applauded and these are used to make comparisons to the present. Some actors issue reminders of Arctic missions conducted in extreme weather during the Second World War[54] while others stress that the Distant Early Warning line "has always been a critical piece".[55] This reminiscence is one of pride, but it also serves to criticize or even to shame into action. One Senator criticizes the Navy for not living up to its former capabilities: the "Navy cannot barely even operate in the Arctic anymore. We used to be able to do that quite well."[56] Elsewhere, then Secretary of the Navy, comments that the Navy has to "start flexing muscles that were atrophied" – again underlining a sense of decay or deterioration in knowledge and capabilities that have once again become critical.[57] This selective recollection of the past serves to illustrate the former Arctic skillset and presence of the US in the Arctic – and to underline the need to regain this position in the present.[58] Continuity of social existence is sought through a narrative that connects temporally separate events of the past with the present, thus using history to reassure the US of its own ability to become Arctic once again. Contained in this understanding is a self-perception that the US is currently not quite Arctic enough, clearly evident in imagery such as muscles having 'atrophied'.

While this may be a response to the sense of *physical insecurity* identified above, it also signals a self-understanding of the US as an Arctic state which seems to fall short of being *ontologically secure* in its Arcticness. The need to curate and maintain a stable existence as 'Arctic', should, however, be seen in light of a larger and more critical identity as superpower. It is the destabilization of US sole superpower identity by China, and to a lesser extent Russia, and the state of competition it places the US in, which stirs this focus on the Arctic in the first place. For the same reason, cold war references are abundant in the policy debate within the national se-

[54] US Senate, *Arctic Readiness*, 45-47; Department of the Navy, *A Strategic Blueprint for the Arctic,* 4.

[55] US Senate, Hearing to Consider the Nomination of: General John E. Hyten, USAF for Reappointment to the Grade of General and to be Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 116th Cong., 1st sess., 50.

[56] Senate, Hearing to Receive Testimony on Strategic Threats, Ongoing Challenges, and National Defense Strategy Implementation, 116th Cong., 1st sess., 74.

[57] Center for a New American Security, "Secretary of the Navy Richard V. Spencer. Discussion at the Center for New American Security (CNAS)." (Transcript of discussion at Center for a New American Security, 8 January 2019).

[58] Donnelly and Steele refer to his use of history as a way to narrate "a past Self as an aspirational one" which is an effective way of highlighting certain aspects of the past, while silencing or rewriting others. Faye Donnelly & Brent J. Steele, "Critical Security History: (De)Securitization, ontological security, and insecure memories," *European Journal of International Security* 4, no.2 (June 2019): 209-226 (219), doi:10.1017/eis.2019.5.

curity community, and direct connections are made between Arctic military developments, global competition, and international order[59] – a specific international order which is at the heart of US superpower identity. Maintaining and defending this order is to be ontologically secure in US superpowerness. And because Arcticness is intricately linked to superpowerness, and the maintenance of this, China becomes the center of attention, also in an Arctic context, despite very little physical Chinese presence in the Arctic. The very clear rejection of Chinese claims to being 'near-Arctic' should be seen in this light. It is a proclamation – inwards and outwards – that the US, in contrast to China, is unquestionably Arctic.

These efforts to move from *ontological insecurity* to a state of *ontological security* happen with inspiration in the US' own Arctic past, but also through a recognition that the Arctic of the past is not comparable to the present. The (re)construction of US Arcticness is a narrative that employs history both as continuity and rupture. An important rupture, and a contrast to the Cold War, is the institutionalization and cementation of which states count as 'Arctic'. The Arctic Council functions as the reference point for this, and the US must, in its own eyes, live up to this collective identity. Not because the other council members require it, but because the general and global state of competition the US finds itself in requires it. It becomes particularly urgent to be fully Arctic when the aspiring superpower China attempts to discursively change Arcticness from a dichotomy into a spectrum on which a state can be degrees of 'Arctic', i.e., 'near-Arctic'. The US seeks to curate and maintain a stable Self/Other, Us/Them narrative for itself, where the US - and Russia, paradoxically - are Self-Us (Arctic) and China is Other (non-Arctic). The changing Arctic policy of the US contains not only a number of concrete initiatives, meant to move towards a state of *physical security*, but also a more subtle effort to move towards a state of *ontological security* by creating an autobiographical narrative which enables the US to experience "a stable, certain, and consistent social existence, where it remains in control about its identity and capacity for action"[60] in the Arctic.

Conclusion

The current US policy shift happening in regard to the Arctic is multifaceted in what it aims to achieve. It is a response to specific actions of Russia and China, but also an inwards process, aiming to write an Arctic chapter of the US autobi-

[59] See for instance Senate, Strategic Threats, 75; House, Hearing on the Northern Border: Homeland Security Priorities in the Arctic, part I, 116th Cong., 1st sess., 1; House, Hearing on the Northern Northern Border: Homeland Security Priorities in the Arctic, part II, 116th Cong., 2nd sess., 16-18.

[60] Rumelili, "Identity and desecuritization," 58.

ography. This Arctic chapter is written through a narrative that draws on distance and proximity, continuity and rupture in its account of what the Arctic is in relation to the US. The policy shift is a conscious effort to move the US towards both *physical* and *ontological security* in regards to the Arctic region.

To move from *physical insecurity* to *physical security* the existence of the Arctic Council and its definition of which states are considered 'Arctic' matter less. The state causing most of this physical insecurity, Russia, is itself considered Arctic. But in the quest to curate and maintain a stable identity as 'Arctic', the Arctic Council is an important anchor for the US to move towards *ontological security*. This conscious effort results in pronounced commitment to eventually resuscitating the Arctic Council despite its current suspension as a reaction to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and repeated confirmations from officials and think tankers that "America is an Arctic nation"[61].

Establishing and affirming its Arctic credentials is necessary for the US' self-perception, which is, in turn, a prerequisite for being able to credibly reject China's claim to 'near-Arcticness'. The "capacity for action"[62] is then a product both of the collective identity established and maintained through the Arctic Council, and of the ongoing identity work of the national security community in the US. In other words, the US must become Arctic for itself first of all, but this Arcticness cannot be separated from the collective identity of the eight Arctic states, tied as it is to the existence of the Arctic Council.

Importantly, the Arctic chapter of the US autobiography is only one chapter in an autobiography in which the overarching theme is superpower and how to maintain a stable social existence as one – and as the only one. The destabilization to this social existence comes from China, and leaves the US in a state of competition. The northernmost part of the globe then becomes a particular instance of this state of competition, and curating Arcticness becomes a stabilizing pillar in the effort to maintain superpowerness.

Turning to Russia, it is clear that Russia in the Arctic threatens something for the US, but it is also clear that this is not the same kind or degree of competition that China evokes. In the years between the 2014 Ukraine crisis and Russia's 2022 full-scale attack on Ukraine, the US and its Arctic Allies and partners managed to engage Russia's two very different roles. In terms of physical security, Russia is perceived as a threat and an adversary in the Arctic. Simultaneously, Russia is a very important part of the collective identity that the US anchors its Arcticness in and

[61] Antony Blinken, "Secretary Blinken Remarks on National Strategy for the Arctic Region" (Remarks at US Department of State, Washington, DC, 10 July 2022), retrieved via https://www.youtube.com/, at 00.02.

[62] Rumelili, "Identity and desecuritization," 58.

seeks to maintain. Russia is a part of an 'Us' that stands in contrast to all those that are not Arctic, and only by being part of this 'Us' alongside Russia, is the US able to reject those who attempt to redefine the 'Us' to include a larger number of states. While it is still too early to determine the long-term consequences of the sus-pension of the Arctic Council in the aftermath of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the situation raises interesting questions for the coupling and decoupling of physical and ontological security. The analysis illustrates how Russia has for some time existed in the US' perception as both an enemy in physical terms and as a part of an 'Us' in terms of ontological security-seeking. The two types of security have co-existed and both have motivated policy. But the war in Ukraine raises questions about how to maintain an Arctic 'Us' inclusive of Russia, while Russia so categorically exists as a physical adversary in a Euro-Atlantic context. The suspension of the Council in the aftermath of Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, may therefore become a source of ontological insecurity for all those states considering them-selves Arctic and drawing on the Council's definition of the same. This includes other member states, whose 'Arcticness' also depends on careful maintenance of 'Arctic' identity constructions, such as Denmark/the Kingdom of Denmark and perhaps Iceland. Examining how or whether it will be possible for the eight Arc-tic states to maintain a collective identity as 'Arctic' in light of the deep enmity instantiated by Russia's war in Ukraine, could reveal new layers of the coupling and decoupling of physical security and ontological security.

Interdependent Independence

Greenland–Denmark Relations and Its Representations in Arctic Council Ministerial Meetings

Renato Fakhoury

Renato Fakhoury is a doctoral student in Global Studies at the University of Massachusetts in Lowell, and a research fellow at the North American and Arctic Defense and Security Network (NAADSN).

Abstract

The Arctic Council is one of the primary intergovernmental forums addressing the issues faced by Arctic states and Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic. Amongst those topics, is the case of GreenlandicDanish relations. Greenland (or "Kalaallit Nunnat") is an autonomous region of Denmark, currently on a legally established path towards independence. This process, however, is extremely complex, as both nations have become economically, politically, and culturally, interconnected. This paper discusses in what ways territory and metropolitan region have become interdependent and analyzes how the speeches from Greenlandic and Danish representatives during Arctic Council Ministerial Meetings reflect (or not) its independence process.

Introduction

These experiences [of participating in the Arctic Council] are of great importance to us in Greenland as we move towards independence, becoming an Arctic state."1 These words, said by Pele Broberg, Greenland's then Minister of Foreign Affairs, Business, Trade and Climate, illustrate the picture of a country-in-the-making, eager to gain diplomatic experience and to formulate its own identity.[2] Greenland, or Kalaallit Nunaat, is a complex territory with an even more complex quest for independence. Located in the North American Arctic—although geopolitically part of Europe, it has been populated for over 5,000 years, and is currently a self-governing territory of the Kingdom of Denmark.

[1] Inuuteq Holm Olsen, "Greenland, the Arctic, and the issue of representation: What is the Arctic? Who has a Say?" in the *Arctic and World Order*, eds. Kristina Spohr and Daniel Hamilton (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2020), 77-95.

[2] It is important to mention that Broberg is a member of Naleraq, Greenland's most nationalist party. His hostility towards Denmark culminated in his dismissal by Premier Egede in 2022.

Although Denmark has been granting increasingly more autonomy to Greenland's government (the Naalakkersuisut), the process of independence still reflects dynamics of power in between metropolitan region and territory, and how both Greenland and Denmark have become interdependent. In the more obvious sense, Greenland's earlier economic and political institutions were shaped after Danish models, and, to this day, its economy is heavily subsidized and dependent on Denmark.[3] Greenland's imports are larger than its exports, which causes the country a significant trade deficit. Moreover, many Danish workers occupy high positions in Greenland's public administration and business sectors. The territory is also still dependent on the Danish block grant (paid by Denmark to ensure the continuity of certain services) which amounts to 30 percent of Greenland's GDP.[4] The grant amounts to approximately 3.7 billion Danish Kroner, which would convert to around $540 million. At the same time, Denmark is reliant on Greenland to be a part of different channels of Arctic dialogue—such as the Arctic Council—which Jacobsen calls "The Arctic Advantage." [5] The fact that Greenland and the Faroe Islands' geographical positions are the key to Denmark's status as an Arctic state in a time when the Arctic was named one of the five most important security and foreign policy priorities by the Danish government may grant Greenland a unique position in the negotiating deals with Denmark.

This paper analyzes the ways in which the Arctic Council has contributed—or not—to voice narratives of independence in regard to the relations between Denmark and Greenland. First, I examine how Greenland's route towards independence has been treated in scholarly literature throughout the 21st century. I then analyze the opening speeches that Greenlandic and Danish officials have delivered in Arctic Council ministerial meetings, as well as the resulting declarations from those meetings, in four different aspects—locutors, audiences, themes, and language. I argue that, although the issue of independence is not cited as much throughout the analyzed speeches, there is a clear Greenlandic quest for more autonomy in Arctic Council bodies, which sometimes is silenced by nation-states. Greenland would then see the Arctic Council—as well as other international venues—as a channel to develop its diplomatic tradition and identity links.

[3] Javier L Arnaut, "The political economy of Greenland: From colonialism to a mixed economy," in *Greenland's Economy and Labour Markets*, ed. Laust Høgedahl (New York: Routledge, 2021), 30-47.

[4] HanVan Kammen, "Greenland's post-colonial identity formation: a new perspective", (master's thesis, Aalborg University, 2015).

[5] Marc Jacobsen, "Greenland's Arctic advantage: Articulations, acts and appearances of sovereignty games," *Cooperation and Conflict* 55, no. 2 (2020), 170-192.

Background

For the past 70 years, Greenland has procured more autonomy from Denmark, starting with its formal participation in the Danish Parliament in 1953. In 1979, the island obtained Home Rule, when over 70 percent of voters elected for greater autonomy from Denmark. This led to the establishment of a Greenlandic Parliament (Inatsisartut) and greater sovereignty in key areas - such as education, the environment, health, and fisheries. What Home Rule did not grant Greenland, though, was ownership over subterranean natural resources, nor did it recognize Greenland's rights as a "nation" under International Law. Instead, the island was designated as a "special national community within the Kingdom of Denmark."[6] In a time where being European carried negative symbolic weight towards Greenland, the Danish decision to join the European Economic Community (EEC) heavily influenced the Home Rule referendum. As a consequence, in 1985, Greenland became the first territory to leave what would become the European Union.[7]

In the early 2000s, Greenland and Denmark held further negotiations regarding independence, which resulted in the introduction of a more powerful self-government system in 2008 (which was approved by over 75 percent in Greenland) and in the Self-Government Act, which entered into force on 21 June, 2009.[8] One of the key aspects of this new status was that it promulgated a process in which Greenland could become independent from Denmark at a time of the territory's own choosing. And while the territory is still highly dependent on Denmark (economically, politically, and socially), this newly granted autonomy opens pathways for representation in international organizations—among them, the Arctic Council.

Chater et al. argue that, until the creation of the Arctic Council in 1996, the northern polar region lacked a significant network of institutions and a developed framework of regional governance.[9] During the Cold War, cooperation among Arctic states was sought on an ad hoc basis, and developed primarily through West-

[6] Adam Grydehøj, "Government, policies, and priorities in Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland): Roads to independence," in *The Palgrave Handbook of Arctic Policy and Politics*, eds. Ken Coates and Carin Holroyd (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2020), 217-231.

[7] The decision was also heavily influenced by economic interests. Leaving the EEC and, instead, joining the Overseas Countries and Territories arrangement granted Greenland de facto sovereignty over fisheries after which Nuuk could then negotiate favorable agreements directly with Belgium.

[8] Rauna Kuokkanen, " 'To see what state we are in': First years of the Greenland self-government act and the pursuit of Inuit sovereignty," *Ethnopolitics* 16, no. 2 (2017), 179-195.

[9] Rauna Chater, Wilfrid Greaves, and Leah Sarson, "Assessing security governance in the Arctic," in *The Routledge Handbook of Arctic Security*, eds. Gunhild Hoogenson Gjørv, Marc Lanteigne, and Horatio Sam-Aggrey (New York: Routledge, 2020), 43-56.

ern capitalist democratic powers. Multilateral codes of Arctic law, on the other hand, were also lacking, and actions were often the result of unilateral negotiations. The Arctic Council is often considered the most important governance institution for its respective region.[10] The organization is a derivate from the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS), established at the end of the Cold War in order to promote environmental research between the West and the Soviet Union. Originally, the AEPS was formed by four working groups, focused on monitoring Arctic fauna and flora, as well as emergency prevention, preparedness, and response. The officialization of the Arctic Council established two more groups, on sustainable development and environmental contaminants.

The Arctic Council was established through the 1996 Ottawa Declaration, which stated that the Council was responsible for "promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States, Arctic Indigenous Peoples and other Arctic inhabitants on common Arctic issues, in particular on issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic."[11] All eight Arctic states (Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States) are members of the Arctic Council, which also includes permanent participation from six organizations representing Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic, supported by its Indigenous Peoples Secretariat. One specificity of the Council is that it, per the Ottawa Declaration, should not deal with proceedings related to security, focusing on matters of environmental research and technical facilitation. The organization has a permanent secretariat established in Tromsø, Norway, and as of today includes 39 observer members, including non-Arctic states such as China, the United Kingdom, Japan, and France, as well as non-state actors and representatives of Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic.

Greenland's participation in the Arctic Council aimed to reinforce cooperation among Arctic nations and raise awareness of Indigenous claims. In the first years of the Council, Greenland signed the Barrow and the initial Reykjavik Declarations representing the Kingdom of Denmark, and helped fund the development of certain agencies, such as the Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat (IPS).

The meetings dating from after 2009, however, mark a shift in the relationship between Greenland, Denmark, and the Arctic Council. First, in an effort to showcase the rising autonomy of Greenland and the Faroe Islands in regard to Arctic affairs, the declaration resulting from the Ministerial Meeting in Nuuk was signed by separate representatives of Denmark, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands. In other

[10] Piotr Graczyk and Timo Koivurova, "The Arctic Council," in *The Handbook of the Politics of the Arctic*, eds. Leif Christian Jensen and Geir Hønneland (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2015).

[11] The Arctic Council, Ottawa Declaration, Sept 1996.

bodies of the Council, however, Greenland and the Faroe Islands were finding themselves progressively constrained. During the 2011-2013 Swedish Chairmanship of the Arctic Council, Greenland and the Faroe Islands were excluded from executive Senior Arctic Official (SAO) meetings—the venue where high-level political negotiations and decisions are made—when only one chair was positioned at the negotiating table for the Kingdom of Denmark, instead of the traditional three. Additionally, Greenlandic and Faroese representation was also downgraded as the traditional three flags representing Greenland, the Faroe Islands, and Denmark were replaced by one full-sized Danish flag. Greenland then decided to boycott the 2013 Ministerial Meeting happening in Kiruna and suspend all its ongoing activities within the Council until a resolution was found (which happened only during Canadian Chairmanship in 2013-2015).

The resolution found in negotiations with Canada was announced in August 2013, when Greenland published a press-release announcing that it would resume its participation in the Arctic Council and that, in the future, Denmark, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands would have full participation rights therein. Furthermore, in a case when the number of seats allotted to each delegation was less than three, the delegate with the most competence on the matter being discussed would sit at the table.[12] Kuupik Kleist, leader of the main opposition party in Greenland, reminded the Greenlandic press that, at the end of the day, the Kingdom of Denmark only has one vote in the Arctic Council:

> [Greenlanders] had preferred to see that the subject matter of the self--governing countries [of Greenland and the Faroe Islands] role in the Arctic Council be discussed as a separate agenda item during an Arctic Council meeting instead of Greenland going at it alone. The issue is not only about Greenland but encompasses many other Arctic areas.[13]

Literature and Theoretical Framework

Literature on Greenland's independence and its relations with Denmark can be divided into three main themes. First, some scholars have approached the issue of identity construction and the depiction of either Greenland or Denmark as the "other," depending on the locutor of the speech.[14] Second, the fact that Greenland

[12] Government of Greenland. Press release from the Government of Greenland, August 19, 2013: "Grønland genoptager sin deltagelse i Arktisk Råd," 2013.

[13] Noah Mølgaard, Innuttaasut taasitinnissaat Atassutip tapersinngilaa. Sermitsiaq, 26 August 2013, https://sermitsiaq.ag/.

[14] Marc Jacobsen, "The Power of Collective Identity Narration (Greenland's Way to a More Autonomous Foreign Policy)," *Arctic Yearbook,* 2015.

is able to choose the moment of its secession with Denmark is particularly interesting to the literature in International Relations, as it has the opportunity to "lay the economic, political, and social groundwork for a successful independence."[15] And third, scholars have been concerned with the next steps—and what happens after Greenland becomes independent.[16]

Exploring the concept of "other" may help us understand the complicated relationship between not only Denmark and Greenland, but also between them and other Arctic states. For that "other" to be put forth, there must be an "us"—which, in the case of Greenland, is defined by terms of it being a "culture-nation"—characterized by a widespread perception of culture and identity as an essence, and not an everchanging structural feature.[17]

According to ontological security scholars, nation-states seek security in order to maintain consistent self-concepts, and the image of the "self " in the international system is both constituted and kept through the use of narrative—which instigates foreign policy.[18] In Arctic literature, scholars have approached this identity antagonism and ontological insecurity with different levels of analysis, such as in Indigenous communities, the nation state, and the economy.[19] The understanding that Greenland's culture is a vital part of its identity creates an instance where there is a community sharing those values, and they should be protected from external interference.[20] This also culminates in the formation of a national narrative, which differentiates the people who make up the in-group from external actors—creating an "Us" and a "Them."[21]

[15] Adam Grydehøj, "Government, Policies, and Priorities in Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland): Roads to Independence," *in The Palgrave Handbook of Arctic Policy and Politics, eds.* Ken Coates and Carin Holroyd (New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2020), 218.

[16] Jeppe Strandsbjerg, "Making Sense of Contemporary Greenland: Indigeneity, Resources and Sovereignty," in Polar Geopolitics? Knowledges, Resources and Legal Regimes, eds. Richard Powell and Klaus DODds (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2014), 259-276.

[17] Jacobsen, "The Power of Collective Identity Narration," 102.

[18] Brent J. Steele, Ontological Security in International Relations: Self-identity and the IR state (New York, Routledge, 2008).

[19] D. A. L. Adnan, "Indigenous People as Self-Narratives of Canada For Building Ontological Security in the Arctic," *Anadolu Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 21, no. 4. 2021; Karine Perreault, Mylène Riva, Philippe Dufresne, and Christopher Fletcher, "Overcrowding and sense of home in the Canadian Arctic" *Housing Studies* 35, no. 2. 2020; Brigt Dale and Berit Kristoffersen, "Post-Petroleum Security in a Changing Arctic: Narratives and Trajectories Towards Viable Futures, The Arctic Review on Law and Politics vol. 9 (2018).

[20] Ulrik Pram Gad, Når mor/barn-relationen bliver teenager: Kompatible rigsfællesskabsbilleder som (dis) integrationsteori. *Politica-Tidsskrift for Politisk Videnskab* 40, no. 2. 2008.

[21] Jacobsen, "The Power of Collective Identity Narration," 102.

These insecurities can be seen through narrative, for example, at the time of Greenland's boycott to the Arctic Council, and also cite other countries—such as Canada and the United States. Per Berthelsen, at the time Chair of Greenland's Parliament Permanent Committee on Foreign Policy and Security, argued that "Inuit in Canada are a minority. If Greenland achieves direct participation in Arctic Council negotiations, Canada will suddenly be faced with a dilemma. Our [*Canadian Inuit*] kinsmen will probably demand the same role as Greenland if we are brought in from the cold."[22] In this way, giving Greenland full participation rights in the Arctic Council could trigger other sub-national groups to demand the same. On the other side, opposition leader Premier Kuupik Kleist noted that Greenland's absence from the negotiating table only favored other states, as they would be able to shape the agendas of discussions without objection:

> The super powers have a whole different agenda. They avert giving indigenous peoples influence by keeping the power themselves. USA's access to the Arctic Council is because of Alaska's position and the northern [territories] in Canada have also given Canada its access to the Arctic Council. They will not let go of their seats at the table in the Arctic Council.[23]

This also highlights Greenland's importance for Denmark—Greenland provides Denmark with a seat at the table when it comes to negotiating Arctic affairs.

Discourse as an Identity-Shaper: Greenlandic Participation in the Arctic Council

In this paper, I analyze three types of Arctic Council documents, which are available in Arctic Council online archives—opening statements (also called interventions), joint statements, and declarations. All three are produced at, or for, the Ministerial Meetings at the Arctic Council. I look at them in three perspectives: first, when talking about locutors and audiences, I highlight the role of those responsible for delivering speeches, as well as their audiences, both in the Arctic Council and domestically. I then discuss trends in their speeches—such as recurring topics. Lastly, I talk about the role of language in appeasing or instigating debate.

Different officials have signed Arctic Council declarations in the name of the Kingdom of Denmark since the creation of the Council through the Ottawa Declaration. While most of them were Danish Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Greenlandic officials signed declarations three times from 1998 to 2021.

[22] Noah Mølgaard, Innuttaasut taasitinnissaat Atassutip tapersinngilaa. Sermitsiaq, 26 August, 2013. Available at: https://sermitsiaq.ag/. Accessed 27/05/2022.

[23] Mølgaard, Innuttaasut taasitinnissaat Atassutip tapersinngilaa.

Table 1. Officials who signed Arctic Council Declarations in the name of the Kingdom of Denmark

Year	Document	Official	Nation	Title
1998	Iqaluit Declaration	Niels Petersen	Denmark	Minister for Foreign Affairs
2000	Barrow Declaration	Johnathan Motzfeldt	Greenland	Premier, Greenland Home Rule
2002	Inari Declaration	Ole Samsing	Denmark	Senior Arctic Official
2004	Reykjavik Declaration	Josef Motzfeldt	Greenland	Deputy Premier
2006	Salekhard Declaration	Connie Hedegaard	Denmark	Minister for the Environment
2009	Tromsø Declaration	Per Stig Møller	Denmark	Minister of Foreign Affairs
2011	Nuuk Declaration	Signed by Denmark, the Faroe Islands and Greenland		
2013	Kiruna Declaration	Villy Søvndal	Denmark	Minister of Foreign Affairs
2015	Iqaluit Declaration	Martin Lidegaard	Denmark	Minister of Foreign Affairs
2017	Fairbanks Declaration	Anders Samuelsen	Denmark	Minister of Foreign Affairs
2019	Rovaniemi Joint Ministerial Statement	Anders Samuelsen	Denmark	Minister for Foreign Affairs
2021	Reykjavik Declaration	Jeppe Kofod	Denmark	Minister for Foreign Affairs

In terms of audience, it is important to highlight that both Greenland and Denmark have domestic and international audiences to satisfy when delivering speeches. Greenland, while being a culture-nation, promotes similarities with other minorities, such as the Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic in Canada, and the state of Alaska in the United States –the only reason why the United States has a seat in Arctic affairs. Those statements reinforce the notion of "other" and are a guide towards independence and the formation of a Greenlandic identity—mainly through differentiation from other Arctic states. Denmark, on the other hand, has been an advocate for Greenland's contributions in the Arctic Council, as many Danish statements regarding infrastructural development, climate change and integration concerned Greenland. Denmark acknowledges Greenland's right to be included in foreign policy decisions involving the Greenlandic people and territory, and it also benefits from having the status of an Arctic state by virtue of Greenland and the Faroe Islands. Denmark also does not directly cite the matter of independence in any of the analyzed speeches.

Greenland has been irregularly depicted in Arctic Council declarations. Although there is no written codification of Greenland's status (i.e., as a special national community), from the first declaration—the founding document of the Arctic Council—Greenland was acknowledged for its financial support to the Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat, alongside members Denmark and Canada. Further mentions in declarations were usually represented by "Denmark/Greenland," when Greenland was directly involved (such as hosting the Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat): "Welcome with appreciation the continuing offer of *Denmark/Greenland*

to host the Indigenous Peoples Secretariat (IPS)."[24] Or just "the Kingdom of Denmark," when Greenland is not directly involved in the decision: "Welcome the offer of the *Kingdom of Denmark* to chair the Arctic Council during the period 2009-2011 and to host the Seventh Ministerial meeting in 2011."[25]

The Nuuk Declaration of 2011 marks the first—and so far, only—time in which representatives from Denmark, Greenland, and the Faroe Islands signed the document separately.[26] This comes as a consequence of the Self-Government Act passed by the Danish congress two years prior to the meeting, but also preludes the 2011-2013 Swedish Chairmanship of the Council, where Greenland was excluded from SAO negotiations. There is no mention of Greenland in any of the subsequent Declarations.[27]

The 2011 speech given by Greenland's Premier, Kuupik Kleist, also reflects the territory's will to develop and to be seen as a state in international law:

> Let me stress for a moment, that we claim the right to development—an entrenched right in international law—and if we want the Arctic Council to succeed, the governments have a sacred duty to respect not only in words, but also indeed, the universal right to development by the residents and indigenous peoples of the Arctic.[28]

In 2015, at the meeting in Iqaluit, Greenland reinforced that the development of the Arctic Council depends on ensuring participation for all of its members: "Greenland has since the very beginning of the Arctic Council been very active in the work of the Council. For us it is a necessity that we are present and are helping to shape the decisions about our region. [...] Greenland will not be a passive victim of climate change."[29]

Finally, in 2021, Pele Broberg, Greenland's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Business, Trade and Climate stressed how important participation in organizations such as the Arctic Council is for Greenland. It is also the first time Greenland speeches openly talk about independence:

> In our participation in the work of the Council, it is important for us to continue to gain diplomatic experience and have a good dialogue with our

[24] The Arctic Council, Tromsø Declaration, 2009 (emphasis added).

[25] The Arctic Council, Tromsø Declaration, 2009.

[26] Lene Espergen (Denmark), Kaj Leo Johannesen (Faroe Islands), and Kuupik Kleist (Greenland).

[27] 2019's document is not technically a declaration. Members of the A.C. did not achieve consensus on a unified resolution, so instead of a Declaration, a Joint Statement was issued.

[28] Greenland intervention, 2011 Ministerial Meeting, 2011.

[29] Greenland intervention, 2015 Ministerial Meeting, 2015.

> partners in the Arctic. These experiences are of great importance to us in Greenland as we move towards independence, becoming an Arctic state.[30]

Speeches by Denmark highlight a plethora of issues, and, in most speeches, issues are politicized and brought to the attention of other Council members. The speeches from 2000 and 2002 highlight the importance of infrastructural development, especially in Greenland and the Faroe Islands. According to Denmark, infrastructural development would then boost trade and telecommunications, which are essential to the livelihood in the Arctic Circle. The line "Denmark and Greenland will continue to promote and do what they can to facilitate the opening of the Arctic Window in the way it should be understood—i.e. promoting cooperation on issues of common interest" shows that Greenland was represented as Denmark's partner, with a common goal of boosting Arctic cooperation between the European Union and other regions of the world. [31]

In 2006, Danish Minister for the Environment Connie Hedegaard, stressed the importance of working on climate change and its dangers to Greenland, by acknowledging that "Greenland is already striving to cope with the effects of climate change, and we know for a fact that we have only seen the very early signs of global warming. We need effective policy responses, and we need them now."[32]

The 2011 speech by Denmark again focused on climate change. Kuupik Kleist, Premier of Greenland, and talking on behalf of Denmark, highlighted different areas threatened by global warming:

> What's also true is that the Arctic is at peril. I am talking about the rapidly escalating warming of the climate. I am talking about the vanishing traditional ways of life. I am talking about the current transformations in terms of geography, demography, economy, culture and, in particular globalization.[33]

Danish speeches from 2013 and 2015 focus on more infrastructural and procedural tasks, such as the importance of conducting oil spill exercises, highlighting the importance of diversifying energy sources in the Arctic and promote inclusivity to the international community. While representatives present the lack of connectivity in the Arctic as a setback, it is presented with optimism—highlighting the opportunity for infrastructural development that the region presents. This trend is also followed in the subsequent speeches from Denmark, which focus on strat-

[30] Greenland intervention, 2021 Ministerial Meeting, 2021.
[31] Denmark intervention, 2002 Ministerial Meeting, 2002.
[32] Denmark intervention, 2006 Ministerial Meeting, 2006.
[33] Denmark/Greenland intervention, 2011 Ministerial Meeting, 2011.

egies to promote cooperation in the region and frame infrastructural investments as "crucial for a successful and economic development."[34]

One last consideration is that most of the Arctic Council officials are delivering speeches in English, that were translated from their native languages. The use of sentence structures such as passive voices, while more formal, also has an appeasing tone in discourse, that may be more apparent in venues where speakers use their native languages. Olsen (2020) explores the case of Greenland's opening speech at the 2019 Arctic Circle Assembly in Reykjavik, where Premier Kim Kielsen said, "Whenever the Arctic is discussed within the Realm, Greenland always plays a central role. Thus, we are of the conviction that it should be natural for Greenland to occupy a permanent seat in the Danish delegation to the Arctic Council."[35] However, when translated directly from the Greenlandic "Pissusissamisoortutullu uagut isigaarput Kalaallit Nunaat Issittumi Siunnersuisooqatigiinni Naalagaaffiup aallartitaattut issiavik tigummissagipput," the sentence means "that, as we see it, Greenland should —naturally —occupy the seat that Denmark currently occupies at the Arctic Council"[36]. Using and archiving untranslated versions of speeches (which is common for Russian speeches in the Arctic Council) could be a practice to facilitate understanding contextual clues given by language.

