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# NEWPORT ARCTIC SCHOLARS INITIATIVE

*Report No.1*

## Conflict Prevention and Security Cooperation in the Arctic Region

*Frameworks of the Future*

Walter Berbrick and Lars Saunes, Project Directors

September 2020

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The U.S. Naval War College (NWC), the oldest institution of its kind, was founded in 1884 by Rear Admiral Stephen B. Luce. His leadership and vision laid the foundation for more than a century of professional development and research—and it all started with the desire to better educate the fleet. The U.S. Naval War College offers graduate education to military officers and national security professionals and is accredited to award Master of Arts degrees. The college serves roughly 600 in-residence graduate students and more than 1,000 distance-education students each year.

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The U.S. Naval War College sponsors the Newport Arctic Scholars Initiative (NASI) to assess issues of current and critical importance to Arctic policy and provide policymakers with concrete judgments and recommendations. Diverse in backgrounds and perspectives, NASI scholars aim to reach meaningful consensus on findings and recommendations through private deliberations. Once launched, NASI is independent of NWC and solely responsible for the content of its reports. NASI scholars are asked to join a consensus signifying that they endorse “the general policy thrust and judgments reached by the group, though not necessarily every finding and recommendation.” Each NASI scholar also has the option of putting forward an additional or a dissenting view. Scholars’ affiliations are listed for identification purposes only and do not imply institutional endorsement. NASI observers participate in discussions, but are not asked to join the consensus.

For further information about NWC or the Newport Arctic Scholars Initiative, please write to the U.S. Naval War College, [PAO@usnwc.edu](mailto:PAO@usnwc.edu), or call the communications office at 401-841-7501. Visit our website, [USNWC.edu](http://USNWC.edu).

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**President, U.S. Naval War College**

## **Foreword**

I am pleased to introduce the 2020 Newport Arctic Scholars Initiative (NASI) Report, which illustrates the Naval War College's long-standing commitment to advancing excellence in education, research, and international maritime cooperation. This comprehensive report showcases several ways Arctic and non-Arctic nations and navies can improve dialogue and cooperation on matters of security and defense in the Arctic region. It provides leaders in government and academia with practical recommendations for improving current and new basic conceptional ideas for establishing – and maintaining – open channels of communication, preventing conflict and enhancing cooperation on areas of common security and defense interests among nations and navies in the Arctic region.

This report builds upon the 2018-2019 NASI work, which found that “existing Arctic security architectures have significant limitations and have been outpaced by recent developments.” This report calls out five major reasons for improving and creating circumpolar confidence building measures and regional arrangements to prevent tension and misunderstanding among the growing number of states operating in and through the Arctic.

First - Though the Arctic Council has provided an exceptional forum for Arctic stakeholders to discuss key issues, the exclusion of security matters from its mandate poses an additional challenge to a region facing increased security concerns and challenges to the rules-based Arctic.

Second - The report recognizes that “a notable rise in military exercises, demonstrations, capability advancements and basing has contributed to rising tension in the region.” This is further exacerbated by “a lack of dialogue on national security interests related to Arctic military activity, driven primarily by the 2014 Russian annexation of Crimea.”

Third - The group argues for developing a regional framework for understanding and responding to China's diverse and multilayered approach to gaining access and influence over Arctic States. As the report indicates, “without more substantive strategic engagement and collective action, particularly a coherent response to growing Chinese penetration of the region, the current regional system of states that emerged as a result of the Ottawa Declaration and has been held in place by the Arctic Council over the last 20 years is increasingly vulnerable to deconstruction and replacement.”

Fourth - As we look over the horizon in the years ahead the report defines five critical boundary and border issues that stand at the forefront of bilateral or multilateral negotiations. Listed in increasing order of complexity and challenge to resolve, they include: Hans Island, Beaufort Sea, Northwest Passage (NWP), North Pole and the Northern Sea Route (NSR).

Fifth - Though the Arctic is largely known as a peaceful region, there are two areas within the Arctic that may emerge as geostrategic hotspots. Tensions may flare over areas such as Svalbard and/or Greenland for their natural resources and strategic locations. Such focus is critical to anticipating and preventing crises from erupting in the region.

Taken together, these challenges are increasingly disruptive and transformative to Arctic nations and navies, making finding regional policy responses more difficult. To this end, 2020 NASI scholars argue that the Arctic region needs to respond urgently and comprehensively over the next five years to improve current regional frameworks and put forward new frameworks for security dialogue and cooperation in the region. This report provides recommendations for policy makers and heads of Navy in two broad areas: 1) Reinforce, Restore and Scale Current Multilateral Framework; and 2) Launch New Multilateral Framework:

With respect to the former, experts argue to restart both the Arctic Chiefs of Defense meetings and the Arctic Security Forces Roundtable with Russia. Further, the report suggests inviting Russia to the International Seapower Symposium and Newport Arctic Scholars Initiative. Experts also argue to keep the Arctic Council mandate on security and defense in place in order to preserve and promote continued cooperation on issues of environmental protection and sustainable development. Experts argued that the Arctic Coast Guard Forum should not be used as a forum to discuss hard security issues. Doing so would “diminish the noteworthy success of this forum.” Finally, this group does not believe that NATO is the appropriate venue for leading the security dialogue and cooperation that is necessary and missing in the Arctic. The NATO alliance, however, “remains a valuable, legitimate Arctic actor that can contribute to deconfliction even if not cooperation.”

Increased maritime activity in the Arctic Ocean, including surface, subsurface and aviation activity, coupled with the lack of a global forum to discuss issues related to hard security are the impetus for creating an Arctic Ocean Maritime Symposium (AOMS). AOMS would be an open and inclusive platform to generate a flow of information between naval professionals leading to common understanding and cooperative solutions to promote maritime security partnerships, preserve maritime access and provide ready naval forces to respond to crises and contingencies.

Further, the report recommends creating a Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea’ (CUES) to reduce the chance of an incident at sea or an unintentional escalation in the Arctic region. This would help standardize safety procedures, communications and maneuvering instructions to allow for cooperation without escalation.

Finally, the report calls for the creation of a high-level political-military forum for the Arctic region. Implementing many of these recommendations will require strong political will and an exemption from current sanctions policy, an admittedly difficult task given the frozen state of Western and Russian diplomacy.

The array of thoughtful policy prescriptions and findings set forth in this report reflect consensus among this group of experts and do not represent the official positions or policies of any one organization or government.

I would like to thank Dr. Mary Thompson-Jones and CDR Rachael Gosnell for their significant contribution to this important project. My thanks extends to all the 2020 NASI scholars for similarly lending their knowledge and experience over this challenging year. This report would not have been possible without the vision and leadership of NWC’s Dr. Walter Berbrick and RADM Lars Saunes (retired) who directed the NASI program and this report. They too have earned our thanks for taking on such a complex and critical subject.

  
S. S. CHATFIELD  
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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The report of the 2020 Newport Arctic Scholars Initiative (NASI) on *Conflict Prevention and Security Cooperation in the Arctic Region: Frameworks for the Future* is the product of its scholars, who graciously shared their time and expertise with us. We are grateful for the input and feedback they provided throughout this ten-month project. In particular, we would like to thank our team leads, Rachael Gosnell, Brian Sittlow, and Mary Thompson-Jones for their strong leadership and thoughtful vision; it was a genuine pleasure to work with them.

All of the 2020 NASI scholars contributed, and a special thanks goes to each and every one of them, who were extremely generous with their time and energy, providing inputs and advice on all the drafts as well as sharing the findings and recommendations with national and naval leaders as the report neared completion. A special thanks to Rachael Gosnell, Mary Thompson-Jones, and Lillian Hussong for their comments, edits, and recommendations while others shared helpful thoughts with our team leads.

We are also thankful to several individuals from the U.S. Naval War College who provided input and support over the course of our project, including Professor Thomas Culora, Dean, Center for Naval Warfare Studies; Professor Thomas Mangold, Dean, International Programs; Professor Colin Jackson, Chair, Strategic and Operational Research Department; and Professor Richard LaBranche, Chair of the War Gaming Department. We are also grateful to Karen Sellers and Dionne Horrabin for arranging the logistics for our in-person and virtual seminars. NWC's press team deserves recognition for ably preparing the report for publication, and NWC's graphics team deserves our thanks for producing the graphics that appear throughout the report.

Further, we appreciate the contributions from NWC's faculty and staff who attended events related to this project, including seminars in Newport and virtually, and to those members who lent their time to serve as presiders or panelists for these events. And a special thanks to the Naval War College Foundation for their generous support throughout this project.

Finally, we are thankful to NWC President RADM Shoshana S. Chatfield for her vision and leadership during the 2020 NASI project year.

While this report is the product of the 2020 Newport Arctic Scholars Initiative, the responsibility for any omissions or errors is ours. Once again, our sincere thanks to all who contributed.

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Arctic region is experiencing significant changes environmentally, economically, politically, and militarily. Climate change is enabling the opening of the Arctic, with greater maritime access creating both economic opportunities and regional security challenges. The evolving geostrategic environment is further characterized by a return to great power competition. Though the Arctic has been a region of relative peace and stability in recent decades, there is rising concern for increased tensions and conflict in the region. With this backdrop, the Newport Arctic Scholars Initiative was created to bring together national security practitioners and scholars from Arctic States to analyze security implications of the evolving Arctic and produce recommendations for heads of navy and policymakers.

The Newport Arctic Scholars Initiative (NASI) 2020 consists of 19 national security practitioners and scholars from seven Arctic States. NASI 2020 analyzed issues of current and critical importance to Arctic policy and developed concrete findings and recommendations for policymakers. This report, *Conflict Prevention and Security Cooperation in the Arctic Region: Frameworks for the Future*, captures consensus of the NASI 2020 scholars. Building upon the 2018-2019 NASI work on the limitations of the current cooperative security fora in the Arctic region, this cohort explored existing international frameworks and assessed their abilities to ensure freedom and security in the Arctic through political-military means. NASI 2020 also examined existing frameworks to determine whether they enabled increased dialogue and maritime security cooperation in the region. The frameworks were further evaluated for their abilities to prevent and manage conflict and enhance cooperation on areas of common security and defense interests in the region. Scholars were tasked to identify new frameworks that could be useful in establishing – and maintaining – open channels of communication, preventing conflict, and enhancing cooperation on areas of common security and defense interests among nations and navies in the Arctic region. Finally, the group sought to identify practical arrangements for a future meeting or summit that could bring together states to enhance dialogue on security and cooperation in the Arctic region.

The Arctic, defined in this report, includes the Arctic Ocean and land masses north of the Arctic Circle (approximately 66 degrees north latitude). Except for the European Arctic, the region has been largely – but not entirely – free from conflict. Diminishing ice coverage is enabling an increase of maritime activity, though the region will still see only a small fraction of global maritime activity. With just over four million inhabitants – about half of whom are living in the Russian Arctic – the region lacks significant infrastructure to provide foundations for commerce and maritime security. Though the Arctic Council has provided an exceptional forum for Arctic stakeholders to discuss key issues, the exclusion of security matters from its mandate poses an additional challenge to a region facing increased security concerns and challenges to the rules-based Arctic.

