



North American Arctic Security Dialogue (NAASD) 2026: Understanding Capabilities and Advancing Burden Sharing in the North American Arctic

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North American Arctic Security Dialogue (NAASD) 2026: Understanding Capabilities and Advancing Burden Sharing in the North American Arctic

Defense and security leaders from the United States and Canada convened on May 18 for the 2026 North American Arctic Security Dialogue (NAASD), a forum focused on strengthening cooperation in the rapidly evolving Arctic security environment.

Hosted by the Ted Stevens Center, this year's dialogue brought together military practitioners, policymakers, researchers, and Arctic experts to examine the capabilities, partnerships, and priorities required to ensure

effective deterrence and defense across the North American Arctic. Held in conjunction with the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) and U.S. Northern Command's VISTA AURORA Tabletop Exercise, the one-day academic dialogue examined emerging defense and security challenges across the North American Arctic and their implications for homeland and continental defense.

Opening the event, Ted Stevens Center Director Maj. Gen. (ret.) Randy "Church" Kee provided a geostrategic assessment of Arctic security challenges posed by Russia and China, emphasizing the growing importance of the Arctic to homeland defense and international security.

"This dialogue underscores the importance of trust and cooperation between the United States and

Canada in maintaining a credible Arctic defense posture," said Maj. Gen. (ret.) Randy Kee, Director the Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies. "I am honored to join these professionals to discuss stronger interoperability, persistent regional presence, and enhanced domain awareness. Together we will identify essential components for future arctic security planning."

The dialogue featured keynote presentations from senior leaders representing the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), U.S. Northern Command, and the Canadian Armed Forces. Discussions focused on the importance of burden sharing, operational readiness, and maintaining a credible defense posture across the continent's northern approaches.

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NAASD 2026

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A key theme of the dialogue was the Arctic environment itself as a growing defense challenge. Officials noted that vast distances, severe weather, ice conditions, and limited infrastructure continue to complicate military movement, response efforts, and sustainment operations. Participants emphasized the need for improved Arctic mapping, weather forecasting, communications, and domain awareness systems to create a shared operational picture across the region.

Throughout the day, participants examined the unique challenges of operating in the Arctic environment. Sessions addressed logistics and communications limitations,

infrastructure and energy vulnerabilities, gray-zone threats, information operations, and the complexities of conducting search-and-rescue missions across vast and remote Arctic regions.

Panel discussions brought together experts from NORAD and U.S. Northern Command, the Canadian Joint Operations Command, the U.S. Arctic Research Commission, the Canadian Coast Guard, the Irregular Warfare Center, and other organizations to identify practical opportunities for enhanced cooperation.

As the Arctic continues to gain strategic significance, the North American Arctic Security Dialogue

serves as a platform for strengthening relationships, generating actionable insights, and ensuring the United States and Canada remain prepared to address emerging challenges together.

The Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies strengthens national, allied, and partner capabilities by cultivating regional expertise, building durable networks, and generating actionable insight for the warfighter. TSC is the Department of War's premier institution dedicated to Arctic-focused education, engagement, and research, empowering today's practitioners and preparing tomorrow's strategic leaders.

TSC Hosts Norwegian Ambassador Anniken Huitfeldt

For the Ted Stevens Center, engaging with allies and partners remains essential to advancing a secure, stable, and cooperative Arctic. This month, the Center was honored to host Ambassador Anniken Huitfeldt of Norway and Lise Kristiansen, Norwegian Honorary Consul, for a productive discussion on the evolving security environment across the Arctic region. The conversation explored a range of shared challenges and opportunities, including strategic competition in the European High North, emerging dynamics in the Arctic-Pacific, and the growing importance of Arctic security, resilience, and interoperability. Participants also highlighted Alaska's unique role as a strategic crossroads and a venue for dialogue among allies, partners, and stakeholders committed to preserving security and stability in the region. The engagement reinforced the strong and enduring relationship between the United States and Norway, two Arctic nations with a shared interest in strengthening security, enhancing regional awareness, and promoting collaboration across the circumpolar North.