Conclusion

In conclusion, independence has been portrayed inconsistently in Arctic Council speeches by Greenland and Denmark. While Denmark has granted more autonomy to Greenland in regard to the signing of documents on its behalf, Greenland's representation in the Arctic Council has taken a turn in 2011 when the Danish delegation—which includes Greenland and the Faroe Islands—were given only one chair at a Senior Arctic Officials meeting. In response, Greenland boycotted some of the council's meetings, and was involved in a series of negotiations with Canada about its role in the Council.

Greenland's position in the Arctic Council has been representative of its position as a culture-nation, with its discourse highlighting Denmark and other Arctic states as an "other", mostly in moments of quest for higher autonomy within the Council. In its quest towards independence, participation in international fora is particularly relevant to Greenland, as it formulates its diplomatic tradition and helps in shaping a Greenlandic identity. Greenland is still, however, deeply depen-

[34] Denmark intervention, 2017 Ministerial Meeting, 2017.
[35] Olsen, "Greenland, the Arctic, and the issue of Representation," 77.
[36] Olsen, "Greenland, the Arctic, and the issue of Representation," 77.

dent on Danish commerce, labor, and monetary policies, slowing down the process towards independence.

This interdependence goes both ways, as Denmark is also attached to Greenland. The island is rich in natural resources, which include a quarter of the world's reserves for rare earth elements. Similarly, its proximity to both North America and Europe has caused Greenland to be used as part of NATO's defense strategy. More importantly though, Greenland is the key to Denmark's access to the Arctic—which goes from access in international fora such as the Arctic Council to the capacity of negotiating deals with other world players. 

US Arctic Strategy Survey

Jessica Olcott Yllemo
Tucker Hamilton

Jessica Olcott Yllemo is the Director, Climate Security Programs at the American Security Project. Her work is focused on climate security, emergency response/disaster preparedness, and civil affairs.

Tucker Hamilton is a research assistant at the American Security Project. He graduated *summa cum laude* from The George Washington University with a B.A. in International Affairs and a minor in Russian.

Abstract

Although it has historically been a region of operational and scientific cooperation, the Arctic is rapidly becoming an area of geostrategic significance with increased maritime activity and energy exploration. The US alone has 14 federal agencies that sponsor or conduct Arctic related activities, so the region requires unique coordination across multiple national security interests, including border security; economic, environmental, and food security; freedom of navigation; national defense; natural resource protection; and protection of US sovereign rights. The subsequent literature-review style report explores recent federal actions and updated US Arctic strategies to educate and inform key stakeholders about priorities and interests in the region.

Introduction

Although it has historically been a region of operational and scientific cooperation, the Arctic is rapidly becoming an area of geostrategic significance. The Arctic is warming nearly four times faster than the rest of the world,[1] and there is an anticipated increase in maritime activity and energy exploration which portends an uncertain future. Both Russia and China have declared the region a national priority and made investments in activities in the region,[2] which foreshadows increasing geopolitical tensions. Russia is a mere 55 miles away from US soil at the Bearing Strait, and as it continues to increase its military presence[3] by opening a new Arctic Command[4] and reopening numerous Soviet-era Arctic military sites, concern is warranted. Likewise,

[1] Jonathan Bamber, "The Arctic is warming nearly four times faster than the rest of the world," *PBS News Hour*, August 15th, 2022, https://www.pbs.org/.

[2] US Coast Guard, *Arctic Strategic Outlook*, April 2019, 5, https://www.uscg.mil/.

[3] Nick Paton Walsh and Sarah Dean, "Russia's militarization of the Arctic shows no signs of slowing down," CNN, December 22, 2022, https://www.cnn.com/.

[4] Euronews, "NATO chief warns about Russia's Arctic military buildup on Canada visit," August 27, 2022, https://www.euronews.com/.

China's declaration that it is a "near-Arctic state"[5] and issuance of an Arctic policy[6] makes it crucial for American leaders, stakeholders, and elected officials to pay close attention to regional developments. Indeed, China's pattern of behavior in the Indo-Pacific region and its disregard for international law are cause for concern as its economic and scientific presence in the Arctic grows.[7]

The State of Alaska makes the United States an Arctic nation, thus having key implications for homeland security, defense, research, and international cooperation. With 14 federal agencies that sponsor or conduct Arctic science, engineering, and related activities,[8] the Arctic requires leadership and cooperation across multiple national security interests, including border security, economic security, environmental security, food security, freedom of navigation, geopolitical stability, human safety, national defense, natural resource protection, and assertion and protection of US sovereign rights.[9] As such, it is critical that the US prepares for a more dynamic, open region.

Overall, US policy is that the Arctic remains a stable and peaceful region. However, there is a near universal understanding that the rapidly changing environmental and geopolitical landscape in the region will have profound implications for policy, operations, and research. At the federal level, the US has recognized the emerging challenges through several critical activities, including an announcement of the Ambassador-at-Large for the Arctic Region position at the US Department of State (DOS).[10] The shift from coordinator[11] to ambassador signals a recognition of the growing importance of the region. The Department of Energy (DOE) has also re-established its Arctic Energy Office (AEO), which "serves as a principal advisor to the Undersecretary on all domestic Arctic issues," and leads DOE priorities in the region, to include analysis, assessments, initiatives, and activities.[12] Similarly, the Department of Defense (DOD) has established the Arctic Strategy

[5] Andrew Wong, "China: We are a 'Near-Arctic State' and we want a 'Polar Silk Road,'" CNBC, February 14, 2018, https://www.cnbc.com/.

[6] The State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, *China's Arctic Policy*, January 2018, https://english.www.gov.cn/.

[7] US Coast Guard, *Arctic Strategic Outlook*, April 2019, 6, https://www.uscg.mil/.

[8] National Sciences Foundation, "Polar Programs," https://www.nsf.gov/.

[9] US Coast Guard, *Arctic Strategic Outlook*, April 2019, 14, https://www.uscg.mil/.

[10] Department of State, "Establishing an Ambassador-at-Large for the Arctic Region," August 26, 2022, https://www.state.gov/.

[11] Department of State, "Office of the US Coordinator for the Arctic Region," https://www.state.gov/.

[12] Arctic Research Consortium of the United States, "US Department of Energy Reestablishes its Arctic Energy Office," https://www.arcus.org/.

and Global Resilience Office[13] to enhance homeland defense capabilities, coordinate activities, and protect US interests. Furthermore, within the last five years, the Departments of the Army, Air Force, and Navy have each promulgated Arctic strategies with clear visions for Arctic warfighting capabilities and security aspirations, indicating the rising importance of the Arctic in national security planning. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has also released its first-ever Arctic strategy, underscoring the increasing role the agency and its assets expect to play in the coming decade, particularly with respect to US Coast Guard (USCG) activities. In its 2019 Arctic Strategic Outlook, the Coast Guard stated, "The Arctic maritime domain will continue to open and increased activity will create more demand for Coast Guard services. Near-term variability will result in a dynamic operating environment that exposes mariners and Arctic communities to unpredictable levels of risk."[14] In the region, increasing maritime traffic, potential critical mineral resource extraction, and Arctic tourism present both opportunities and challenges for Arctic communities and US security interests.

The subsequent literature-review style report explores several recent federal actions and updated Arctic strategies that are most relevant to defense and security stakeholders. This select review is designed to educate and inform leaders, policymakers, and the general public about Arctic issues. The broad overviews in this report are meant to inform policy discussions and stakeholder actions and are presented through a defense and security lens.

National Strategies

National Security Strategy (NSS)

The 2022 NSS outlines the vision and priorities for the nation's security apparatus in the forthcoming "decisive decade" with a stated goal of a "free, open, prosperous, and secure international order."[15] While only mentioned once in its 2017 predecessor, the Arctic has a much more prominent role in the 2022 version. It has three lines of effort, all of which are applicable to the Arctic:

1. Invest in the underlying sources and tools of American power and influence;

[13] Jim Garamone, "DOD Establishes Arctic Strategy and Global Resilience Office," Department of Defense, September 27, 2022, https://www.defense.gov/.

[14] US Coast Guard, Arctic Strategic Outlook, April 2019, 14, https://www.uscg.mil/.

[15] The White House, National Security Strategy (Washington, DC: The White House, October 2022), 10, https://www.whitehouse.gov/.

2. Build the strongest possible coalition of nations to enhance our collective influence to shape the global strategic environment and to solve shared challenges; and
3. Modernize and strengthen our military so it is equipped for the era of strategic competition with major powers, while maintaining the capability to disrupt the terrorist threat to the homeland.[16]

Given that the Arctic has a longstanding reputation for international collaboration, it makes sense that despite the changing physical and geopolitical environment, cooperation will persist—at least among like-minded Allies and partners. Of note, the NSS has two dedicated sections entitled, "Maintain[ing] a Peaceful Arctic" and "Protect[ing] Sea, Air, and Space," which illustrate both the importance of and intention for the Arctic region. The NSS frames the Arctic challenges with respect to strategic competition with Russia and the People's Republic of China (PRC) and also acknowledges the evolving environmental and economic challenges due to climate change. It states that security will be maintained by "improving our maritime domain awareness, communications, disaster response capabilities, and icebreaking capacity to prepare for increased international activity in the region,"[17] as well as deepening cooperation with Arctic Allies, partners, and Arctic institutions. It clearly states the US intention to protect freedom of navigation and will "determine the US extended continental shelf in accordance with international rules."[18]

National Defense Strategy (NDS)

The Arctic was not a feature of the 2018 NDS but is acknowledged several times in the 2022 version. Integrated deterrence and campaigning are at the core of the 2022 NDS, and the Arctic region is likely to play a key role in both. The NDS further builds upon the concepts and goals of the NSS by outlining four priorities, which are also relevant to the Arctic:

1. Defending the homeland, paced to the growing multi-domain threat posed by the PRC; deterring strategic attacks against the United States, Allies, and partners;
2. Deterring aggression, while being prepared to prevail in conflict when necessary—prioritizing the PRC challenge in the Indo-Pacific region, then the Russia challenge in Europe; and,

[16] The White House, *National Security Strategy*, 2022, 11.
[17] The White House, *National Security Strategy*, 2022, 15.
[18] The White House, *National Security Strategy,* 2022, 16.

3. Building a resilient Joint Force and defense ecosystem.[19]

The NDS focuses on the PRC as the "pacing threat" and Russia as an "acute threat" while labeling the Arctic as a "new corridor of strategic interaction."[20] It reiterates the US intention to maintain the Arctic as a stable region "characterized by adherence to internationally agreed upon rules and norms,"[21] with specific improvements in early warning and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities to deter threats. The NDS also calls for shared maritime domain awareness and partnership with Canada to enhance North American Aerospace Defense Command capabilities but cautions that "activities and posture in the Arctic should be calibrated" to preserve the Department of Defense's focus on the Indo-Pacific region.[22] And while not explicitly tied to the Arctic, the climate change related language in the *Strengthening Resilience and Adaptability* subsection under *Building Enduring Advantages* will likely apply to Arctic stakeholders, specifically with regard to analyzing climate change impacts on the Joint Force, integrating climate change into threat assessments, and increased resilience of military installations.

National Strategy for the Arctic Region (NSAR)

The 2022 NSAR is a ten-year strategy that envisions a peaceful, stable, and cooperative Arctic region which identifies Alaska, Alaska Native communities, and other Arctic Allies as key components of maintaining stability. The Arctic's rapidly changing environment due to climate change is at the core of the NSAR. The threats and risks from an increasingly accessible Arctic include impacts on infrastructure, economic development, diminishing native traditions and livelihoods, and an increase in maritime traffic which may lead to more maritime incidents and/or an increase in illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. The 2022 NSAR's major lines of effort remain the same as its 2013 predecessor but includes a new line of effort dedicated to sustainable economic development. The 2022 NSAR is organized into four mutually reinforcing pillars:

1. Security
2. Climate Change and Environmental Protection
3. Sustainable Economic Development

[19] US Department of Defense, *National Defense Strategy*, October 2022, 7, https://media.defense.gov/.
[20] US Department of Defense, *National Defense Strategy*, 2022, 6.
[21] US Department of Defense, *National Defense Strategy*, 2022, 16.
[22] US Department of Defense, *National Defense Strategy*, 2022, 16.

4. International Cooperation and Governance.[23]

Each is supported by five stated principles:

1. Consult, coordinate, and co-manage with Alaska Native tribes and communities;
2. Deepen relationships with Allies and partners;
3. Plan for long-lead time investments;
4. Cultivate cross-sectoral coalitions and innovative ideas;
5. Commit to a whole-of-government, evidence-based approach.[24]

Of particular relevance for Arctic defense stakeholders is pillar 1, which states that the US will "deter threats to the homeland and our Allies by enhancing capabilities required to defend our interests in the Arctic."[25] It calls for the enhancement and exercising of both military and civilian capabilities in the Arctic and improving the understanding of the environment to develop whole-of-government capabilities. Its three strategic objectives are: 1) improve our understanding of the Arctic operating environment; 2) exercise presence to support priority goals; and 3) maximize unity of effort with Allies and partners. It includes "expanding the US Coast Guard icebreaker fleet to support persistent presence in the US Arctic and additional presence as needed in the European Arctic,"[26] as well as modernizing domain awareness, expanding data and observation, modeling, and analytic capabilities. Also relevant for defense stakeholders is pillar 4, international cooperation and governance and its two strategic objectives: 1) sustain the Arctic Council and other Arctic institutions and agreements and 2) protect freedom of navigation and continental shelf limits, which reaffirms the US commitment to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). It also highlights the ongoing challenges with both Russia and PRC, the latter of which has doubled its investments in the Arctic over the past decade, including expanding its icebreaker fleet and dual-use scientific engagements.[27]

The NSAR also acknowledges the emerging Arctic critical mineral industry and states that "US government agencies will expand support for sustainable development and growth."[28] It provides support to advancing adaptation and resilience to

[23] The White House, National Strategy for the Arctic Region (Washington, DC: The White House, October 2022), https://www.whitehouse.gov/.

[24] The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*, 7-8.

[25] The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*, 3.

[26] The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*, 9.

[27] The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*, 6.

[28] The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region,* 13.

support Alaska Native communities as well as for investments in infrastructure while simultaneously mitigating greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and protecting Arctic ecosystems.

Like both the NSS and NDS, the NSAR highlights cooperation with Allies and partners, as well as the important role of Alaska Native Tribes and communities in decision making and planning. Similarly, it calls for existing international institutions and agreements, like the Arctic Council and the Arctic Coast Guard Forum, to be strengthened and empowered to manage the impacts of increased activity in the region.[29] NSAR also declares the intent to "advance implementation and enforcement of existing international agreements, including the Central Arctic Ocean (CAO) Fisheries Agreement, the International Maritime Organization's Polar Code, and the Agreement on Enhancing International Science Cooperation in the Arctic.[30]

Federal Research

US Arctic Research Commission (USARC)

USARC is an independent federal agency that plays a significant role in planning and implementing international Arctic science initiatives, as well as with the Arctic Council and Arctic Science Ministerial Meetings.[31] Since its inception in 1984, USARC has recommended key goals and objectives to provide structure for data and research which informs policy and decision-making. The Director of the National Science Foundation (NSF) is a non-voting, ex officio member, and the seven remaining Commissioners are from academic and/or research institutions, private industry, and the Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic community, and are appointed by the President.[32] It works closely with the Interagency Arctic Research and Policy Committee (IARPC) and supports recommendations to address other key federal Arctic doctrine, including the NSS, NSAR, guidance on Indigenous knowledge, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Arctic Report Cards. USARC has one standing working group, The Alaska Rural Water and Sanitation Working Group, and two archived groups that have been transferred to other entities— The Arctic Renewable Energy Working Group and The Arctic Mental Health Working Group.

[29] The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region,* 13-14.
[30] The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*, 14.
[31] US Arctic Research Program, Report on the Goals and Objectives for Arctic Research 2023-2024, 24.
[32] US Arctic Research Commission, USARC Commissioners, https://www.arctic.gov/.

Three of USARC's stated duties are of particular interest for defense and security stakeholders: 1) facilitate cooperation in Arctic research among federal, state, and local governments and with international partners; 2) recommend advances in Arctic research logistics; and 3) recommend improved methods for data sharing among research entities.[33]

Report on the Goals and Objectives for Arctic Research 2023-2024

There are five goals outlined in the Goals and Objectives for Arctic Research 2023-2024 report that are similar to its predecessors:

1. Environmental Risks and Hazards;
2. Community Health and Well-Being;
3. Infrastructure;
4. Arctic Economics;
5. Research Cooperation.

The 2023-2024 report also outlines progress made in each of the goal areas, makes specific recommendations for future actions, and identifies several emerging topics, including electric vehicles (EVs) and batteries; tourism; archaeology; aquaculture; small-scale nuclear power; and drones.

Of note for defense and security stakeholders is the progress and success by Insitu, an American company, in building "surface situational awareness from satellites and remotely piloted aircraft systems operating beyond line of sight."[34] Likewise, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson in Alaska is facilitating aircraft maintenance through a new virtual reality training lab that has the potential to support similar activities in rural communities and research installations.[35]

National Science and Technology Council (NSTC)

Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee (IARPC)

Arctic Research Plan (2022-2026)

The IARPC brings together representatives from 18 federal entities to establish a coordinated agenda for Arctic research.[36] In accordance with the responsibilities outlined in the Arctic Research Policy Act of 1984, the IARPC released the 2022-

[33] US Arctic Research Program, Report on the Goals and Objectives, 2.
[34] ArcticX 2022, Integrated Remote Sensing for the Arctic, https://www.idg.network/.
[35] US Arctic Research Program, Report on the Goals and Objectives, 11.
[36] US Arctic Research Program, Report on the Goals and Objectives, 5.

2026 Arctic Research Plan (ARP) in December 2021. The ARP identifies broad priority areas, which include:

1. Community Resilience and Health: Improve community resilience and well-being by strengthening research and developing tools to increase understanding of interdependent social, natural, and built systems in the Arctic;
2. Arctic Systems Interactions: Enhance the ability to observe, understand, predict, and project the Arctic's dynamic interconnected systems and their links to the Earth system;
3. Sustainable Economies and Livelihoods: Observe and understand the Arctic's natural, social, and built systems to promote sustainable economies and livelihoods; and
4. Risk Management and Hazard Mitigation: Secure and improve quality of life through research that promotes an understanding of disaster risk exposure, sensitivity to hazard, and adaptive capacity.[37]

The plan has overarching principles of sustained engagement, inclusion and equity, and transparency and accessibility, and is implemented through biennial implementation plans in order to allow the flexibility needed to be responsive to changing Arctic dynamics. The Arctic Research Plan's foundational activities that are critical to achieving goals and priorities include: data management; education, training, and capacity building; monitoring, observing, modeling, and prediction; participatory research and Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic leadership in research; and technology innovation and application.

NSTC IARPC Arctic Research Plan

Biennial Implementation Plan (2022-2024)

The IARPC Implementation Plan (2022-2024) expands upon the ARP (2022-2026) priorities, goals, and principles and examines interdisciplinary research questions to advance the broad priority areas outlined in the ARP. It is carried out by ARP Priority Area Collaboration Teams, Foundational Activity Collaboration Teams, and existing Communities of Practice.[38] The Implementation Plan outlines specific objectives, deliverables, and collaborating agencies for each priority area, as well as expected dates of completion. Deliverables are updated on the IARPC

[37] The Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee of the National Science and Technology Council, Arctic Research Plan 2022-2026, December 2021, ix–x, https://www.iarpccollaborations.org/.

[38] The Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee, Biennial Implementation Plan 2022-2024 for the Arctic Research Plan 2022-2026, November 2022, 10, https://www.iarpccollaborations.org/.

Collaborations website, which also serves as a critical coordination mechanism for all of the multidisciplinary teams. Two threads permeate many of the priorities and activities: food security, which is fundamental to the well-being and resilience of Arctic residents, and infrastructure, on which community well-being and security depend.[39] Of note for defense stakeholders is the US Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) leading role in two separate studies for Objective 4.3: Research to support more resilient and transformative infrastructure to withstand potential impacts from acute and long-term hazards, including those hazards brought about by climate change.[40] DOD also has the leading role in all seven data management deliverables, focused on FAIR (findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable) and CARE (collective benefit, authority to control, responsibility, and ethics) principles in the Arctic.

Department of Commerce (DoC)/National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

NOAA is an essential partner for Arctic national security stakeholders, especially the US Coast Guard, Navy, and Air Force.[41] NOAA provides critical services, such as annual Arctic Report Cards[42], scientific analysis, and environmental stewardship, and its weather and sea ice forecasts remain critical for maritime domain awareness, commercial shipping, military navigation, and energy exploration.[43] Agency actions are guided by its 2011 Arctic Vision and Strategy document, which envisions an Arctic where sound science informs conservation and management decision-making, as well as productive and resilient ecosystems.[44] The Arctic Vision and Strategy outlines six priorities, seen in the graphic below,[45] and places an imperative upon understanding, measuring, and predicting the consequences of climate change in the Arctic.[46] In pursuit of these objectives, NOAA simultaneously improves the information, knowledge, and services that it provides peer agencies operating in the Arctic and enhances the quality of stewardship efforts.[47]

[39] The Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee, Biennial Implementation Plan, 17.
[40] The Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee, Biennial Implementation Plan, 42.
[41] National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, NOAA's Arctic Action Plan, April 2014, 10-13, https://arctic.noaa.gov/.
[42] National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Arctic Report Card, 2022.
[43] NOAA, NOAA's Arctic Action Plan, 11.
[44] NOAA, NOAA's Arctic Vision and Strategy, 6, 13.
[45] NOAA, NOAA's Arctic Vision and Strategy, 7.
[46] NOAA, NOAA's Arctic Vision and Strategy, 13.
[47] NOAA, NOAA's Arctic Vision and Strategy, 11.

NOAA's 2014 Arctic Action Plan provided additional clarity on the agency's objectives and milestones for the Arctic. Of particular relevance to Arctic security stakeholders is the first line of effort, advancing US security interests and its four subcomponents:

1. Evolving Arctic infrastructure and strategic capabilities,
2. Enhancing Arctic domain awareness,
3. Preserving Arctic region freedom of the seas, and
4. Providing for future US energy security.[48]

To improve weekly and seasonal sea ice forecasts, the Arctic Action Plan calls for NOAA to develop refined "higher spatial resolution regional sea ice models for Alaskan waters that can assimilate both weather and sea ice observations."[49] Additionally, because forecast quality depends upon observation and available sensors, the Action Plan similarly calls for the expanded deployment of varied sensing devices to collect observations, ranging from buoys and other "in situ technologies" to airborne and real-time satellite coverage.[50]

Likewise, NOAA's newest Arctic Research Program (ARP) Strategy (2022-2026) details plans for enhancing sea ice forecasts through concerted investment into both mass data collection and better models to filter that information. Over the next five years, the ARP will focus on deploying long-term observation instruments, developing new observational technologies, investing in sea ice modeling improvements, translating data into accessible products, and improving availability of forecasts for other federal agencies.[51]

Department of Energy (DOE)

DOE is responsible for ensuring America's security and prosperity by addressing its energy, environmental, and nuclear challenges through science and technology.[52] As a consequence of emerging Arctic energy resources, changing shipping patterns, altered fisheries, and increased tourism, DOE sought to inform its engagements with a new strategy.[53] As such, DOE's 2022 Arctic Strategy was developed to serve as "the guiding document to accelerate energy transition, enable

[48] NOAA, NOAA's Arctic Action Plan, 10.

[49] NOAA, NOAA's Arctic Action Plan, 11.

[50] NOAA, NOAA's Arctic Action Plan, 12.

[51] National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Arctic Research Program Strategy (2022-2026), January 2022, https://globalocean.noaa.gov/.

[52] US Department of Energy, Arctic Strategy, 2022, iii, https://www.energy.gov/.

[53] US Department of Energy, Arctic Energy Office, "DOE Arctic Strategy to Guide Responses to Climate Change," December 14, 2022, https://www.energy.gov/.

science-based decision-making, and ensure national security in the Arctic."[54] It calls for focused investments in energy, science, and security that will support US policy goals for a secure and stable Arctic, thus the department has a rapidly expanding presence in the region. Efforts in the region are coordinated by the DOE's re-established Arctic Energy Office (AEO) which has three strategic goals, each with four objectives that directly support the NSAR:

1. Lead and partner to advance the decarbonization, resilience, and equity of the Arctic energy sector and broader economy;
2. Ensure investments towards energy transition are informed by and relevant to Arctic climate challenges and equity considerations.
3. Develop, demonstrate and deploy energy technologies, and make available technical assistance and loan programs, to enhance the resilience of Arctic communities and critical infrastructure in the Arctic region.
4. Lead and partner to ensure decarbonized energy is a part of future Arctic infrastructure.
5. Lead the safe and secure integration of small, modular, and mobile nuclear energy to support energy resilience and decarbonized energy.
6. Lead and partner to advance the scientific understanding of Arctic challenges;
7. Use computing to lead the high-resolution Earth system modeling of natural, managed, and man-made systems to answer pressing Arctic problems.
8. Engage with federal, state, local, tribal, academic, and international partners to advance the scientific understanding of the Arctic.
9. Ensure Arctic relevance of fundamental scientific and engineering investments in infrastructure.
10. Lead the integration of new technological advances (e.g., artificial intelligence) to enhance our ability to inform response and support decision making about climate changes.
11. Lead and partner to ensure Arctic security.
12. Provide technical capability and solutions to execute traditional homeland, national, and global security missions with a focus on the impacts of a changing climate.
13. Develop and deploy solutions to support both energy security and national security in the Arctic.

[54] US Department of Energy, Arctic Energy Office, "DOE Arctic Strategy to Guide Responses to Climate Change."

14. Steward lab resources and facilitate increased cooperation between labs and USG interagency, state, local, tribal, academic, and international partners to address Arctic security.
15. Lead and partner to improve Arctic all-domain awareness.[55]

DOE's Arctic work spans numerous projects and activities, including grid modernization, critical minerals research and development, and system monitoring and modeling. These projects and DOE's involvement in the future of Arctic energy are particularly important in Alaska given its abundant and varied energy resources, proximity to emerging Arctic oil and gas fields, substantial hydrocarbon pipeline infrastructure, and sizeable energy sector labor force.[56] Alaskan communities are acutely vulnerable to economic impacts from fossil fuel industry job losses, so there is a natural and profound interest in capturing DOE renewable energy investments.[57] DOE also participates in several security programs and projects across the US interagency as well as with international bodies. Department of Defense (DOD) Alaska makes the US an Arctic nation, and as such, is a key node for homeland defense. The Arctic spans three US geographic combatant commands: US Northern Command (USNORTHCOM), US Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM), US European Command (USEUCOM) and all time zones, as well as multiple functional combatant commands, thus requiring unprecedented levels of cooperation both via the US interagency as well as internationally.[58] In September 2022, DOD established the Arctic Strategy and Global Resilience Office to enhance homeland defense capabilities and coordinate the growing number of defense related activities and interests in the region.[59]

DOD Arctic Strategy

The 2019 DOD Arctic Strategy is guided by the NSS and NDS and has a similar desired end-state: a secure and stable region where US national interests are safeguarded, the US homeland is defended, and nations work cooperatively

[55] US Department of Energy, Arctic Strategy.

[56] Interagency Working Group on Coal and Power Plant Communities and Economic Revitalization, Initial Report to the President on Empowering Workers Through Revitalizing Energy Communities, April 2021, 8,14, https://netl.DOE.gov/.

[57] Interagency Working Group on Coal and Power Plant Communities and Economic Revitalization, Initial Report to the President on Empowering Workers Through Revitalizing Energy Communities, 8, 14.

[58] Headquarters, Department of the Army, *Regaining Arctic Dominance—the US Army in the Arctic*, January 2021, 1, https://www.army.mil/.

[59] Jim Garamone, "DOD Establishes Arctic Strategy and Global Resilience Office," Department of Defense, September 27, 2022, https://www.defense.gov/.

to address shared challenges.[60] It calls for building Arctic awareness, enhancing Arctic operations, and strengthening the rules-based order in the Arctic in order to achieve DOD's objectives: 1) defending the homeland; 2) competing when necessary to maintain favorable regional balances of power; and 3) ensure common domains remain free and open. Commander, US Northern Command (CDRUSNORTHCOM) is DOD's Arctic Capability Advocate which coordinates with combatant commands, military departments, and defense agencies to "ensure that Arctic capability gaps are identified and prioritized."[61] The Strategy specifically calls for modernizing DOD's missile and cruise missile defense systems, as well as establishing robust and dynamic communications architecture which can be fully integrated and interoperable with partners, and that can operate above 65 degrees North latitude (and below negative 60 degrees Fahrenheit). It further emphasizes the importance of accurate and timely meteorological, oceanographic, and atmospheric observation data, as well as continued cooperation with partners, including Canada.[62]

It is important to note that the vast terrain and challenging physical conditions make both Alaskan and Arctic operations difficult. "The high latitudes suffer from poor propagation of radio signals, geomagnetic interference, scant landside infrastructure, and limited satellite coverage and bandwidth. Some Arctic communities have cellular phone networks, but these are often constrained by limited coverage, capacity, and reliability."[63]

In Annex A, the Strategy also outlines each military department's role in achieving Arctic objectives. The US Air Force operates the majority of the DOD's assets in the Arctic; the Navy's 2nd Fleet (whose Commander is dual-hatted as Commander of NATO's Joint Force Command Norfolk) has responsibility for ensuring the readiness of and dynamically employing maritime forces in the Atlantic and the Arctic; the Marine Corps maintains the capability to support Naval operations "any time and place" including two Marine Expeditionary Brigades that can conduct offensive operations in extreme cold weather environments; US Army Alaska (USARAK) executes both Joint Forces Land Component Commander functions in support of US Army Pacific (USARPAC) operations and USNORTHCOM Homeland Defense and Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA)

[60] The Department of Defense, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Report to Congress: Department of Defense Arctic Strategy, June 2019, 1, https://media.defense.gov/.

[61] Department of Defense, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Report to Congress: Department of Defense Arctic Strategy, June 2019, 9, https://media.defense.gov/.

[62] Department of Defense, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Report to Congress: Department of Defense Arctic Strategy, June 2019, 2, https://media.defense.gov/.

[63] US Coast Guard, Arctic Strategic Outlook, April 2019, 29, https://www.uscg.mil/.

missions in Alaska and the Alaska Joint Operations Area; and the National Guard through either the Army or Air Force, provides the forces to support DOD's Arctic missions.[64] Also of note, the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Engineering Research and Development Center, Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory (ERDC-CRREL) and US Army Cold Regions Test Center conduct research and development to enhance Arctic domain awareness.

Department of the Air Force Arctic Strategy

"Given the Arctic's vast distances and challenges to surface operations, air and space capabilities have long been essential to gain rapid access and provide all-domain awareness, early warning, satellite command and control, and effective deterrence."[65] As such, the 2020 Department of the Air Force *Arctic Strategy* outlines the important roles and capabilities of both the Space Force and the Air Force, the latter of which provides 79 percent of DOD resourcing to the Arctic.[66] A substantial portion of those resources reside with the Air Reserve Component[67] as well as the Alaska Air National Guard. The strategy provides details for four lines of effort:

1. Vigilance;
2. Power projection;
3. Cooperation; and
4. Preparation.

It states an intent to enhance missile defense surveillance systems, improving domain awareness, and ensure adequate command, control, communications, intelligence, surveillance, & reconnaissance (C3ISR), as well as power projection through a combat-credible force capable of agile operations and logistics.[68] The strategy also outlines research and development, exercises, and training activities.