Of the eight Arctic states, five are members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and two are NATO partners. The eighth Arctic state, Russia, recognizes and generally adheres to most international and maritime organizational structures and norms applicable to the Arctic region. Yet the opening of maritime routes and the potential for exploitation of natural resources in the region may challenge the Arctic's long-standing peace and stability. Both the Northern Sea Route and the Northwest Passage face disputes as to their characterization for transit under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The potential for offshore resources has spurred Arctic states to submit claims in accordance with UNCLOS to extend their continental shelves. The North Pole is currently claimed by three states – Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, and Russia. Though all claims have been asserted peacefully thus far, the discovery of significant resources may spark a more aggressive approach. This delicate situation is further complicated by the involvement of non-Arctic states, such as China.

The Arctic region may emerge as a nexus for economic development and strategic competition. There has been a notable rise in military exercises, operations, and basing in the Arctic from a number of Arctic stakeholders, but still remains far below the level of activity seen during the Cold War. Russia is developing additional capabilities to operate in the inhospitable region. It has expanded Arctic naval operations and supports the Northern Sea Route with the world's largest icebreaker fleet. Russia is further constructing new airfields and renovating old bases across the Russian Arctic. NATO is also improving its Arctic capabilities, with Exercise Trident Juncture 2018 bringing more than 50,000 troops, 65 ships, and 250 aircraft representing all (then) twenty-nine Allies (as well as Sweden and Finland) in Norway or off the Norwegian Coast exercising a collective defense scenario. Militarization in the Arctic is not limited to great power competition, with most of the Arctic nations refocusing defense efforts in the region. Other non-Arctic states, such as the United Kingdom and France, regularly operate both surface vessels and submarines north of the Arctic Circle. Reports indicate that China has also signaled intent to operate ballistic missile submarines in the Arctic. For example, in August 2020, Germany has deployed 8 MCM vessels to Norway to conduct their annual Squadex in Norwegian waters up to and including Narvik (which is far north of the Arctic Circle). With the increased military presence and activities in the Arctic, there is a risk of an Arctic security dilemma. A lack of robust mechanisms for transparency and dialogue will further exacerbate regional tensions and potential for conflict.

While the Arctic has long been viewed as a peaceful and stable region, there are significant disputes that should be addressed through bilateral or multilateral negotiations to reduce the risk of increasing tensions. These disputes include Hans Island, the Beaufort Sea, the Northwest Passage, the North Pole, and the Northern Sea Route. Though the first three are unlikely to cause conflict as they involve Western Arctic states, the last two are more controversial. The Northern Sea Route is a shipping lane that was restricted to Soviet/Russian usage for decades before being opened to international traffic in 1991. Yet the international community disagrees over the characterization of the route, with competing views on whether it falls under innocent passage in territorial waters or transit passage through international straits

under UNCLOS. The North Pole offers both a symbolic claim as well as potential for vast strategic and economic significance. Though resources are as of yet unproven, Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, and Russia have all claimed the North Pole as part of their extended continental shelves. The 1988 Canada-U.S. Northwest Passage Agreement and the 2010 Norway-Russian Barents Agreement offer potential models for dispute resolution that aligns with the commitment of the Arctic coastal states in the 2008 Ilulissat Declaration.

In addition to these disputes, there are two areas within the Arctic that have the potential to emerge as geostrategic hotspots. Both Greenland and Svalbard present unique cases that could cause regional tensions to flare, given their abundant natural resources, multiple stakeholders, and strategic locations. While the likelihood of armed conflict among Arctic States resulting from conflicting interests in the Arctic remains relatively low, these cases highlight the importance of dialogue and confidence-building measures as a means of reducing regional tensions and alleviating the possibility of conflict. However, armed conflict resulting from conflicts in another region could easily spill-over into the Arctic.

Regional dialogue and cooperation are achieved through organizations like the Arctic Council, founded by the Ottawa Declaration in 1996. Yet the Council faces some criticism for its limited mandate – security matters are excluded – and structure as well as the inability to enforce agreements or apply sanctions against its members. The growing competition in the region poses challenges for the Council’s current approach to multilateral governance and dialogue. Chinese investments and involvement in the region cast further concerns for the forum’s relevance, particularly as the Sino-Russian strategic partnership deepens.

Other regional frameworks with avenues for Arctic cooperation include NATO; the NATO-Russia Council was established as a mechanism for cooperation, consultation, and consensus-building. Yet Russian distrust of the organization will likely invalidate this option as a means of dialogue on important Arctic matters. It could further initiate closer Sino-Russian relations as Russia looks to counterbalance the Alliance in the Arctic, introducing added complexity into regional security discussions and increasing the security dilemma. Organizations like the Arctic Security Forces Roundtable (ASFR) and Arctic Coast Guard Forum (ACGF) offer opportunities for dialogue among the members, yet each of these have concerns with the mandate and membership.

Given the findings of this report, the consensus was to reinforce, restore, and scale current multilateral frameworks. Though the Arctic Council faces challenges, the current mandate has served the organization well and changing it risks its achievements as a venue for dialogue and cooperation. Yet there is an opportunity to refine the Council’s mandate and empower it to help shape regional policy by increasing funding and exploring a joint enforcement capability in the Arctic waters.

The Arctic Chiefs of Defense (ACHOD) Forum offers an appropriate venue for top Arctic military leaders to discuss security-related topics relevant to the Arctic. Though the ACHOD was suspended following the Russian annexation of Crimea, the forum offers an

opportunity for dialogue to help prevent misunderstandings and unintended security escalation. This could further enable improved integration through military exercises, combined operations, communication, information sharing, transparency measures, and other cooperative mechanisms. Similarly, the ASFR membership could be updated to include Russia again, enabling greater discussion amongst key Arctic security stakeholders. Another opportunity to improve dialogue is the International Seapower Symposium (ISS), a biannual event that brings together global maritime leadership to collaborate on collective maritime security issues. Similarly, inclusion of Russia in the Newport Arctic Scholars Initiative could enable greater understanding of all Arctic nations' perspectives, fostering dialogue and trust.

While these existing frameworks are critical to maintaining stability in the region, the evolving strategic landscape warrants the implementation of new multilateral frameworks. The creation of an Arctic Ocean Maritime Symposium (AOMS) would enable the discussion of issues related to maritime security and defense and promote security, cooperation, and coordination among international naval leaders. Though all would be welcome, the eight Arctic nations would control management rights for the symposium given their greater interests in the Arctic. A biannual AOMS would present a unique opportunity to improve information flow and lead to a common understanding, while promoting cooperative solutions to promote maritime security partnerships, preserve maritime access, and provide ready naval forces to respond to crises and contingencies.

In order to improve Arctic communication and safety, it is recommended that an Arctic Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea (CUES) be implemented. Using the Western Pacific Naval Symposium CUES as a model, the non-binding Code could reduce the chance of an incident at sea or an unintentional escalation. This draws upon the successful bilateral 1972 Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Prevention of Incidents on and Over the High Seas – more commonly referred to as the Incidents at Sea or INCSEA agreement – and could potentially reduce regional escalations with a multilateral framework. Other bilateral INCSEA agreements, including between the Kingdom of Norway and Russia, for instance, should not be overlooked.

It is further recommended that a new high-level political-military forum for the Arctic be created. The past success of the Arctic Five – the five coastal states – in developing the 2008 Ilulissat Declaration illustrates the potential of creating a new security forum for the Arctic. The focus of the forum should remain on commonalities in order to address regional challenges, with an understanding that regional stability and security benefit all stakeholders.

In a region that is rapidly evolving, it is clear that new mechanisms are necessary in order to ensure the Arctic remains a peaceful and stable region. The emerging challenges to a rules-based order highlight that the existing framework of governance may be insufficient in an era of great power competition. While Arctic exceptionalism has kept the region relatively peaceful, the increasing accessibility to the region may spark economic and security competition. Yet the region has tremendous potential for continued stability and peace – the current disputes are

largely amongst Western Arctic nations and thus far all stakeholders have adhered to international norms and customs. Regional governance frameworks have largely been effective and offer avenues to build upon to further enhance cooperation and coordination. Yet new fora will enable greater dialogue and confidence-building commiserate with a region that is increasingly the nexus of economic development and strategic competition. There must be a recognition of the evolving strategic landscape and a commitment to improving dialogue and transparency if the region is to remain conflict-free.

# *INTRODUCTION*

As a result of climate change, sea lanes are opening in the Arctic, resulting in increasing military presence, transit, commercial activities, resource exploitation, and overall development. Greater access will create opportunities and challenges for regional security, and is likely to result in a greater role for maritime forces. Indeed, as the Arctic becomes more accessible, state interests in the region will continue to grow. Greater activity in the Arctic, particularly at sea, will potentially contribute to competition and friction. These changes will also affect how states perceive each other's intentions in the region, shaping habits of both cooperation and competition.

The evolving circumstances confront Arctic states with a strategic choice: either leverage Arctic-oriented international organizations, modify them, or create new ones. Existing Arctic security architectures have significant limitations and have been outpaced by recent developments. Defense leaders and planners must first understand the perspectives of the many countries engaged in the Arctic, along with their ambitions and policies. They must then review the history of dialogue and security cooperation in the Arctic; weigh the merits of current frameworks; and envision the structure and characteristics of future frameworks for the region.

There is consensus among Arctic states that they benefit from a peaceful and stable Arctic, but that is where agreement stops. Some experts argue that there is an Arctic exceptionalism, where peace in the region is impervious to challenges elsewhere in the world. Others contend that the Arctic has always known conflict, and point to archeological evidence of raiding and political violence going back a thousand years. They also point to extensive mercantile competition as early as the 16th century – especially in the Barents Sea and Svalbard archipelago – that sometimes erupted into naval and land battles. And in more modern times, the Arctic was a hotspot during the decades-long rivalry between the Soviet Union and the United States.

What seems certain is that the Arctic is becoming increasingly prominent in the defense and security policies of major powers in and outside the region. Arctic states increasingly stress the need to defend their maritime approaches, exercise their sovereign rights, and protect their northern territories and waters. Such considerations are likely to gain in importance across the region as the Arctic Ocean becomes increasingly accessible, ultimately providing unobstructed access to the northern flank of coastal states. For some countries, this is nothing new. For example, Norway has long defended its lengthy northern coastline from attacks going back to the 12th century and during the Napoleonic Wars. It established a fortress in Vardo in 1310, and modernized it in the 1730s.

Today, many countries perceive the Arctic as having increased strategic importance in an era that has seen a revival of great power competition among the United States, China, and Russia. Increased interests from nations outside the Arctic, and supranational governance structures such as the European Union, serve as indicators that reserving Arctic matters to Arctic

states alone will be challenged even as Arctic coastal states promote a status quo strategy.

There are well-established circumpolar governance architectures, both at the state and transnational levels. However, these organizations do not include security and defense matters. As the importance of the Arctic grows, mechanisms to manage tension and enhance cooperation in the security realm might contribute to regional peace and stability.