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UPCOMING COURSES

Warfighting Arctic Foundations Course (WAFC)

26-02: 22 June – 1 July 2026

The Warfighting Arctic Foundations Course is a fully asynchronous, self-paced program conducted over nine days with an estimated 10–12 instructional hours. Throughout the course, participants will develop the ability to recognize the Arctic as a system of interconnected domains with global implications, describe the strategic interests of the United States, allies, partners, and competitors in the region, and explain how environmental, geopolitical, legal, and societal systems interact to shape Arctic security dynamics.



Arctic Warfare History Course (AWHC)

26-02: 13-24 July 2026

The Arctic Warfare History Course is a two-week blended program consisting of approximately 20 instructional hours and two synchronous sessions. Throughout the course, participants will develop the ability to analyze historical Arctic campaigns and understand their strategic and operational implications. They will also examine the environmental and logistical challenges unique to Arctic warfare, assess the importance of human performance and morale in extreme conditions, and compare past and present Arctic military operations to identify both continuity and change. By the end of the course, students will be able to apply lessons learned from historical examples to contemporary Arctic security scenarios.



Arctic Operational Risk Course (AORC)

26-01: 13-17 July 2026

This five-day, 35-contact hour executive education course examines the complex operational risks inherent in Arctic security activities across all domains. It focuses on how practitioners can assess, mitigate, and manage risks unique to the Arctic's challenging environment, characterized by extreme weather conditions, limited infrastructure, and constrained transportation networks. The curriculum incorporates local and place-based knowledge to enhance risk assessment and decision-making capabilities.



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Security Through Synthesis

*Courtesy article by Matt Jardin ,
University of Alaska Anchorage*

One of the most enduring metaphors for America is the melting pot — a place where different experiences, identities and specialties come together to create something much stronger than any element alone. For Lt. Cmdr. Sam Krakower, interdisciplinary studies graduate and graduate student hooding ceremony speaker for the spring Class of 2026, that metaphor reflects both his academic journey and professional path.

Born and raised in southern New Jersey, Krakower’s educational path began at the United States Coast Guard Academy, where he earned a Bachelor of Science in government while also commissioning as a Coast Guard officer. In the early days of active duty, he gained experience at sea and in leadership, including commanding a fast response cutter in Key West, Florida, navigating the nation’s sole heavy polar icebreaker from Seattle to Antarctica, and participating in a congressional fellowship that deepened his understanding of policymaking. These experiences ultimately positioned him for an advanced education assignment at UAA focused on Arctic policy and security, which aligns with the Coast Guard’s growing strategic interest in the region. Krakower is the second Coast Guardsman ever to receive this assignment.

The Arctic security program Krakower pursued is interdisciplinary by design, as the region’s challenges cannot be viewed through a single lens. Security concerns in the Arctic intersect with environmental change, economic development, Indigenous sovereignty and shifting geopolitics, and his coursework and research reflect this complexity by drawing from multiple schools and disciplines.

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Business Executives for National Security Visit TSC

This month, the Ted Stevens Center welcomed leaders from Business Executives for National Security for discussions focused on strengthening security, resilience, and cooperation across the North American Arctic. The visit brought together experts from the public and private sectors to examine how industry best practices, innovation, and strategic partnerships can help address the region’s rapidly evolving geostrategic environment.

Throughout the engagement, participants explored opportunities to leverage commercial expertise and operational insights. Conversations emphasized the importance of collaboration between government, industry, and allies to enhance readiness, improve infrastructure and logistics, and support long-term stability in the Arctic. The exchange reinforced the shared commitment to building a stronger, more secure Arctic through sustained cooperation and forward-looking solutions.



Security Through Synthesis

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“The best thing [about this program] has been the freedom to pursue different classes from different schools, and getting different interpretations of why the Arctic matters from educators who are engaged, active and just love to teach,” said Krakower.

Illustrating the benefits of the interdisciplinary model is Krakower’s newfound understanding of Indigenous perspectives. Exposure to Alaska Native Studies challenged him to consider Arctic security not only as a strategic or operational issue, but as one rooted in the lived experiences of people who have inhabited the region for generations.