[64] Department of Defense, Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Report to Congress: Department of Defense Arctic Strategy, 16-19.

[65] Department of the Air Force, *The Department of the Air Force Arctic Strategy*, July 2020, p. 2, https://www.af.mil/.

[66] The Department of the Air Force, *Air Force Arctic Strategy*, 5.

[67] The Department of the Air Force, *Air Force Arctic Strategy*, 13.

[68] The Department of the Air Force, *Air Force Arctic Strategy*, 9.

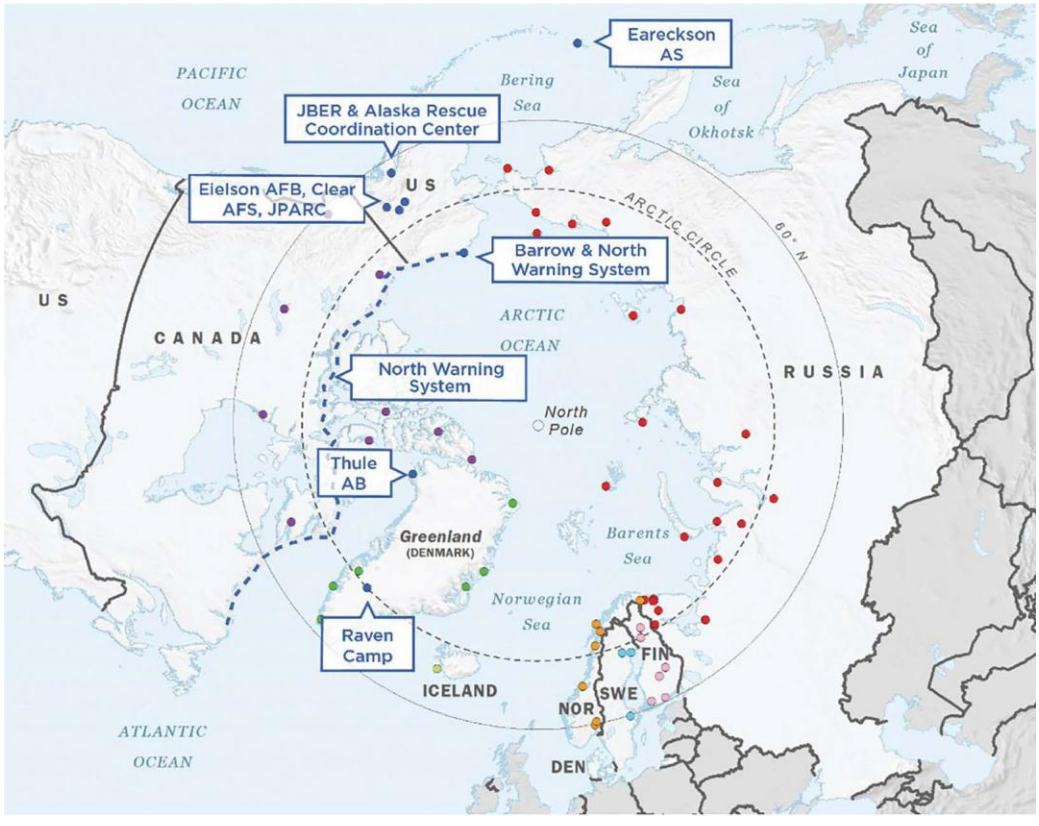


Figure 1. Department of the Air Force Equities in the Arctic. *Department of Air Force Arctic Strategy, 2020.*

Department of the Army—Regaining Arctic Dominance

The Army's 2021 *Regaining Arctic Dominance* states that the Army "will field a Multi-Domain Task Force (MDTF) enabled division and adjust our Alaskan-based brigade combat teams to regain the US Army's Arctic dominance.[69] It requires a "Total Army" approach that incorporates the Army Reserve and the National Guard, with a desired end state of an increase in ability to operate in extreme cold-weather, mountainous, and high-altitude environments. The MDTF end state is supported by five lines of effort:

1. Improving Arctic capability;
2. Competing in the Arctic and globally;

[69] US Army, Chief of Staff of the Army. *Chief of Staff Paper #3: Regaining Arctic Dominance*, January 19, 2021, https://www.army.mil/.

3. Defending the far north in crisis and conflict;
4. Building Arctic multi-domain operations; and
5. Projecting power across the Arctic.[70]

Each of the lines of effort also support DOD objectives of defending the homeland, competing to maintain favorable regional balances of power, and ensuring common domains remain free and open.[71]

[70] HQDA, *Regaining Arctic Dominance*, 29, https://www.army.mil/.
[71] HQDA, *Regaining Arctic Dominance*, 28, https://www.army.mil/.

Figure 2. US Army Alaska Force Structure. *US Army Regaining Arctic Dominance, 2021.*

Department of the Navy—Strategic Blueprint for the Arctic

The Navy released A Strategic Blueprint for the Arctic in 2021 which augments the 2019 Strategic Outlook for the Arctic and the 2020 Advantage at Sea: Prevailing with Integrated All-Domain Naval Power. It describes how the Navy will "apply naval power as we continue to prepare for a more navigable Arctic region."[72]

[72] Department of the Navy, A Blue Arctic: A Strategic Blueprint for the Arctic, January 2021, 11.

It asserts that "peace and prosperity in the Arctic region requires enhanced naval presence and partnerships,"[73] and states that the Navy will "maintain enhanced presence, strengthened cooperative partnerships, and adapt naval forces for a Blue Arctic."[74] The Navy will maintain enhanced presence by regionally posturing naval forces, conducting exercises and operations, integrating Navy-Marine Corps-Coast Guard capabilities and synchronizing fleets."[75] It specifically states the intent to "organize, train, and equip as a naval expeditionary force capable of operating in Arctic littorals," as well as enhance awareness and expand regional consultative mechanisms, interoperability, and collaboration. It also lists several additional objectives to modernize capabilities for cold weather-capable operations, including infrastructure; command, control, communications, computers, cyber, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C51SR); and science and technology, particularly with the Office of Naval Research (ONR) International Cooperative Engagement Program for Polar Research (ICE-PPR).

Department of Homeland Security (DHS)

DHS Strategic Approach for Arctic Homeland Security

The 2020 Strategic Approach for the Arctic identifies three overarching goals:

1. Secure the homeland through persistent presence and all domain awareness;
2. Strengthen access, response, and resilience in the Arctic; and
3. Advance Arctic governance and rules-based order through targeted national and international engagement and cooperation.[76]

Given the agency's key role in critical infrastructure protection, the strategy focuses on DHS and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency's (CISA) role in Arctic cybersecurity and critical infrastructure. "Increasing development and deployment of information and communications technology (ICT) are crucial linkages to commerce and communication…diminished ice and increased waterway access for trade and tourism, will require an expanded operational footprint for the USCG and Customs and Border Protection (CBP).[77] The strategy declares intent for several objectives, including the acceleration of both USCG icebreaker

[73] The Department of the Navy, *A Blue Arctic: A Strategic Blueprint for the Arctic*, 2021.

[74] The Department of the Navy, *A Blue Arctic, 4.*

[75] The Department of the Navy, *A Blue Arctic, 11.*

[76] US Department of Homeland Security, Office of Strategy, Policy, and Plans, *Strategic Approach for Arctic Homeland Security* 2020, p. 5, https://www.dhs.gov/.

[77] US Department of Homeland Security, Office of Strategy, Policy, and Plans, *Strategic Approach for Arctic Homeland Security* 2020, 15.

and high latitude communications systems acquisition, procurement, deployment and sustainment; bolstering resilience from man-made and natural events; enhancing federal/state, local, tribal, and territorial (FLSTT) ability to detect and deter nefarious foreign investment/influence; sustaining Arctic region freedom of the seas; securing future US energy prosperity, and protecting the integrity of Arctic governance and cooperation fora.[78]

US Coast Guard Arctic Strategic Outlook

The USCG has been the lead federal agency for homeland security, safety, and environmental stewardship in the Arctic region for over 150 years.[79] The 2019 USCG Arctic Outlook updates its 2013 predecessor and acknowledges that "access to the Arctic's vast energy, mineral, fisheries, and other commercial resources is growing at precisely the same time that global interest in these assets intensifies."[80] The USCG Arctic Outlook anticipates an increase in demand for Arctic missions while simultaneously increasing unpredictability and levels of risk. As the US's primary Arctic maritime presence, the USCG leverages its principles of partnership, unity of effort, and a culture of continuous innovation to establish three lines of effort:

1. Enhancing the capability to operate effectively in a dynamic Arctic domain;
2. Strengthening the rules-based order, and
   Innovating and adapting to promote resilience and prosperity.[81]
3.

[78] US Department of Homeland Security, Office of Strategy, Policy, and Plans, *Strategic Approach for Arctic Homeland Security* 2020, 20, https://www.dhs.gov/.

[79] United States Coast Guard, The United States Coast Guard Arctic Strategic Outlook, April 2019, p. 2, https://www.uscg.mil/.

[80] US Coast Guard, *Arctic Strategic Outlook*, 2.

[81] US Coast Guard, *Arctic Strategic Outlook*, 6-7.

Advancing the Trans-Atlantic Arctic Partnership

Collaboration and Cooperation in a Demanding Security Environment

CDR RACHAEL GOSNELL,
US NAVY COL STEFAN HINZ,
GERMAN AIR FORCE

CDR Rachael Gosnell is a doctoral candidate in international security and economic policy at the University of Maryland, with a focus on Arctic security. She holds a MA in international security studies from Georgetown University, a master's in engineering management from Old Dominion University, and a Bachelor of Science in political science from the US Naval Academy.

Col. Stefan Hinz joined the Marshall Center in July 2020. He serves as the Head of the Regional Security Studies Department. He is also the acting Deputy Commander for the German Element of the Marshall Center.

There is no doubt that the Arctic is at an inflection point that will necessitate collaboration and cooperation from like-minded nations. At the forefront of intersecting climate, economic, geopolitical, and security trends, the region further serves as a unique connector between the North American, European, and Asian continents. Emerging security concerns – and global interest in the region's natural resources and maritime routes – have catapulted the Arctic to the forefront of policy discussions in many nations. The fragile polar ecosystem transcends regional states, and phenomenon such as ice melt and migratory shifts of marine life have the potential to impact the larger global community. Arctic states and key stakeholders must grapple with the challenges posed by these evolving trends, which are compounded by the profoundly negative impact that Russia's war in Ukraine has had on Arctic governance, scientific collaboration, and economic development.

The complex dynamics of the Arctic demand innovative thinking, collaboration, and cooperation to better understand regional challenges and opportunities. The Arctic is best understood as a number of sub-regions with unique characteristics. The European High North is particularly influenced by the aforementioned Arctic trends, as it is the most densely populated, economically developed, and heavily militarized sub-region of the Arctic. The unprovoked war in Ukraine has prompted both Sweden and Finland to seek NATO membership, which will result in seven of the eight Arctic nations being NATO Allies who share common ideals and a common commitment to trans-Atlantic security. Yet the Arctic region will remain a strategic and economic priority for Russia, particularly as competi-

tion increases for regional resources. Indeed, Russia's 2020 Arctic Strategy[1] and 2022 Maritime Doctrine lend insights into the importance the nation places on its Arctic Zone. Russia views the Arctic as a vital region contributing more than ten percent of its GDP and accounting for about twenty percent of the country's exports, as well as having cultural and historical significance, even as the nation faces unprecedented sanctions and isolation. The diminishing ice coverage will have profound impacts for the maritime domain of the High North, increasingly bringing commercial and military vessels to the region.

Non-Arctic states are also increasingly interested in the Arctic. Germany and other European Union (EU) member states have been at the forefront of research expeditions, such as the noteworthy MOSAiC polar expedition, led by the Alfred Wegener Institute, Helmholtz Centre for Polar and Marine Research (AWI), that brought together more than 500 scientists from 20 nations (representing 37 nationalities) to better understand climate change. Yet other nations – particularly China – have taken an interest in the region's economic potential and have sought to strengthen their own Arctic policies while raising concerns regarding regional sovereignty, stability, and security.

Given the complex security backdrop posed by an evolving Arctic region, the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies and the Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies seek to collaborate to improve the collective understanding of the region's most pressing concerns. Trans-Atlantic cooperation affords both Centers the opportunity to bridge the evolving Arctic security challenges posed by myriad threats.

Together, the George C. Marshall and Ted Stevens Centers can bring together regional academic experts, security practitioners, and policymakers to share perspectives, exchange ideas, and develop actionable solutions to the challenges posed by the dynamic region. This partnership offers an opportunity to develop insights from the North American and European continents for trans-Atlantic solutions. The George C. Marshall Center's unique German-American partnership allows contributions of the German and broader European perspectives in developing solutions for climate and biodiversity challenges, as well as security concerns for NATO's Northern and Eastern Flanks. With the addition of Sweden and Finland into NATO, the Baltic Sea Region becomes increasingly tied to High North security and stability. The George C. Marshall Center has long been a focal point for European security challenges and brings forth decades of regional expertise and credibility, while the newest US Department of Defense regional center, the

[1] Officially titled "Strategy of Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation and the Provision of National Security for the Period to 2035."

Ted Stevens Center, highlights the importance the United States is placing on Arctic security.

The flagship program for cooperation and collaboration between the George C. Marshall Center and Ted Stevens Center is the European Security Seminar–North (ESS–N), a one-week seminar hosted in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, that brings together international experts on the European High North and broader Arctic region to discuss emerging security trends. Last fall, the inaugural co-hosted ESS-N was attended by more than 50 mid- and senior-level experts, to tackle the challenges posed in the Arctic by Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine. Informed by national and EU Arctic strategies, as well as evolving regional security policies, these experts gained a broader appreciation for the opportunities that lie ahead for the Arctic-Seven nations, while enhancing the understanding of the critical challenges posed by an aggressive Russia and opportunistic, overall dominance seeking China.

In the future, the George C. Marshall and Ted Stevens Centers will continue a robust partnership through timely workshops addressing evolving challenges, as well as supporting each other through an exchange of experts, joint research, and additional co-hosted events in areas of mutual interest. Both Centers are unified in their unswerving commitment to stability and security in the trans-Atlantic Arctic, underpinning common US and European security, defense, and economic interests that further enable global security and stability.

Trans-Atlantic cooperation in the High North is imperative to ensuring that common security interests are met. Common values will yield collaborative geostrategic solutions as we work together with security partners to collectively affect the challenges posed by the evolving Arctic region. Research, dialogue, and thoughtful analysis of these pressing challenges will enable this partnership to strengthen transnational relationships, improve understanding of regional challenges, and build a bridge that enables a more stable and secure environment. Together, the George C. Marshall Center and Ted Stevens Center are a powerful team unifying the trans-Atlantic Arctic.

Climate Change and Arctic Security

Multi-Actor, Diverse and Distributed Assets and Modalities

Sean Moon

Dr. L. "Doc" Alessa

Col (R) Per Erik Solli

James Valentine

Mr. Sean Moon is a retired Coast Guard officer, currently serving as a Senior Policy Analyst in the US Department of Homeland Security Office of Strategy, Policy, and Plans.

Dr. L. "Doc" Alessa is an internationally renowned defense and security expert and practitioner with advanced degrees in both the physical and social sciences. She has published extensively in the fields of complex systems and provides scientific expertise to the defense enterprise.

Colonel (r) Per Erik Solli is a Senior Defense Analyst at Norwegian Institute of International Affairs (NUPI) in Oslo and Senior Advisor at Nord University in Northern Norway.

Mr. James Valentine is a retired Coast Guard Commander with 20 years of national security experience. He has MS degrees in Strategic Intelligence and Geospatial Intelligence and is pursuing his PhD in geographic information science.

Abstract

Climate and Environmental Change (CEC) is driving highly variable operational environments for Allies and adversaries alike. While technology is often touted as the determinant for strategic advantage, this is not necessarily true in the Arctic where whoever has the most knowledge possesses more strategic options and can apply the knowledge to achieve strategic dominance short of open conflict. Rapidly acquiring precise knowledge while limiting our adversaries acquisition requires that we understand their patterns of obtaining information and comprehension. Failure to understand their patterns results in an inability to detect or mitigate adversarial activity. Futures planning attempts to do this, in part, but lacks the precision and rigor to provide concrete outputs that can be used tactically. By adding a framework that looks at multiple actors, distributed assets, and modalities, this lack can be overcome.

Introduction

Climate Security

Climate security refers to minimizing national and international security risks and maximizing opportunities that emerge as a result of changing climatic pat-terns. In other words, climate and environmental changes (CEC) may introduce new risks, opportunities and/or amplify those that already exist. Here we define it as the ability to maintain a desired set of strategic options, ensure regional sta-

bility and sustain military and/or security operations under highly variable and uncertain conditions.

The Arctic consists of three distinct regions; North American, European, and Russian, each of which is experiencing rapid CEC and as a result increasing security risk. This has far-reaching implications for the way the world manages the High North, creating advantages and disadvantages for Allies and adversaries alike. Applying this definition to the defense and security enterprise means that climate security encompasses many inter-related, inter-dependent and interactive systems. Systems science, the interdisciplinary field in which scientists attempt to understand systems ranging from simple to complex, offers the potential to more readily and accurately comprehend the reality in which activities take place, identify interactions, and disaggregate activities of interest.

Currently, few frameworks provide enough precision and context to systematically evaluate where, when, how, why, and what interventions are necessary to mitigate short- and long-term risks and opportunities. Achieving this is immensely critical in a circumpolar north where a rising People's Republic of China (PRC, or China) is forging alliances with the Russian Federation.[1] The Arctic is ours to win or lose. To ensure we (the United States and her Allies and partners) gain and maintain the advantage we propose a different entry point and framework, that of Multi-Actor, Diverse and Distributed Assets and Modalities - MADDAM.

Defining Terms

Multi-Actor. Under MADDAM, it is assumed that the systems of interest will involve large populations of diverse actors, whether witting, willing, or not.

Diverse and Distributed Assets. This diverse population of actors can interact with extensive physical assets (e.g., financial, infrastructure, etc.).

Modalities. Modalities are the effects of the interrelationships within the system, between the actors and assets. This differs from the systems definition of "how" the assets interact (their behavior rules) and addresses "why" the assets interact. Modality is the function or effect of asset interactions. They may be regular (known/understood/expected) or irregular (outside the norm). For example, a modality might be information gathering (the modality) about strengths and weaknesses in academic knowledge or a particular topic.

[1] John Grady, "China, Russia Quietly Expanding Arctic Partnership, Says Panel," *USNI News*. https://news.usni.org/. Accessed March 30, 2023.

Modalities may also be theoretical or siloed, that is, known by a small group of individuals but not promulgated more widely for a variety of reasons ranging from poor communication practices, classification or an isolation culture.

For example, consider communications, essential to political, diplomatic, military and security operations. Developing precise knowledge of the topography of communications networks leads to identifying critical hardware nodes that are vulnerable to adversary penetration or control. In an Arctic context, in its 2021 national threat assessment, the Norwegian Police Security Service (Politiets sikkerhetstjeneste, PST) assessed that "… foreign states will continue to try and map Norway's critical infrastructure with a view to identifying functions and vulnerabilities."[2] They further stated that the greatest threats would come from Russia and China, and that foreign intelligence services can obtain information and influence that will prejudice Norwegian interests through acquisitions and investments targeted at Norwegian businesses.

Gaining placement and access to information systems would allow the PRC to conduct a host of activities, from studying patterns of life to identifying political mindsets or population viewpoints. This, in turn, allows manipulation of those dynamics through such activities as mis- or dis-information campaigns, direct engagement with decision makers, or cultural exchanges that are targeted at manipulating perceptions in a favorable fashion to the PRC.

Traditionally, western precepts are responsive: activity is detected and countered. But what if the activities are not detected, either through a low signal to noise ratio (they don't rise above detection thresholds) or a lack of aggregation (many small activities are not connected to understand the greater impact)? By identifying modalities that are of concern through MADDAM, we can then work backwards to identify activities might require intervention.

Access to information networks may be accomplished via installation of state controlled or influenced systems. To achieve that end, influence of decision makers and popular perceptions is potentially useful to gain contracts and permits. Looked at from this perspective, it is possible to identify who might be targeted, and how - and therefore identify key indicators to look for. In the case of the Norwegian telecommunication network, our example modality is the establishment of a network by Huawei, a large Chinese telecommunications company, with the effect of having placement and access in the High North to communications. Such networks could also be used for long-term data collection of environmental change to support operations even if decommissioned.

[2] Politiets sikkerhetstjeneste, National Threat Assessment, 2021, https://pst.no/.

The Challenge of the Many Arctics

The Arctic means different things to different people. For scientists, it is a considered a global knowledge commons. To the private sector, the Arctic represents resources such as fish, oil, gas, minerals, and rare earths. For politicians, the Arctic is a place where sustainability must promote growth in economies. For residents, it is "home," where the needs of the many are spread across a vast landscape in which infrastructure must be built and maintained and where subsidies are necessary.

While strategies such as the United States' *National Strategy for the Arctic Region* speak of "the" Arctic, in reality it is multiple regions each with unique characteristics that influence defense and security considerations.[3] Some Arctic practitioners divide it into three Arctics: North America, European/Scandinavian, and Russian/Asian. Others into four regions, based on continental shields (e.g., the Canadian Shield), or five based on oceanography.

To the defense and security enterprises, the Arctic is a dynamic region where missions must be delivered with limited experience, under harsh, demanding and highly variable conditions that are being impacted by climate change at twice the rate of the rest of the planet (though some scientists estimate that the rate is four times greater) with little existing infrastructure.[4] In its 2021 *Climate Adaptation Plan*, the US Department of Defense (DOD) stated that its desired end state was to "[e]nsure the DOD can operate under changing climate conditions, preserving operational capability and enhancing the natural and man-made systems essential to the Department's success."[5] The US Army was more direct in stating that it must be able to deliver its mission irrespective of climate change in its 2022 *Climate Strategy*:

> The Army's core purpose remains unchanged: to deploy, fight, and win the nation's wars by providing ready, prompt, and sustained land dominance as part of the Joint Force. Climate change will only make this mission more

[3] The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region* (Washington, DC: The White House, October 2022), https://www.whitehouse.gov/.

[4] United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Sixth Assessment, "Report, Working Group 1 – The Physical Science Basis, Regional fact sheet – Polar Regions," https://www.ipcc.ch/; Paul Voosen, "The Arctic is warming our times faster than the rest of the world," *Science*, Dec 14 2021, doi: 10.1126/science.acz9830.

[5] US Department of Defense, Office of the Undersecretary of Defense (Acquisition and Sustainment), "Department of Defense Climate Adaptation Plan, Report Submitted to National Climate Task Force and Federal Chief Sustainability Officer," September 2021, https://media.defense.gov/.

challenging, and the Army must proactively reduce the risks that climate change imposes.[6]

The multiplicity of arctics makes understanding changing operational environments challenging, context specific, and scale dependent. Adding even one climate change signal, that of temperature, demonstrates the importance of precision when discussing "The Arctic." The degradation of permafrost is representative of the kinds of ripple effects of these subtle temperature changes. A full quarter of the Northern Hemisphere is made up of continuous (deep) and discontinuous (shallow) permafrost. Geocryologists estimate that, depending on global temperature increases and location, between 30 and 85 percent of current subsurface permafrost will thaw within a century.[7] This permafrost thawing has been occurring rapidly for roughly 40 years, and is impacting some $15.5 billion in US civil defense infrastructure. Permafrost covers some 65 percent of the Russian Arctic and about 30 percent of the North American Arctic. If we understand how the permafrost degradation will impact infrastructure in both countries, we will not only be able to increase our resilience but also identify opportunities to gain strategic advantage (Figure 1).[8] Achieving that level of precision, given the complex dynamics of the region and actors, can be done by studying it as a system but this is time consuming. A different method (MADDAM), focused on adversary modalities, may provide an entry point to developing system understanding from a security focus in a precise and timely way.

Systems, Arctic Climate Change and Security

While multiple definitions of "system" exist, it is generally defined as a group of interacting or interrelated elements that act within a set of rules to achieve a given end state or states.[9] Systems are characterized as being organized (structured/ordered), interactive (the elements function with each other), interdependent (achieving the given end state requires elements to work together), integrated (e.g., to a greater or lesser extent the system is holistic), and focused on a central objective

[6] United States Army, "United States Army Climate Strategy," February 2022, https://www.army.mil/.

[7] Sergei Marchenko, "Principles of classification and mapping of permafrost in Central Asia," 8th International Conference on Permafrost, 2002, 10.13140/2.1.3020.3685.

[8] Lilian Alessa, "Artificial Intelligence and the Arctic," *Center for Strategic & International Studies*, December 2, 2022, https://www.csis.org/.

[9] Dov Dori et al, "System Definition, System Worldviews, and Systemness Characteristics," *IEEE Systems Journal* 14 (2020), 1538-1548.

(the given end state).[10] The interacting or interrelating elements are traditionally termed agents, but may also be defined as assets or actors. Agent is a term from Agent Based Modeling (ABM), the computational modeling of phenomena as dynamic systems of interacting agents where rules governing interactions are known or theorized and implemented within a defined environment simulation. ABM can be used for analyzing such topics as the spread of communicable diseases. In discussing systems concepts we use the term agent, in discussing MADDAM we use the term actor and asset, as allows us to also encompass things such as physical infrastructure (e.g., cellular telephone network equipment).

While multiple taxonomies have been proposed for systems (e.g., Kenneth Boulding's 1956 *General Systems Theory: The Skeleton of Science*, Peter Checkland's 1999 *Systems Thinking, Systems Practice,* or Thomas Hughes's body of work on technological systems) that of the Cynefin (kuh-NEV-in) framework proposed by Kurtz and Snowden in 2003 is both simple and elegant, encompassing as it does sense-making across multiple domains.[11] According to Snowden, "Cynefin is at its heart a decision support framework, not a method or model. It is based on the principle of 'bounded applicability'; there are few if any context-free solutions, but many valid context-specific ones."[12] In other words, the Cynefin framework is a way of looking at system types but not in and of itself a system theory.

The original Cynefin framework (Snowden has since revised the terminology) encompasses five domains; two "ordered" (complicated), two un-ordered (complex), with a central domain (disorder). For example, in an ordered system with known causes and effects where relationships tend to be linear and empirical, the elements, organization/structure, and rules can be known to the extent that outcomes are predictable. Contrast this with an un-ordered system in which there may be known or unknown cause and effect relationships but through the sheer number the agents and relationships, outcomes cannot be well understood or predicted. In this case, indicators become more difficult to detect as outcomes of agent activity. In viewing the domains, we propose that they overlap to greater or

[10] W. Richard Scott and Gerald Davis, *Organizations and Organizing: Rational, Natural, and Open Systems Perspectives* (New York: Routledge, 2016).

[11] Kenneth E. Boulding, "General Systems Theory: The Skeleton of Science," *Management Science*, vol. 2, issue 3, April 1956, pp.197-208, reprinted in *General Systems, Yearbook of the Society for General Systems Research*, vol. 1, 1956; Peter Checkland, *Systems Thinking, Systems Practice* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley, 1999); C. F. Kurtz and D. J. Snowden, "The new dynamics of strategy: Sense-making in a complex and complicated world," *IBM Systems Journal* 42, no. 3 (2003), *462-483*; Molella, Arthur. Review of Hughes on Technology, *Minerva* 43, no. 1 (2005), 113–17.

[12] Dave Snowden et al, *Cynefin – Weaving Sense-making into the Fabric of Our World* (Cognitive Edge Pty Ltd, October, 2020).

lesser degrees, where our knowledge of system elements may be imprecise. This may be visualized as in Figure 1.

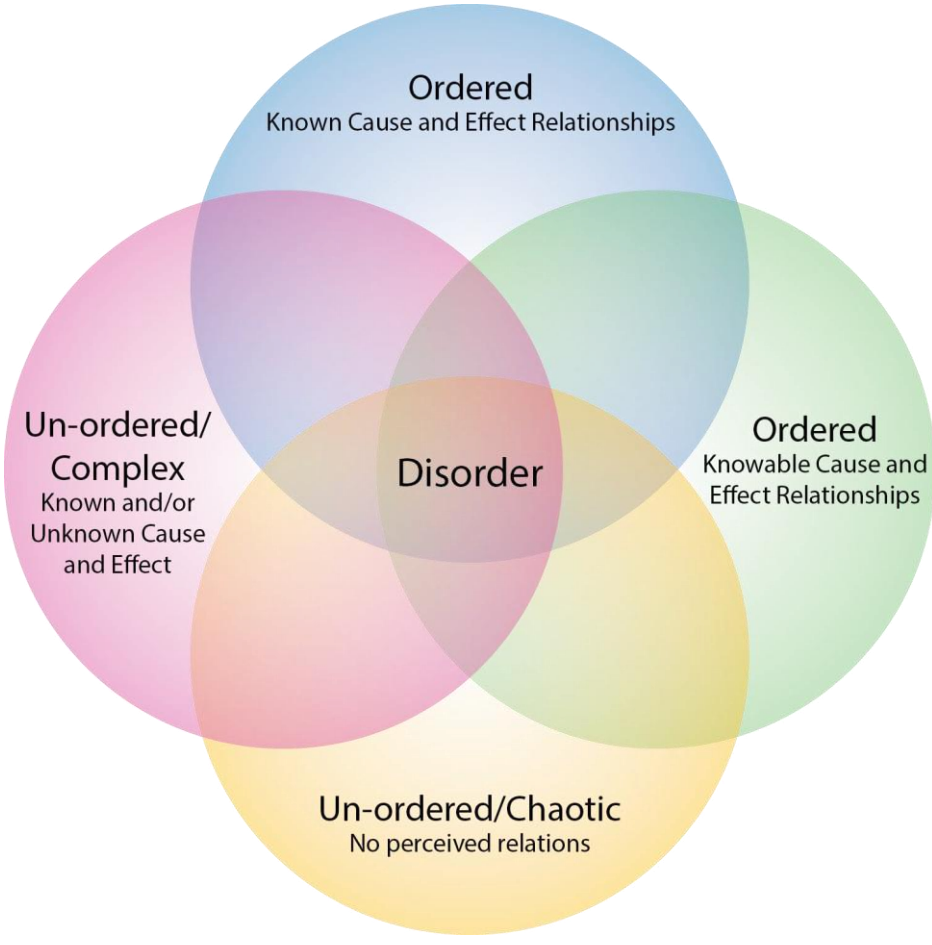


Figure 1: Cynefin framework visualized as overlapping domains of system knowledge

Finally, the domain of disorder is the central space between the other four domains. This realm is dominated by confusion, where differing opinions or conflicting understanding of relationships leads to poor system understanding. In this disordered space, detection of agents must almost certainly be driven by data, in order to avoid opinion or perception-based decision-making and move to one of the more comprehensible domains. Climate change in the Arctic provides a perfect storm where disorder (the changing climate) provides a venue where irregular warfare can be conducted: there is significant disagreement and conflicting opin-

ions as to the changes taking place, and even considerations that would be known or predictable (regular) are chaotic and irregular (for example, weather).

In the realm of Arctic and climate security, where agents may not be readily identifiable (and indeed may be actively attempting to avoid detection), it will be difficult to develop a system model with those agents as a starting point.

The Issue of Scale

Understanding Arctic climate change and security systems is dependent on scale. At a highly granular scale, system elements are minimal, and relationships more readily understood. For example, to a passenger on an Alaskan float plane desiring to make a trip to Utqiagvik, the system may be seen as simple and transactional. Find a company, schedule a flight, pay for the flight, show up on time – and arrive at the desired destination. The actors and rules are readily understood. In Cynefin framework terms, this system can be understood as ordered/known.