The United Nations Charter potentially offers the means to mitigate conflict, but given the global competition between the United States, Russia, and China, all of whom are permanent members of the Security Council, the UN's power to regulate security matters in the Arctic is weak, dependent on these three powers.

The Arctic Council, comprised of the eight member states of Canada, the United States, Iceland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia along with six permanent participants representing Arctic Indigenous peoples, is the primary multinational governance body for cooperation in the Arctic. Along with the eight member states, there are thirteen non-Arctic states (to include European and Asian nations), thirteen intergovernmental and interparliamentary organizations, and twelve non-governmental organizations recognized as observers. However, the 1996 Ottawa Declaration which founded the Council contains a footnote stating that the Arctic Council should not deal with matters related to military security. Numerous other, more specialized organizations, such as the Arctic Coast Guard Forum or Arctic Security Forces Roundtable, are important but less comprehensive in scope or membership.

Given the opening of the Arctic and rising geopolitical tensions, current fora are inadequate to address and mitigate conflicts within the Arctic, let alone deal with conflicts spilling over from outside the region. There is a need for more circumpolar confidence building measures in addition to regional arrangements to prevent tension and misunderstanding among the growing number of states operating in and through the Arctic.

The purpose of this report is to inform political and military leaders and heads of navies of Arctic states on ways to strengthen cooperative frameworks that maintain open channels of communication, prevent and manages conflict, and enhance cooperation on areas of common security and defense interests in the Arctic region.

This report builds on the work of the 2018-2019 Newport Arctic Scholars Initiative regarding the limitations of current cooperative security fora for the Arctic region. To explore the objectives of this study, the authors developed the following questions:

1. What current or new international framework(s) are best suited to ensure freedom and security in the Arctic through political-military means?
2. What current or new international framework(s) are best suited to increase dialogue and maritime security cooperation among navies in the Arctic region?

Arctic security architecture can be conceived as a sub-system of current international security frameworks at the strategic level. The primary objectives guiding research and discussion among the experts were as follows:

- Identify advantages, disadvantages, and potential improvements of current international frameworks to prevent and manage conflict, and enhance cooperation on areas of common security and defense interests in the Arctic region;
- Identify new frameworks to maintain open channels of communication, prevent and manage conflict, and enhance cooperation on areas of common security and defense interests among nations and navies in the Arctic region;
- Identify practical arrangements for a future meeting or summit that brings together states to share their views related to security and cooperation in the Arctic region.

This report represents the collective work of 19 national security practitioners and scholars from Arctic states. It reflects consensus among these scholars on the future development of security frameworks to prevent and manage conflict, and enhance cooperation on areas of common security interests among nations and navies in the Arctic region. These frameworks are driven by a discussion of major policy drivers, key border and boundary issues, and geostrategic hot spots in the region. The work was organized through the Political-Military Working Group and the Navy Working Group, providing different perspectives and backgrounds designed to give national political-military leaders and heads of navies a coherent framework for thinking about Arctic security cooperation and a set of strong and clear judgments, recommendations, and priorities.

# FINDINGS – Policy Drivers

## *Challenges to Rules-Based Arctic*

The Arctic region, defined in this report to include the Arctic Ocean and land masses north of the Arctic Circle (approximately 66 degrees' north latitude), has certainly seen its share of conflict. Compared to other regions, inhospitable conditions and lack of maritime access has prevented large scale deployment of forces. In this vast space — stretching from Europe to the Pacific Island chains — the foundations of commerce and security are established through sea, air, and rail links. The region relies on secure supply chain connectivity and sustainable development that is implemented in a transparent and equitable way.

As fears of a new cold war brew, however, the guarantors of that international order such as the Arctic Council and Arctic Coast Guard Forum, to name a few, may be not be sufficient to ensure security and dialogue in the region.



Figure 1. Political Map of the Arctic Region

The Arctic's harsh climate is one of many reasons for the region's limited human population (about 4.4 million). Climate change, competition for natural resources, and more aggressive state claims have begun to challenge the long-standing peace and stability in the region. Seven of the eight Arctic states enjoy alliance agreements and strong bilateral and multilateral agreements through shared values of liberal internationalism. Five are NATO members; two are NATO partners. The eighth, Russia, recognizes and adheres to most international and maritime organizational structures and norms. While most states agree the Arctic is rules-based, there is increasingly contentious debate on how to interpret the rules, such as defining international straits and continental shelves. Challenges range from conflicting views on the status of newly-opening maritime routes, such as the Northern Sea Route (Russia) and the Northwest Passage (Canada), as well as claims to expanded Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs).

Added to those challenges is involvement from non-Arctic states such as China, which insists the Arctic is the common heritage of mankind, and that as a leading power it should have considerable influence in how the region is developed. China is not alone among non-Arctic states looking to the Arctic for its untapped potential; yet doing so may upset the delicate balance that has long resulted in a relatively peaceful region.

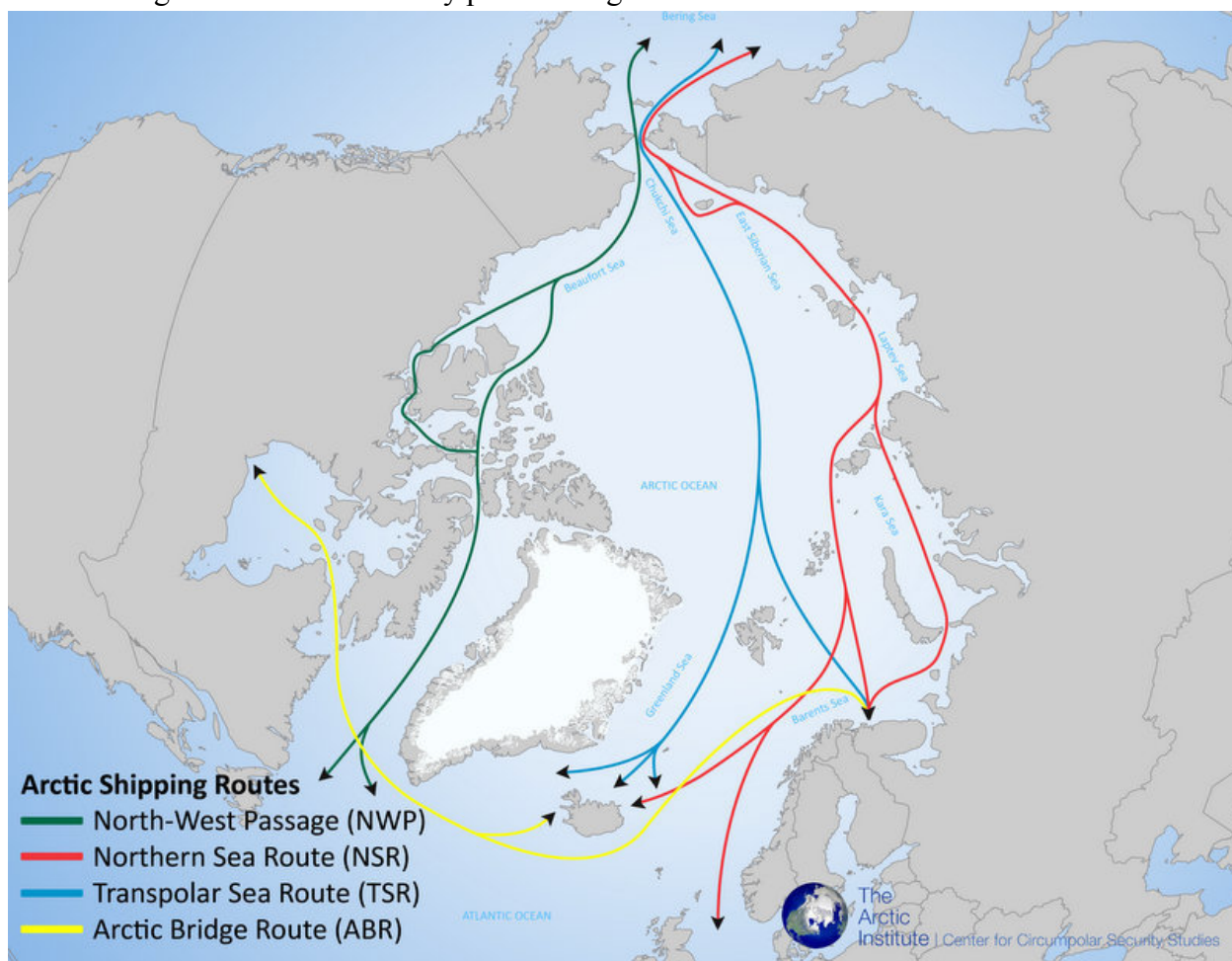


Figure 2. Arctic Shipping Routes

One such driver of non-Arctic state involvement is the potential economic benefit of receding ice in the region. The Northern Sea Route (NSR) is a maritime passage along Russia's northern coast, connecting the Atlantic Ocean and Barents Sea to the Bering Sea and the Pacific Ocean. Though opened by the Soviet Union in 1935, the route was restricted to Soviet-flagged vessels until 1991 and saw limited use given the predominance of sea ice. However, as climate change has made the route more accessible, Russia has attempted to impose further controls over commercial shipping vessels including stipulations that potentially challenge a rules-based Arctic. These include mandating advance notification of passage, reporting ship characteristics, and obligatory pilotage requirements, issues that will be examined further in this document. The Northwest Passage (NWP) is another example of differing views among states. The NWP connects the Atlantic to the Pacific through the Davis Strait, Beaufort Sea, and the Canadian northern archipelago. In this case, Canada has claimed internal, national control of the NWP, whereas other nations – to include the United States – take the position that the waterway is an international strait.

There may be further disputes regarding sovereign rights of offshore resources. Several Arctic states have already submitted claims in accordance with UNCLOS for an extension of their continental shelves. Three nations—Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, and Russia—claim an extension reaching to the North Pole. Thus far all claims have been asserted peacefully and in accordance with international law, but the discovery of significant resources (gas, oil, or minerals) may spark a more aggressive approach. Advances in technology have made the Arctic more accessible, but technology can also wreak harm through cyberattacks, espionage, and dual use capabilities that adversely affect international order in the Arctic. The authors believe that the only way forward for the international community is to construct common rules and norms to increase transparency on the development and employment of emerging technologies in the Arctic.

These examples, and other developing issues across the Arctic region, have the potential to challenge the rules-based system. Economic dependency and national conflict could play out repeatedly, upsetting international norms and stoking international tension. In a sense, the Arctic Ocean region may not only emerge as the nexus for economic development and strategic competition, but may also be a test case for adapting cooperative relations between Arctic powers and evolutionary growth of the rules-based order more broadly.