“In the military, you don’t always think about the Indigenous side of things,” said Krakower. “Every class I went through had some nexus to Indigenous populations that have lived in the Arctic for thousands of years, and that’s such a crucial part that needs to be consistently understood. There’s tangible, reciprocal benefits from working in a security nexus with Indigenous populations and ensuring that they’re part of the conversation.”

Central to Krakower’s research is a comparative analysis of maritime choke points, particularly the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom (GIUK) Gap and the Bering Strait. Historically, the GIUK Gap has played a critical role in defense and trade. Krakower’s work explores how lessons from that strategic corridor might inform approaches to safeguarding U.S. and Alaska interests in the Arctic and contribute to more informed policy decisions

and operational strategies.

As the graduate student hooding ceremony speaker, Krakower hopes to use the moment to underscore the shared accomplishments of his fellow graduates. Despite each student’s path being uniquely shaped by different professional experiences and personal situations, the completion of advanced study represents a collective achievement, regardless of discipline. It is in that sense that the melting pot metaphor resonates not only with his own journey, but with the diverse experiences represented within the graduating class.

Looking ahead, Krakower will serve as the operations officer on the Coast Guard’s newest icebreaker, U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Storis. Once onboard, he will apply his academic insights to real-world missions in the Arctic. His long-term goal is to continue contributing to operations, research and policy that help clarify the strategic importance of the region to audiences beyond Alaska, fostering a greater awareness of the Arctic’s role in national and global security.

“Most folks in the Lower 48 don’t understand the importance of us being an Arctic nation,” said Krakower. “These programs are extremely helpful in communicating why the Arctic matters and why Alaska matters, and I’m looking forward to the opportunity to immediately give back to this great state.”



The future of Arctic security | Talk of Alaska Interview

Ted Stevens Center Director Randy "Church" Kee joined Lori Townsend and Former Lieutenant Governor Mead Treadwell on a recent episode of Talk of Alaska to discuss the future of Arctic security amid rapidly increasing activity across the region.

The conversation explored how Arctic waterways, once largely inaccessible due to persistent ice coverage, are now experiencing unprecedented levels of maritime traffic, including significant growth in crude oil tanker operations. Panelists highlighted the importance of strengthening Arctic domain awareness, infrastructure, international cooperation, and preparedness to ensure the safety, security, and stability of the increasingly strategic Arctic region.

[LISTEN HERE](#)



Ted Stevens Center Engages with Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory on Arctic Security and Innovation



Ted Stevens Center leaders visited the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory for discussions on Arctic operational resilience and the evolving Arctic operational theater.

During the visit, TSC Director Randy “Church” Kee and guests engaged with APL experts on applied science and technology supporting Arctic research, sea ice prediction, warfighter readiness, critical infrastructure resilience and national security missions.

Partnerships like this help advance innovative solutions to emerging challenges in the Arctic and beyond.

TSC DIRECTOR TOURS USS TED STEVENS (DDG 128)

Director Randy “Church” Kee had the opportunity to tour the USS Ted Stevens (DDG 128) in Norfolk, Virginia and meet the sailors who will soon bring this incredible ship to life.

As the Navy’s newest and most advanced Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer prepares for commissioning in Whittier, Alaska, the visit highlighted the strong connection between the Ted Stevens Center and the ship that proudly carries Senator Ted Stevens’ name.

Meeting members of the crew reinforced the legacy of leadership, service, and commitment to national security that Senator Stevens championed throughout his life. From the Arctic to the Indo-Pacific, the future USS Ted Stevens represents the strength, readiness, and global reach of the U.S. Navy.

The Ted Stevens Center is honored to share in this historic milestone and looks forward to continuing to build the relationship with the crew of USS Ted Stevens as they prepare to join the fleet.





TSC Hosts Defense Orientation Conference Association (DOCA)

On May 8, 2026, The Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies hosted business and civic leaders from the Defense Orientation Conference Association for discussions focused on Arctic security, strategic competition, and the growing importance of the Arctic to U.S. national security.