Local scale information is often insufficient. Only at very large scales or over lengthy periods of time can changes be identified and trends theorized. For example, in assessing climate change the United Nations tracks multiple key indicators, but four that broke records in 2021 were greenhouse gas concentrations, sea level rise, ocean heat and ocean acidification.[13] These trends were only revealed by aggregating diverse and distributed local measurements.

To further illustrate the impact of scale, consider the float plane passenger example. The simple system observed from the passenger's frame of reference is actually part of a system of systems. A complicated financial system is necessary to handle the payment, the company must ensure that the aircraft is fueled and maintained, which involves different supply chains, the pilot must be trained and certified, etc. The differing systems are generally ordered/known or ordered/knowable to the appropriate agents. Even the hypothetical passenger could learn about them, and therefore understand most of the system and its rules.

However, parts of the system also fall into the un-ordered/complex domain, especially when human factors come into play. In order to maintain the aircraft, parts and supplies are needed. Those supply chains are subject to decisions by manufacturers. Transportation (and the flight itself) are subject to highly complex systems such as weather. In the Arctic, climate change creates a system where normal rules are variable. Parts and supplies may not be available making alternate suppliers necessary, weather may be unpredictable, etc. This variability can

[13] World Meteorological Organization, "Four key climate change indicators break records in 2021," https://public.wmo.int/.

create opportunity space in which actors and assets are able to exploit modalities. For example, a company or community seeking fuel or supplies may be open to acquiring them from a different source, which may have motivations of influence and access.

Not fully understanding the agents and rules of the systems creates vulnerabilities that opposition can exploit if they have better understanding. Simply stated: If an adversary understands more than we do, they can operate in a way we are not prepared to detect or counter. In the Arctic system with its climate change accelerated variability with multiple assets it may be difficult to detect the agents and subsequently identify indicators.

The PRC conducts operations at scale, with large numbers of assets that are often widely distributed and focused. China believes the Arctic is an exploitable new strategic frontier, where investment in Arctic science enhances its Arctic influence and strategic position. In its first-ever Arctic Policy declaration, China asserted that it "…will improve the capacity and capability in scientific research on the Arctic, pursue a deeper understanding and knowledge of the Arctic science, and explore the natural laws behind its changes and development, so as to create favorable conditions for mankind to better protect, develop, and govern the Arctic."[14] One method the PRC has long favored in achieving scientific objectives is the recruitment of foreign expertise via such programs as the Thousand Talents program.[15] The program is an example of scale.

In a report by the United States Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs it was estimated that by 2017 China had exceeded its "Thousand Talents" program recruitment goal of 2,000 and had recruited more than 7,000 "high-end professionals," including several Nobel laureates.[16] The program seeks to attract high level scientists in support of the PRC's goal of making China the world's leader in science and technology by 2050.[19] While the majority of the professionals recruited were probably benign, many either failed to report their program association, or under-reported their activity, contrary to US law. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) uses the program to obtain technologies, expertise, and intellectual property from overseas by legal, illegal or non-transparent means. As a result of con-

[14] The State Council, People's Republic of China, "China's Arctic Policy," https://english.www.gov.cn/.

[15] US Federal Bureau of Investigation, "The China Threat: Chinese Talent Plans Encourage Trade Secret Threat, Economic Espionage," https://www.fbi.gov/.

[16] United States Senate, "Threats to the US Research Enterprise: China's Talent Recruitment Plans, Staff Report of the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations of the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs," November 18, 2019, https://www.hsgac.senate.gov/.

cerns over PRC intellectual property theft, in 2020, the United States cancelled over 1,000 student visas out of the estimated 360,000 Chinese students in the country due to concerns about their ties to the PRC's military.[17]

Applying MADDAM

Which brings us to a conundrum. To apply systems science, especially at scale, we need to identify actors and understand their behaviors. But, in large or complex systems or systems of systems, especially when the actual actors are attempting to avoid detection or are participating unknowingly, this becomes difficult.

As an entry point to developing a system understanding, under MADDAM there are three questions to ask.

1. What is/are the modality/modalities of interest? In other words, what are the effects and outcomes, for example in an ostensibly "communications systems" network.
2. What is the distribution of infrastructure for the modality or modalities?
3. What actors or classes of actors might be involved?

The purpose is to map Arctic complexity in a focused and tactical way to anticipate the effects of changing operational environments. The outputs reveal where the greatest risks and/or opportunities lie, particularly when networked across our partners and Allies. The utility of a systems science approach lies mainly in the fact that policies don't always, or even often, guarantee action. And assets, once in place, can still be used for a variety of purposes even when formally "de-commissioned."

For discussion, remember the Norwegian PST assessment that the PRC was an intelligence threat and would try to map Norway's critical infrastructure."[1]

The two largest companies operating cellular phone networks in Norway, including base stations and other infrastructure, are Telenor and Telia. In 2009, the Norwegian state-controlled telecommunications operator Telenor entered into a contract with Chinese firm Huawei, in which a significant proportion of the Norway's cellular network was based on Chinese equipment.[18] In 2011, Telia entered into an agreement with Huawei and Ericsson to build a combined 2G/3G/4G network in the country.[19] Such a dense communications networks, which can also

[17] Lucas Niewenhuis, "US kicks out 1,000 Chinese students for alleged ties to 'miliary-civil fusion," *The China Project*, September 10, 2020, https://thechinaproject.com/.

[18] Gwladys Fouche, "Norway considering whether to exclude China's Huawei from building 5G network," *Reuters*, January 10, 2019, https://news.abs-cbn.com/.

[19] 4G 5G World, "TeliaSonera selects Huawei and Ericsson to build mobile network in Norway," January 11, 2011, http://4g5gworld.com/.

be used for environmental monitoring, are particularly useful in a region undergoing dramatic CEC. In addition to communications security risks, such a network potentially provides the PRC and its allies with a knowledge advantage with respect to the changing environment.

In 2019, both Telia and Telenor selected Sweden's Ericcson as the primary provider for its fifth-generation network, in part because of concerns by partners and Allies, and its own security services, over potential high-tech espionage and network vulnerability.[20] Alongside their new agreements, both Telia and Telenor announced that all Huawei components in their existing 4G networks would be removed by 2024. However, Huawei telecommunications equipment remains in place in the country, such as in Telia's Narrowband Internet of Thing (NB-IoT) network – potentially posing an ongoing risk.

In the 2022 United States *National Security Strategy*, the President stated that:

> The PRC [The People's Republic of China] has also sought to increase its influence in the Arctic by rapidly increased (sic) its Arctic investments, pursuing new scientific activities, and using these scientific engagements to conduct dual-use research with intelligence or military applications.[21]

In the 2022 *National Defense Strategy*, the US Department of Defense stated that:

> The PLA seeks to target the ability of the Joint Force to project power to defense vital US interests and aid our Allies in a crisis or conflict. Both states [the PRC and the Russian Federation] are already using non-kinetic means against our defense industrial base and mobilization systems.[22]

And, finally, in the 2022 *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*, the President stated that:

> Over the last decade, the PRC has doubled its investments, with a focus on critical mineral extraction; expanded its scientific activities; and used these scientific engagements to conduct dual-use research with intelligence or military applications in the Arctic.[23]

These public statements, presumably based on extensive analysis by the Intelligence Community (IC), the defense and security enterprises, and other entities

[20] Ericsson.com, "Telia Norway selects Ericcson as sole 5G RAN provider, 08 October 2019, https://www.ericsson.com/; Victoria Klesty and Terge Solsvik, "Norway's Telenor picks Ericsson for 5G, abandoning Huawei," *Reuters*, 13 December 2019, https://www.reuters.com/.

[21] The White House, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, October 2022).

[22] The White House, *National Security Strategy*.

[23] The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*.

such as the Department of State, identify a primary actor, its desired outcomes, and provide some insights into modalities. Potentially, the raw data used to conduct these analyses could also provide a greater level of granularity (e.g., identifying specific assets and methods), though the overall enterprise, especially the IC, is challenged in its ability to do so by issues such as outdated methods and cultural and procedural impediments to sharing information, especially classified information, related to Arctic climate change with Allies and partners.[24]

Applying systems theory, identifying targeted asset networks (towers), and determining how they are interacting, i.e., what the *cumulative* potential cause-and-effect relationships look like, would be necessary to assess, understand, and respond to the totality of the system being used by the PRC to achieve its objectives. Currently, such a system opposes rapid analysis and it is almost certainly significantly larger and more complicated than a single entity, identified as the "PRC." The system is unordered/complex – it may be possible to know some of the elements and explicate the rules governing their interactions, but certainly is low that they could all be identified, especially using traditional investigative or counter-espionage tradecraft.[25] This creates a situation with multiple actors, potentially widely distributed, operating covertly – and who may not even know they are part of a system designed to achieve a targeted effect.

By considering specific modalities it is possible to reduce this complexity, and to illustrate MADDAM an open-source real-world example will be beneficial.

Facts and Assumptions

According to the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the PRC uses a four-step process to gain a technological edge:

1. Introduce. The PRC uses legitimate and illegitimate (including theft) means to acquire technology and introduce it to China.
2. Understand. Using its civilian institutions and military, the PRC works to understand the foreign materials it acquires.
3. Assimilate. The civilian and military institutions assimilate the foreign acquisitions, e.g., by reverse-engineering.
4. Re-innovate. Chinese institutions re-innovate, to develop new technologies and knowledge.

[24] Lilian Alessa, Sean Moon, James Valentine, Michael Marks, Don Hepburn, and Andrew Kliskey, "Surprise and Suspense: How the Intelligence Community Forgot the Future," *The International Journal of Intelligence, Security, and Public Affairs* 23, no. 3, 310-342.

[25] *Encyclopedia of Lying and Deception*, edited by Michael Williams (New York: Sage, 2014).

Huawei, a China-based company, is one of the world's largest providers of telecommunications equipment, networking gear, smartphones, and an extensive range of communication components from cables to relays. Numerous countries believe Huawei products are insecure and could be used by the PRC for spying. Some also believe that the company steals intellectual property from foreign technology firms. Huawei denies the allegations and has stated that it is willing to enter 'no-spy' pacts.[26] However, this ignores China's National Intelligence Law which requires "organs, organizations, and citizens" to provide "support, assistance, and cooperation" to PRC intelligence institutions, emphasizing the weakness of policies compared to modalities.

On January 28, 2019, the US Department of Justice (DOJ) charged Huawei with bank fraud and stealing trade secrets.[27] In a 13-count indictment DOJ charged Huawei, its chief financial officer, and two affiliated firms with a list of crimes including conspiracy, money laundering, bank and wire fraud, flouting US sanctions on Iran, and obstruction of justice.

On March 12, 2021, the US Federal Communications Commission (FCC) placed Huawei Technologies on its "Covered Equipment or Services" list, deeming that it posed an unacceptable risk to the national security of the United States or the security and safety of United States persons.[28] The FCC also initiated a $1.9 billion reimbursement program to assist with the removal, replacement, and disposal of communications equipment and services provided by Huawei or (or another Chinese telecommunication corporation, ZTE). It is unlikely that this will occur in the next few years given the estimated cost of $3.1 billion and the dependence of rural America on this infrastructure.[29]

In accordance with Chinese law, Huawei could be required to support state intelligence organizations, up to and including compromising foreign networks. This has led to the outright ban, or effective removal, of Huawei telecommunications systems from all Arctic nations except for Iceland. Banning these systems, however, doesn't necessarily result in the loss of their modalities (their use to acquire information or provide relays). Cellular transmission towers can also be used as monitoring instruments for climate change variables: atmospheric water vapor, rainfall,

[26] Paul Sandle, "Huawei willing to sign 'no-spy' pacts with governments: chairman," *Reuters*, May 14, 2019. https://www.reuters.com/.

[27] US Department of Justice, "Chinese Telecommunications Conglomerate Huawei and Huawei CFO Wanzhou Meng Charged with Financial Fraud," Media Release, 28 January 2019, https://www.justice.gov/.

[28] Federal Communications Commission, 2021. https://www.fcc.gov/. Accessed Jan 10, 2023.

[29] Federal Communications Commission, "List of Equipment and Services Covered by Section 2 of The Secure Networks Act," https://www.fcc.gov/supplychain.

temperature and others that are key to gaining operational advantage. Thus, the modality remains intact. The status of the Arctic and Huawei is shown in Table 2.

Table 1: Status of Huawei's wide distribution as a telecommunications network contributor in the Arctic nations.

Arctic Nation	Status
Canada	Banned Huawei from developing 5G network development on May 19, 2022. [30]
Denmark	Banned Huawei from 5G network development on May 21, 2021.[31]
Finland	On December 7, 2020, Finland's parliament approved a law allowing authorities to ban the use of telecom network equipment when they have "serious grounds for suspecting that the use of the device endangers national security or national defense." While not specifically naming Huawei, or by country of origin, this is widely seen as banning Huawei equipment.[32]
Iceland	Two out of three telecommunications firms use Huawei products in their systems, especially in connection with developing 5G networks.[33]
Greenland	Selected Sweden's Ericsson to develop 5G networks on December 19, 2019.[34]
Norway	Has not banned Huawei, but Telia and state-controlled Telenor selected Ericsson to build their 5G networks. Both will continue to use Huawei 4G and select market 5G upgrades until 5G is completed, estimated to be in 2023 to 2024.[35]
Sweden	Banned the use of telecom equipment from Huawei and ZTE in its 5G networks on October 20, 2020. Following assessments by the Swedish Armed Forces and security service, the Swedish Post and Telecom Authority (PTS) set spectrum auction license conditions that required companies to remove Huawei equipment from existing central functions by Jan. 1, 2025.[36]
United States	On March 12, 2021, Huawei Technologies was placed on the "Covered Equipment or Services" list, deemed to pose an unacceptable risk to the national security of the United States or the security and safety of United States persons.[32]

MADDAM

Given that the PRC could, at least in theory, use Huawei to support modalities ranging from climate change monitoring for operations to intelligence collection,

[30] Erik Hertzberg and Brian Platt, "Canada Bans Huawei From 5G, Ending Years-Long Impasse," *Bloomberg*, May 19, 2022, https://www.bloomberg.com/.

[31] "Huawei blocked from core 5G networks of major Dutch providers," *NL Times*, May 21, 2021, https://nltimes.nl/.

[32] Anne Kauranen and Supantha Mukherjee, "UPDATE 1-Finland approves law to ban telecoms gear on security grounds," *Reuters*, December 7, 2020, https://www.reuters.com/.

[33] Mbl.is, Iceland Monitor, "Two Telecom Companies in Iceland Use Huawei Products," October 22, 2020, https://icelandmonitor.mbl.is/.

[34] Jacob Gronholt-Pedersen, "Greenland chooses Ericsson over Huawei for 5G rollout," *Reuters*, December 19, 2019, https://www.reuters.com/.

[35] Telenor, "Telenor completed 5G vendor selection for Norway," December 13, 2019, https://www.telenor.com/.

[36] "Sweden bans Huawei, ZTE from upcoming 5G networks," *CNBC*, October 20, 2020, https://www.cnbc.com/.

we can begin to map the PRCs efforts by answering, at least hypothetically, the three key questions, then iteratively expanding on those answers.

1. What is/are the modality/modalities of interest?
    - Answer 1. Data collection for radio signals, electromagnetic phenomena, and/or atmospheric variables.
    - Answer 2. How these data could impact operations.
    - Answer 3. How these data provide an advantage in navigating Arctic climate change.
    - Answer 4. What effects/impacts of data overmatch are acceptable/unacceptable ("if they know to x, then we can/cannot currently deal with y").
2. Where might that modality be conducted?
    - Answer 1. At specific latitudes/longitudes.
    - Answer 2. At institutions, universities, research stations and maritime vessels.
3. What actors or classes of actors might be involved?
    - Answer 1. Corporate technology officers/executives.
    - Answer 2. Individuals specialized in specific scientific disciplines related to the modality variables (focus).
    - Answer 3. Rural representatives.

In table format, this application of MADDAM is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: A partial illustration of MADDAM applied to potential PRC activity in telecommunications.

Multi Actor (Diverse)	Distributed Assets	Modality	Effect
Technology Executives	Across multiple companies/Different cultural regions	Establish telecommunications infrastructure	Data collection
		Identify locations of highest utility	Identify technologies' operational electromagnetic profiles
		Downplay/protest concerns	Control data
Technical/Scientific Experts	Across sectors	Gather information	Data collection
		Identify targets for further/more detailed collection	Use academia to further goals
		Influence perceptions	Control decision spaces
		Drive scientific/technical focus areas	Insights into strengths/weaknesses of security and defense capabilities
Rural Representatives	Across multiple institutions/Different cultural regions/municipalities.	Exert pressure on nations/corporations to provide services	Change social norms in adversaries favor
		Provide information	Pattern of life

Once a context for using a framework like MADDAM is identified (e.g., subsurface communication) it can then be refined iteratively as understanding improves. This adds greater levels of detail, much of it hiding in plain sight: PRC-affiliated publications, grants, and calls for papers alone provide remarkable insights into topics which, when matched with operational needs, can identify modalities. Specific government organizations both domestically and across allies, such as the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Justice and Public Security (to which the PST reports), or the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development (KDD, to which the Norwegian Communications Authority is responsible) can collaboratively add data. That would then be followed by refining where the distributed asset actions might take place, such as influencing perceptions in the print, radio, television, or social media. The iterative process enables insight into the potential interactions of the system elements.

While most assets and efforts will be benign, MADDAM enables a targeted approach to identify *effects of concern* particularly since modalities don't respect policies. This aids in more rapid detection, which can support decisions related to denial, deterrence, or other activities to resist the PRC's stated desire to achieve

global dominance in opposition to the United States and Allies goal of a peaceful and stable Arctic.

Conclusion

MADDAM was developed for the High North because of the high rate of CEC and our limited domain awareness. While it can be applied anywhere, its application to the Arctic harkens to General Billy Mitchell's assertion to Congress, "I believe that in the future, whoever controls Alaska controls the world. I think it is the most strategic place in the world."[37] Given the costs and difficulty of operating there and the consequences of giving our adversaries superior knowledge, MADDAM enables surgical precision for planning.

Understanding systems, and applying systems thinking to defense and security considerations, is fundamental to identifying often deeply tangled and sometime covert irregular or asymmetric adversarial activities. The well-established modalities used by adversaries such as the PRC and the rate of climate change in the Arctic amplify complexity and scale. This results in un-ordered domains where the sheer size of the system of interest may render it resistant to analysis. Ultimately, we can't do everything all at once. We must determine what, when, where and why certain effects are unacceptable and require interventions. Targeted and integrated areas of focus through the application of frameworks like MADDAM provides a way to achieve this by focusing on the modalities (functions/activities) and effects that would lead to adversary success.

[37] Cited in Lisa Murkowski, December 11, 2018. "Floor Speech: Unveiling Arctic Legislation to Reinvigorate America's Arctic Role." https://www.murkowski.senate.gov/. Accessed March 30, 2023.

Climate Change Has Awakened the Polar Dragon

John Conger
Erin Sikorsky

John Conger is the Director Emeritus of the Center for Climate and Security and the former Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) at the US Department of Defense.

Erin Sikorsky is the Director of the Center for Climate and Security and previously served for over a decade in the US intelligence community.

Abstract

While the Arctic has long been a strategic domain, with Cold War superpowers competing across the frozen pole, climate change's thawing of the icecaps is inviting new activity and interest in the High North. For over a decade now, China has recognized the impacts of climate change as a national security challenge—and opportunity. Nowhere is this more apparent than in its evolving approach to the Arctic. Put another way, China perceives the increasingly accessible Arctic to be a "near-China region" over which it plans to exert influence, a dynamic that only accelerates as climate change makes the Arctic more accessible and less remote. For the United States, these developments take on even more urgency when viewed in the context of the broader US competition with China, as well as the deepening relationship between China and Russia.

Introduction

While the Arctic has long been a strategic domain, with Cold War superpowers competing across the frozen pole, climate change's thawing of the icecaps is inviting new activity and interest in the High North. In particular, China is prioritizing this increasingly important geopolitical region, significantly complicating the great power calculations and dynamics with which the United States must contend.

For over a decade now, China has recognized the impacts of climate change as a national security challenge—and opportunity.[1] Nowhere is this more apparent than in its evolving approach to the Arctic. In 2013, China released its first Na-

[1] See Eyeck Freymann, "The Adaptation Advantage," The Wire China, 17 July 2022 or Erin Sikorsky, "China's Climate Security Vulnerabilities," edited by Francesco Femia. (Washington, DC: The Center for Climate and Security, Nov 2022).

tional Climate Adaptation Strategy, and the following year its holistic national security strategy identified "environmental security" and "resource security" as two of eleven key components. A few years later, in 2018, Beijing published a white paper on the Arctic, identifying China as a "near Arctic power," noting that due to climate change, "The Arctic situation now goes beyond its original inter-Arctic States or regional nature, having a vital bearing on the interests of States outside the region and the interests of the international community as a whole, as well as on the survival, the development, and the shared future for mankind."[2] Put another way, China perceives the Arctic to be a "near-China region" over which it plans to exert influence, a dynamic that only accelerates as climate change makes the Arctic more accessible.

For the United States, these developments take on even more urgency when viewed through a more holistic lens of geopolitical competition. First, China's Arctic activity must be examined in the context of the broader US competition with China. Second, the relationship between China and Russia—the more traditional Arctic security threat for the United States—must be examined as well to understand the full scope of the implications for the United States.

The Nexus of Climate Change and Resource Access in the Arctic

While the United States and others have viewed such Chinese claims with skepticism, the white paper is not wrong in noting that what happens in the Arctic does not stay in the Arctic. Even if global temperatures rise by less than two degrees Celsius on average above pre-industrial levels, the Arctic could experience a sea ice–free summer at least once a decade. Decreased sea ice allows for additional human activity in the Arctic; this in turn further damages the Arctic ecosystem beyond the impacts of a warming. Decreasing sea ice and permafrost—as a result of which more fresh water enters the Arctic Ocean—can change weather and climate conditions in other parts of the globe. This is all happening faster than scientists previously thought. In the fall of 2022, a new study revealed that the Arctic has warmed four times faster than the rest of the world over the past 40 years, a significant change from the previous assessment that the region was warming two times as fast. The Arctic is on average three degrees Celsius warmer than it was in 1980.[3] These changes are fueling China's expansive ambitions in the Arctic. In January 2018, this ambition was formalized in the previously mentioned Arctic

[2] State Council Information Office of the People's Republic of China, *China's Arctic Policy* (Beijing: CCP, 2018), http://english.www.gov.cn/.

[3] Rantanen, M., Karpechko, A.Y., Lipponen, A. et al. "The Arctic has warmed nearly four times faster than the globe since 1979." Commun Earth Environ 3, 168 (2022). https://doi.org/10.1038/s43247-022-00498-3.

white paper, China's first public Arctic policy, wherein China laid out its vision to take advantage of melting sea ice to develop a "Polar Silk Road," eventually connecting North America, East Asia and Western Europe. This will shorten travel times compared to traditional routes through the Straits of Malacca and Suez Canal, offering China a new strategic advantage in terms of global trade and freedom of navigation.[4] In 2021, the Chinese government's 14th Five-Year Plan reiterated the importance of developing such transit routes in the Arctic.[5] Also in 2021, a civilian ice-breaking cargo vessel owned by a Russian firm successfully transited from China to Russia in February, the first time such a trip was made in the winter months.[6] Given that the Arctic Sea is averaging 12.6 percent of sea loss per decade such trips will likely become more frequent in decades to come, and prior to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Moscow had sped up its investment in port facilities along its Arctic coastline.[7] China is attuned to these developments and keen to make investments of its own in the equipment needed for operations in the High North. In 2021, China released a policy note outlining plans to develop a heavy ice breaker and a heavy lift vehicle for operations in the region.[8]

In addition to new transport routes, China is attuned to the access climate change will unlock in the Arctic for fossil fuels, critical minerals, and fish stocks– especially as climate impacts elsewhere in the world affect China's energy and food security. The Arctic has an estimated 90 billion barrels of oil and 1,669 trillion cubic feet of natural gas, amounting to 22 percent of the world's oil and natural gas reserves.[9] Critical minerals needed for energy transition, such as lithium and nickel, are also in abundance in the region, and experts estimate there are significant critical minerals in the deep seabed of the Arctic Ocean as well.[10] While deep seabed mining is still theoretical at this point in the Arctic, China is well-positioned to take the lead in any future efforts given its investments in min-

[4] Sherri Goodman and Elisabeth Freese, "China's Ready to Cash In on a Melting Arctic," *Foreign Policy* 1 May 2018.

[5] Marc Lanteigne, "The Polar Policies in China's New Five Year Plan," *The Diplomat* 12 March 2021, https://thediplomat.com/.

[6] Marc Lanteigne, "Feedback Loop: The Voyage of the Christophe de Margerie (and Its Aftermath)," *Over the Circle*, 4 March 2021, https://overthecircle.com/.

[7] Eytan Goldstein, "Eclipsed Again: Russia's Northern Sea Route will Have to Wait," *Harvard International Review* 24 February 2023, https://hir.harvard.edu/.

[8] Malte Humpert, "China to Build New Heavy Ice Breaker and Lift Vessel for Arctic," *High North News* November 16, 2021, https://www.highnorthnews.com/.

[9] Mark Rowe,"The World is Gearing Up to Mine the Arctic," *Geographical* 12 August 2022; https://geographical.co.uk/.

[10] Caitlin Keating-Bitonti, "Seabed Mining in Areas Beyond National Jurisdictions: Issues for Congress," Congressional Research Service 5 December 2022; https://crsreports.congress.gov/.

ing technology and political influence over the International Seabed Authority (ISA), the UN governing body developing rules of the road for such exploration. Of the 30 contracts the ISA has approved for deep seabed mining globally, China has secured five—the most of any country.[11]

Arctic fish stocks are another key resource that are becoming more accessible and more abundant due to the changing climate. A study from the University of British Columbia found that in a high warming scenario, fish migration due to warming waters could increase annual catch amounts by the end of the century significantly—providing Arctic fisheries 37 times more fish than today.[12] Though China has signed the Central Arctic Ocean Fisheries Agreement, which bans fishing in the region for 16 years beginning in 2021, the country has a worrisome track record on illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing practices. China is the world's largest consumer of fish and operates the world's largest commercial fishing fleet.[13] At the same time, food security is an increasing concern for Beijing. It has 20 percent of the world's population yet only 12 percent of the world's arable land—much of which is threatened by climate change.[14] In the coming decades it is likely Beijing will act more aggressively to access fish stocks in the Arctic as it has elsewhere in the world.

An Opening for China?

While Russia is clearly the dominant player in the region, China's dominating impact on US strategic views has turned a bipolar dynamic between Russia and NATO into a more complex, multipolar one, even if China's current Arctic presence is more limited. Additionally, the Russian invasion of Ukraine and subsequent suspension of the Arctic Council have upended the traditional mechanisms for maintaining stability and peaceful cooperation in the region. This provides China an opportunity to mold the future of Arctic governance through closer ties to Russia. The longer the Arctic Council activities are suspended, the more likely Russia will look for partners in the region - even if they are only "near-Arctic". In-

[11] "China leads race to exploit deep sea minerals: UN Body," *Reuters* 23 October 2019, https://www.reuters.com/.

[12] Travis C. Tai, Nadja S. Steiner, Carie Hoover, William W.L. Cheung, U. Rashid Sumaila, "Evaluating present and future potential of arctic fisheries in Canada," *Marine Policy*, Volume 108, 2019; https://doi.org/.

[13] Erin Sikorsky. "China's Climate Security Vulnerabilities." Edited by Francesco Femia. The Center for Climate and Security, an institute of The Council on Strategic Risks. Washington, DC. November 2022.

[14] Sikorsky. "China's Climate Security Vulnerabilities."

creased western sanctions on Russia have made China a more attractive investment partner for Moscow's Arctic ambitions as well.[15]

China also faces geopolitical and environmental challenges in the Arctic. A closer relationship between Beijing and Moscow means increased wariness from other Arctic countries, as exemplified by the tense exchange at the Arctic Circle Assembly last year. At the meeting, a senior NATO official clashed with a Chinese diplomat over China's refusal to condemn the Russian invasion of Ukraine and its supposed disregard of the rules-based international order.[16] Also, the Arctic remains a challenging operating environment for even the best equipped ships—as Arctic activity increases, particularly by ill-prepared commercial vessels, the risk of serious accidents increases. The Council on Strategic Risks, the Polar Institute and Sandia National Laboratory have modeled collisions of nuclear and gas equipment in the Arctic, for example, finding that such incidents would have severe environmental and economic implications and would be challenging for governments to respond to.[17]

Implications for the United States

The United States views China as its pacing threat, perceiving Beijing's expanding global influence with significant concern. Of particular note, China's efforts to increase its influence in the Arctic are specifically, though tactfully, called out in the new *US National Strategy for the Arctic Region*.[18] The US Navy's Arctic strategy, *A Blue Arctic*, is more blunt. It states that "China's growing economic, scientific, and military reach, along with its demonstrated intent to gain access and influence over Arctic States, control key maritime ports, and remake the international rules-based order presents a threat to people and nations, including those who call the Arctic Region home."[19]

Taken together, the increasing Chinese presence in the region and the changing climate that prompted it demand an update to US posture in the region that

[15] Trym Eiterjord, "What Does Russia's Invasion of Ukraine Mean for China in the Arctic?" *The Diplomat* 25 March 2022; https://thediplomat.com/.

[16] "China tension over Ukraine flares at Arctic Circle Assembly in Iceland," *South China Morning Post,* 16 Oct 2022; https://www.scmp.com/.

[17] S. Goodman, P. Davies, J. Townsend, and M. Maddox, "Inclusive Planning for Changing Arctic Futures: Demonstrating a Scenario-Based Discussion." Council on Strategic Risks, with Sandia National Laboratories and the Polar Institute, Wilson Center. (2019). https://councilonstrategicrisks.org/.

[18] The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region* (Washington, DC: The White House, October 2022).

[19] Department of the Navy, A Blue Arctic: A Strategic Blueprint for the Arctic, January 2021, https://media.defense.gov/.

anticipates the trajectory of both trendlines. A more muscular Chinese presence and an open Arctic Ocean would demand a re-evaluation of Naval requirements. For example, the US would need to consider increased Navy presence and a fleet prepared to operate in a navigable - but still dangerous - Arctic environment. Moreover, with such a presence, it would need to consider improved polar capabilities for communications and domain awareness. The 2022 National Strategy for the Arctic Region invokes these shortfalls promising to increase investment In "modernized domain awareness to detect and track potential airborne and maritime threats and improve sensing and observational capabilities, including for sensing, ship traffic and weather," and stating it will "improve communications and position, navigation, and timing capabilities by developing communications and data networks capable of operating in the northern latitudes."[20] These capabilities cannot be generated instantaneously, so the planning and programming for future capabilities must begin in the near term. An important step in augmenting near-term Arctic presence is the production of new icebreakers for the US Coast Guard. The existing program includes three heavy and three medium icebreakers, with the first delivery anticipated in 2025, but the push for these new vessels started more than a decade ago. Planning for future capabilities and conditions is a near-term requirement.

Moreover, in a future with increased trade and activity in and out of the Arctic, the Bering Strait becomes an increasingly important thoroughfare, and US capability to monitor activity and maintain presence in the strait will be key to our Arctic posture.

If the US policy response was predicated solely on China's current capabilities and activities, one might contemplate an approach with less urgency. However, one must look at this activity through two more holistic frames.

First, US posture toward Chinese activity in the Arctic must be taken as a facet of a broader Chinese policy. China poses near-term threats to the interests of the United States and its Allies, and therefore Chinese moves in the Arctic must necessarily be incorporated into that holistic picture. Practically, this means that throughout the US government, Arctic or climate policy considerations must be integrated into China policy. For example, the new China House announced by the Biden Administration must consider Chinese activity in the Arctic in a more global view of Chinese activity and strategy.[21] Additionally, in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Arctic and Global Resilience Office must partner with

[20] The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*.