## *Increased Military Activity and Lack of Dialogue*

The Arctic has recently experienced a notable rise in military exercises, demonstrations, capability advancements, and basing that has contributed to rising tension in the region. While still less than at the height of the Cold War, there is increasing military activity not only from Russian, but from British, French, Canadian, American, and other NATO units exercising in the High North and Arctic. Lack of dialogue on national security interests related to Arctic military activity, driven primarily by the 2014 Russian annexation of Crimea, exacerbates the situation. A natural fault line exists between Arctic NATO nations and Russia, but the buildup extends beyond Arctic states, particularly if coast guard and other law enforcement entities are included. Is Russian activity purely a defensive move? Is NATO pushing farther north as part of a containment strategy? These questions and the resultant signals among states and alliances, without clear dialogue allowing for transparency of intent, set the stage for a regional framework fraught with miscalculation. The Arctic region is facing a security dilemma without necessary dialogue which could lead to a dangerous path.

Severomorsk, Murmansk Oblast, and the Kola peninsula area have long been home to Russia's Northern Fleet, with direct access to the Atlantic and the Arctic Oceans. Although the size of the Northern Fleet has diminished since the Soviet era, Russian naval operations over the past ten years are on a noticeable rise in submarine construction and deployments. They also are expanding their amphibious capabilities, and regularly train and exercise them in advanced forced entry operations. Thereto they are about to commence a rapid build-up of highly capable conventional submarines and smaller surface combatants. Within the next 5 – 10 years they are likely to have 6-12 modern SSKs in the North, a LPH, two-three new smaller amphibious ships, and up to 20 new corvettes with LR cruise missiles. Thereto, they are modernizing and refurbishing many older surface combatants such as the Kirov and Udaloy classes. Furthermore, they are developing and testing new strategic weapons such as Poseidon torpedoes (long range – doomsday machines) and hypersonic glider missiles. All of these would more than likely be deployed in the Barents region.

These forces support the bulk of the Russia's second strike capability. Russia supports its Navy and NSR shipping with the world's largest icebreaker fleet, dwarfing the size of all other Arctic nations' icebreaking capabilities. Anti-ship and anti-aircraft missiles (SAM-systems holding both BMD and AA capabilities) are being deployed all along the Russian Arctic islands. Facilities to support these activities include the construction or refurbishment of several hundred buildings and structures. Repurposed and new airfields from Franz Josef Land to Wrangel Island are giving Russian strategic and tactical aviation more Arctic basing.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is making a concerted attempt to improve its own Arctic capabilities. The NATO Exercise Trident Juncture 2018 employed a U.S. Carrier Strike Group north of the Arctic Circle for the first time since 1992. In 2019, Arctic

Expeditionary Capabilities Exercise (AECE) was held in the northern Pacific and Bering Sea to improve U.S. Indo-Pacific Command's capabilities to respond to a regional crisis. The joint training exercise was attended by the U.S. Secretary of the Navy and Commandant of the Coast Guard.

The U.S. Navy has also recommissioned the 2<sup>nd</sup> Fleet, which is postured for maritime command and control in the northern Atlantic. JFC Norfolk, collocated with 2nd Fleet, was created in 2018 as a joint operational level command part of the NATO Military Command Structure under Allied Command Operations. Initial funding has been approved for a new fleet – up to six – of U.S. Coast Guard Polar Security Cutters to improve icebreaking capabilities, with a June 2020 Presidential Memorandum further directing a review of icebreaker options. Reiterating the increased geostrategic importance of the region, the U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM) and North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) Commander recently testified before Congress that the Arctic is the “avenue of approach,” and the “new front line of homeland defense.”

Militarization in the Arctic is not restricted to great power competitors. Historically, Norway has been NATO's most experienced and proactive Arctic security contributor. At Trident Juncture 2018, Norway hosted a joint force of more than 50,000 troops, 275 aircraft, and 65 ships. The scenario's threefold goal was to improve NATO's ability to deter and – if necessary – defend its northern flank; prevent internal communication lines from being severed; and limit Russia's options to target objectives well within NATO territories with conventional munitions -- an important aspect of defending NATO as a whole, not just the northern flank. The exercise included all 29 allied nations, as well as Sweden and Finland. Though Sweden and Finland are not members of the alliance, both participated in NATO's Trident Juncture and are enhancing partnerships with the NATO. U.S. maritime patrol aircraft detachments once again operate from Keflavik air base in Iceland, with a renewed focus on the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom (GIUK) gap. Iceland played an important role, enabling significant maritime logistics efforts in support of the exercise.

Canada and Denmark, each having huge amounts of coastline and landmass in the Arctic region, have also raised their defense stakes in the Arctic. Canada regularly hosts exercises, such as Operation Nanook-Nunalivut near Resolute Bay, and has commissioned six new Arctic Offshore Patrol vessels for its navy. The Danes recently announced they would triple their military spending for the Arctic, focusing on air defense and undersea surveillance. Since 2013, Sweden hosts the biannual Arctic Challenge Exercise series, focused on fostering interoperability between the Air Forces of Finland, Sweden and a set of NATO countries. Due to its strategic location it contributes to deterrence in depth in the Arctic region.

Other non-Arctic States, such as the United Kingdom and France, regularly operate both submarines and surface vessels well north of the Arctic Circle. Britain's Royal Marines (and the U.S. Marines) regularly train in Norway. There have also been reports that China, so far without

success, has asked Russia to allow it to station ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) in the Arctic, operating from Russian ports.

There is no doubt that the Arctic is witnessing increased military presence and activities. Arctic and non-Arctic states alike are testing their capabilities to operate in the region. Such increases yield concerns for an Arctic security dilemma, especially if states find themselves without robust mechanisms for dialogue and transparency.

## *China's Foreign Investments as a Potential Security Threat*

China's 2018 Arctic White Paper provides what is thus far the only official exposition of China's Arctic policy. It endorsed "promoting peace and stability in the Arctic" including security of maritime trade, scientific research, and upholding the UN Charter, UNCLOS, and general international law. The White Paper further stated China's wish to reinforce cooperation with Arctic states on security challenges related to maritime accidents, environmental pollution, and maritime crimes.

China also has increased its focus on the Arctic through its investments, most famously through a "Polar Silk Road" designed to develop Arctic shipping routes as a means of exploiting oil, gas, and minerals. While its White Paper demonstrates China's understanding of its obligations as an observer in the Arctic Council, it remains silent on its interpretation of international law, which may differ from other states. Historically, China has preferred bilateral talks rather than resolving conflicts through existing international frameworks. Some argue that this bilateral preference gives China an advantageous negotiating position as a great power, especially in interactions with smaller states. They point to examples outside the Arctic region in which China gained political influence through foreign investments which in turn became security concerns. Yet the picture of China's true influence in the Arctic is more complex.

Major barriers to economic growth in the Arctic region remain. Infrastructure, today, to support large populations and commercial activity can be found in Nordic states, parts of Alaska, and western Russia. Throughout the rest of Russia, Greenland, Canada, and Alaska, as well as in Indigenous communities, basic infrastructure is extremely sparse. Conventional capital is scarce, opening up greater opportunities for direct investment and lending from state-controlled or affiliated sources.

China's Arctic efforts in the commercial and trade realm, as well as in the area of scientific research with military and commercial applications, increase its ability to gain access in and influence over Arctic constituencies, as well as its future power projection capabilities.

For China, access to natural resources and sea routes remain at the heart of its Arctic strategy, allowing the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to avoid the geopolitically tense Suez Canal and U.S. Navy ships in the Straits of Malacca. And if one of these sea routes goes down, China can bypass it by increasing its flow through the Arctic. To enable this strategy, Chinese State-owned Cosco Shipping Group has ramped up production of a new fleet of ice strengthened container ships to sail from ports in Asia to Europe by the way of the Arctic. Cosco has further established footholds in Europe by investing in port terminals that were previously neglected by private European operators.

Beyond giving China access to strategic infrastructure and resources, the growing portfolio of Chinese investment throughout the Arctic region offers financial leverage that could be applied to secure political advantages. China has demonstrated its willingness to use trade policy as leverage to extract political concessions and submissions, particularly from smaller

nations. Following the 2010 Nobel Prize award to Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo, China closed its market to Norwegian salmon. In 2016, full ties were finally restored, after Norway issued a statement remarkable in its deference. China's increasing economic leverage over small Nordic economies should be a concern for the United States — and for Russia — since the circle of Arctic powers has historically been limited. Like much of the Arctic region, Greenland suffers from a significant lack of infrastructure of all kinds, making it a ripe target for Chinese investment. While China's efforts in Greenland are primarily economic, they focus on dual-use targets, like a former naval base, airfields, strategic minerals, and a satellite ground station.

In 2018, the world's largest port infrastructure developer from China, visited the northern Norwegian town of Kirkenes, situated just 14 kilometers from NATO's northern land border with Russia, to build a mega port—which would be the first and last stop in the European Economic Area along the Northeast passage – linked with rail connections throughout Finland, even across the Baltic sea to Estonia. A year later, Chinese workers finished building the longest suspension bridge above the Arctic Circle, near the northern port city of Narvik.

Chinese troops have been on the Russian land border, drilling platforms and fishing trawlers in Russian waters, and port facilities on Russian territory. Western sanctions have driven Russia and China closer together in the Arctic, where Chinese companies and government agencies are now major shareholders in energy and port infrastructure projects. In the east, China convinced Russia to build Zarubino into the biggest port in northeast Asia; just southwest of Russia's Pacific Fleet in Vladivostok and close to the Chinese border—linking new railways to inland regions of China. Russia and China competing for access and influence over the most northerly ice-free port in Asia, the port of Rajin—located on the border of North Korea and Russia, close to the mouth of the Tumen river basin and the Sea of Japan. China also signed a statement of intent to build a deep water port in Arkhangelsk, Russia's largest northern coastal city next to Finland.

Its investments in the Russian Arctic are substantial and well known, but its investments in two smaller Arctic states, Iceland and Denmark (Greenland), offer contrasting examples. Iceland does not see China's investments, which first occurred after the 2008 bank collapse, as a potential threat to its national security. Chinese interest was likely motivated by factors such as the global impact of climate change, natural resource potential, and future shipping routes, but also by its aspiration for a permanent observer seat in the Arctic Council, which it gained in 2013. Iceland's commercial relationship with China has included failures as well as successes. China lags behind Iceland's other key economic partners as only the seventh largest trade partner of goods (valued at \$712 million) in 2018.<sup>i</sup> Chinese investments in Iceland are limited and, with one exception, do not meet OECD criteria as Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), which require a minimum 10% ownership stake.<sup>ii</sup> Iceland imposes sector-based restrictions on foreign investments in fishing, energy, and transportation.<sup>iii</sup> Critical infrastructure in Iceland includes “systematically important financial infrastructure”<sup>iv</sup> and “critical cyber infrastructure.”<sup>v</sup> There are

currently no reported FDI investments from China in any of the restricted sector-based areas or critical infrastructure.