The engagement provided participants with an opportunity to learn more about the Center’s mission and its role in advancing Arctic literacy, supporting defense research, and preparing the Nation’s warfighters and allies to operate effectively in the Arctic environment. Through briefings and discussions with TSC leadership and subject matter experts, attendees explored the operational, geopolitical, and strategic challenges shaping the region.

DOCA is a nonpartisan organization composed of business and civic leaders dedicated to increasing public understanding of defense, foreign policy, and national security issues. By engaging directly with members of the U.S. Armed Forces and government officials around the world, DOCA members serve as a bridge between the military and the communities they represent.

The visit to the Ted Stevens Center highlighted the importance of fostering informed dialogue on Arctic security as activity and competition in the region increase. Discussions focused on the evolving strategic landscape, the operational realities of the Arctic environment, and the importance of cooperation among allies, partners, government institutions, and industry.

As the Arctic continues to grow in strategic significance, the Ted Stevens Center plays a key role in strengthening understanding of the region through education, research, and professional engagement.



Critical Minerals in the Arctic

Read the Latest Arctic Security Updates: Critical Minerals in the Arctic

This week, we explore critical minerals and the Arctic through:

- The Big Picture: Supply Chain Challenges and the Arctic Answer
- By the Numbers: U.S. Critical Minerals Posture
- From the Field: Sword 26

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DIRECTOR'S MONTHLY NOTE

Dear and Distinguished Colleagues,

This month highlighted the growing importance of collaboration in advancing Arctic security and defense. At the Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies, we were proud to host the North American Arctic Security Dialogue, bringing together leaders and experts to discuss the evolving strategic environment across the Arctic and the importance of allied and partner cooperation in the region.

The dialogue reinforced the importance of cooperation among allies and partners as we address shared challenges, strengthen deterrence, and improve readiness in one of the world's most dynamic strategic regions. These conversations are essential as Arctic activity continues to increase and strategic competition accelerates.

We also strengthened partnerships through a visit to the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory, where discussions focused on innovation, research, and opportunities to support Arctic operations and

readiness. In addition, we were honored to welcome the Norwegian Ambassador to the United States, reinforcing the importance of strong Arctic alliances and continued international collaboration.

Looking ahead, the Center is preparing for a busy summer of courses and professional education programs designed to enhance Arctic literacy and support the Joint Force, allies, and partners operating in the region.

Thank you to all who continue to support our mission as we work together to strengthen Arctic security and defense.

Very respectfully,

Randy "Church" Kee, Maj Gen, USAF (Ret)
Director
Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies

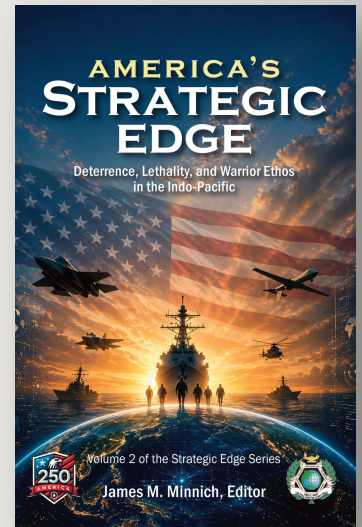


DIRECTOR'S MONTHLY READING RECOMMENDATION

America's Strategic Edge: Deterrence, Lethality, and Warrior Ethos in the Indo-Pacific

The Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (DKI APCSS)

America's Strategic Edge: Deterrence, Lethality, and Warrior Ethos in the Indo-Pacific, the second volume in the Strategic Edge series, arrives at a pivotal moment as the United States approaches its 250th anniversary. This collection examines the three interconnected pillars essential to preserving stability in the world's most consequential region: deterrence creates the space for peace, lethality ensures deterrence remains credible, and the warrior ethos provides the moral foundation that governs the use of power. Bringing together a diverse group of scholars and practitioners, the volume explores how these elements sustain America's strategic advantage amid rapid military modernization, contested domains, and intensifying competition across the Indo-Pacific. Grounded in the conviction that lasting security is built through relationships, the book offers strategic clarity and professional insight for leaders entrusted with defending the region's future.



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