[21] Nahal Toosi and Phelim Kine, "Biden launches 'China House' to counter Beijing's growing clout," *Politico* 16 December 2022, https://www.politico.com/.

the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for China to collaborate on an understanding of how China's Arctic policies fit in a broader understanding of China's global geopolitical goals.

Second, China may not be the primary Arctic actor that drives US calculations, but its actions intertwine with and influence Russian activities. Projections of Russian activity in the Arctic must incorporate the implications of Chinese engagement, investment, and cooperation and how they will influence Russian behavior. This is particularly important today given the increasingly close ties between Russia and China. During a March 2023 visit to Moscow, Presidents Xi and Putin agreed to cooperate more closely on Arctic transportation and energy activities, including the development of a governing structure for the Northern Sea Route.[22] Despite these growing ties, some analysts judge there are significant risks for Moscow in allowing a greater Chinese role in the Arctic, including the potential loss of dominance in the region.[23] For the United States, understanding these delicate dynamics is crucial for identifying opportunities to maintain the US position in the Arctic and drive toward continued peaceful cooperation over this crucial region in a warming world.

[22] Malte Humpert, "Putin and Xi Discuss Further Deepening Arctic Partnership," *High North News*, March 24, 2023, https://www.highnorthnews.com/.

[23] Phillipp Ivanov, "Can Russia Get Used to Being China's Little Brother?" Foreign Policy March 21, 2023, https://foreignpolicy.com/.

The Zone of Peace and the Future of Arctic Governance

Maj Nathan Stackhouse, USAF

Major Nathan Stackhouse is an Arctic Strategist for Air Force Futures and advances relationships with northern Allies and partners. He resides in Iceland with his family of six.

Abstract

Chinese cooperation with Russia in the Arctic lays the foundation for an alternative international order guided by the world's leading autocracies. Ambiguity over the future of the Arctic Council serves Beijing's interests far more than clarity and resolution to the current impasse. Arctic exceptionalism as a 'zone of peace' tabled hard security issues in the post-Cold War era in favor of an agenda focused exclusively on science, the environment, and sustainable development goals. Geopolitics has reemerged and is shaping the future trajectory of the region. The status quo in the Arctic is unsustainable as China's power differential over Russia increases.

Introduction

Uncertainty hangs over the future of Arctic governance. This concern seemed to animate nearly all panelists at the 2022 Arctic Circle Assembly in Reykjavik, as decades of collaboration in science and research stopped abruptly in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in late-February 2022. The specter of a new Cold War looms over the global international order yet hope exists that the Arctic can somehow escape the tentacles of great power rivalry. Even as answers remain elusive, it is important to understand the narrative history of the region following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the consequences of embracing a particular vision of peace and security that sidelined hard power considerations from discussions within the Arctic Council. The Circumpolar North became an international relations experiment in post--politics. Yet with the fragmentation of the Arctic Council, new geopolitical possibilities are emerging. This article outlines whether the "zone of peace" narrative framework first articulated by General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev has outlived its usefulness as an organizing principle in Arctic governance. Moreover, it examines how the People's Republic of China (PRC) is well-positioned to assert its claims and ambitions in the region. Chinese diplomats provided a harbinger of things to come by debuting a twenty-first-century version of the Gorbachev initiative during the Arctic Circle Assembly. The acute and pacing

threats of Russia and the People's Republic of China, respectively, call for a new narrative framework untethered from post-Cold War assumptions which obscure great power security dynamics.

End of History

When Francis Fukuyama penned his famous essay entitled "The End of History?" in 1989, globalization seemed to open new horizons for theorizing about the nature of international relations. Fukuyama essentially declared liberal democratic hegemony over the post-Cold War world. At the time, some analysts asserted that Russia would resort to an imperial "pre-Bolshevik" mode of governance that would continue to present international challenges evocative of the 19th century "balance of power" era. Fukuyama argued this realist presumption was a "highly questionable proposition" as economics had overtaken matters of high politics or grand strategy in international relations.[1] Imperial conquest no longer appeared to be a viable option in his formulation, as if the West's victory was so complete and thorough that expansionism would be permanently foreclosed from the future of international relations. He cites Soviet Foreign Minister Shevardnadze as an example of the emerging post-historical consensus: "The struggle between two opposing systems is no longer a determining tendency of the present-day era. At the modern stage, the ability to build up material wealth at an accelerated rate on the basis of front-ranking science and high-level techniques and technology, and to distribute it fairly, and through joint efforts to restore and protect the resources necessary for mankind's survival acquires decisive importance."[2] Fukuyama pointed to a governance model characterized by "economic calculation, the endless solving of technical problems, environmental concerns, and the satisfaction of sophisticated consumer demands."[3] The inevitability of history relegated strategic competition to the background of international affairs. According to him, these traditional factors would never quite rise again as systemic level challenges because liberal democratic hegemony imposes a mix of restraints and enticements upon reluctant or recalcitrant states at the end of history.

Fukuyama's forecast assumed a materialist future devoid of heroism, technocratic in execution, and confident of its immutable course. Embodied in the project of European integration, such an ontology consists of "rules and rules about rules [that] stand outside of history," derived from normative behavioral patterns

[1] Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?," *The National Interest* 16 (1989), 15–16.
[2] Fukuyama, "The End of History?," 17.
[3] Fukuyama, 18.

and spawning quasi-legal regimes alongside international law. [4] Arctic governance is modeled from similar theoretical commitments as the European project, explicitly rejecting realist (or traditional) assumptions by showcasing critical constructivism as an effective new conceptual template for conducting and evaluating international relations.[5] The High North represents how normative interpretations and non-state stakeholder interactions focused on 'low politics' might produce durable international cooperation and sustainable peace without the structural straightjacket of realpolitik. After three decades of Arctic experience, we might be tempted to declare victory for the constructivists, but the dawn of a new era in great power competition has sadly disabused us with the 'return of history.' That may be why, according to Rob Huebert, analysts who would seek to bring traditional security perspectives into Arctic governance discussions are dangerous or perhaps even immoral. Huebert argues that the new thinking induces a degree of intellectual conformity which I contend institutionalizes the Hegelian assumptions embedded throughout Fukuyama's thesis.[6] These constraints jettison free inquiry by 'delegitimizing' the traditional approach in international relations—stripping it from the parameters of acceptable discourse within Arctic academic and policymaking communities.[7]

Clash of Theories

In essence, Huebert demonstrates how the zone of peace narrative has played out in practice. It has provided the imaginary space for quarantining hard security from Arctic affairs, allowing theorists and practitioners alike to style themselves as the post-historical vanguard. Arctic governance represents a breakthrough in international politics—embodying the steady emancipation of a vast territory from the nation-state and its historic entanglements. Moreover, non-traditional theorists have successfully broadened the definition of security even as the traditional view has been marginalized. The new theorists argue the Arctic's 'excep-

[4] Ronen Palan, "A World of Their Making: An Evaluation of the Constructivist Critique in International Relations," *Review of International Studies* 26, no. 4 (October 1, 2000), 597, https://doi.org/.

[5] John J. Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions," *International Security* 19, no. 3 (January 1, 1994), 40–41, https://doi.org/.

[6] In Fukuyama's explanation, Hegel contended that Napoleon's victory over the Prussian army in 1806 embodied a type of "universalization of the state" through a "vanguard of humanity" that spread the ideals of the French Revolution. In essence, these principles are the liberal democratic state and the universal right to freedom. Napoleon, thereby, inaugurated the beginning of the end of history.

[7] Rob Huebert, "Understanding Arctic Security: A Defence of Traditional Security Analysis," in *Breaking Through: Understanding Sovereignty and Security in the Circumpolar Arctic,* eds. Wilfrid Greaves and P. Whitney Lackenbauer (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021), 80-81.

tional' nature practically forbids any challenge to the notion that the region is outside the "normal pressures and demands of the larger international system." According to Huebert, non-traditional theorists mischaracterize the realist perspective in what amounts to a "straw man" logical fallacy—creating a "facade of cooperation" in the Arctic, an illusion only recently punctured by events in Ukraine.[8] The new thinkers largely embrace regional security complex (RSC) theory to explain developments in Arctic governance. According to Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, a regional security complex (RSC) is "a set of units whose major processes of securitization, de-securitization, or both, are so interlinked that their security problems cannot reasonably be analyzed or resolved apart from one another."[9] The critical theory version of this framework seems to provide the non-traditionalists with the rationale of an insulated Arctic region with its own internal logic and security imperatives—largely impervious to external threats unfolding outside of its geographical boundaries. Understood in this way, critical RSC theory underpins an imagined regional identity as part of a "constructed community" project.[10]

The critical constructivist approach thereby attempts to define the Arctic as an RSC based on the absence of traditional military threats, a high degree of interdependence, shared environmental and climate challenges, and democratic consultation.[11] This conception is institutionalized through the Arctic Council and animated by the zone of peace narrative. Arctic governance continued undisturbed along its post-historical path by mostly ignoring Russian aggression elsewhere and expanding the idea of security from its traditional sense to include social, cultural, economic, and environmental factors. Gorbachev's 1987 Murmansk Initiative inaugurated the process of Arctic regionalization, defined as "the process of cooperation and identity building based on geographic contiguity." Regionalization "experienced a renaissance of sorts at the end of the Cold War", marking the end of bipolar competition. [12] Among the three modes highlighted, ideational regionalization (or critical constructivism) best explains Arctic governance since the 1990's and how international fora such as the Arctic Circle Assembly function

[8] Huebert, "Understanding Arctic Security," 83–84, 87.

[9] Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 44.

[10] Andreas Østhagen, "The Arctic Security Region: Misconceptions and Contradictions," *Polar Geography* 44, no. 1 (February 28, 2021), 59, https://doi.org/.

[11] Østhagen, "The Arctic Security Region," 64.

[12] Marc Lanteigne, "Considering the Arctic as a Security Region: The Roles of China and Russia," in *The Routledge Handbook of Arctic Security*, eds. Gunhild Hoogenson Gjørv, Marc Lanteigne, and Horatio Sam-Aggrey (New York: Routledge, 2020), 317.

as sub-governmental organizations wherein a wider group of stakeholders—both government and non-government, is invited to shape the region's future.[13] So, while the Arctic Council stands as the region's foremost governance institution, a variety of networks and fora have bolstered the overarching purpose of keeping the northern latitudes *exceptional* or protected from historical forces.[14]

The earlier Ukraine crisis of 2014 exposed vulnerabilities in regional exceptionalism, yet the sentiment allowed for the continued compartmentalization of Arctic issues until 2022. Huebert warns us: "Despite the best efforts of most Arctic security analysts to move away from a focus on state-based hard power in the region, the Russian government is still moving ahead with that agenda. So, it is important not to ignore that Russia is determined to use military power to achieve its core objectives".[15] The practical outworking of Fukuyama's thesis begins to take shape. For in the same way neo-liberal theorists and practitioners assumed market economies would spur liberal democratic reforms in China, the critical and constructionist schools have insisted upon a post-historical aspiration that has been exploited by revisionist powers who never abandoned realpolitik.

Regional security complex theory may therefore be a useful lens through which to evaluate securitization trends in the Arctic, but Huebert's analysis suggests those benefits are severely outweighed when applied normatively by embracing an *a priori* dismissal of traditional international relations perspectives that seek to account for great power competition.[16] When an academic field and practitioner community refuse to permit the full range of debate, important insights are missed and compounded by the opportunity costs of inaction. The disbelief over melting ice caps that only a few decades ago challenged the analytical status quo has now become a problem which can no longer be ignored. In the same way, Huebert makes the case that current intellectual commitments threaten to delay or prevent sound policy recommendations needed to safeguard Arctic peace.

Who Benefits?

Old habits are hard to break, and that is especially true when it comes to Arctic governance. The zone of peace narrative has been so widely embraced by the foreign policy establishment that the conditions are set for a "gray rhino" event—a

[13] Lanteigne, "Considering the Arctic as a Security Region," 318.

[14] Klaus Dodds, "Geopolitics, Security, and Governance," in *The Routledge Handbook of Arctic Security, eds. Gunhild Hoogenson Gjørv, Marc Lanteigne, and Horatio Sam-Aggrey (New York: Routledge, 2020), 267.*

[15] Huebert, "Understanding Arctic Security," 90.

[16] Huebert, "Understanding Arctic Security," 84.

highly probable, high impact but nevertheless neglected threat.[17] Such a scenario could combine the internationalization of the Arctic with the limits of existing governance structures. As a burgeoning superpower, the People's Republic of China (PRC) is ideally situated to leverage its status as the most consequential Arctic Council observer and exploit Russia's direct challenge to the international system led by the United States. Beginning with its self-proclaimed status as a 'near Arctic state,' China pushed the boundaries of political acceptability by introducing its novel concept through the publication of an Arctic Policy Paper in 2018.[18] This idea coincided with the rise of climate change as a top international priority and the Arctic Council as the region's most influential intergovernmental body. Though geographically meaningless, the 'near Arctic state' phrasing allows for an inclusive understanding that encompasses the global implications of climate change as well as the reasonable notion that transregional problems require a wider range of stakeholders.

Beijing may have invoked the concept by drawing directly from the Murmansk Initiative. Gorbachev's famous reference to the Arctic as a "zone of peace" successfully 'framed' subsequent ideas regarding the environment and sustainable development that continues to resonate within policymaking circles today.[19] His norm entrepreneurship helped rehabilitate the Soviet Union's image following its disastrous handling of the Chernobyl nuclear meltdown one year prior. Gorbachev set up this narrative in the following way: "The potential of contemporary civilization could permit us to make the Arctic habitable for the benefit of the national economies and other human interests of the *near-Arctic states* [emphasis added], for Europe and the entire international community. To achieve this, security problems that have accumulated in the area should be resolved above all".[20] In the process of calling for greater multilateralism and de-securitization within the Arctic,[21] Gorbachev acknowledged global stakeholders and laid the groundwork for future "internationalization" even though, as mentioned above, the immediate consequence was the regionalization of the High North. He effectively challenged the

[17] Østhagen, "The Arctic Security Region: Misconceptions and Contradictions," 65–66; Lanteigne, "Considering the Arctic as a Security Region: The Roles of China and Russia," 318–19.

[18] "Full Text: China's Arctic Policy," January 26, 2018, http://english.www.gov.cn/.

[19] Rodger A. Payne, "Persuasion, Frames and Norm Construction," European *Journal of International Relations* 7, no. 1 (March 1, 2001), 39, https://doi.org/.

[20] Mikhail Gorbachev, "Mikhail Gorbachev's Speech in Murmansk at the Ceremonial Meeting on the Occasion of the Presentation of the Order of Lenin and the Gold Star to the City of Murmansk," Barentsinfo, October 1, 1987, https://www.barentsinfo.fi/.

[21] Kristian Åtland, "Mikhail Gorbachev, the Murmansk Initiative, and the Desecuritization of Interstate Relations in the Arctic," *Cooperation and Conflict* 43, no. 3 (September 1, 2008), 292, https://doi.org/.

era's hard security assumptions between East and West, offering détente as a release valve for thawing relations abroad while pursuing glasnost and perestroika at home. In retrospect, Gorbachev's actions safeguarded the Soviet Arctic Zone for the future of the Russian state by expanding the definition of security to include economic, environmental, and human considerations while inviting the world to take part in the responsible stewardship of regional resources. Beijing's position as a 'near Arctic state' hearkens back to Gorbachev's original vision and builds off the rhetorical precedent he established in Murmansk. The subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union buried the concept until it could be resurrected by China as the *raison d'etre* for its entry into Arctic affairs.

Now geophysical changes in the High North, compounded by geopolitical challenges to the liberal international order, provide unique prospects for revisionist powers like China and Russia. In terms of governance structures, the Arctic Council has been the paramount intergovernmental organization for coordinating the actions and policies of the eight Arctic nations. But when the Arctic Seven (A7) refused to ignore the implications of Russia's largescale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Council meetings were suspended with no clear timeline or plan for resumption.[22] In the same way Russia has frozen other conflicts to reclaim a sphere of influence, a paralyzed Arctic Council provides Beijing with an ideal opportunity to 1) internationalize the Arctic as peacemaker 2) normalize its involvement in regional affairs and 3) expand broad cooperation with Russia.

Internationalization

When Gorbachev invoked the peaceful internationalization of the Arctic in Murmansk, it is useful to recall that the speech was given at the nadir of Soviet power. Of course, Gorbachev could not have known what would unfold over the course of the next several years, but the combined effect of setbacks in Chernobyl, Reykjavik, and Afghanistan posed numerous political, economic, and military challenges to the Soviet regime and prompted a foreign policy détente between the United States and its Allies. Accordingly, 'internationalization' was a valuable diplomatic tool for mitigating Soviet retrenchment so that core interests in the Arctic could be maintained. Gorbachev, in other words, promoted it less from altruism and more out of geopolitical weakness. Beijing, on the other hand, advances the same concept from a position of strength. The Chinese ambassador to Iceland, He Rulong, advanced this notion during the most recent Arctic Circle Assembly

[22] "Joint Statement on Arctic Council Cooperation Following Russia's Invasion of Ukraine - United States Department of State," United States Department of State, March 3, 2022, https://www.state.gov/.

in Reykjavik. After calling prepared remarks from Admiral Rob Bauer, Chief of NATO's Military Committee, "arrogant" and "paranoid," Rulong asserted that "China, as the peacemaker in the world, we will continue to make our due contribution to world peace and...Arctic affairs." The ambassador demurred when the admiral challenged him to condemn Russia's most recent attack on Ukraine; instead, Rulong stated that "China's foreign policy is a foreign policy of peace and independence".[23]

This revealing episode underscores Beijing's strategic communications strategy and highlights Chinese assertiveness as a steady and reliable guarantor of international peace. The claim may not be new, but its resonance in the Arctic region is perhaps more salient than ever. It is at least conceivable that an outside power is the only hope of ensuring the Arctic remains a zone of peace given the seemingly intractable nature of existing tensions between the A7 and Russia. The ambassador argued that NATO is destabilizing the Arctic status quo by cynically fusing two separate and unrelated issues—the Ukraine war and Arctic affairs, into a matter of high politics. Moreover, despite the admiral's best efforts to anchor the debate in traditional assumptions over sovereign national rights, the ambassador sidestepped the trap by appealing to abstract themes that contrast China's peaceful development model with Western colonialism. Rulong made the argument that the region is too important to be left to decisionmakers who no longer possess the vision, restraint, or moral authority to sideline hard security matters from this "common heritage of mankind."[24] For an audience sensitized to "securitization" (i.e. remilitarization), this line of reasoning may have been compelling.[25] Olafur Ragnar Grimsson, President of the Arctic Circle Assembly, recognized the uncertain path ahead in a subsequent panel by asking the Chinese Special Representative on Arctic Affairs, Gao Feng, whether China would "show up" to Arctic Council meetings after Norway's accession to the presidency in May 2023. The question suggests that China's decision to attend as an observer nation is a matter decisive to the Council's future legitimacy and governance functions. It is unclear how China carries such weight, yet the query bolstered Beijing's claimed status as peacemaker and serves to advance the internationalization of the region.

[23] Admiral Rob Bauer, "NATO and the Arctic," November 22, 2022, accessed November 26, 2022, https://www.apple.com/.

[24] Bauer, "NATO and the Arctic."

[25] Shogo Suzuki, "Japan's Socialization into Janus-Faced European International Society," *European Journal of International Relations* 11, no. 1 (March 1, 2005), 156–58, https://doi.org/.

Normalization

Gao implied the Arctic Council is undergoing a crisis of legitimacy, expressing doubt "whether the presidency could be passed on to anybody or Norway could take over because there is no procedure on that issue".[26] And since the impasse can only be resolved by member states, the Chinese position amounts to disinterested pragmatism. "So, when there is an opportunity to work together," according to Gao, "we will do it. We will go ahead with that, either the A7 or Russia or anybody".[27] These comments, however reassuring on the surface, belie the reality that institutional gridlock opens strategic opportunities for substantive changes to Arctic governance. China will not be eager to restore the status quo.

The Assembly began the slow but unmistakable process of acculturating the international Arctic community to increased Chinese involvement given the uncertainty ahead. Grimsson's question to Gao Feng validated the 'appropriateness' of China's norm entrepreneurship even as his earlier question to Admiral Bauer hinted it was inappropriate to bring China into a discussion focused on Russian aggression against Ukraine. The goal here is not to critique Grimsson's role as Assembly moderator but to highlight a way of thinking that is compatible with, or at least receptive to, Beijing's strategic communications. It is a view that simultaneously enlarges the scope of international stakeholders in Arctic affairs but tends to narrow the discussion along the lines of Gorbachev's "zone of peace" narrative. Adopted norms, such as the sidelining of hard security matters from Arctic Council deliberations, are reflected in group consensus over time and thereby require few reinforcements because they are unchallenged, internalized, and institutionalized.[28] Such normative expectations are difficult to reconcile with emerging geopolitical realities in the northern latitudes.

As the largest and most influential "non-Arctic state," China is too powerful to merely accept the Arctic status quo, yet it cannot act unilaterally without generating stiff resistance among Arctic Council members. Thus, norm entrepreneurship is the most preferable way to split the difference.[29] Successful norm entrepreneurs seldom have opportunity to enact systemic change unilaterally but patiently seek to evolve certain notions alongside commonly accepted ones until

[26] Arctic Circle, "China and the Arctic - Q&A FULL SESSION," YouTube, October 28, 2022, accessed November 22, 2022, https://www.youtube.com/.

[27] Arctic Circle, "China and the Arctic."

[28] Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change," *International Organization* 52, no. 4 (September 1, 1998), 891–92, https://doi.org/.

[29] Marc Lanteigne, "'Have You Entered the Storehouses of the Snow?' China as a Norm Entrepreneur in the Arctic," *Polar Record* 53, no. 2 (March 1, 2017), 119, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0032247416000759.

concept innovations are "taken for granted".[30] Compliance and opportunism interact in parallel with existing political realities; effective entrepreneurs probe for favorable circumstances, assess risk, and evaluate the necessary conditions for reformulating existing rules. China's entrepreneurship is now aided by Russia's 'norm-shaking' war in Ukraine and opens diplomatic space for China to maneuver in the Arctic. Some scholars have written that deteriorating relations between Russia and the West would sideline China as the region militarizes, but the Assembly panels indicate otherwise. The Chinese emissaries accomplished their goal of reciting non-controversial stanzas from the "zone of peace" hymnbook while awaiting the formal collapse of the Arctic Council. [31] This is norm entrepreneurship in action. Further, revisionist communication strategies do not require direct, frontal assaults on existing policies and practices; rather, "de-internalization" can be accomplished through indirect means yet still enervate public support for earlier values.[32] Whether Russian norm-shaking ultimately results in Chinese norm-making remains to be seen, yet Arctic Council paralysis makes it possible by accelerating the international demand for mediation with Russia while attenuating fears or concerns over China's 'near-Arctic' status. Initiative is on the side of the revisionists.

The Return of History

Geopolitical realignment, or the return of history, is underway following Russia's largescale conventional attack on Ukraine. China has neither condemned Russia's invasion, nor has it enforced the sanctions regime or paused defense cooperation with Russia.[33] Deepening integration between China and Russia in the Arctic is a relatively new development, tracing its current origins to the Crimean crisis of 2014. Russia, historically jealous of its national prerogatives in the Arctic, reversed direction and requested that the Northern Sea Route (NSR) be incorporated into China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) soon after Western sanctions

[30] Finnemore and Sikkink, "International Norm Dynamics and Political Change," 892.

[31] Lanteigne, "'Have You Entered the Storehouses of the Snow?' China as a Norm Entrepreneur in the Arctic," 124.

[32] Ryder McKeown, "Norm Regress: US Revisionism and the Slow Death of the Torture Norm," *International Relations* 23, no. 1 (March 1, 2009), 9, https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117808100607.

[33] James T. Areddy, "Xi Jinping Steps Back Onto Global Stage After Three-Year Absence," *WSJ*, November 13, 2022, https://www.wsj.com/; White House, "United States National Security Strategy," October 2022, https://www.whitehouse.gov/. In response, the new US national security strategy states: "China harbors the intentions and, increasingly, the capacity to reshape the international order in favor of one that tilts the global playing field to its benefit."

took hold.[34] Sino-Russian cooperation has gained momentum in the intervening years, a point Admiral Bauer emphasized at the Arctic Circle: "In their joint statement in February 2022, Beijing and Moscow pledged to intensify practical cooperation in the Arctic. Two authoritarian regimes that do not share our values or respect the rules-based international order working together in an already fragile region."[35] NATO's reminder that Sino-Russian Arctic policy coordination coincided with the onset of the Ukraine war is significant. It stretches credulity to imagine such discussions were coincidental or peripheral to the global ambitions of each or that the timing was somehow unrelated.

The shift in relations is a remarkable example of how events outside of the region can impact the Arctic.[36] Moreover, the development suggests that Cold War animosities between Moscow and Beijing are not insurmountable, casting doubt on Western efforts to use the old 'divide and conquer' rulebook for this new era.[37] Interdependence means policies directed toward one impact the other, inducing a degree of complexity absent from the 20th century bipolar context.[38] If "the crown jewel in China's grand strategy is the Belt and Road Initiative" and the Arctic is Russia's most valuable region, we begin to see the outlines of a synergistic relationship with few limits. [39] Shortly after the Communist Party congress in October 2022, the Chinese and Russian foreign ministers conducted a call to reaffirm cooperation "at all levels."[40] Energy resources are an essential component, but by no means do they encompass the full range of strategic goals envisioned through this partnership. The relationship is broad and deepening on virtually every front.[41]

Russia's geography and willingness to challenge the global order make it a natural Chinese ally in the short and long term. This does not mean that close military coordination in the Arctic is imminent, but we can imagine logical steps toward that outcome as the power differential grows and Moscow's dependence

[34] Olga V. Alexeeva and Frédéric Lasserre, "An Analysis on Sino-Russian Cooperation in the Arctic in the BRI Era," *Advances in Polar Science*, December 30, 2018, 276, https://doi.org/.

[35] Bauer, "NATO and the Arctic."

[36] Østhagen, "The Arctic Security Region: Misconceptions and Contradictions," 59.

[37] Rob Huebert, "The New Arctic Strategic Triangle Environment (NASTE)," in *Breaking the Ice Curtain? Russia, China, and Arctic Security in a Changing Circumpolar World*, eds. P. Whitney Lackenbauer and Suzanne Lalonde (Calgary: Canadian Global Affairs Institute, 2019), 76.

[38] Rebecca Pincus, "Three-Way Power Dynamics in the Arctic," Strategic Studies Quarterly 14, no. 1, (Spring 2020), 58, https://www.jstor.org/stable/26891883.

[39] Pincus, "Three-Way Power Dynamics in the Arctic," 45.

[40] Josh Chin, Ann M. Simmons, and Wenxin Fan, "China Nods to Even Tighter Ties With Russia in Xi Jinping's Third Term," *WSJ*, October 28, 2022, https://www.wsj.com/.

[41] Daniel Coats, "Worldwide Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community," Homeland Security Digital Library, January 29, 2019, accessed October 17, 2022, https://www.hsdl.org/.

on Beijing increases. For now, it is enough that Beijing acquires a "shaping role" in the region.[42] The fragmentation of the Arctic Council is the ideal opportunity for joint norm entrepreneurship and norm-shaking/making on regional governance. China requires no endorsement from any nation other than Russia to advance its interests along the Northern Sea Route. Chinese engagement, therefore, is greatly simplified with the suspension of the Arctic Council. Perhaps equally important, the vastness of the Russian Arctic Zone creates a unique opportunity to modify international law and the regional agenda to a degree that would be difficult for the remaining A7 states to ignore in the years ahead. Together, Russia and China "can play a major role in forming the system of international relations in the Arctic using their advantages and authority." And "cooperation with Russia will give Chinese actions more validity."[43] In short, Russia can confer legitimacy on China, making its regional involvement acceptable and routine in the process of evolving Arctic governance and norm development.

Arctic Future

The history of the Arctic demonstrates close interplay between "peace-oriented processes" and "security-motivated" imperatives.[44] This article does not argue that one is more important than the other or that an expansive understanding of security is mistaken. Rather, changing conditions require reordered priorities. Oran Young advocates for a "reset" in Arctic governance and identifies various paths forward but underscores the limitations of the existing construct built upon a zone of peace narrative.[45] Dogmatic insistence upon the Arctic as a region of low politics only increases the chances that it will become a theater of conflict as the post-Cold War peace recedes. Emphasis on "peace-oriented processes" *exclusively* ensures an asymmetric imbalance that is sure to strengthen Russian and Chinese authoritarianism. Both have joined efforts since at least 2014 to undermine the 'rules-based international order' yet have managed to successfully compartmentalize actions abroad from Arctic affairs. Western nations bargained that engagement would preserve the exceptional nature of the region, but it has come at the expense of deterrence. The goal should be neither appeasement nor war but rather A7 solidarity over the future of Arctic governance and norms *within its control*.

[42] Pincus, 58.

[43] Pincus, 53.

[44] Alan Henrikson, "The Arctic Peace Projection: From Cold War Fronts to Cooperative Fora," in *The Routledge Handbook of Arctic Security*, 13.

[45] Oran R. Young, "Is It Time for a Reset in Arctic Governance?," *Sustainability* 11, no. 16 (August 20, 2019): 10–11, https://doi.org/.

Worse than the breakup of the Arctic Council is a scenario that would delay fundamental Western reforms due to unrealistic aspirations rooted in the assumptions of the post-Cold War consensus. Hard power considerations must be central to a new narrative if foreseeable threats ("gray rhinos") are to avoid becoming surprise events ("black swans"). Some international relations theorists would claim this sparks a security dilemma, yet the existing hard power imbalance between the A7 and Russia is a multi-decade product of Moscow's unilateral militarization with no parallel escalation among the other Arctic nations. This gap, however, has been accompanied by Western credulity over the purpose and nature of the Russian buildup, developments that are only now being recognized for their destabilizing or dual-use potential. [46] In other words, the zone of peace formulation has weakened the West but continues serving as a useful prop for the autocratic alliance between Moscow and Beijing. It will be discarded once its utility has expired. But for now, the narrative upholds the fiction of the Arctic as a normatively low-tension region, practically imposing a benign if not magnanimous interpretive lens upon Sino-Russian designs.

The 2022 Arctic Circle Assembly was a microcosm of this dynamic. It is fair to assume that many attendees and participants have been greatly influenced by the norms derived from the Arctic Council and its original mandate to sideline hard security matters from the agenda. Given the longstanding durability of these norms over decades of globalization, a state of disbelief undoubtedly arises when deep philosophical commitments to the 'zone of peace' and 'end of history' are put to the test. The Chinese message at the Arctic Circle would have reassured those seeking an alternative to the specter of a renewed Cold War and perhaps inspired hopes for a 21st century version of the Murmansk Initiative. With Russian voices absent from this year's Assembly, the Chinese perspective was amplified as peacemaker and mediator. By resorting to ambiguity about the future of the Arctic Council, He Rulong and Gao Feng acutely highlighted the PRC's limitations as a mere observer, reminding the audience of its exclusion as a formal member of the club as well as its potential to stabilize Arctic governance in the future—albeit with Chinese characteristics. The Arctic Circle's plenary sessions depicted how China might achieve its goals in the region, not with direct confrontation but through ill-defined assurances, tepid support to the Arctic Council, and behind-the-scenes cooperation, if not overt coercion, vis-à-vis Russia. Beijing will likely advise Moscow on how to handle the Arctic Council chairmanship rotation in

[46] Alexander Sergunin, "Arctic Security Perspectives from Russia," in *The Routledge Handbook of Arctic Security*, 137.

May 2023, and we should mark the ensuing political paralysis as the official launch date of Chinese ascendance in the North.