However, Chinese investment in Greenland has been more controversial, leading to debates in Danish parliament. China's interest in Greenland's rare earth minerals is considered by some Danes to be a potential security risk, and similar interest in Greenlandic iron, zinc, and lead mines also fueled Danish concerns. Danes have also been concerned about Chinese interest in commercial exploitation of two of the world's largest uranium deposits in southern Greenland, located in Kringler and Kvanefjeld. In 2013, a majority of Greenland's County Councils abolished the so-called zero tolerance for uranium for the purpose of extracting Kvanefjeld's resources, triggering a sharp disagreement between the Greenlandic authorities and the Danish government over competencies. Greenland's government (which has home rule but not full independence) holds mineral rights, but Denmark still controls security and defense policy. The deal would have led to the state-owned China National Nuclear Corporation carrying out the processing. In 2016, parties reached an agreement declaring the extraction of uranium a Greenlandic matter, but giving Denmark final control over possible exports.<sup>vi</sup>

Chinese interest in Greenland's infrastructure development posed other problems. Denmark rejected a bid from Chinese mining company General Nice Group' to buy the Grønnedal Naval Support Base. The marine station had been put up for sale, but was immediately taken off the market and reactivated.<sup>vii</sup> And shortly after an official Greenlandic visit to China in 2017, Greenland selected the State-owned China Communications Construction Company to oversee the expansion of Nuuk and Ilulissat airports.<sup>viii</sup> An agreement between the Greenlandic Government and the Government of Denmark on funding for the comprehensive airport project was concluded in the fall of 2018. However, the potential Chinese commitment did not materialize. Instead, the U.S. Department of Defense sent a letter of intent regarding possible investments in airports for both civilian and military use in Greenland. This agreement proved to be controversial in Greenland and led to the downfall of the Greenlandic Government under Prime Minister Kim Kielsen.<sup>ix</sup> Though Greenland retains home rule over most issues, Chinese economic interest in Greenland will continue to be closely monitored by Copenhagen to ensure compliance with Danish defense and security policies.

In the future, the Arctic could plausibly see “debt trap” lending — as seen in the One Belt, One Road Initiative — linked to badly needed infrastructure, like ports, airfields, roads, communications cables or towers, hospitals, or housing. Chinese-built and operated ports in the Arctic might be predicated on their use as refueling stations for Chinese vessels. Likewise, Chinese polar science, like their growing fleet of polar ice breakers, can also be used to inform military and economic advances in the region, while also advancing the world's understanding of climate change — an important strategic concern for China. Despite the near-term benefits that come from quick economic investment, it is difficult to see how China's growing presence and influence around the Arctic region will benefit all Arctic states in the long-run, including Russia.

Understanding China's diverse and multilayered approach in this region is important both for improving our collective understanding of how the CCP attempts to gain access in and influence over Arctic States and for developing a regional framework for responding to these actions to protect national interests. Without more substantive strategic engagement and collective action, particularly a coherent response to growing Chinese penetration of the region, the current regional system of states that emerged as a result of the Ottawa Declaration and has been held in place by the Arctic Council over the last 20 years, is increasingly vulnerable to deconstruction and replacement.

## FINDINGS - Borders and Boundaries

This section summarizes five key issues that should be addressed through bilateral or multilateral negotiations, in increasing order of complexity and challenge to resolve: Hans Island, the Beaufort Sea, the Northwest Passage (NWP), the North Pole, and the Northern Sea Route (NSR). The first three are “in the family” of the Western Arctic states; the last two involve negotiations with Russia. The 1988 Canada-U.S. NWP Agreement and Norway-Russian Barents agreement are two influential models that could help resolve other Arctic regional disputes, given the commitment of the Arctic coastal states in the Ilulissat Declaration.

### *Climate Change is Redefining Boundaries*

The phenomena of sea level rise and melting ice are redefining boundaries. States are forced to confront increased human activity, as well as increased maritime traffic on the NSR, the NWP, and other potential polar routes. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is the predominant legal framework that defines boundaries at sea, serving as a “constitution” of our oceans, supported by 168 parties.<sup>x</sup> The United States remains noticeably absent from those nations who have ratified the framework. Although it has not ratified UNCLOS, the U.S. recognizes it as customary international law. The International Law Commission (ILC) has a working group within the UN addressing sovereign boundary claims, and is tasked with providing recommendations on how to define boundaries at sea in the future for the UN General Assembly.<sup>xi</sup> Yet questions remain as to the impact ILC’s work will have on reconciling disagreements in the Arctic, given the limits on its mandate. As such, all eight Arctic States should work together to address how sea level rise will affect boundaries in the region. Although this is not the first report to make this recommendation, the United States should consider immediately ratifying UNCLOS, and end its legal disadvantage.

### *Hans Island*

The only disputed piece of land in the Arctic is Hans Island, a half-square-mile of uninhabited and resource-less rock disputed by Canada and Denmark because of its position in the Nares Strait between Canada’s Ellesmere Island and Greenland. Although Canada and Denmark negotiated their maritime boundary in the area in 1973, they could not agree over the surface of the island, which straddles the maritime boundary. Long dormant, the issue attracted a flurry of media attention in 2004 amid the symbolic dispatch of each states’ military to assert the island as Canadian and Danish territory, respectively. In 2005, Canada and Denmark entered into an ‘agreement to disagree’ on jurisdiction over Hans Island, and negotiations over the matter remain ongoing. Plans to divide the island have failed in the past, but under the terms of the 2005 agreement both countries have agreed to inform the other before they visit.

Unresolved boundary issues among the Western Arctic states are a political liability in the rapidly transforming polar region. Bilateral negotiations to resolve these disputes can help eliminate sources of bilateral tension while facilitating greater cooperation and investment in the region. A negotiated resolution consistent with UNCLOS principles between Canada and Denmark would strengthen the Arctic legal regime while removing an unnecessary source of bilateral disagreement.

## *Beaufort Sea*

Located offshore between the State of Alaska and the Canadian territory of Yukon, the Beaufort Sea is another instance of an Arctic boundary dispute between close allies. The dispute over the maritime boundary is a product of differing interpretations of the 1825 Treaty of St. Petersburg between the Russian and British empires, which established the border between their respective colonial territories in northwest North America. These territories were purchased by the United States in 1867 and assumed by Canada in 1880, respectively, and the Beaufort Sea boundary has been disputed ever since. Canada contends that the wording of the treaty indicates the maritime boundary should be an extension of the land border, while the United States argues that it should form a perpendicular line to the shore equidistant from each country's territory. The differing interpretations have produced a disputed wedge of the Beaufort Sea that is approximately 21,000 km<sup>2</sup>, and estimated to contain more than one billion cubic feet of oil and nearly two billion cubic feet of natural gas.

The Beaufort dispute should be addressed bilaterally. Resolving the dispute would not only create an environment of greater certainty for investment, navigation, and State authority in the region, but would remove a persistent bilateral irritant. Over the years, the two countries have periodically exchanged diplomatic notes objecting to each other's actions to regulate or otherwise exercise jurisdiction over the disputed area.<sup>xiii</sup> The lack of an agreed upon border also impedes establishment of both countries' extended continental shelf claims. It is ironic that Canada and the United States' respective positions on the Beaufort boundary would, if implemented, favor the other country with respect to the size of their extended continental shelf.

The underlying rationale for resolving the dispute is both economic and political. In addition to facilitating greater clarity over natural resource ownership and maritime regulations, addressing the Beaufort Sea boundary will underscore the commitment of the parties to peaceful dispute resolution in the Arctic, and demonstrate the capacity of Canada and the United States to negotiate settlement of longstanding (and in this case inherited) political issues. The failure of the parties to negotiate a resolution, provides a point of political weakness to be exploited by potential adversaries which undermines the unity of both the North American partnership and the relations between the allied circumpolar States.

## *The Northwest Passage*

The Northwest Passage (NWP) has been a longstanding source of disagreement between Canada and its Arctic partners, particularly the United States. In 1925, Canada had claimed exclusive jurisdiction over the entire Arctic Archipelago, thus asserting sovereignty over all polar waters enclosed by a prolongation of its territorial borders, including the NWP. However, prior to 1982, international law only granted Canada jurisdiction over waters up to 12 nautical miles from its shoreline, making most of the passage international waters. Other states have never accepted the Canadian claim, and some have asserted their rights of innocent passage. In 1969, and again in 1985, the United States dispatched Coast Guard vessels to test the NWP as a potential shipping route, without requesting Canadian permission. In response, Canada gave its permission and dispatched its own icebreakers in support even though the USA had not asked for permission nor assistance. Canada also instituted legislative changes in 1970 that unilaterally limited access to what it considered internal waters, and began regulating ships within 100 nautical miles of its Arctic coastline. In 1982, the updated UNCLOS built upon the new Canadian precedent as the new basis for international maritime law, but the change did not alter the disputed status of the passage, since other states maintained the NWP constituted an international strait which entitled all states the right of peaceful transit.

To address the status of the NWP, in 1988 Canada and the U.S. signed an agreement whereby the United States would not enter the NWP without Canadian permission, but Canada committed that such permission would always be granted. The agreement also stated that it would not prejudice either state's claim over the legal status of the passage. In effect, Canada and the United States agreed to disagree while creating an effective mechanism to manage the issue. This status quo has persisted to the present, but was called into question in 2019 when the U.S. Secretary of State indicated the United States considered Canada's legal claims to the NWP "illegitimate."

Canada and the United States should take steps to reaffirm the well-managed nature of the NWP dispute. At a minimum, both states should reaffirm the 1988 Northwest Passage Agreement, and refrain from confrontational or unfriendly public statements. If possible, both states should also take steps to resolve their legal and practical differences, perhaps by negotiating an updated bilateral agreement on the NWP. Alternatively, the 1988 Canada-USA Agreement could form the template for a multilateral negotiation with all eight Arctic states over the use and status of the NWP. Such a multilateral agreement could similarly produce an "agreement to disagree" that maintains state parties' respective legal positions while resolving practical issues pertaining to safe transit and navigation of the passage. Such an agreement would enhance cooperation and opportunities for commercial activity in the North American Arctic, and demonstrate the willingness and capacity of the Arctic states to negotiate agreements and address unresolved issues in good faith without compromising their underlying legal positions or strategic interests.

## *North Pole*

The North Pole has long been a source of dispute and tension among Arctic states, both symbolically and because of its potential, but as yet unproven, strategic and economic significance. The claiming of the North Pole for the United States in 1909 generated competing legal interpretations of the international legal regime for Arctic territorial claims. This legal dispute persisted well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as circumpolar states consolidated their Arctic territories and sought to buttress the development of a favorable legal regime. Long beyond the boundaries of any one state's sovereign territory, the provisions for states to claim an extended continental shelf under Article 6 Paragraph 8 of UNCLOS slowly reignited questions of who "owns" the North Pole.