Conclusion

The zone of peace narrative has not outlived its usefulness, for it continues providing Beijing and Moscow with necessary rhetoric during the transition time between the old international order and the revisionist one under construction. A myopic view would continue to claim the Arctic is still exceptional and impervious to the systemic challenges posed by revisionist powers.[47] But if regional security complexes are not static entities and can vary with "political decisions and manipulation," Finland and Sweden's imminent accession into the NATO alliance punctures the existing narrative by catalyzing the division of the Arctic into separate camps.[48] Russia has already warned this decision could "militarize" the region, echoing the Chinese position voiced at the Arctic Circle Assembly.[49] Even as the region is splitting along new ideological lines, it is essential for the A7 community to understand the revisionist narrative and craft unified policies directed toward the joint agendas of both powers. Attempts to delink Beijing from Moscow (or vice versa) fail to grasp the synthesis and endanger peaceful prosperity in the High North. That should not be cause for despair, for it will finally allow for a more robust discussion over the future of Arctic governance, pairing a new narrative with the hard security commitments required to sustain and nourish it. Epistemological humility warrants reevaluation of the fundamental assumptions behind Arctic exceptionalism, and it would be manifested through a more modest yet discriminating form of internationalization that accounts for historical patterns and the full panoply of security imperatives.

[47] Østhagen, "The Arctic Security Region: Misconceptions and Contradictions," 62.

[48] Buzan and Waever, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, 93–100; Lanteigne, "Considering the Arctic as a Security Region: The Roles of China and Russia," 320.

[49] Krestia DeGeorge, "Russia Says Sweden and Finland Joining NATO Could Accelerate Militarization of Arctic Region," *Arctic Today*, January 25, 2023, https://www.arctictoday.com/.

Accelerating Change and Enabling the National Strategy for the Arctic Region through the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea

Lt Col Jason S. DeSon, USAF

Lt Col Jason DeSon is the Staff Judge Advocate for the 23d Wing, Moody Air Force Base, Georgia. He previously served as the Deputy Staff Judge Advocate, Alaskan NORAD Region, Alaskan Command, and Eleventh Air Force, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska.

Abstract

The 2022 National Strategy for the Arctic Region calls for continued support for the US to ratify the UN Convention on the Law of Sea (UNCLOS) to "vigorously defend" US interests in the region. Despite playing a key role in its development, the US has never ratified UNCLOS. Instead, it has chosen to follow most of its provisions as a matter of customary international law. This approach has generally worked so far, but as the Arctic undergoes fundamental changes as a result of climate change and increased human activity in the region, it is time to accelerate change in the legal domain and pursue ratification before other global powers seek to undermine the rules-based international order that has upheld the stability of the most strategic place in the world for decades.

Introduction

Despite the challenges to Arctic cooperation resulting from Russia's aggression in Ukraine, the United States will work to sustain institutions for Arctic cooperation, including the Arctic Council, and position these institutions to manage the impacts of increasing activity in the region. We also seek to uphold international law, rules, norms, and standards in the Arctic.

– National Strategy for the Arctic Region

The year 2022 saw two important events of legal significance for the Arctic. First, in February, the US House of Representatives passed its version of the *America COMPETES Act*, with a "Sense of Congress" provision stating, "it is in the national interest for the United States to become a formal signatory of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)" the importance of which "was most recently underscored by the strategic challenges the United

States faces in the Asia-Pacific, the Arctic, and the Black Sea regions."[1] One news article noted at the time that this "declaratory resolution is the latest salvo in a decades-long debate over whether the United States should join the 168 parties that have ratified the law of the sea convention since it was first opened for signature in 1982."[2] Unfortunately, the effort failed as the language was struck from the final bill after it went through the US Senate. Despite increased calls for its ratification as a matter of national security, advice and consent from the Senate remains elusive.

The second event came in October, when President Biden released the updated *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*—the first update to the national strategy since 2013. It acknowledges that the region is going through a "transformational change."[3] It also calls for the United States to "protect navigation and overflight rights and freedoms across the Arctic" and "delineate the outer limits of the US continental shelf in accordance with international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)."[4] As such, the strategy makes clear that Executive Branch continues "to support joining UNCLOS and to vigorously defend US interests, which are best served by widespread adherence to the international rule of law."[5]

Prior to the release of the *National Strategy for the Arctic Region,* the Air Force and DOD released their own Arctic strategies acknowledging the changing strategic environment in the Arctic region resulting in increased human activity and resource competition. They also reinforced one of the enduring cornerstones of US national security strategy—the need to uphold the so-called rules-based international order. Achieving this objective in the Arctic presents a number of challenges for the military across multiple domains. This article assesses the strategic risk in the legal domain if the United States continues to refuse to ratify UNCLOS.

Accelerating change in the legal domain by ratifying UNCLOS is essential to the long-term strategic objective of a free and open Arctic by adding increased legitimacy to US military operations in the region. This legitimacy is key to more effective competition against those adversaries seeking to undermine the rules-

[1] Teresa Chen, Alana Nance, and Han-ah Sumner, "Water Wars: 'We've Seen This Movie Before': US Suspicious of Beijing's Motives in Solomon Islands," *Lawfare,* 30 Jun 2022, https://www.lawfareblog.com/.

[2] Chen, Nance, and Sumner, "Water Wars."

[3] The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region* (Washington, DC: The White House, October 2022), 14.

[4] The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*, 14.

[5] The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*, 14.

based order from within. And legitimacy is the "legal power" that the US military must project just as it projects air and space power.

In order for Air and Space Forces to retain access guaranteed by international law in the Arctic and achieve strategic objectives for a stable and conflict-free region, the Air Force must accelerate change in the legal domain by advocating for the ratification of the UNCLOS to legitimize all US Arctic operations and more effectively uphold the rules-based order without increasing strategic competition. As the Air Force Chief of Staff, General Charles Q. Brown, Jr., states in his *Accelerate Change or Lose* guidance, if we do not change our approach, "the rules-based international order so many have fought to defend may disintegrate and our national interests will be significantly challenged."[6] Failure to accelerate change risks being unprepared "to compete, deter, and win."[7]

The Most Strategic Place in the World

> *Outside of the United States proper, Alaska is our most important point with regard to our protection against Asia. The distance to Hawaii from Alaska is only 1,300 miles, as compared to 2,000 miles from our Pacific coast. Alaska is within striking distance of any place we want to approach in Asia, either commercially or in a military way.*
>
> – General William Mitchell
>
> *American Air Power and the Pacific*

Most if not all Airmen who have ever been stationed in the Arctic are familiar with Billy Mitchell's often repeated quote taken from his 1935 testimony to the House Military Affairs Committee, "I believe that in the future, whoever controls Alaska controls the world. I think it is the most strategic place in the world."[8] However, not all may be as familiar with Mitchell's reasoning in the introductory quote to this section, which Mitchell wrote in 1928. And while his sentiments focused on Alaska as a strategic site for airpower in the Pacific, the same principle can be applied across the Arctic region. Indeed, it would be a mistake to believe that Russia or any other Arctic nation does not equally see the greater strategic significance of their footprints in the region. Alaska is the US footprint in the Arctic making it an Arctic nation and its strategic significance remains as substan-

[6] General Charles Q. Brown, Jr., *Accelerate Change or Lose* (Washington DC: Department of the Air Force, August 2021), 7.

[7] Brown, *Accelerate Change or Lose*, 7.

[8] Quoted in John Haile Cloe, *The Air Force in Alaska, Part I, Early Flights and Strategic Importance: 1920-1940* (Elmendorf AFB, AK: Office of History, Alaskan Air Command, 1983), 64.

tial as it was in 1928 with modern aviation making almost all national capitals in the Northern hemisphere easier to reach than the continental United States—or as it is referred to by Alaskans—"the lower Forty-Eight."[9] Additionally, it stands at one end of "[t]he air lanes and sea lanes of the Great Circle Routes [that] are heavily trafficked by shipping companies because they shorten the distance between the two continents, saving time and money for shippers."[10]

Understanding the geography of the Arctic is the first key task to understanding the rules-based order that governs the region. The Air Force adopts the definition of the Arctic as codified in US law as "all US and foreign territory north of the Arctic Circle and all US territory north and west of the boundary formed by the Porcupine, Yukon, and Kuskokwim Rivers; all contiguous seas, including the Arctic Ocean and the Beaufort, Bering, and Chukchi Seas; and the Aleutian Islands chain."[11] Put simply, the Arctic region "consists of the Arctic Ocean, adjacent seas, and parts of eight nations: Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark (including Greenland), Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States."[12] Since the majority of the Arctic region consists mainly of the Arctic Ocean and adjacent seas, the primary legal regime applicable to the region is the law of the sea.

As the new *National Arctic Strategy Region* states, however, the Arctic is going through a transformative change—which includes its geography. According to NASA, which has been tracking sea ice by satellites since 1979, the Arctic Sea ice minimum has been declining at a rate of 13 percent per decade.[13] According to the 2022 Arctic Report Card from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) the Arctic is warming more than twice as fast as the rest of the globe.[14] In the executive summary, the authors of the report card note that "satellite-based records reveal increasing maritime ship traffic within all Arctic high seas and national exclusive economic zones, aligning with the 'ship-ice hypothesis,' which posits that Arctic shipping will increase as sea ice diminishes."[15] They note that this raises questions on the "future of Arctic trade routes."[16]

[9] Col. Michael J. Forsyth, "Why Alaska and the Arctic are Critical to the National Security of the United States," *Military Review* (January-February 2018), https://www.armyupress.army.mil/.

[10] Forsyth, "Why Alaska and the Arctic are Critical to the National Security of the United States."

[11] *Commerce and Trade,* US Code 15 (1984) § 4111.

[12] Department of the Air Force, *The Department of the Air Force Arctic Strategy*, July 2020, 4.

[13] Roberto Molar Candanosa "NASA Finds 2022 Arctic Winter Sea Ice 10th-Lowest on Record," National Aeronautics and Space Administration, 22 Mar 22, https://www.nasa.gov/.

[14] "Arctic Report Card 2022," National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, accessed 8 January 23, https://www.arctic.noaa.gov/.

[15] M. L. Druckenmiller, R. L. Thoman, and T. A. Moon, "Executive Summary: Arctic Report Card 2022," National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 22 Nov 22, https://www.arctic.noaa.gov/.

[16] Druckenmiller, Thoman, and Moon, "Executive Summary: Arctic Report Card 2022."

"The challenge for strategic leadership is to understand the dynamics of change that are now occurring and develop the clearest possible visualization of the end results of change with enough lead time to ensure a competitively advantageous position can be achieved."[17] Perhaps in no other region on Earth is this strategic challenge more pronounced than in the Arctic. The new *National Strategy for the Arctic Region* identifies this strategic challenge in its opening text, "Driven by climate change, this transformation will challenge livelihoods in the Arctic, will create new economic opportunities, and could intensify strategic competition among countries."[18] But the threat of increased competition in the region is nothing new. The 2019 Department of Defense Arctic Strategy (hereinafter, "DOD Arctic Strategy") declared that the changing physical environment has led to the region becoming a "potential avenue for expanded great power competition and aggression."[19] As such, the region is "increasingly uncertain, with a deepening and intensifying of problematic strategic trends."[20]

"DOD's strategic approach for the Arctic is to protect US national security interests and prudently address risks to those interests in ways that uphold the region's rules-based order, without fueling strategic competition."[21] The end-state identified in the DOD Arctic Strategy is a "secure and stable region in which US national security interests are safeguarded, the US homeland is defended, and nations work cooperatively to address shared challenges."[22] Even though the DOD Strategy predates the new *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*, the general strategic approaches in both documents remain consistent.

One of three strategic ways for achieving DOD's desired end state is to strengthen the international rules-based order in the Arctic.[23] While not specifically defined in the strategy, the rules-based order is described as reflecting "Arctic nations' respect for national sovereignty and constructive engagement to address shared challenges."[24] It also incorporates "norms governing access to the region."[25] The strategy also states that this order is currently being challenged by Russia and China in different ways. Toward this end, "US interests include maintaining flex-

[17] National Defense University, *Strategic Leadership and Decision-Making,* (Washington DC: National Defense University, n.d.), Chapter 2, The Strategic Environment.

[18] The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*, 5.

[19] Department of Defense, *Report to Congress, Department of Defense Arctic Strategy,* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, June 2019), 5.

[20] Department of Defense, *Department of Defense Arctic Strategy*, 3.

[21] Department of Defense, *Department of Defense Arctic Strategy*, 7.

[22] Department of Defense, *Department of Defense Arctic Strategy*, 1.

[23] Department of Defense, *Department of Defense Arctic Strategy*.

[24] Department of Defense, *Department of Defense Arctic Strategy*, 2.

[25] Department of Defense, *Department of Defense Arctic Strategy*, 12.

ibility for global power projection, including by ensuring freedom of navigation and overflight; and limiting the ability of China and Russia to leverage the region as a corridor for competition that advances their strategic objectives through malign or coercive behavior."[26] This is entirely consistent with the fourth pillar of the *National Strategy for the Arctic,* which calls for upholding "international law, rules, norms, and standards;" closing "potential gaps in Arctic governance;" preserving "freedom of navigation;" and protecting "US sovereign rights."[27] The new strategy takes this a step further by specifically calling for "joining UNCLOS to vigorously defend US interests, which are best served by widespread adherence to the international rule of law."[28]

The Air Force released its own Arctic Strategy in 2020—its first for the region. It notes, that "[g]iven the Arctic's vast distances and challenges to surface operations, air and space capabilities have long been essential to gain rapid access and provide all-domain awareness, early warning, satellite command and control, and effective deterrence."[29] Indeed, the Air Force provides nearly 80 percent of DOD resourcing to the region.[30] The service adopts four lines of effort to meet DOD Arctic objectives. Chief among these is all-domain power projection.[31] The strategy reinforces the strategic challenge highlighted by the DOD Arctic Strategy by stating that, "With increasing levels of air and space traffic over the Arctic, it is imperative that the region remains a free and open domain. Air and Space Forces must retain the global access guaranteed under international law."[32] To this end, the state of Alaska will have more advanced fighters than any other location in the world.[33] Thus, it becomes even more critical for the long-term sustainment and legitimacy of the air and space power projected into the Arctic through our foothold in Alaska, that all necessary and proper actions in the legal domain be taken to ensure the legitimacy of those forces—not only in their presence in the region, but in their actions protecting US strategic interests and adherence to the international rule of law.

[26] Department of Defense, *Department of Defense Arctic Strategy*, 5.
[27] The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*, 13.
[28] The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region,* 14.
[29] Department of the Air Force, *The Department of the Air Force Arctic Strategy,* 2.
[30] Department of the Air Force, *The Department of the Air Force Arctic Strategy*, 4.
[31] Department of Defense, DOD Report to Congress: Resourcing the Arctic Strategy, 9.
[32] Department of Defense, DOD Report to Congress: Resourcing the Arctic Strategy, 9.
[33] Department of Defense, DOD Report to Congress: Resourcing the Arctic Strategy, 4.

A Brief History of the Law of the Sea

> *A tangle of claims, spreading pollution, competing demands for lucrative fish stocks in coastal waters and adjacent seas, growing tension between coastal nations' rights to these resources and those of distant-water fishermen, the prospects of a rich harvest of resources on the sea floor, the increased presence of maritime powers and the pressures of long-distance navigation and a seemingly outdated, if not inherently conflicting, freedom-of-the-seas doctrine - all these were threatening to transform the oceans into another arena for conflict and instability.*
>
> – Office of Legal Affairs, *United Nations*

According to the United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea, "The oceans had long been subject to the freedom of-the-seas doctrine - a principle put forth in the seventeenth century, essentially limiting national rights and jurisdiction over the oceans to a narrow sea belt surrounding a nation's coastline. The rest of the seas were declared free for all and belonged to none. While this situation lasted into the twentieth century, by mid-century there was an impetus to extend national claims over offshore resources."[34] The modern law of the sea is now codified by the 1982 *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea* or UNCLOS.[35] This treaty did not take effect until 1994.[36] 167 countries are parties to it as well as the European Union. The US is not among them. While the US played a key role in its drafting, the treaty has yet to be ratified by US Senate despite multiple attempts by both Republican and Democratic administrations that have supported it. Despite this, the United States has taken the policy position that it accepts most of its provisions as binding under customary international law—which is unwritten law established by the practice of states undertaken with a belief that those acts are legally binding (referred to in legal channels as *opinio juris*).[37] However, this position has continued to draw scrutiny.

The law of the sea is critical to current Air Force strategic objectives in the Arctic in two ways. First, it defines the sovereign territories of states. At its core, the law of the sea establishes a state's sovereign territory at 12 nautical miles past its shoreline. This is important as the airspace directly over a state's territorial seas

[34] Department of Defense, DOD Report to Congress: Resourcing the Arctic Strategy.

[35] UNCLOS is sometimes abbreviated UNCLOS III as it was the result of the Third UN Conference on the Law of Sea, which began in New York in 1973.

[36] "Law of the Sea," US Department of State, accessed 9 January 2023, https://www.state.gov/.

[37] Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, US Indo-Pacific Command, "The US Position on the U.N. Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)," *International Law Studies* 97, (2021): 81-88.

are considered part of its national airspace. With some exceptions the seas beyond that 12 nautical mile limit are free and open to navigation. Likewise, the airspace beyond 12 nautical miles is considered international airspace where the only legal obligation is to show *due regard* to the safety of other aircraft in flight. These are key aspects to the United States' Freedom of Navigation (FON) operations carried out by the Air Force and Navy abroad that will be discussed later. Second, and arguably more critically, the law of the sea governs access to certain natural resources beyond a nation's territorial sea. This impact has become even more pronounced in recent years given changes in the Arctic environment. How the law of the sea applies in the Arctic may also be changing as environment changes make the region and its resources more accessible and human activity in the region correspondingly increases. Additionally, technological advances "in extracting natural resources including fish, rare earth metals, oil and gas are driving a race for influence in the Arctic that could spur future conflicts."[38] Understanding both of these legal impacts is essential in order to advocate for accelerated change in the legal domain in the Arctic.

The initial US objection to ratifying UNCLOS revolved around Part XI of the treaty governing deep seabed mining. This provision was modified in 1994 to address the US objections, but the Senate nonetheless did not hold any hearings on UNCLOS after it was transmitted by President Clinton. Ten years later, President George W. Bush pushed for UNCLOS to be ratified and this time the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee did hold hearings and recommended that the full Senate give its advice and consent to ratify UNCLOS, but the full Senate took no action.[39] The matter was taken up again in 2007 with the same result. In 2010, the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force, launched under the Obama Administration, strongly called for ratification of the UNCLOS to further national security interests and codify "essential navigational rights and freedoms upon which our armed forces rely."[40] The last attempt to get the Senate to ratify UNCLOS occurred in 2012 and again no action was taken.

Current US objections seem to be mostly political in nature and based on perceived loss of national sovereignty that would outweigh any benefit obtained by joining UNCLOS, particularly since the US already benefits from many of the

[38] Brian L. Sittlow, "What's at Stake With Rising Competition in the Arctic?" *Council on Foreign Relations,* 1 May 2020, https://www.cfr.org/.

[39] Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, "The US Position on UNCLOS," 85.

[40] White House Council on Environmental Quality, *Final Recommendations of the Interagency Ocean Policy Task Force*, (Washington, DC: The White House, 2010), 8-9.

rights conferred by the treaty as a matter of customary international law.[41] Additionally, those who object to ratification, particularly as it relates to the Arctic, note that the "US has successfully protected its interests in the Arctic since it acquired Alaska in 1867 and has done so during the more than 30 years that the convention has existed. The harm that would be caused by the convention's controversial provisions far outweighs any intangible benefit that allegedly would result from US accession."[42] They also argue that the treaty has done little to deter other competitors like China and its actions in the South China Sea, noting that China has carried forth its activities there despite an adverse tribunal ruling against their claims.[43]

There are two fallacies with these current objections. First, just because the US may have successfully "protected its interests" in the Arctic in the past does not mean it will continue to do so effectively in the future, especially in the face of changing environmental factors. Increased access to the region means increased activity. With that increased activity comes the prospect of increased competition. This leads to the second fallacy. Just because the law did not necessarily deter China from carrying out its activities in the South China Sea, does not necessarily mean that it will fail to do so in the future. The US must cease ceding ground in the legal domain. Why should it not show its might in the legal domain just as it does in all the others? The fact is the US continues to fight with one arm tied behind its back in the legal sense. This does nothing to strengthen the legitimacy of its position in the legal domain or its actions in the other domains. If there was ever a legal equivalent of the tactically advantageous "high ground," joining UNCLOS is such a maneuver. And it is necessary now more than ever as the war of law in the Arctic has already begun.

The "War of Law" with Arctic Competitors

The shift in the international security environment has raised a basic question as to whether the Arctic in coming years will continue to be a region generally characterized by cooperation and low tensions, as it was during the post-Cold War era, or instead become a region characterized at least in part by competition and increased tensions, as it was during the Cold War.

[41] Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, "The US Position on UNCLOS," 86.

[42] Ted R. Bromund, James Jay Carafino, and Brett D. Schaefer, "7 Reasons US Should Not Ratify UN Convention on the Law of the Sea," The Heritage Foundation, Jun 4, 2018, https://www.heritage.org/.

[43] Bromund, Carafino, and Schaefer, "7 Reasons US Should Not Ratify UN Convention on the Law of the Sea."

– Ronald O'Rourke, et al.
Changes in the Arctic

It has been noted that the origins of modern Arctic governance itself can be traced to early interstate conflicts over the "delineation and management of natural resources such as seal and fish stocks."[44] This in turn is has been driving Arctic nations to reconsider the "territorial boundaries and the policies that delineate [lucrative Arctic resources]."[45] These boundaries and policies are themselves bounded by the international law of the sea. Beyond the law of the sea, the only other binding agreements governing the region have come under the auspices of the Arctic Council, these include agreements related to search and rescue and scientific exploration among other limited topics.

The Arctic Council was formed by the Ottawa Declaration in 1996. According to the US State Department, the Arctic Council is the "preeminent intergovernmental forum for addressing issues related to the Arctic Region."[46] The members of the Arctic Council include Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, the Russian Federation, and the United States. Critically, the State Department notes that the Arctic Council is not itself a "treaty-based international organization but rather an international forum that operates on the basis of consensus."[47] The Council has generally focused "its work on matters related to sustainable development, the environmental protection; its mandate explicitly excludes military security."[48] Despite its relative success, the Arctic Council has two main limitations: 1) it does not have inherent authority to enforce its actions on the member states; and 2) it is expressly prohibited from raising issues of military security.[49] As such, while it has its uses, the Arctic Council cannot be relied upon as an alternative to UNCLOS ratification.

While the Council has generally been praised as one of the few success stories of international cooperation, that changed in 2022 when Russia invaded the Ukraine. Even prior to the invasion, Russian activity in the Arctic was a cause for concern particularly as it relates to the law of the sea. In November 2020, Russian military vessels allegedly interfered with US fishing vessels in the Bering Sea

[44] Jen Evans, "History and Future of Arctic State Conflict: The Arctic Institute Conflict Series," *The Arctic Institute,* 25 May 2021, https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/.

[45] Evans, "History and Future of Arctic State Conflict."

[46] Office of Ocean and Policy Affairs, "Arctic Region," US Department of State, accessed 8 January 2022, https://www.state.gov/.

[47] Office of Ocean and Policy Affairs, "Arctic Region."

[48] Office of Ocean and Policy Affairs, "Arctic Region."

[49] Congressional Research Service, *Changes in the Arctic,* 55.

operating in the US exclusive economic zone or EEZ.[50] International law recognizes a nation's exclusive sovereign right to harvest the natural resources within its EEZ, however, the law also grants freedom of navigation on the surface. Thus, the Russian military vessels were legally operating in the area and had provided proper notice of the exercise. As such, the US was compelled to recognize the right of Russian military vessels to operate within the EEZ just as much as it recognizes its own sovereign rights to resources within it.

The Russian strategic objective may have been more than just to conduct an exercise and flex its muscles in the region. Moscow may have deliberately leveraged its rights under the law to purposely interfere with the US fishing vessels in yet another play in the greater game of great power competition. In this sense, these were just additional salvos in the Arctic "War of Law." This term was first used by Jon Kyl, Douglas Feith, and John Fonte in a 2013 *Foreign Affairs* article arguing that international law "undermines democratic sovereignty."[51] (The chief argument of those who oppose ratification of UNCLOS.) But their usage of the term is too narrowly focused and misplaced. Here it is used to describe an actual conflict between states taking place solely within the legal domain. Further, it is the use of international law not necessarily to undermine sovereignty in the domestic, democratic sense, but rather in the broader international context.

The example of Russian interference with US fishing vessels and alleged tampering with Arctic undersea cables highlights another key attribute of Arctic governance—the need to legally outflank our competitors by protecting the rights accorded by international law. The US has done this in other parts of the globe through its "Freedom of Navigation (FON)" programs. According to the DOD fact sheet on the FON program, "Since the founding of the nation, the United States has asserted a vital national interest in preserving the freedom of the seas, calling on its military forces to protect that interest."[52] Initially started in 1979, the FON Program derives its current legal authority from the US Oceans Policy of 1983, which states that the United States "will exercise and assert its rights, freedoms, and uses of the sea on a worldwide basis in a manner that is consistent with the balance of interests" as reflected in UNCLOS.[53] At the same time, the

[50] Mike Baker, "'Are We Getting Invaded?' US Boats Faced Aggression Near Alaska," *New York Times,* 1 Dec 1, 2020, https://www.nytimes.com/.

[51] John Kyl, Douglas Feith, and John Fonte, "The War of Law: How New International Law Undermines Democratic Sovereignty," *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2013, 115–125.

[52] Department of Defense, *US Department of Defense Freedom of Navigation Program,* Washington, DC: Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, 28 February 2017.

[53] Department of Defense, US Department of Defense Freedom of Navigation Program.

policy states that the US will not "acquiesce in unilateral acts of other states designed to restrict the rights and freedom of the international community."[54]

Each year DOD releases a FON report summarizing the operations conducted under the FON program. In fiscal year 2020, DOD challenged the excessive claims of 19 countries. However, multiple operations were conducted against one country—China.[55] Indeed the US conducted multiple FON operations in the South and East China Seas to counter excessive maritime claims by China. China has used the law to legitimize its military presence in the South China Sea and limit the rights of other nations to freely navigate its waters or fly in the airspace above it. Similar efforts in the Arctic are no stretch of the imagination when one considers that China has already expressed interest in pursuing its economic and scientific interests in the region. China released its Arctic policy in 2018. In it, China declared itself a "near Arctic State."[56] It would be foolish to believe that China will not seek to defend access to its share of Arctic resources that may become accessible soon.[57]

According to the *National Strategy for the Arctic Region,* "Over the last decade, the PRC has doubled its investments, with a focus on critical mineral extraction; expanded its scientific activities; and used these scientific engagements to conduct dual-use research with intelligence or military applications in the Arctic."[58] However, as of 2023, China's actions in the Arctic appear to have slowed somewhat given the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and its greater interest in Taiwan, but it has not abandoned its Arctic ambitions entirely.[59] Those ambitions include the so-called "Polar Silk Road," that ties China's interests in the region to its "Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)."[60]

While it may be difficult for China to find a partner—other than Russia—by which to get a foothold on land territory in the Arctic region, its development of man-made military facilities in the South China Sea could be foreshadowing of similar artificial bases of operation in the Arctic itself. Indeed, while UNCLOS may state that such artificial bases do not in themselves create new territorial seas

[54] Department of Defense, US Department of Defense Freedom of Navigation Program.

[55] *Report to Congress: Annual Freedom of Navigation Report, Fiscal Year 2020* (Washington, DC: US Department of Defense, 27 January 2021).

[56] Swee Lean Collin Koh, "China's Strategic Interest in the Arctic Goes Beyond Economics," *Defense News,* 12 May 2020, https://www.defensenews.com/.

[57] Koh, "China's Strategic Interest in the Arctic Goes Beyond Economics."

[58] The White House, *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*, 6.

[59] Michael Lipin, "China Begins to Revive Arctic Scientific Ground Projects After Setbacks," *VOA News,* 5 December 2022, https://www.voanews.com/.

[60] Anu Sharma, "China's Polar Silk Road: Implications for the Arctic Region," *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs,* 25 October 2021, https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/.

or associated EEZs, at least one legal scholar notes that UNCLOS may be silent on whether those bases themselves might still be considered sovereign territory of that nation under the law.[61] What rights could this confer? Would China demand equal status on the Arctic Council? How would that shape Arctic governance in the future? While a nation may have sovereignty over the territory it creates, the building of that territory may itself be illegal depending on where and how it is built—yet that illegal "occupation" can still be "legitimized by the international community" if it does nothing in response.[62] And this is the crux of the argument for the US to adopt UNCLOS. Not only to enhance the *legitimacy* of its own actions in the Arctic, but to prevent the legitimization of our competitors' actions in the region.

Ratification of UNCLOS will more effectively counter China's "Three Warfares" strategy—which seeks to do battle in the psychological, legal, and media domain.[63] As noted in a 2013 DOD Report, China uses lawfare to curtail US power projection in the South China Sea.[64] There is no reason to believe that they would not do the same in the Arctic. "Aside from ratifying UNCLOS, removing any perceived double-standard in US policy on these questions is perhaps the single most influential unilateral action that Washington could undertake to expose the weakness of the Chinese claim, in terms of both its legality and its legitimacy."[65]

Ratification of UNCLOS will more effectively counter Russia's legal claim over the Northern Sea Route (NSR). "This maritime passage could become the fastest way of transport between major ports of East Asia and Western Europe. The NSR is the shipping route that runs along the Russian Arctic coastline from the Kara Sea to the Bering Strait. The rapidly melting sea ice has led some analysts to predict that the shorter shipping route may replace the Suez Canal Route that runs from the Red Sea to the Mediterranean Sea."[66] Parallels have been drawn to Russia's legal treatment of the NSR to China's treatment of the South China Sea

[61] Dr. Imogen Saunders, "Artificial Islands and Territory in International Law," *Vanderbilt Journal of Transnational Law,* Vol. 52 (2019) 643-684, 650.

[62] Saunders, "Artificial Islands and Territory in International Law," 684.

[63] Robert T. Kline, "The Pen and the Sword: The Peoples Republic of China's Effort to Redefine the Exclusive Economic Zone," *Military Law Review,* vol. 216 (Summer 2013), 122-169.

[64] Stefan Halper, "China: The Three Warfares," Report to Director, Office of Net Assessment, Office of the Secretary of Defense, 2013, 444.

[65] Halper, "China: The Three Warfares," 444.

[66] Pavel Devyaktin,. "Russia's Arctic Strategy: Maritime Shipping (Part IV)." *The Arctic Institute,* 27 February 2018. https://www.thearcticinstitute.org/.

in the form of "jurisdictional exceptionalism."[67] Russia has used its interpretation of UNCLOS to bolster its claim of sovereignty over the route. [68] However, the US contests Russia's claim and argues that the Arctic's shipping lanes, such as the NSR, should be considered international waters and exempt from Russian regulation. But the fact that the US has not signed the treaty that it seeks to enforce creates an *appearance* of impropriety that damages the credibility and legitimacy of its own power projection across all domains, to include the legal domain where the US must now operate to deter, compete, and win.

The Way Ahead—Denying Our Competitors the Legal Advantage by Adopting UNCLOS

> *American influence is always stronger when we lead by example…It's a lot harder to call on China to resolve its maritime disputes under the Law of the Sea Convention when the United States Senate has refused to ratify it—despite the repeated insistence of our top military leaders that the treaty advances our national security. That's not leadership; that's retreat.*
>
> *– President Barack Obama*

In a 2019 commentary, then-Secretary of the Air Force Heather Wilson and Chief of Staff Gen David Goldfein noted that by 2022, the Air Force would deploy more fifth generation aircraft in the Arctic region than anywhere else in the world.[69] This is on top of other capabilities in place that are designed to detect air threats from coming over the poles and quickly project airpower into the Northern hemisphere.[70] Without a doubt, strengthening military capabilities in the Arctic will be an essential element for enforcing international legal norms in the region. However, similar efforts to enforce norms in other parts of the world have not necessarily deterred Great Powers from attempting to subvert these norms to gain an advantage.

To accelerate change in the legal domain and achieve national security interests in the Arctic, the US must ratify UNCLOS. The challenge for the Air Force remains how to effectively explain why mere reliance on customary international law is insufficient to give the increased legitimacy required to not only project a

[67] Elizabeth Buchanan, and Bec Starting, "Why the Arctic is Not the 'Next' South China Sea," *War on the Rocks,* Nov 5, 2020. https://warontherocks.com/.

[68] Buchanan and Starting, "Why the Arctic is Not the 'Next' South China Sea."

[69] Hon. Heather Wilson, and Gen David Goldfein, "Air Power and the Arctic: The Importance of Projecting Strength in the North," *Defense News,* 9 January 2019, https://www.defensenews.com/.

[70] Wilson and Goldfein, "Air Power and the Arctic: The Importance of Projecting Strength in the North."

more effectively project a combat credible force into the Arctic but enforce the legitimacy of our actions and prevent ratification of illegitimate actions in the region by our competitors. It is critical to meet these competitors on all of their playing fields. The war of law in the region is raging, but the US has yet to truly engage with its full might in the legal domain. It begins by pursuing the adoption of UNCLOS and gaining the legal "high ground." Upon adoption, US military leaders can immediately remove some of the uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity that exists in the Arctic legal environment.

Ultimately, ratification of UNCLOS serves two purposes: 1) it modernizes and strengthens the rules-based order by making the US a key player in the Arctic and its primary governance structure—the law of the sea; and 2) it enhances the ability of the US and its allies to project legal power to delegitimatize otherwise unlawful actions that may be taken by their competitors in the region. Ratification will counter the narrative put forth by our primary competitors—Russia and China—that the US engages in double standards when enforcing rules that it has not signed on to. Finally, ratification of UNCLOS serves to eliminate the uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity that currently exists in the Arctic legal environment. General Brown has called upon the Air Force to accelerate change or lose. The Air Force is doing this in every domain but the legal one. It is a domain we have all too often ignored to our own peril. Our competitors have been engaging the US and other allied nations on multiple fronts, slowly eroding the international order that has been in place since the end of World War II. It is time to maneuver into the position of advantage above our potential adversaries. It is time to take the legal high ground. It is time to project its legal power by finally adopting UNCLOS or risk losing an ever-changing Arctic.

Toward Integrated Deterrence

Sweden's Role on NATO's Northeast Flank

Dr. Lisa Aronsson
Dr. David Auerswald
Dr. Jaclyn Kerr
Brett Swaney

Dr. Lisa Aronsson is Research Fellow for Europe and NATO at National Defense University's INSS and a Non-Resident Senior Fellow at the Atlantic Council. Her research focuses on NATO, European defense and security.

Dr. David Auerswald is Professor of Security Studies at the US National War College and an Atlantic Council Nonresident Senior Fellow. He writes on Arctic security, civil-military relations, and NATO operations.

Dr. Jaclyn Kerr is Senior Research Fellow for Defense and Technology Futures at INSS and a Nonresident Fellow at the Brookings Institution. Her research includes emerging domains and technologies, and Russian politics and strategy.

Brett Swaney is an Assistant Research Fellow at the Institute for National Strategic Studies at the National Defense University. His research focuses on European defense and security, NATO, and transatlantic relations.

Note: The authors would like to thank their partners at the Swedish Defense University, all those who generously offered their insights for this study, and those who provided invaluable feedback on earlier drafts of this paper.

Abstract

This study evaluates Sweden's potential contributions to the US concept of Integrated Deterrence in northern Europe as Sweden and Finland prepare to join the NATO alliance. Integrated Deterrence is a core principle in the Biden administration's 2022 US National Defense Strategy; it argues that deterrence success requires that the US coordinate military and nonmilitary efforts across federal departments, domains, and the full spectrum of conflict, as well as incorporate "ally and partner perspectives, competencies, and advantages at every stage of defense planning." Sweden, given its location, capabilities, and Total Defense mindset, could make important contributions to Integrated Deterrence along NATO's northeast flank. Our field research in Sweden and a scenario planning exercise with participants from across northern Europe and the United States suggest that for Sweden to contribute in a meaningful way, however, it must adapt its strategic culture and doctrine, enhance resilience to sub-threshold challenges, and prioritize NATO structures over other regional cooperation formats. At the same time, US policymakers should recognize that Sweden's evolving capabilities and domestic political situation constrain the realm of the possible in the short-term and adapt US strategy accordingly. We conclude with thoughts on the future of Integrated Deterrence in northern and northeast Europe.

Introduction

After illegally annexing Crimea and destabilizing eastern Ukraine in 2014, Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022. The war that followed, now in its second year, has inflicted enormous human suffering and inspired heroic resilience among Ukraine's people. It has also dramatically reshaped the entire European security environment. The war has upended fundamental US and Western European assumptions about Russia and the European security architecture. Most strikingly for northern European security, the war led Sweden and Finland to abandon their long-held, non-aligned statuses and apply together for full NATO membership. Their accession to NATO would create an opportunity for much more robust defense and deterrence in Europe's northern and northeast tier.

Since 2014, the United States and its European Allies have worked to reconstitute NATO's capacity for collective defense and deterrence in Europe. The Joseph Biden administration also launched a new initiative, Integrated Deterrence, in its 2022 US National Defense Strategy (NDS), which aims to further strengthen deterrence with Allies and partners. The 2022 NDS argues that successful deterrence requires not only better integration of national military and non-military tools across government departments, domains, and the full spectrum of conflict. Importantly, it also requires the incorporation of "ally and partner perspectives, competencies, and advantages at every stage of defense planning."[1] It aims to deter aggression across traditional and new domains, with more than just the military instrument, and with full allied coordination.

The new US concept, like all deterrence strategies, aims to prevent aggression rather than stop it in progress (defense) or coerce an adversary into reversing its aggression after that aggression has already occurred (compellence).[2] Deterrence strategies can take various forms. *Deterrence-by-denial* strategies aim to prevent aggression by denying an adversary any potential gains from aggression and making it clear to an adversary that its objectives are not achievable. *Deterrence-by-punishment* strategies, on the other hand, aim to prevent aggression by threatening retribution against an adversary should it act aggressively. These strategies increase

[1] "Fact Sheet: 2022 National Defense Strategy," Department of Defense, March 28, 2022, https://www.defense.gov/; *National Defense Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, DC: The Department of Defense, 2022), https://www.defense.gov/.

[2] The discussion in this paragraph draws heavily from Alexander George and Richard Smoke, *Deterrence in American Foreign Policy*, Columbia University Press, 1974; Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence*, Yale University Press, 2008; Thomas Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict*, Harvard University Press, 1980; Glenn Snyder, "Deterrence and Power," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 4, no. 2 (1960), 163-178.

an adversary's costs from aggression to a level that is judged to outweigh any possible benefits an adversary might receive from aggression. *Immediate deterrence* aims to deter aggression against one's territory while *extended deterrence* deters aggression against territory outside one's national borders.

Integrated deterrence combines these approaches and works across domains. It continues a longstanding US formula of extended deterrence in Europe and, also, the expectation that European Allies will provide immediate deterrence and help deter attacks against their neighbors. The Biden administration's approach to Integrated Deterrence departs from past strategies, however, by inviting much more direct allied and partner collaboration and contributions than has been the case in the past. The concept also combines deterrence-by-denial and deterrence-by-punishment in new ways. It emphasizes denial as well as elements of resilience and persistence, in certain domains and forms of conflict, including in conventional military, cyber, information, and below the threshold of armed conflict, and it emphasizes deterrence-by-punishment in other areas, such as by threatening retaliation should Russia escalate its war through the use of nuclear or chemical weapons.[3] Integrated Deterrence is a component of the 2022 US NDS and is primarily aimed at deterring Chinese and Russian aggression. Strengthening the alliance and collaboration with and among Allies and partners are a means of implementing it in Europe. Finland's and Sweden's accession to NATO will bring an opportunity for the US and its Allies to further strengthen defense and implement Integrated Deterrence in Europe. Sweden and Finland are among NATO's closest Enhanced Opportunities Partners. They are liberal democracies with highly capable militaries, which are fully interoperable and exercise regularly with NATO forces. Both contribute to resilience through their Total Defense concepts, which integrate government, private sector, and individual actions into a comprehensive approach.[4] Their accession to NATO would allow for the consolidation of considerable allied military power.

Sweden, the focus of this study, has the potential to become a cornerstone state for Integrated Deterrence in Europe's northeast flank.[5] Sweden's geography of-

[3] As is discussed more below, there has been significant recent foment in strategic thought concerning deterrence, persistence, and other strategic approaches in new domains and below the threshold of armed conflict.

[4] The term "total defense" is used here as an umbrella concept; the authors note that total defense differs from the Finnish concept of comprehensive security with each model having unique national characteristics.

[5] While this study focuses primarily on Sweden, many others have assessed Finland's contributions to defense and deterrence. See Robin Forsberg, Aku-M. Kähkönen, Jason C. Moyer, "Finland's Contributions to NATO: Strengthening the Alliance's Nordic and Arctic Fronts," *Wilson Center Insight and Analysis*, November 8, 2022, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/, Heljä Ossa and Tommi Koivula, "What Would Finland Bring to the Table for NATO?" *War on the Rocks*, May 9, 2022, https://warontherocks.com/.

fers NATO strategic depth in multiple directions and links the Arctic with the Baltic Sea region. Sweden's territory, military strength, robust industrial base, its expertise, and ambition for leadership make it a promising partner for Integrated Deterrence. Some in Sweden believe that, provided the government can accelerate its planned increases in defense spending,[6] Sweden may become the "preeminent military" among the Nordic states.[7] The sheer size of its territory and its advantageous geographic position could substantially strengthen allied logistics, airpower, undersea capabilities, and domain awareness. Stockholm's leadership could facilitate planning for a geostrategic space from the North Atlantic to the Baltic Sea, and it would allow for the rationalization of multiple formats for regional security cooperation.

If Sweden is to become the cornerstone state for the implementation of Integrated Deterrence, Sweden would have to complete its strategic adaptation into a full alliance member. The analysis that follows highlights the promises and challenges associated with that adaptation. It is based on a US National Defense University – Swedish Defense University workshop in Stockholm, field research in Sweden, and a scenario planning exercise in Washington DC in late 2022. We first review the northern European security environment and shifts that may be required in the Swedish mindset and strategic culture. Second, we assess the challenges Sweden may face below the threshold of armed conflict while in transition to NATO membership and into the future.[8] Third, we discuss the leadership role Sweden could play in implementing Integrated Deterrence, and we conclude with thoughts on prospects for success for Integrated Deterrence in northern Europe. [9]

[6] "Scandinavian Defense Doubling Spending," Aviation Week Intelligence Network, March 22, 2022, https://aviationweek.com/; Joe Gould, "Sweden Getting into the NATO Groove by Aiding Ukraine, Boosting Budget," DefenseNews, December 6, 2022, https://www.defensenews.com/.

[7] Research discussion with Swedish government official, Washington, DC, October 5, 2022.

[8] For the purposes of this paper, "sub-threshold" is used as a reference to gray zone operations, the term of art for the desire of certain powers to stay under the threshold of triggering a military response. Gray zone operations are, "best understood as activity that is coercive and aggressive in nature, but that is deliberately designed to remain below the threshold of conventional military conflict and open interstate war"; See Hal Brands, "Paradoxes of the Gray Zone," Foreign Policy Research Institute, February 5, 2016, https://www.fpri.org/; See also, Antulio J. Echevarria II, "Operating in the Gray Zone: An Alternative Paradigm for US Military Strategy" (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College Press, December 2015); Michael J. Mazarr, "Mastering the Gray Zone: Understanding a Changing Era of Conflict" (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College Press, December 2015).

[9] "Sweden's Chief of Defense Wants to Strengthen Military Presence in Northern Sweden," *High North News*, November 3, 2022, https://www.highnorthnews.com/.

Northern Europe's Security Environment

NATO's northeast flank is a geographic space that runs from Greenland in the west through the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom (GIUK) Gap, Nordic states, and into the Baltic Sea region. It includes the North Atlantic and European Arctic, and it borders Russia, Belarus, and Russia's exclave, Kaliningrad, in the east. It is within striking distance of Russia's Northern Fleet homeport, and Russia's submarines regularly traverse its vast maritime environs. The area is rich in natural resources such as oil, gas, fish, and minerals, including rare earth minerals, and it is a conduit for sea lines of communications and regional energy transport. Climate change studies demonstrate that the Arctic is warming faster than the global average, increasing access and activity, as well as infrastructure challenges associated with melting permafrost.[10] The region already of strategic interest to NATO and Russia, and it is attracting China's attention.

The security environment in NATO's northeast flank is changing rapidly and in profound ways because of climate change, the war in Ukraine, and strategic competition between the US, China, and Russia. After Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, NATO significantly strengthened deterrence for the Baltic states and Poland. The Nordic and Baltic states also significantly increased their national defense spending after witnessing Russia's aggression.[11] They are now providing Ukraine with high levels of military assistance. Russia's aggression led Denmark to reverse an opt-out for EU common defense policy, too, generating opportunities for more industrial cooperation. Finland and Sweden decided to apply for full NATO membership, dropping their longstanding traditions of non-alignment or military neutrality. While these decisions reflect trends in their national policies since 2014, they will also mark a monumental shift in the European security architecture.

Once Sweden and Finland join the alliance, NATO will wield a formidable concentration of military power in northern Europe, not far from Russia's strategic northwest and western borders. To explore how Integrated Deterrence might apply, NDU and SEDU conducted a workshop in Stockholm in late September 2022. The NDU team conducted additional research discussions with US and Swedish government officials, including at the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The team met with academics, politicians, journalists, and

[10] Rebecca Hersher, "The Arctic is Heating Up Nearly Four Times Faster Than the Whole Planet, Study Finds," *NPR*, August 11, 2022, https://www.npr.org/; World Meteorological Association and UN Environment Programme ,Regional Fact Sheet – Europe, Working Group I – The Physical Science Basis, United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), https://www.ipcc.ch/.

[11] See Kiel Institute for the World Economy, Ukraine Support Tracker, accessed February 14, 20223, https://www.ifw-kiel.de/.

defense industry representatives. Field research focuses on assessing various Swedish perspectives on deterrence needs and threats to security, and the new Swedish government's view of the changing security environment. The team attempted to gauge the government's priorities, which focused primarily on deterring Russia's belligerence.

Russia is seen in Sweden, and across the region, as the acute, near-term security threat. Russia shares a land border with Finland, and it accesses the oceans through the GIUK Gap. It modernized its Northern Fleet in the Kola Peninsula, a component in Russia's nuclear second-strike capability and, arguably, its only remaining claim to great power status. Remilitarization in the north aims for "strategic depth and perimeter control through the creation of multi-layered defense bastions across its Arctic territory. Russia's posture, therefore, seeks to contest the presence of other actors by using interdiction capabilities."[12] Its air-sea doctrine aims to deny access to the Barents and Kara Seas, and its maritime doctrine identifies the Arctic, particularly the maritime zone bordering the Northern Sea Route, as Russia's highest defensive priority. Its strategy "draws a direct line between military security and the use of armed force to secure the extraction of natural resources as well as control over critical maritime infrastructure and trade routes."[13] Below the threshold of armed conflict Russia engages in jamming or spoofing GPS signals, snap exercises to disrupt shipping or fishing activity, cyber- or other attacks against critical infrastructure, disinformation campaigns to undermine democratic processes, or the manipulation of refugee flows.

As a result, Russia has become the "most significant and direct threat" to NATO.[14] This view is shared by all thirty Allies, and it is reflected in the alliance's 2022 Strategic Concept. Between the Wales Summit in 2014 and the Warsaw Summit in 2016, the NATO Allies committed to increasing defense spending and investment, and they reassured their most vulnerable Allies through the enhanced Forward Presence and by responding to sub-threshold attacks. NATO's 2019 military strategy reflected this new focus on Russia and, since February 2022, NATO has doubled the number of battlegroups along its eastern front for defense and deterrence. Since 2014 the US has sought, through the European Deterrence Initiative, to increase its deterrence posture, strengthen the readiness and responsiveness of US

[12] Mathieu Boulègue, "The Militarization of Russian Polar Politics," Research Paper (London, UK: Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs, June 2022), 6, https://www.chathamhouse.org/.

[13] Quoted in Anna Clara Arndt, Commander Göran Swistek, "Fit for Deterrence and Defense? The NATO Summit in Madrid and the Future of the Alliance," *Ethics and Armed Forces*, 2 (2022), http://www.ethikundmilitaer.de/.

[14] NATO 2022 Strategic Concept, Madrid Summit (June 29, 2022), https://www.nato.int/.

forces in Europe, support allied defense and security, and bolster the security and capacity of partners.[15] As the Vilnius summit approaches, NATO is focused on its New Force Model and regional plans, and it is moving towards a more ambitious strategy for forward defense.

Russia is widely considered to be the most acute and imminent threat to Sweden, to NATO, and to European security more broadly, but experts across the region recognize uncertainty about Russia's future and the environment more generally. It is not possible to predict when or how Russia's war in Ukraine might end, but its outcome will most likely be transformative for Ukraine, Russia, and Europe more generally. Such was the motivation for the NDU-SEDU scenario planning exercise in Washington, DC in December 2022.[16] The exercise was designed to identify threats and critical uncertainties that could affect northern Europe beyond the Ukraine war and through the year 2035. It brought together twenty-six participants from Canada, Denmark, Finland, Latvia, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The group had diverse areas of expertise, including defense and security, military planning and logistics, economics, climate change, energy, Nordic and Baltic security, Russia, China, cyber, information, and resilience planning.

Russia featured as the central challenge in the scenarios that the groups developed, but with significant uncertainty. Russia's longer-term capacity to project power and its coherence as a state actor depends on a variety of factors, including the outcome of the war in Ukraine, and Russia's ability to learn lessons from the battlefield and reconstitute its military power.[17] Moreover, Russia's future depends on its ability to manage demographic challenges, the effects of climate change, and relations with China. Its economic prospects are dim given Western sanctions, the potential reduction in global demand for fossil fuels, and of course, socio-political developments within Russia.[18] China was also identified as a second, central challenge over the longer-term. Its impact will depend on Beijing's

[15] US Department of Defense European Deterrence Initiative Fact Sheet. Quoted in Paul Belkin, Hibbah Kaileh, "The European Deterrence Initiative: A Budgetary Overview," (July 1, 2021), https://crsreports.congress.gov/.

[16] The exercise used a methodology similar to that which is described in US Government, "Alternative Futures Analysis," in "A Tradecraft Primer: Structured Analytic Techniques for Improving Intelligence Analysis", March 2009, 34-37.

[17] Dara Massicot, "What Russia Got Wrong: Can Moscow Learn from its Failures in Ukraine?" *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2023, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/.

[18] Nicholas Lokker, Jim Townsend, Heli Hautala, and Andrea-Kendall-Taylor, "How Finnish and Swedish NATO Accession Could Shape the Future Russian Threat: A Report from the Transatlantic Forum on Russia," Center for a New American Security (CNAS), January 2023, https://www.cnas.org/; Research discussion, Stockholm, Sweden, (September 25, 2022).

willingness or ability to acquire minerals and hydrocarbons,[19] the evolution of its relations with Russia,[20] and its desire for a role in governance. China's 2018 White Paper on Arctic policy and other documents and speeches suggest Beijing's engagements in the region are on the rise.[21]

Finally, the exercise identified environmental change – physical and technological – as critical variables. The Arctic is warming faster than the rest of the planet, and its pace, extent, and timing will affect security. [22] Uneven impact and varied national approaches to mitigate or adapt to its effects will also matter. Sea level rise, melting permafrost, and degraded infrastructure present significant challenges for Russia, more so than for northern Europe.[23] Technological changes will also influence the security environment. Development of and access to digital technologies have become a site of political, economic, and military competition. For NATO Allies, force integration, domain awareness, and access to high latitudes, space, and cyber domains will all depend on technological advances, and cyber and space are now domains that could trigger NATO's Article 4 consultations or Article 5 collective defense response.[24] Advancing technologies also affect the trajectory of climate change and the global energy sector. National preparations and adaptations will shape geopolitical competition and the balance of power in the region.

Sweden at a Strategic Crossroads

Integrated Deterrence focuses on the combining of US national military and non-military tools for deterrence purposes as well as the incorporation of allied and partner capabilities, experience, and expertise at all stages of defense planning. Developing and implementing Integrated Deterrence can be done in Europe by strengthening the NATO alliance and, also, by working through regional corner-

[19] Oscar Almén and Christopher Weidacher Hsiung, "China's Economic Influence in the Arctic Region: The Nordic and Russian Cases," RAND – FOI Report, (Stockholm, Sweden: Swedish Defence Research Agency [FOI], June 2022), https://www.foi.se/.

[20] Magnus Nordenman, "China and Russia's Joint Sea 2017 Baltic Naval Exercise Highlight a New Normal in Europe," *USNI News*, July 5, 2017, https://news.usni.org/.

[21] Rush Doshi, Alexis Dale-Huang and Gaoqi Zhang, *Northern Expedition: China's Arctic Activities and Ambitions* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, April 2021), https://www.brookings.edu/.

[22] Chelsea Harvey, "The Arctic is Warming Four Times Faster Than the Rest of the Planet," *Scientific American*, August 12, 2022, https://www.scientificamerican.com/.

[23] Heather A. Conley and Cyrus Newlin, "Climate Change Will Reshape Russia," Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS), January 13, 2021, https://www.csis.org/.

[24] See Section 32 of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Brussels Summit Communique, Issued by the Heads of State and Government Participating in the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Brussels 14 June 2021, https://www.nato.int/.

stone states like Sweden. Deterrence success will depend on these states' ability to collectively demonstrate both the will and the capacity to either punish an adversary for its aggression or deny that adversary any gains from aggression. Sweden can make a meaningful contribution to Integrated Deterrence, including as a cornerstone state, provided it can demonstrate leadership alongside a willingness and ability to respond to Russia's aggression across the spectrum of conflict and across domains while in the process of joining NATO.

Integrating strategies with other regional Allies and NATO will require the institutionalization of a new Swedish mindset over the longer-term. Assuming that Sweden joins NATO sometime during 2023 and most likely after Finland, Sweden will have to continue to overhaul its defense and security policy priorities and responsibilities as well as its national identity and strategic mindset.[25] Sweden has identified as a non-aligned state for nearly 200 years, and Sweden has long considered this non-aligned status to be a "morally and ideologically superior" position compared with NATO membership.[26] As a result of this longstanding political tradition, the Swedish national mindset evolved to focus on unilateral national defense and efforts to avoid direct involvement in East-West conflicts. This led Sweden to build a network of cooperative defense arrangements with neighboring Finland, trilateral information sharing and training agreements with others, multilateral formats such as the Nordic Defense Cooperation or NORDEFCO, and NATO partnership.

Sweden's arrangements, however, have all been non-binding, and they required no substantive changes to Swedish doctrine or national security decision-making. Sweden would not commit to participating in the defense of Europe writ large, other than through non-binding or ambiguous statements such as, from then--Foreign Minister Carl Bildt in 2014, "Sweden will not remain passive if another EU member state or Nordic country suffers a disaster or an attack."[27] Sweden has professed commitments to international law and the existing international order, though, and participated in multinational peacekeeping and stability operations as part of a UN or EU operation. Despite Sweden's non-aligned, unilateral defense focus, it has not fought close to its territory since World War I, and then only to protect Finland's Åland Island from Soviet occupation. Swedish thinking has pre-

[25] At the time of writing, however, neither Sweden nor Finland has acceded to NATO. Ratification is still outstanding from Hungary and Turkey.

[26] Mike Winnerstig, "From Isolationist Neutrality to Allied Solidarity: The Swedish Road to NATO Membership," International Centre for Defence and Security, September 26, 2022, https://icds.ee/en/.

[27] Carl Bildt, "Presentation to the Riksdag on Foreign Affairs," Stockholm, February 19, 2014; David Auerswald, "The High North," in R.D. Hooker, Jr., (ed.) *Charting a Course: Strategic Choices for a New Administration*, (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, December, 2016), https://ndupress.ndu.edu/.

dominantly focused on coordinating with Finland and other partners when its interests aligned, and only on an ad hoc rather than on a permanent basis.

During field research, our Swedish interlocutors emphasized how important this historical political and cultural predilection remains in Swedish political narratives.[28] Russia's full-scale invasion on February 24, 2022, combined with its heinous attacks on civilians, such as in Bucha, proved a turning point in Swedish and Finnish public opinion, leading both to seek stronger deterrence in NATO. For Sweden to emerge as a full ally, much less as a regional anchor state for US Integrated Deterrence, Sweden will have to sustain a new national defense narrative over the longer-term in Swedish government documents as well as in the public consciousness. This new thinking will have to extend beyond the defense of Sweden's territory. It will have to extend to the whole alliance, and possibly to the Indo-Pacific, and it must persist after Russia's war in Ukraine ends.[29] This will not be easy for Swedish defense forces, despite its Chief of Joint Operations Lt. Gen Michael Claesson's claim that joining NATO will be "a small step for the [Swedish] military, but a giant leap for the political system."[30]

Swedish officials will coordinate much more closely with Allies on its core defense policy, subjecting themselves to alliance scrutiny and abiding by NATO decisions. Such openness to non-Swedish perspectives may be difficult for the establishment to accept. Consider that Sweden has long worried about threats from the Baltic Sea, particularly from the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad, against Gotland Island and Sweden's southeast coast. In the words of several Nordic interlocutors, Sweden looks to the southeast when it makes security plans. That will have to change once it becomes a member of NATO. Norway is threatened from the northern and western maritime regions. Finland closely monitors its long eastern border with Russia. Denmark looks west toward the North Atlantic and Greenland and east toward the Baltic Sea. Sweden will have to merge its concerns with those of its future Allies, requiring a larger aperture in its defense planning. The same, of course, holds true for other Nordic states, whose planning will also adapt once Sweden and Finland join NATO.

Regional mindsets are already beginning to change, though more work remains to be done. During field research, Swedish officials and other interlocutors argued

[28] Neither Russia's war in Georgia in 2008 nor its illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 upended Sweden's non-aligned status or sparked major increases in Sweden's defense spending. That said, Sweden and Finland became Enhanced Opportunities Partners at NATO's 2014 Wales Summit.

[29] Astri Edvardsen, "Sweden Prepares for a Massive Shift Within Security and Defense," *High North News*, December 20, 2022, https://www.highnorthnews.com/.

[30] Quoted in Jacqueline Feldscher, "NATO Membership for Sweden would be 'A Small Step for the Military, but a Giant Leap for the Political System," *Defense One*, April 22, 2022, https://www.defenseone.com/.

Sweden was "shocked" out of its long-standing tradition after Russia's 2022 reinvasion of Ukraine for two reasons. The first had to do with changing public opinion after Russia's violation of international law and norms and its brutality toward Ukraine and its people. From 2014 through Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022, public support for NATO membership fluctuated in the mid to low thirties. Televised images of destroyed cities and deliberate attacks on Ukrainian civilians horrified Swedes as much as they did others in the West. By May 2022, when Sweden signaled its desire to join NATO, public support for membership reached the high fifties, growing to the mid-seventies by summer's end.[31] Secondly, Finland forced Sweden's hand, showing political leadership in committing to NATO membership despite, or perhaps because of, its 833-mile-long border with Russia. Sweden could not remain non-aligned without imperiling itself and Finland.

This is not to say attitudes toward NATO membership were stagnant within Sweden's defense community before the 2022 events in Ukraine.[32] At the military level, Sweden has participated in numerous NATO exercises, missions, and operations since the 1990s. At the political level, support for membership was less widespread, though politicians set in motion the prerequisites for NATO membership as early as 1994 when Sweden became a NATO Partnership for Peace member. Those preparations accelerated after Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014. Sweden's 2019 Defense Commission Report, for example, which is prepared by defense professionals, the government, and all parties in parliament, laid the groundwork for closer cooperation with NATO. Among other things, it recommended expanding the Swedish army, creating Arctic ranger battalions, preparing to operate in Finland's territory, upgrading air defenses and vehicles, acquiring new submarines, and improving anti-submarine capabilities.[33] Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine accelerated these trends and led the military to give serious thought to multinational forces operating within a common battlespace and under a unified command.

Sweden's center-right government sees Sweden at the center of a wider geostrategic space, marking a departure from its historic focus on the Baltic Sea. That Swedish mindset is already evident in the Swedish Armed Forces' November 2022

[31] Statista Research Department, "Survey on Perception of NATO Membership in Sweden 2014-2022," 19 December 2022, https://www.statista.com/; RJ Reinhart, "Most Finns, Swedes Approve of NATO's Leadership," Gallup, 16 September 2022, https://news.gallup.com/.

[32] For a review, see Stefan Lundqvist, "A Convincing Finnish Move: Implications for State Identity of Persuading Sweden to Jointly Bid for NATO Membership," *Studia Europejskie - Studies in European Affairs*, 4 (2022), 73-110.

[33] David Auerswald, "All Security is Local: Arctic Defense Policies and Domain Awareness," (Washington, DC: Atlantic Council, March 2022), https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/.

military assessment.[34] The government has also committed to increasing Sweden's defense spending to reach NATO's current target (two percent of GDP) by 2026, as noted above, and Sweden is projected to spend the most on defense among the Nordic states in real terms by 2030.[35] In 2023, its defense budget will grow by approximately $800 million, with which the government plans to improve infrastructure, expand military personnel, and focus on its areas of defense specialization in the air, maritime, and ISR domains.[36] Planned investments include additional squadrons of Gripen-Es (JAS-39E), an additional third-generation submarine, additional air-defense systems, and a plan to establish one or two new Army brigades.[37] These will be especially important in dealing with a future Russia, particularly but not exclusively if Russia succeeds in Ukraine. They could also be important in deterring predatory Chinese activities, if they take on a larger role, in the European Arctic.

The Swedish government will also use the injection of new funding to fill what it has identified as important gaps in cyber capabilities and to address more complex issues such as in the context of data privacy (discussed below). The Swedish government also has plans to strengthen signals intelligence, data-sharing with Allies, and general domain awareness. These non-kinetic preparations will be important tools for bolstering Swedish and wider regional resilience. They can also help address the threats associated with a militarily weakened Russia, uncertainty around Russia's future, or an aggressive China that might attempt to fill voids left by Russia. There is every expectation that Sweden's plans will be further developed by the time of its next multiparty Defense Commission.[38]

Sweden will need to adapt its strategic mindset to address broader challenges as well. First, it will have to define its contribution to NATO's nuclear mission. As Onderco and Portela argue, as a NATO ally, it can no longer build bridges between the "adepts of nuclear deterrence and pro-disarmament abolitionists" in the EU.[39] NATO is a nuclear alliance based on the capabilities of the US, UK, and France, and on the willingness of other Allies to accept the transshipment or stationing of nuclear weapons on their soil. Swedish participation will require a psychological shift. Since the 1968 Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

[34] Anna Wieslander, Eric Adamson, Jesper Lehto, "Securing Northern Europe Within NATO: Sweden and Finland as New Allies," (Washington, DC: Atlantic Council, January 2023), https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/.

[35] "Scandinavian Defense Doubling Spending," Aviation Week, March 22, 2022, https://aviationweek.com/.

[36] "Sweden's Chief of Defense Wants to Strengthen Military Presence in Northern Sweden," High North News, November 3, 2022, https://www.highnorthnews.com/.

[37] Research discussion with defense industry experts, Stockholm, Sweden (September 28, 2022).

[38] Research discussion with Swedish officials, Stockholm, Sweden (September 2022).