In the early 2000s, the North Pole re-emerged as a flashpoint for disputed Arctic territorial claims. In December 2005, in the middle of a Canadian federal election, the media revealed that the *USS Charlotte (SSN-766)* had likely traversed Canadian Arctic waters without authorization while en route to the North Pole, where American sailors disembarked on the ice. While the incident did not have strict legal repercussions, it occurred soon after a high profile dispute between Canada and Denmark over Hans Island in the Nares Strait and fueled further anxieties about Canada's ability to assert its Arctic claims. These concerns were compounded in the summer of 2007, when a private, Russian-led expedition planted a Russian flag on the ocean floor at the geographic North Pole. While the expedition itself was to conduct scientific research in support of Russia's claim to an extended continental shelf that included the North Pole, the symbolic and somewhat innocuous flag planting attracted international attention and galvanized a critical response from other circumpolar States. Canada and Denmark, in particular, objected to what they claimed was undue Russian assertion over the North Pole, which they also claimed as parts of their extended continental shelves. The popular and political responses to the flag planting were expressed as part of an emerging discourse over a "race for the Arctic" that posited the region as an emerging zone of inter-state tension and competition, and which framed Russia as an aggressor.

Currently, the North Pole is subject to overlapping extended continental shelf claims by three states: Canada, Denmark, and Russia. While these claims will be adjudicated by the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) in due course, this process is both lengthy (expected to take over a decade) and scientific-technical. In other words, the recommendations of the CLCS, once issued, constitute an assessment of the scientific basis for each State's territorial claims, but are not legally binding. States must still accept and enact the CLCS's recommendations. Given the history of disputes surrounding the North Pole, it would be in the interest of the Arctic states – particularly the allied nations of Canada and Denmark – to engage in a negotiated resolution of their overlapping claims. This is particularly the case given the expressly political nature of the issue.

The Arctic holds examples of peaceful resolutions of disputes that can act as a guide. The diplomatic resolution of the Norway-Russia maritime boundary in the Barents Sea in 2010 is a

good example of bilateral dispute resolution. While the solution raised criticism from some experts in international law, it has served both states well and allowed them to access resources in a previously disputed zone.

In order to peacefully and expediently resolve the disputes, the Arctic states with overlapping territorial claims, including the North Pole, should not necessarily wait for a determination of the CLCS on those claims. Bilateral or multilateral discussions between the parties, particularly NATO allies, can facilitate a possible resolution to overlapping claims, help maintain and restore confidence, and deepen Arctic cooperation. The successful diplomatic resolution of the Norway-Russia maritime boundary offers a potential model for bilateral boundary disputes.

## *Northern Sea Route*

The Northern Sea Route (NSR) is a shipping lane between the Atlantic Ocean and the Pacific Ocean along the Russian coast of the Arctic. Opened by the Soviet Union in 1935, the NSR remained limited to USSR flagged vessels until 1991, though traffic has largely been limited by the predominance of ice coverage and inhospitable weather across the route. The passage crosses five marginal seas: Barents Sea, Kara Sea, Laptev Sea, East Siberian Sea, and Chukchi Sea. It also crosses three straits: Yugorskiy Shar Strait, Karskiye Vorota Strait, and Bering Strait. The international community disagrees over whether each should be characterized as international straits used for navigation.

This characterization of straits is important because of coastal states' abilities to regulate traffic through the regime of: 1) innocent passage in territorial waters or 2) through the regime of transit passage in straits used for international navigation in accordance with UNCLOS. Russia considers the passage to be internal and territorial waters—a view it shares with Canada regarding the NWP. That said, neither supports the other's claim. The United States disagrees with both, citing the waters as international, but Nordic states have not given official views on how to define these passages. Based on these disagreements and different interpretations of UNCLOS, it is difficult to agree upon which international law regime to apply to the passage. This might lead to future tensions as shipping increases through the passage during the longer ice-free periods.

Russia has cited UNCLOS to justify enacting more stringent rules and standards to protect and preserve its marine environment in the NSR, based on Article 234 which discusses ice-covered areas in the EEZs.<sup>xiii</sup> This might affect future navigational rights, given the differing practices among the Arctic countries. In addition, Russia has proposed new legislation that foreign vessels must provide 45 days of advance notice before travelling through the NSR, the requirement for tug escort at a premium cost, and has further mandated the use of Russian pilotage.<sup>xiv</sup> The proposed new legislation from Russia is problematic, especially given the disagreement as to whether a strait is used for international navigation or not, because it might:

- Challenge the immunities of warships in innocent passage
- Add a notification/approval regime on commercial ships based on the rules in UNCLOS
- Provide stricter regulation on navigation in its EEZ

Challenging the immunities of warships is problematic because it may lead to more tension in a region already experiencing increased militarization. By instituting a notification and approval regime, Russia is both challenging the differing interpretation of the regime of innocent passage in territorial waters, and potentially blocking freedom of navigation in straits used for international navigation, as UNCLOS prohibits such practice according to a strict interpretation of the wording in Article 44. There is no evidence of states directly confronting Russian control over the passage, except for France, which did a Freedom of Navigation Operation (FONOP) through the NSR in September 2019 with *FS Rhone*.<sup>xv</sup>

Russia has also used UNCLOS to justify control over its EEZ. Specifically, UNCLOS Article 234 gives the Russian government legislative jurisdiction to protect the marine environment in ice-covered areas in its EEZ. Article 234 says:

*Coastal States have the right to adopt and enforce non-discriminatory laws and regulations for the prevention, reduction and control of marine pollution from vessels in ice-covered areas within the limits of the exclusive economic zone, where particularly severe climatic conditions and the presence of ice covering such areas for most of the year create obstructions or exceptional hazards to navigation, and pollution of the marine environment could cause major harm to or irreversible disturbance of the ecological balance.*

The purpose and function of Article 234 is to balance coastal states' interests in protecting ice-covered areas with the international community's interests of international navigation in EEZs. The article is based on a historic compromise between Canada, the U.S., and Russia (as the Soviet Union). In UNCLOS, Article 211 also applies, particularly Section (6) concerning pollution from vessels where permission is needed from the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to adopt regulations based on technical and scientific evidence to support the needs for such regulations. Article 234, however, does not fall directly under the scope of the regulation in Article 211, but was placed in a section of its own as a *lex specialis* of Article 211 to avoid the need for approval from IMO as a compromise. Canada has expressed interest in further extending coastal state jurisdiction in ice-covered areas to seek international recognition for the legality of its 1970 Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act (AWPPA) regulations.

Yet the article is not universally applied. UNCLOS Article 236 states that warships and naval auxiliary vessels are exempted from the scope of Article 234 (immunity also applies to other state-owned vessels used for non-commercial government service only). As such, it can be concluded that:

1. The Arctic states should not challenge the immunities of warships in accordance with international law.
2. The Arctic states should discuss possible solutions regarding warships in innocent passage/transit passage through NSR to avoid a South China Sea situation.

## Findings - Geostrategic Hotspots

Though the Arctic is largely known as a peaceful region, there are a few areas within the Arctic that may emerge as geostrategic hotspots. Tensions may flare over areas such as Svalbard or even Greenland for their natural resources and strategic locations. It is imperative to better understand Arctic regions with the potential to become geostrategic hotspots in order to anticipate and prevent crises from erupting in the region.

### *Svalbard*

The Spitsbergen Treaty entered into force in 1925 and celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its signing on February 9, 2020. The treaty granted Norway sovereignty over Svalbard, with a special responsibility over its territory, people, resources, and its archipelago, while providing equal access and non-discriminatory rights of other State signatories.<sup>xvi</sup> Today, the parties are working, living, and researching together peacefully. Yet, the Svalbard question involves contested legal issues, such as the nature of sovereign state rights conferred by international treaties, shared economic rights of states, the scope and limits of governance regimes, the definition and extent of territorial borders, and the applicability and evolution of UNCLOS.<sup>xvii</sup> All signatories to the Spitsbergen Treaty accept Norway's right to govern Svalbard and its territorial waters. However, some signatories, such as the United Kingdom and Russia, oppose the Norwegian view that the treaty does not apply to the demarcation of Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) nor to the definition of continental shelves. Russia, Spain, and Iceland have also formally challenged the legality and enforcement of the Fishery Protection Zone (FPZ) around Svalbard, which was established unilaterally by Norway in 1977—after the conclusion of UNCLOS—and justified on conservation grounds.

Due to the effects of climate change, which has opened up increased commercial possibilities for energy production and shipping in the Arctic, there is a possibility that legal issues related to Svalbard may generate added political and economic friction. Svalbard's extended geographical area not only raises questions about regional management; it is also a prime example of what has been termed a “territorial temptation” in the Arctic's “diminishing global commons.”<sup>xviii</sup> While the maritime territory around Svalbard is not part of such commons, it is, nonetheless, a disputed area. The question is whether Norway's sovereignty extends to the modern maritime zones adjacent to Svalbard's territorial sea, or whether it is restricted by the equal access and non-discriminatory rights of state parties to the treaty, i.e., does the extended Norwegian continental shelf include the continental shelf adjacent to Svalbard, or does Svalbard have its own Continental shelf. The answer to this question is crucial: if Svalbard has its own continental shelf then the treaty effectively constrains Norway from developing offshore resources.

There seems to be little chance that Norway will change its continental shelf policy with respect to Svalbard. It has so far been able to enlarge its territorial sea around Spitsbergen, to establish a FPZ where its jurisdiction is accepted, if not recognized by all the contracting parties, and to acquire an extended continental shelf.<sup>xix</sup> The Norwegian government's decision to refrain from making attempts to exploit potential oil and gas resources within the disputed Svalbard region has without doubt contributed to geopolitical stability.

Yet, apart from questioning the legality of the FPZ, Russia recently expressed its dissatisfaction with Norwegian administration of the Svalbard Treaty, claiming it represented a violation of its terms because Norway issues permits for the development of oil and gas deposits in the areas of the continental shelf which Russia believes fall under the treaty. While the Russians have voiced similar complaints in previous bilateral talks, they have not done so officially, at least not in public. Their main criticism has been directed at Norway's practice with respect to the principle of non-discrimination—a charge the Norwegian government has denied. In addition, Norway has been challenged by China, which wants to evoke the non-discriminatory rights of the signatories of the Svalbard Treaty to justify scientific research in Svalbard. Norway has rejected this interpretation, claiming that its sovereign rights include regulating such research on the islands. This has raised political questions about how scientific research on and around Svalbard is being used for both commercial and military—or “dual use”—purposes and about ways to counter such practices.

Western countries, such as the United States and Britain, have generally backed Norway's resistance to Soviet and Russian pressures towards Svalbard both during and after the Cold War, while maintaining their own legal position on the Svalbard question. The new U.S. geopolitical Arctic narrative—which criticizes Russian military bases in the Arctic and its sovereignty aspirations over the NSR and which views China's Arctic economic and science cooperation strategies in the region as a harbinger of a future military presence—suggest that such support remains firm. Hence, it is not likely that Western legal reservations about the Norwegian position on the continental shelf with respect to Svalbard will be used to complicate Norway's relations with Russia and China. To be sure, the danger of a direct military confrontation over Svalbard remains low. But continued legal challenges and prospects of future access to natural resources shows that the islands can become a geopolitical Arctic hotspot.