[39] Michal Onderco, Clara Portela, "NATO's Nordic Enlargement and Nuclear Disarmament: The End of Bridge Building," *War on the Rocks*, February 20, 2023, https://warontherocks.com/.

and Sweden's abandonment of its own program in 1972, Sweden promoted nuclear disarmament internationally. To become a credible ally, it will have to contribute to nuclear sharing arrangements, and that will depend on its ability to manage a national debate and public opinion. Deterrence is often linked with weapons, and Swedish officials noted that a close translation for Integrated Deterrence in Swedish, "avskräckning," is commonly associated with terror and is usually avoided in national debates. Moreover, Sweden's defense debate lacks a tradition of discussing concepts such as "denial," "punishment," "extended," "credible signals," etc. Sweden will also be expected to contribute to NATO's 360-Degree approach, including by adopting a more prominent international role in the alliance beyond northern Europe.[40] The Allies adopted the 360-Degree Approach at their 2016 Warsaw Summit. It was initially intended to reconcile competing pressures between the Bucharest 9 or the Allies more focused on Russia, and those Allies more focused on instability in the south.[41] Since then, the concept has evolved in NATO debates to include consideration of other threats, including across and in new domains. As a partner state, Sweden contributed to NATO missions and operations when its national interests overlapped, but as a NATO ally it will be expected to respond to a broader array of contingencies. It could be expected to provide a presence in the Black Sea, for example, or by defending Turkey or Estonia in the event of a crisis. This requires a shift in Sweden's planning, which Swedish officials acknowledge. They conveyed a commitment to all aspects of NATO membership.

Additionally, Sweden will be expected to continue increasing defense spending in the years to come to bolster deterrence. Sweden's current government has already committed to accelerating Sweden's plans to reach NATO's spending target of two percent of GDP on defense from 2028 to 2026. Success will require political consistency and cross-party collaboration, both of which are long-established traditions when it comes to Swedish foreign and security policy. The cross-party composition of Swedish Defense Commissions is a tangible sign that Sweden prioritizes long-term political buy-in from across the political spectrum when it comes to defense policy. One challenge that remains, however, is for Sweden to acknowledge that its defense rearmament needs will likely require reaching beyond

[40] NATO, Statement by NATO Defense Ministers, (June 25, 2015), https://www.nato.int/, quoted in Christelle Calmels, "NATO's 360-Degree Approach to Security: Alliance Cohesion and Adaptation After the Crimean Crisis," *European Security*, (July 22, 2020).

[41] Calmels, "NATO's 360-Degree Approach to Security," 416-435.

the Swedish industrial base to outside vendors, something that Sweden has been reluctant to do in the past for major acquisition programs.[42]

Finally, Sweden will have to staff the additional military and civilian positions required for NATO membership and for a larger defense force, and this could be difficult. From a US perspective, Allies need to have clear visibility over and a voice in shaping NATO priorities, threat perceptions, and implementation plans if they are to coordinate actions across domains, another foundational principle of Integrated Deterrence. Sweden will most likely need to dramatically increase its integration with US planning cells, its contingents in the various NATO commands and headquarters, and its alliance-oriented positions in the Defense and Foreign Ministries in Stockholm. Further, those filling these new billets ought not to be conscripts. Sweden and NATO would both benefit significantly from Swedish expertise on US, NATO, multilateral, and multidomain operations. Military service ought to be made more attractive, too, to expand a professional military force, a difficult task for a highly educated and affluent country.

Evolving Sub-threshold Challenges

Integrated deterrence is not limited to addressing conventional military attacks. The concept also aspires to mitigate threats of adversary aggression across domains and across the spectrum of escalation, including below the threshold of armed conflict. Sweden faces significant sub-threshold threats and challenges in the near-term while its application to NATO is still pending ratification by two Allies and while Russia's forces are occupied in Ukraine.[43] These include cyberattacks, information operations to divide public opinion and degrade alliance unity, special operations and hybrid warfare targeting critical infrastructure, and the manipulation of economic interdependencies. Over the longer term, Sweden must consider the threat from an evolving Chinese presence in the region or the possibility of a weaker, more vulnerable, or more unstable Russia.

Building capacity and alliance collaboration to address these threats will be important for Sweden in the near-term given uncertainty about its status in NATO in early 2023. It involves strategic and conceptual challenges that differ in nature from efforts to deter more overt armed attack. This aggression takes

[42] Interviews and comments from Swedish officials, Stockholm (September 2022) and Washington (March 2023). See also Zamone Perez, "Acquisition Revamp Needed to Meet Demand Surges, Defense Industry Says," *Defense News*, 12 October 2022, https://www.defensenews.com/.

[43] Nicholas Lokker, Jim Townsend, Heli Hautala, and Andrea-Kendall-Taylor, "How Finnish and Swedish NATO Accession Could Shape the Future Russian Threat: A Report from the Transatlantic Forum on Russia," (Center for a New American Security, January 2023), https://www.cnas.org/.

place below thresholds in international law or known adversary red lines, limiting legal or politically viable options for response. Covert aggression also greatly slows, and sheds doubt on timely attribution, making punishment harder to conduct on a meaningful timeline, and harder to justify publicly. While deterrence-by-denial is widely regarded as preferable, its applicability to certain below-threshold threats where defense is challenging and aggression common, is widely debated. US debates use other concepts, such as "persistent engagement," "defend forward," and "layered deterrence" in the cyber domain, and wrestle with the complexity of the threats, even while incorporating them into the Integrated Deterrence framework.[44]

Similarly, building resilience to ongoing adversary gray zone or informational aggression is sometimes as important as efforts to change adversary decision calculus to deter or compel cessation of aggression. Adversaries take advantage of political and societal divisions. They can highlight wedge issues to exacerbate divisions, undermine democratic processes, and weaken solidarity or cohesion. In Sweden, interaction with fringe political factions, media outlets, and social media ecosystems fit with known patterns of Russian influence operations. Our interlocutors suggested multiple possible Russian campaigns in Sweden since the spring of 2022. One mentioned the Swedish outlet Nya Dagblad, known for connections to anti-vaccination conspiracies and the Swedish far right, which published an article titled "Shocking document: How the US planned the war and energy crisis in Europe." It supposedly leaked a RAND report from January 2022 that described alleged plans for the US to force Russia to invade Ukraine, ultimately benefiting the US economy and strategic position at the expense of its European Allies. Russia's embassy in Sweden posted the article on Twitter, and the Russian-backed RT media outlets reported it; the leaked report was denied immediately by RAND and found to be fraudulent.[45]

Russia also engages in domestic Swedish politics to pursue its interests. More subtle indications of possible Russian influence operations involve Sweden's strategic transition and emerging developments in internal political allegiances and tensions. This is most prevalent on the far right and on the far left of the Swedish

[44] US Cyber Command, "Achieve and Maintain Cyberspace Superiority: Command Vision for US Cyber Command," March 23, 2018, available at: https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/; US Department of Defense, "Department of Defense Cyber Strategy 2018: Summary," September, 2018, available at: https://media.defense.gov/; US Cyberspace Solarium Commission, Cyberspace Solarium Commission Report, March 2020, available at: https://www.solarium.gov/; Michael P. Fischerkeller, Emily O. Goldman, Richard J. Harknett, *Cyber Persistence Theory: Redefining National Security in Cyberspace*, (New York: Oxford University, 2022).

[45] "Double Check: Nya Dagbladet Publishes Fake RAND Document About Ukraine," Logically.ai, September 22, 2022, available at: https://www.logically.ai/.

political spectrum. Since the start of Russia's war in Ukraine, new divisions have emerged within Sweden's political right, especially within the Sweden Democrats, with some on the right taking strikingly pro-Russia positions.[46] There is also some indication of possible Russian influence operations targeting left-leaning, Swedish activists. This is potentially the case in relation to Turkish demands for the extradition of Kurdish immigrants as part of the negotiations around Sweden's accession to NATO. In protests in front of the Turkish embassy and Swedish parliament in September 2022, protesters called for solidarity with Kurdistan and, in some cases, the PKK. Earlier research on Russian anti-NATO influence operations had indicated the potential vulnerability of far-left peace activists and pro-Kurdish networks for targeted manipulation.[47]

Potential adversaries can also target political will or weaken capacity to resist aggression by attacking critical infrastructure. Despite setbacks in Ukraine, Russia retains potent naval and special operations capabilities in the Nordic and Baltic regions. The Nord Stream pipeline's sabotage is illustrative of the weaponization of infrastructure for political objectives and demonstrates the challenges in reaching clear attribution around covert, below-threshold incidents. Because the pipeline passed through Nordic Exclusive Economic Zones rather than territorial waters, foreign ships could not legally be prevented from operating in proximity to the pipelines before, or from "inspecting" the damage after, the incident.[48] The pipeline incident resembles other difficult-to-attribute undersea incidents involving Norwegian data cables and sensor networks. In January 2022, one of two optical cables connecting the Svalbard Satellite Station (SvalSat) to mainland Norway was severed by apparent human activity, degrading critical downlink and uplink data flows.[49] In April 2021, cables in the Lofoten-Vesterålen (LoVe) Ocean Observatory undersea sensor network were cut. The seafloor sensors collect data

[46] Research discussion with investigative journalist, Stockholm, Sweden (September 30, 2022). Note that others on the political right backed away from supporting Russia as the war unfolded.

[47] Kate Starbird, "Information Operations and Online Activism Within NATO Discourse," in *Three Tweets to Midnight: Effects of the Global Information on the Risk of Nuclear Conflict*, Harold Trinkunas, Herbert Lin, and Benjamin Loehrke eds. (2020), www.hoover.org/.

[48] Kyle Mizokami, "'Several Hundred Kilos' of Explosives Caused Nord Stream Gas Pipeline Leaks. Is Russia to Blame?," *Popular Mechanics*, updated October 19, 2022, https://www.aol.com/.

[49] Svalbard's latitude permits low earth orbit satellites to readily download data from every orbit, and the SvalSat station is one of only two in the world which can communicate with satellites in polar orbits. Both SvalSat and the connecting cables were planned by the Norwegian Space Centre (NSC) in consultation with NASA, EUMETSAT, and the European Space Agency, before they began operations in 1997 and 2002 respectively.

for scientific research and intelligence, including submarine movements off Norway's coast.[50]

The northern European regional economies are another site of potential subthreshold threats and challenges. Sweden is among the largest of the regional economies. It operates a mostly cashless economy, and 98 percent of the population has internet access. This renders it particularly vulnerable to malicious cyber activities. Sweden has been subject to a growing level of costly criminal cyberattacks recently, including ransomware, which led the US International Trade Administration to assess Sweden as "one of the most exposed countries both by the number of attacks and how much they cost the companies."[51] Moreover, China has expanded its economic footprint across the European Arctic, including in Sweden's High North, in pursuit of scientific research and its economic interests. A recent RAND-FOI study has begun to inventory China's investments in the European Arctic and in the Russian Arctic in an effort to spark debate over its implications for security; much more work remains to be done to understand and respond to the defense and security implications of these investments.[52]

Despite vulnerabilities, Sweden has managed to withstand these below-threshold campaigns and efforts to divide Swedish public opinion on the question of NATO membership. Swedish officials noted that they expected and had prepared for a much more concerted effort on the part of Russia to derail their NATO application. Though Moscow messaged veiled threats to Sweden (and Finland), its rhetoric subsided or pivoted as public support for NATO accession swelled, perhaps a tacit acknowledgment that Russia had failed to stop the process.[53] Officials also argued that Sweden is rapidly increasing its awareness and understanding of China's presence and the related risks. Sweden's state-owned space company, for example, halted all cooperation with China in late 2020.[54] There is also growing awareness of China's attempts to leverage its regional economic footprint for its

[50] Malte Humpert, "Nord Stream Pipeline Sabotage Mirrors Svalbard Cable Incident," *High North News*, September 29, 2022, www.highnorthnews.com/; Atle Staalesen, "'Human activity' behind Svalbard cable disruption," The Barents Observer, February 11, 2022, thebarentsobserver.com/.

[51] US International Trade Administration, "Sweden - Country Commercial Guide," July 25, 2022, http://www.trade.gov/.

[52] Oscar Almén and Christopher Weidacher Hsiung, "China's Economic Influence in the Arctic Region: The Nordic and Russian Cases," RAND – FOI Report, (Stockholm, Sweden: Swedish Defence Research Agency [FOI], June 2022), https://www.foi.se/.

[53] Research discussion with Swedish official, Washington, DC, (September 23, 2022).

[54] Keegan Elmer, "Swedish Defense Agency Warns Satellite Station Could Be Serving Chinese Military," *South China Morning Post*, 14 January 2019, https://www.scmp.com/; Jonathan Barrett and Johan Ahlander, "Swedish Space Company Halts New Business Helping China Operate Satellites," Reuters, 21 September 2020, https://www.reuters.com/.

own purposes.[55] Aggressive Chinese policies brought marked changes in Swedish public opinion and are shaping the government's reassessment of China's regional intentions.[56] Swedish officials attribute Sweden's resilience to social solidarity, civic trust, and societal awareness of potential Russian and Chinese narratives.[57]

A Locus for Integrated Deterrence?

Strengthening cooperation with and among Allies and partners is an important component of the US concept of Integrated Deterrence. Once Sweden and Finland both join the alliance as full members, Sweden will sit at the geographical center of NATO's northern and northeast flank. Sweden's territory will become an obvious military focal point for allied logistics and military reinforcements should a crisis emerge along the alliance's borders with Russia in Norway, Finland, or the Baltic states. Sweden is well positioned to lead air force coordination across the entire region, and it can also contribute valuable maritime and undersea capabilities beyond the Baltic Sea. Sweden could also help bolster cyber-defense coordination and rationalize existing formats for regional defense cooperation. Broadly, Swedish leadership would strengthen NATO's forward defense and deterrence objectives while helping implement Integrated Deterrence.[58]

Russia's military setbacks in Ukraine offer a window of opportunity for NATO to further strengthen deterrence in the northeast. NATO moved quickly after Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 to reassure the Baltic states and Poland, including through the deployment of four new battlegroups to the region, but allied plans to reinforce those states have remained somewhat limited by Sweden's and Finland's non-aligned or NATO partner status and by other European mobility and sustainment challenges. Once both Sweden and Finland join NATO, Sweden provides a promising new pathway to reinforce Norway, Finland, or the

[55] Kerker Hellstron, Oscar Almén and Johan Englund, "Chinese Corporate Acquisitions in Sweden," FOI Report 7466 (Stockholm, Sweden: Swedish Defence Research Agency, February 2021), https://www.foi.se/; Oscar Almén and Christopher Weidacher Hsiung, "China's Economic Influence in the Arctic Region: The Nordic and Russian Cases," RAND – FOI Report, (Stockholm, Sweden: Swedish Defence Research Agency [FOI], June 2022), https://www.foi.se/; Bohman and Frida Lindberg, "Dependence in Europe's Relations with China: Weighing Perceptions and Reality," Swedish National China Centre Report, 26 April, 2022, https://kinacentrum.se/.

[56] Laura Silver, Christine Huang, and Laura Clancy, "Negative Views of China Tied to Critical Views of Its Policies on Human Rights," Pew Research Center, June 29, 2022, https://www.pewresearch.org/; Bethany-Allen Ebrahimian, "China's Bullying has ruined its relationship with Sweden," Axios, April 29, 2020, https://www.axios.com/. "How Sweden Copes with Chinese Bullying," *The Economist*, 20 February 2020, https://www.economist.com/.

[57] Research discussions with Swedish officials, Stockholm, Sweden, (September 25, 2022).

[58] NATO 2022 Strategic Concept, Madrid Summit, June 29, 2022, https://www.nato.int/.

Baltic states during a conflict. Moreover, Sweden's planned increases in defense spending can help make NATO's expanded rapid reaction force more credible through investments in infrastructure and mobility. Anna Weislander, Eric Adamson, and Jesper Lehto argue that enhancing allied cooperation in air and missile defense; air dominance; undersea dominance; intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR); and readiness will all strengthen deterrence.[59] Sweden is well positioned to lead much of that effort.

Geographically, Sweden offers NATO strategic depth by linking the European Arctic to the Baltic Sea region. Its territory is centrally located for logistics and supply routes, making its roads, rail networks, ports, and airfields ideal hubs for reinforcement or resupply. The western port of Gothenburg is a natural debarkation point for transatlantic resupply, and the port of Visby and the airfields on Gotland Island are critical regional transit hubs for allied reinforcement into the Baltic Sea region. They create alternative supply routes to the Baltic States and relieve pressure on the narrow Suwalki Gap, which connects Lithuania and Poland by land between Kaliningrad and Belarus. Moreover, Sweden's northern territory links Norway's remote Finnmark to Lapland in northern Finland. Further, Sweden will be a critical logistical link in receiving and staging transatlantic reinforcements from Norway's Ofoten and Trondheim regions. It was no surprise, then, Swedish Supreme Commander Micael Byden acknowledged "demand [on Sweden] has increased." Sweden must invest in infrastructure and grow its personnel to deliver on these new responsibilities.[60] A host-nation support role will require institutionalizing a new strategic mindset as a NATO member state.

Sweden will have an important role to play in coordinating allied military efforts, especially regarding air power. Sweden has numerous airfields that sit beyond Russian artillery range, and it has the ability to convert multiple designated highways into runways. It is ideally positioned to lead modern distributed operations by both Swedish and Finnish aircraft. Sweden's Gripen aircraft are interoperable with the F-35s flown by other regional NATO Allies. Combined, this should give the Nordic states a collective air force of approximately 200 advanced fighter

[59] Anna Wieslander, Eric Adamson, Jesper Lehto, "How Allied Sweden and Finland can Secure Northern Europe," Issue Brief, Atlantic Council, January 6, 2023, https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/. See also Ann-Sofie Dahl with Pauli Järvenpää, "Sweden, Finland and NATO: Security Partners and Security Producers," in *Northern Security and Global Politics: Nordic-Baltic Strategic Influence in a Post-Unipolar World*, edited by Ann-Sofie Dahl and Pauli Jarvenpaa, Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2013, 124-136, 129.

[60] "Sweden Likely has to Spend More Than 2% on Defence, Top Commander Says – Swedish Radio," Reuters, December 2, 2022, https://www.reuters.com/.

aircraft (JAS-39Es and F-35s) by 2030.[61] Swedish government interlocutors noted in our discussions that they are discussing deeper cooperation with the Finnish, Norwegian, and Danish air forces on multinational planning, data sharing, and air exercises, with the possibility of Sweden leading the creation of a joint air operations center or hosting large-scale exercises such as Arctic Challenge and Vigilant Knife.[62] These efforts will strengthen interoperability and could be incorporated into NATO planning.[63]

Sweden could also play a role in strengthening the integration of maritime and undersea capabilities in the Baltic Sea and beyond. Sweden's navy is the smallest of its services but, as John Deni argues, it operates some of the "most advanced equipment in the world." Deni points to the Gotland diesel-electric submarine, which extended undersea endurance from days to weeks.[64] Sweden's navy, like Finland's, is still structured and organized to address contingencies in the Baltic Sea region, given Sweden's coastline and strategic islands, and its near-term contributions include "small combatants, amphibious boats, and forthcoming submarines and signals intelligence ships."[65] Its maritime and undersea capabilities are supported by robust industry and intelligence, however, and help deter subthreshold threats to undersea energy and communication links or from adversary special forces infiltration of islands through the Baltic Sea.[66] Regional integration and a warming climate might require Sweden to deploy maritime assets, together with Norway, for example, to improve allied situational awareness in the Norwegian and Barents Seas.

Sweden's role in Integrated Deterrence could also involve forward thinking about new domains, emerging technologies, and future warfare. In January 2022, Sweden created a new Agency for Psychological Defense to address information

[61] Karlis Neretnieks, "Burden Sharing and Specialization After Sweden and Finland's NATO Accession," Frivärld, September 2022, https://frivarld.se/.

[62] Research discussion with Swedish government official, Stockholm, Sweden, (September 28, 2022); Wieslander et al, "How Allied Sweden and Finland can Secure Northern Europe"; Astri Edvardsen, "US Department of Defense Establishes Arctic Strategy Unit," *High North News,* October 4, 2022, https://www.highnorthnews.com.

[63] Research discussion with officials at the Ministry of Defense, Stockholm Sweden, (September 28, 2022).

[64] John Deni, "Sweden and Finland are on their way to NATO membership: Here's what needs to Happen Next," Atlantic Council Issue Brief, (August 22, 2022), https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/.

[65] Sebastian Bruns, "The Swedish Navy in NATO: Opportunities and Challenges," CIMSEC, January 11, 2023, https://cimsec.org/.

[66] Håkon Lunde Saxi, Bengt Sundelius, Brett Swaney, "Baltics Left of Bang: Nordic Total Defense and Implications for the Baltic Sea Region," INSS Strategic Forum 304, (Washington, DC: NDU Press, January 2020), https://ndupress.ndu.edu/.

and psychological operations.[67] Moreover, Sweden's December 2020 Total Defense Bill established a new military cyber defense training facility and increased exercises to strengthen Sweden's military cyber capabilities. It also established a National Cybersecurity Center (NCSC) in September 2021[68] to enhance data sharing and cooperation among the government, private sector, and international partners.[69] In January 2022, the Swedish Ministry of Defense announced plans to stand up two new cyber units ("ITF" and "2ITF") to protect the armed forces' networks and, according to the MoD, "increase the Armed Forces' robustness and capacity for defensive and offensive cyber operations."[70] Both units should be fully staffed by 2027, and they will complement the existing Cyber Defence Unit, which defends IT and command and control infrastructure. Though there is some frustration with NCSC planning,[71] investments in national cybersecurity and international partnerships are important components of Integrated Deterrence.

Deterring and addressing sub-threshold challenges in the region requires enhanced cooperation between the government and the private sector and more effective public-private partnerships, especially in cyber-security. There are still multiple impediments to improved transatlantic communications, cloud data storage, and data sharing, largely because of Nordic perceptions that the US infringes on data privacy. Senior industry representatives in Stockholm noted that when it comes to developing more interoperable cloud capabilities across the defense communities of Sweden and its regional Allies, for example, both government and industry officials prefer joint European projects over alliance projects, and not only because of Sweden's and Finland's EU membership and past commitments to non-alignment.[72] The transatlantic debate over data privacy has cast

[67] Adela Suliman, "Sweden Sets Up Psychological Defense Agency to Fight Fake News, Foreign Interference," The Washington Post, January 6, 2022, https://www.washingtonpost.com/.

[68] This center is led by the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (critical infrastructure protection), Swedish National Defense Radio Establishment (signals intelligence), Swedish Armed Forces, and Swedish Security Service, and it is supported by several other agencies, including the Swedish Post and Telecom Agency. Full operational capability was not expected until 2023, see "New National Cyber Security Center to be Established in Sweden," Daily Scandinavian, April 9, 2021, www.dailyscandinavian.com/.

[69] In March of 2022, the country's cyber security action plan (the Swedish Comprehensive Information and Cyber Security Action Plan 2019–22) was updated, detailing new activities for the NCSC, including coordination around cyber incident management, development of a national platform for private-public collaboration, and cyber domain threat analysis. See Olivia Savage, "Sweden updates its Cyber Security Action Plan," Janes, March 8, 2022, www.janes.com/.

[70] Eyal Boguslavsky, "Swedish army sets up new cyber units," Cybertech Insider, January 20, 2022, <www.cybertech-insider.com/post/swedish-army-sets-up-new-cyber-units>; The Shephard News Team, "Sweden Steps Up Cyber Efforts," Shephard Media, January 19, 2022, www.shephardmedia.com/.

[71] Research discussion, Stockholm, Sweden, (September 30, 2022).

[72] Research discussion with defense industry officials, Stockholm Sweden, (September 28, 2022).

a long shadow in the Nordic region, and it will take time to strengthen these efforts in an alliance format that includes the United States.

The above discussion begs the question: What are the proper venues for coordinating allied deterrence efforts in various domains? Until now, the Nordic states have relied heavily on their bilateral relationships with the United States for deterrence purposes, and they have used multiple, nonbinding, regional formats to enhance multinational cooperation among themselves and with non-aligned Sweden and Finland. The Nordic forum known as the Nordic Defense Cooperation (NORDEFCO), for example, convened meetings and conducted regular joint exercises, but it was never considered a serious means to pool resources or practice joint procurement. Other collaboration formats include the German-led Framework Nations concept, the NATO Air Defense Initiative,[73] the UK-led Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF),[74] and a series of bilateral and trilateral agreements in the region and among Nordic Allies for intelligence sharing and operations planning. One Swedish official described these formats as "ersatz NATO" or "surrogates," suggesting that they could become redundant after Sweden and Finland join NATO.

NATO's Nordic enlargement, provided it includes Sweden and Finland, will raise questions about the formats and opportunities to rationalize the formats in a NATO context. NATO is already preparing its regional plans, but enlargement could require adapting NATO's command structure and plans as well as adding new headquarters in ways that add deterrence value and avoid duplication of efforts. This could include knitting together formats to enhance cooperation or dispensing with those that become duplicative or no longer serve their purpose in a NATO context. Sweden currently holds the EU Presidency, and it is focused on bolstering defense and deterrence, sustaining European support for Ukraine, and promoting democratic values and resilience through closer NATO-EU cooperation.[75] As Frank Kramer argues, additional emphasis is needed on leveraging the EU's tools to strengthen military mobility in Europe, sustainment, and the pro-

[73] "Denmark, Sweden Join German-led NATO Air Defense Initiative," Aviation Week, February 15, 2023, https://aviationweek.com/.

[74] Sean Monaghan, "The Joint Expeditionary Force: Toward a Stronger and More Capable European Defense?" CSIS commentary, (October 12, 2021), https://www.csis.org/.

[75] Katherine Walla, "The New Swedish Government's Agenda for its EU Presidency: Forging Unity on Ukraine, Defense, and Trade," The Atlantic Council, December 7, 20222, https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/; See also, "A Conversation with Sweden's Minister of Foreign Affairs Tobias BillstrÖm, The Atlantic Council, December 7, 2022, https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/.

tection of critical infrastructure.[76] Sweden will chair NORDEFCO next year, and is expected to pursue an agenda focused on further hardening the northeast flank while streamlining NATO-EU cooperation.[77]

Conclusion

Students of deterrence understand that deterrence success depends on clear, credible signals of intent from those practicing deterrence, and an adversary's willingness and ability to abstain from aggression.[78] Putting aside an adversary's motivations, deterrence is more likely to succeed when the deterring state or states demonstrate that they can implement their promised actions and they are willing to do so even at a significant domestic and international cost to themselves.[79] In the NATO context, solidarity and political cohesion are an important part of defense and deterrence, alongside investments and capabilities. Deterrence-by-punishment strategies threaten retaliation on the adversary should it engage in aggression while Deterrence-by-denial aims to deny an adversary gains from aggression.

Integrated Deterrence, as described in the 2022 US National Defense Strategy, attempts to balance various forms of deterrence with an emphasis on deterrence-by-denial. It seeks to deny an adversary gains from aggression of any sort, in any domain, or across the spectrum of warfare, and it does so through the integration of US military and non-military tools and, importantly, through increasing collaboration and contributions from the United States' robust network of Allies and partners. Analysts are still debating the importance and implications of this concept for US defense policy, while the Biden administration and its Allies and partners are working toward implementation. Sweden's regional leadership could advance cooperation in NATO's northern and northeast front provide Sweden can be brought into NATO and provided it can continue to adapt its mindset and institutions to those of full NATO member. If Sweden is to play a cornerstone role in Integrated Deterrence in NATO's north, it must foster reginal cooperation and integration within a larger NATO context and redefine its international role.[80]

[76] Franklin Kramer, "Sweden has a Chance to Transform European Security – Even Before it Officially Joins NATO," Atlantic Council, January 30, 2023, https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/.

[77] Research discussion with officials at the Ministry of Defense, Stockholm Sweden, (September 28, 2022).

[78] Robert Jervis, Richard Ned LeBow and Janice Gross Stein, *Psychology and Deterrence,* Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985; Richard Ned Lebow and Janice Gross Stein, "When Does Deterrence Succeed and How Do We Know?" Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security, 1990.

[79] James Fearon, "Domestic Political Audiences and the Escalation of International Disputes," *American Political Science Review* 88, no. 3 (Sept 1994), 577-592.

[80] Wieslander et al, "How Allied Sweden and Finland can Secure Northern Europe."

For the US, NATO's Nordic enlargement, provided it includes both Sweden and Finland, would already mark a monumental step toward implementing the US concept of Integrated Deterrence in Europe. It would allow for much more integration among the Allies in NATO's northeast flank, which borders Russia's strategically important Northern Fleet and Kola Peninsula. It would significantly improve the US's ability to incorporate allied and partners perspectives, capabilities, and competencies into its defense and deterrence planning and posture in Europe. Sweden can play an especially important role in strengthening Integrated Deterrence. It has the largest regional economy, a large landmass at the center of the Scandinavian peninsula with strategic positions in the Baltic Sea and throughout the European High North. It also has a small but highly sophisticated and capable military, a robust industrial base, strong intraregional relationships and an ambition for regional leadership.

Sweden's decision to apply for full NATO membership in 2022 marked a monumental shift in Sweden's defense policy and strategic culture. It is only a first step, however, toward strengthening defense and implementing Integrated Deterrence in northern Europe. Sweden will have to overcome a nearly two-hundred year political tradition of military non-alignment and contribute to NATO as a full ally, including through contributions to NATO's nuclear mission, its 360-approach, and, quite possibly, to further harden its eastern front by contributing to the forward presence or enhancing its role in air policing. This would require continued investments in improved military capabilities and the integration of those capabilities into NATO structures and processes. It would also require leadership in rationalizing the multiple defense cooperation formats in the region. Norway, Denmark, Finland, and others have diverse priorities and different capabilities and expertise to offer. Strengthening integration, resilience and responses to aggression below the threshold of armed conflict will require more coordination with Allies and partners.

Integrated Deterrence requires learning lessons from the past and, also, a common or shared understanding of the future threat environment. As a next step in our collaboration with the Swedish Defense University, we will explore lessons learned from our scenario planning exercise to flush out the potential scenarios and explore the potential future regional threat environments, and the strategies that may be required to address them. While Russia is the clear and acute near-term threat, the regional security environment is changing rapidly. It will be shaped and reshaped by the outcome of the war in Ukraine, the war's implications for Russia and its interests in northern Europe, the evolution of Russia's relationship wht China, future Chinese interests in the region, and the pace and impact

of climate change and technological advances, all of which could change the calculus for Integrated Deterrence across the wider region.

We feel confident that, whatever the future environment holds, Sweden is likely to play an important role in strengthening allied defense and deterrence and implementing the US concept of Integrated Deterrence, at least for the foreseeable future. The region has long depended on bilateral cooperation with the US for extended deterrence. Now, the US needs to rely more heavily on Allies and partners, not only because they have specialized capabilities, unique perspectives and expertise to offer, but because of the unprecedented nature of the threats, limited U.S, resources, and a need for demonstrable collective resolve and political unity. The United States' network of Allies and partners is unrivaled among its competitors, and US planners should not overlook Sweden's potential leadership role in Integrated Deterrence across the region. 

Mission Statement

The *Journal of Arctic Security*, the flagship publication of the Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies, is committed to innovation and excellence in Arctic defense education, relevant practitioner-focused research, and collaboration with America's Arctic security Allies and partners. The *Journal of Arctic Security* is a forum for interdisciplinary intellectual exchange in the spirit of innovation, experimentation, education, analysis, and engagement.

Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed or implied in the *Journal of Arctic Security* are those of the authors and should not be construed as the official sanction of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, USNORTHCOM, Defense Security Cooperation Agency, or any other agencies or commands of the Department of Defense.

Contributors

JAS is an interdisciplinary peer-reviewed publication of the Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies. It welcomes contributions on subjects focused on all aspects of Arctic and climate security, from geostrategic to geophysical. Feature articles should be between 4,000 to 6,500 words in length, excluding citations. Submissions should be formatted according to APA style guidelines. Articles and abstracts for consideration are accepted on a rolling basis. Authors should include their C.V. with submissions. Publication is subject to editorial discretion and Defense Office of Prepublication Security Review processes. Please contact the editorial staff at TSC-JACSS@groups.af.mil

Journal of Arctic and Climate Security Studies
8414 McGuire Avenue
Joint Base Elemendorf-Richardson, AK 99506

View the *Journal of Arctic and Climate Security Studies* online at
https://tedstevensarcticcenter.org