## *Greenland*

Greenland is emerging as an Arctic geostrategic hotspot. Seen from an American perspective, Greenland forms an integral part of the North American continent and in this context, is a key terrain in the defense of the United States. Domain awareness poses challenges for the U.S. military, namely the inability to monitor Greenland's airspace or maritime domain. The current U.S. radar installation at Thule Air Base in Greenland tracks intercontinental ballistic missiles (among other airborne objects), but the Thule radar does not monitor

Greenland's airspace. Greenland is an unsupervised territory where incoming aircraft and cruise missiles heading towards the North American continent can approach undetected (see Figure 1).<sup>xx</sup> Further, Russian Northern Fleet underwater activities in the Danish Strait (so-named, but neither Danish nor a strait, per se) are virtually undetectable as the Danish armed forces have very limited anti-submarine warfare (ASW) capabilities. The Danish armed forces do have maritime surveillance capabilities, but these are insufficient to provide continuous comprehensive coverage of Greenlandic waters, making maritime domain awareness a significant challenge for Greenland.



Figure 1. Overview of current radar coverage for air monitoring in the Arctic.<sup>xxi</sup>

### *The Kingdom of Denmark (Denmark, Faroe Islands and Greenland) Arctic Strategy*

The Kingdom of Denmark's Strategy for the Arctic 2011–2020 stressed the Arctic as a zone of low tension and international cooperation under the rule of international law. Now the Kingdom is developing its 2020 revision, which must address the changing security dynamics in the Arctic and specifically the centrality of Greenland. However, as a small state, the Kingdom benefits from international cooperation on Arctic matters and consequently, the aims of the revised strategy are likely to remain unchanged. The key question remains: how can Denmark

promote international cooperation and keep tensions low in a situation of growing great power rivalry and militarization of the Arctic? The Kingdom discourages weaponization of the Arctic to avoid an evolving security dilemma. Nonetheless, there is a definitive need for improved sovereignty enforcement, air and maritime surveillance, command and control, communications, and enhanced Arctic operational capabilities.

### *Danish Joint Arctic Command*

Danish operations in and around Greenland and the Faroe Islands are the responsibility of the Danish Joint Arctic Command (JAKO). Its main tasks are surveillance and sovereignty enforcement, including land, air, and maritime patrols, along with fisheries inspection, support for scientific expeditions, and explosive ordnance disposal. Furthermore, the JAKO provides support to civil society, to include icebreaking services and medical evacuation missions. In Greenland, the command also performs SAR missions, hydrographic surveys, environmental surveillance, and pollution control. Greenlandic detachments include Station Nord – the second northernmost base in the world – as well as Air Group-West at Kangerlussuaq, the eastern Defense Guard at Mestersvig, and a liaison unit at Thule Air Base in the northwest. The Sirius patrol exercises sovereignty via dog sleds and other means over northeastern Greenland National Park from a base at Daneborg.

For military operations, Joint Arctic Command operates three *Knud Rasmussen* class Arctic patrol vessels that can embark a single SH-60 Seahawk maritime helicopter, although there is no hangar on board. A high-speed, ice-strengthened Combat Boat 90E can be launched from a heated bay in the stern. The ships are armed with a 76 mm gun and have space for modular systems. Two rotational crews per ship increase the ability to remain at sea. Furthermore, two Arctic *Thetis* class patrol frigates are constantly deployed in Greenlandic and Faroese waters. The *Thetis* class has an organic SH-60 Seahawk maritime helicopter and a 76 mm gun.

Since 2019, the Joint Arctic Command has maintained operational control of an anti-air warfare (AAW) frigate from the *Absalon* and *Ivar Huitfeldt* classes, depending on the area and the task. During such patrols, the Joint Arctic Command's air domain awareness is significantly improved. Denmark's maritime patrol aircraft (MPA) capability in the Arctic comes from one of four Royal Danish Air Force (RDAF) Challenger 604 MPA. These aircraft operate from Kangerlussuaq, Greenland and will be assigned to the Joint Arctic Command year-round commencing in 2021. For Search and Rescue missions, the Joint Arctic Command leases via Air Greenland, purchased two new Airbus H225 helicopters, which will replace the older S-61s in 2020. RDAF C-130Js also deploy regularly to Greenland. Although there are no army units permanently assigned, they occasionally deploy to Greenland for training and presence operations.

Denmark is working cooperatively with other militaries in the region as well. Canada's JTFN has also exchanged liaison officers with the Joint Arctic Command, while Danish forces are expected to participate in the Canadian-led multinational exercise 'Nanook 2020.' The presence of Thule Air Base in Greenland, operated by the U.S. Air Force since 1943, means there is close coordination between Joint Arctic Command, U.S. Northern Command, and North American Aerospace Defense Command. The Danish defense agreement from 2018 stipulates that defense forces in the Arctic are to be strengthened as a result of increased regional activities; an Arctic Capability package is under development to meet the above-mentioned requirements. However, the magnitude of Greenlandic territory, in reality, makes it a challenging task for the Kingdom of Denmark to closely surveil, monitor and react accordingly to breaches of sovereignty.

These challenges highlight the importance of dialogue and confidence-building measures for both Greenland and Svalbard as a means of reducing regional tensions and the possibility of conflict erupting. Though the likelihood of conflict remains low throughout the Arctic, the strategic, security, and economic significance of Greenland and Svalbard make these two regions noteworthy for their hotspot potential.

## Findings - Regional Frameworks for Cooperation

### *The Arctic Council*

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the intergovernmental Arctic Council forum are the main pillars on which the internationally recognized regime that governs the Arctic rests.<sup>xxii</sup> The Council has been subject to both acclaim and criticism since it was founded through the Ottawa Declaration in 1996. It has served to foster dialogue, cooperation, and coordination among the eight Arctic States and six Indigenous Permanent Participants on environmental protection and sustainable development issues. The Council's success in evoking binding decision-making on environmental protection and search and rescue through soft power alone partly explains the praise, as does its use of science-based assessments in major studies orchestrated through its six institutionalized Working Groups.<sup>xxiii</sup> In 2018, a group of international academics declared it “a model for regional governance” and nominated it for the Nobel Peace Prize.<sup>xxiv</sup>

The Arctic Council is a coherent policy making platform. While some might argue that its consensus-based decision-making process represents a weakness, others defend it as giving the body additional legitimacy. Realists note that most member states would be unlikely to accept any form of binding voting. In addition to the eight members and six permanent participants, there are a large and growing number of observers. The vested interests of member states, sub-states, non-states, and interstate actors influence its work, while the impact of the rotating chairs amongst member states has varied over the years. Their agendas have been conducive to creating function-specific networks, while horizontal and lateral connections within and between states have shaped its operations.<sup>xxv</sup> States holding the chairmanship introduce new agendas biannually. The Council has no power to enforce agreements or apply sanctions against its members.

Historically, criticism of the Council has centered on the lack of results in promoting sustainable development and mitigating climate change. Some have called for internal reforms to more effectively address the evolving needs of the Arctic.<sup>xxvi</sup> Its evolving views on the role of observers, including China – whose Arctic investments and influence are increasingly extensive - have caused confusion and frustration.<sup>xxvii</sup> U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo made the strongest call for reforms at the 2019 Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting, which failed to issue a final declaration.<sup>xxviii</sup> He introduced hard security issues in response to growing competition in the Arctic, ignoring the footnote in the Ottawa Declaration stating that the Council “should not deal with matters related to military security.”<sup>xxix</sup> Opponents contend that introducing such issues in the Council would be counterproductive and jeopardize existing cooperation on issues vital to regional safety and sustainable development.<sup>xxx</sup> However, the Secretary's argument illustrates

that current geo-economic and geopolitical realities in the Arctic question the assumptions of regional peace and stability on which the Council was founded.<sup>xxxix</sup>

The question is whether member States can continue to cordon off international geopolitics from their work in the Council. The complexities of international law and the growing resource competition in the Arctic region pose ever harder challenges for the Council's current approach to multilateral governance and joint problem-solving. The effects of the new circumstances are well illustrated by its failure to complete its first strategic plan in 2019.<sup>xxxix</sup> If the Council accommodates the effects of renewed geopolitical competition in the Arctic, its member States will no longer be able to refer to the Arctic as a space detached from global politics. Instead, it will represent a typical geopolitical chessboard. This would be challenging and change the character of the Council's operational work. However, its relevance will be reduced if the notion of Arctic exceptionalism is maintained, while China – being denied its desired influence in the Council – may be more than willing to fill the resulting gap in leadership. At the 2019 Arctic Circle China Forum, China hinted it might spearhead new Arctic organizations.<sup>xxxix</sup> Whether or not member states ever agree to change the mandate of the Council, they do need to consider effects of the deepening Sino-Russian strategic partnership and the welcoming stance to Chinese investments by some Arctic states.

# *North Atlantic Treaty Organization*

## **NATO and the Arctic**

NATO's founding task was to deter the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact from military aggression in Western Europe. Despite a foray into expeditionary warfare following the attacks of September 11, 2001, and the invocation of Article V in defense of the United States, this objective remains at the core of NATO's mission. With the resurgence of Russia as a regional security actor in Europe, and a potentially a destabilizing one after the Crimea crisis, NATO is reinvesting in its founding task, including increasing operations in the Arctic—both by member states and the alliance as a whole. This renewed focus on Europe, broadly, and the Arctic particularly has accelerated debate regarding NATO's role in the alliance's northernmost flank.

Should NATO serve as the primary venue for high-level political-military dialogue on the Arctic? The alliance's fitness for that role is deeply contested. NATO has a long history of Arctic operations. All Arctic littoral states other than Russia are alliance members, bringing NATO's area of responsibility up to the Arctic coastline. A conflict involving an Arctic state could result in the invocation of Article V and thus carry implications for non-Arctic NATO members. Meanwhile, Russian relationships with the alliance are deeply strained, and two other Arctic nations (Sweden and Finland) are not NATO members. NATO's long history in the Arctic argues for a legitimate role in regional security, yet these tensions create uncertainty with respect to the nature of that role.

## **NATO's Historic Presence in the Arctic**

NATO presence in the Arctic is not new. The Arctic has been a part of NATO's area of operations since its creation in 1949, and has been an important region for nuclear deterrence and submarine operations. Soviet sea power, for example, was thought to flow from Murmansk into the North Atlantic during a potential conflict with NATO, threatening alliance SLOCs. The Arctic was an important strategic part of NATO's northern flank and seen as critical to control in the event of a war with the Soviet Union. As became clear by the 1980s, the region was strategically significant to Soviet maritime strategy, which envisioned forming defensible undersea bastions in the Arctic from which Soviet ballistic missile submarines could threaten nuclear strikes on the United States and Europe.

Although NATO's focus on the northern flank diminished after the Cold War, both the American and Russian navies continued to deploy submarines to the area as a part of their nuclear second-strike capability and deterrence, activities that continue today. Alliance members have always operated in the Arctic, not least for those alliance members who live in the Arctic, and those operations did not stop (though they often slowed) after the Cold War. The Arctic was and remains integrated into NATO's larger vision of European security, not an isolated area of operations for conventional warfare.

## NATO's Role in the Arctic

***Based on extensive deliberation, this group does not believe that NATO is the appropriate venue for leading the security dialogue and cooperation that is necessary and missing in the Arctic.*** NATO is not representative of all Arctic States—Sweden and Finland are partners, not members, and Russia eyes the alliance with deep suspicion. Advocating for an increased political role for NATO in the Arctic will most likely fuel Russian mistrust and reinforce existing Russian narratives on NATO expansion and encirclement. Emphasizing NATO as the lead venue for dialogue could even reduce the potential for Arctic dialogue on balance if it drives Russian conceptions of Western escalation.

Tensions between Russia and NATO risk not only the failure to institute regularized exchanges of information, but could potentially hasten a marriage of necessity between Russia and China. Russia may prefer to avoid an increased Chinese presence in the Arctic, yet Chinese investment could be a necessity if Russia determined it could not fully meet perceived threats to its north. Already, sanctions towards Russia as a result of its invasion of Crimea and actions in eastern Ukraine have initiated closer Sino-Russo relations such as the Yamal 2 LNG project.<sup>xxxiv</sup> Advocating too forcefully for NATO's political centrality in the Arctic could, in similar fashion, strengthen Chinese-Russian relations to a point in which Russia's requirements for military investments are contingent upon Chinese support.

Finally, advocating for NATO to host an Arctic security dialogue would likely introduce non-Arctic nations into regional security discussions. Even if Russia could be persuaded to participate in a NATO-hosted forum (or if the Western Arctic States weighed Russia-NATO tensions less heavily than in this group's analysis), NATO would remain an undesirable venue for most Arctic States because of its non-Arctic character. All Arctic States regard regional decision making and local forums as the proprietary privilege of Arctic States alone.

***Although this group finds that NATO is not the lead venue for dialogue and cooperation on Arctic security, the alliance remains a valuable, legitimate Arctic actor that can contribute to de-confliction even if not cooperation.*** NATO's longstanding operational history in the Arctic, in particular the region near Norway commonly called the High North, means that the alliance is both an active and legitimate Arctic actor. As a result, NATO can serve as an information conduit between Western navies and Russia. This role is not particularly high-level, politically, nor is it likely to produce large-scale cooperation or coordination. Yet deconfliction, operational-level information exchanges, and strategic signaling can all advance regional stability.

NATO's largest exercise since the Cold War, Trident Juncture 18, took place in the Norwegian Sea and offers a clear example of these functions in action. The exercise, which involved the coordinated operation of approximately 50,000 personnel, 250 aircraft, 65 ships, and 10,000 vehicles, also included significant operational communication with Russian interlocutors and Russian military observers. The alliance communicated publically as well, providing transparency with respect to objectives. Exercise execution was not seamless—media reported Russian efforts to execute a live fire event at sea adjacent to the exercise, as well as GPS

jamming in the far north. Norway and Finland have formally (by diplomatic notes) protested against such incidents. Yet NATO has sufficient institutional mechanisms for dialogue with Russia to avoid dangerous miscalculations of intent, which should be seen as a success on the part of both the alliance and Russia. Although this may not be the high-level solution to inadequate political-military dialogue among Arctic states, it demonstrates that NATO's longstanding Arctic presence is legitimate and offers valuable mechanisms for operational and strategic communication with Russian leadership.

## *Arctic Security Forces Roundtable*

The Arctic Security Forces Roundtable (ASFR) series was initiated in 2011 after the U.S. Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and European Command (EUCOM) discussed the need to address security in the Arctic and adapt to the changing environment. As a result of these discussions, the ASFR was created to fill the identified gap, and specifically, “to build dialogue and agree on tangible actions that could lead to peaceful progress and stability in the region.” Today it is an independent forum, not bound by treaty, to collaborate on Arctic security in all domains and on operationally focused activities.<sup>xxxv</sup>

The overarching objectives of ASFR include:

- Promoting regional understanding through information sharing and by leveraging the work of other forums and stakeholders
- Enabling dialogue and collaboration on Arctic security
- Promoting best practices and technological solutions to address risks and threats
- Integrating scientific research to increase awareness of the environment and challenges<sup>xxxvi</sup>

ASFR is an annual flag- and general officer-level series of events designed to address security in the Arctic, an area expressly not addressed in the Arctic Council. Participants are ostensibly the eight Arctic states and invited partners, to include France, the United Kingdom, Germany, and the Netherlands. However, Russia has not been an active member since 2014 following the Crimea annexation, and has not participated in the ASFR or the Arctic Chiefs of Defense (CHOD) forum – also known as the Northern Chiefs of Defense Conference– since 2014, when military cooperation between the West and Russia was halted.<sup>xxxvii</sup>

Whereas some critics argue that the ASFR could be “more closely modelled after the Arctic Council...in their focus on inclusivity, open and regular multi-lateral dialogue, and finding common ground on policy”<sup>xxxviii</sup> others see it merely as, “an opportunity for the defense establishments from a number of countries in the High North and the Arctic to meet to exchange information, de-conflict activities, and talk about the challenges we respectively face.”<sup>xxxix</sup>

The ASFR, with its mandate to establish and maintain a security dialogue, serves as a parallel structure to the non-security oriented Arctic Council. The ASFR’s agenda includes military issues, fortifying trust, preventing unintentional incidents, and adopting a military code of conduct. Bringing the ASFR and Arctic hard security into any other forum could become a limiting, diverting, or restraining factor to other well-working forums. Relations between the West and Russia are unlikely to be cordially reestablished in the near future. However, given the geopolitical security situation in the Arctic, Russia’s role cannot be neglected. While Russia may

prefer meeting within the Arctic Chiefs of Defense Forum, the ASFR could serve as a more moderate forum to foster dialogue.

## Recommendations - Reinforce, Restore, and Scale Current Multilateral Frameworks

### *Restart Arctic CHOD Meetings with Russia*

The Arctic Chiefs of Defense Forum (CHOD) was designed as an annual meeting that allows the top Arctic military leaders to convene discussions on security-related topics that intersect Arctic issues. Canada hosted the first Arctic CHOD meeting in April 2012, with the aim of creating a forum where the Chiefs of Defense and other regional senior defense officials could discuss common safety and security issues pertaining to the Arctic. The focus on the meeting was national experiences in Arctic operations, as well as assistance and cooperation with civilian authorities in the Arctic. The meeting aimed at further strengthening relations between Arctic nations and sought to broaden mutual understanding of each State's abilities while enhancing support to authorities performing Arctic search and rescue, mass casualty response, and marine oil pollution response. As Arctic states have some unsolved territorial disputes and Arctic coastal states are submitting claims for extended continental shelves, establishing dialogue and trust among Arctic CHODs is essential to help prevent misunderstandings and future unintended security escalation.<sup>xl</sup>

During the first Arctic CHOD meeting, all participants agreed the agenda should include improved search and rescue (SAR) capabilities and address northern environmental challenges in parallel with the Arctic Council agenda. Additionally, there was a desire to establish a forum that would contribute to a peaceful Arctic and to bolster cooperative security among the Arctic nations. There were no formal declarations, but the participants subsequently determined the forum construct, such as meeting frequency, a chair rotation schedule, instruments for recording decisions, and means of communication.

The second Arctic CHOD conference was held in Ilulissat, Greenland in 2013. This meeting aimed to strengthen defense relationships and dialogue regarding Arctic issues and common national interests. The regional military commanders were included in the meeting for direct mutual and bilateral discussions focused on Arctic issues. Topics included sharing of expertise on regional operational challenges, promoting responsible stewardship, and the role the military can play to support of their respective civil authorities.<sup>xli</sup>

Military-to-military cooperation with Russia was halted in 2014, after the Russian annexation of Crimea and military operations in Ukraine. As a result, all further Arctic CHOD meetings were suspended, which has severely limited all recognized comprehensive security dialogue on the Arctic. Yet the potential for a security-related event transpiring in the Arctic continues to escalate due to the increased level of activity in the region. Particularly concerning

is the recent level of Russian militarization within the Arctic. Conflict could further stem from a spillover of great power competition from another part of the world. This could lead to unintended escalation in the Arctic if dialogue is unavailable. Reconvening the former Arctic CHOD forum would be a mechanism that Arctic states could use to re-open dialogue on the strategic military level, increase transparency, and build trust in order to mitigate security challenges arising from misperceptions or misunderstandings. Although inviting Russia back into military-to-military discussions may be controversial, closer analysis might conclude that the seniority and representation by only the top military leaders (with statesman or envoy-like credentials), could ease Russia back into an Arctic security forum with mutually beneficial outcomes.

The Arctic CHOD forum would be a logical military-based measure to reduce tension and ensure a rules-based order in the Arctic region. The forum would build common understanding and trust through a transparent dialogue. It could open communication at the highest military level, lower the risk of unintended escalation, mitigate contentious issues, and promote common stewardship of a peaceful Arctic region. To ensure this forum endures, the Arctic CHODs should agree upon a new declaration of security cooperation that outlines foundational principles, an over-arching purpose and objectives, and an agreement to the maintenance of a dialogue through recurrent meetings. Additionally, a future Arctic CHOD conference could work in parallel with the Arctic Council, allowing security issues to be addressed without impacting the Council agenda.

Though the Arctic CHOD Forum would be most effective with all eight Arctic CHODs represented, there is still value in restarting the forum even without Russia. If unable to attain a policy waiver to permit the inclusion of Russia, the remaining Arctic CHODs should continue the forum to collectively align on Arctic security issues. It is especially important for NATO CHODs to meet with Sweden and Finland, countries that are not NATO members but are in alignment with western democratic ideals and the general conduct of Arctic security matters.

As Arctic States struggle with military resources and readiness, re-starting the Arctic CHOD forum could enable better international integration through military exercises, combined operations, communication, information sharing, transparency measures, and other cooperative mechanisms.

## *Update Arctic Security Forces Roundtable Membership*

The Arctic Security Forces Roundtable (ASFR) offers a substantial architecture to discuss relevant Arctic security issues among regional stakeholders. Yet Western sanctions towards Russia preclude its participation. Since Russia comprises approximately half of the Arctic coastline and Arctic population, it holds a unique role in Arctic security. In order to facilitate a comprehensive approach toward regional security, the ASFR should consider re-inviting Russia to its annual meetings. If the ASFR is allowed to include Russia, the following recommendations are offered for the forum:

- Maintain a similar position utilized in other fora, such as the Nordic Council and the Arctic Coast Guard Forum.
- Start with small steps to create trust via leadership meetings, and begin with soft topics, such as using security forces for SAR.
- Re-organize the Arctic Chiefs of Defense Conference (ACHOD) as the lead forum with ASFR as a sub-group for preparations and being the “secretariat” (combine ACHOD + ASFR).
- As an alternative, consider linking the ASFR to the Arctic Council, tasking this body to address security through a comprehensive approach. The ASFR might serve a similar role to that of the Arctic Coast Guard Forum, modeled on inclusivity and open, multi-lateral dialogue and serving the aim of finding common policy ground.
- Alternatively, divide ASFR membership into a group of Arctic states only, and form a second group of non-Arctic states holding observer status.

These actions would require strong political will and an exemption from current sanctions policy, an admittedly difficult task based on the frozen state of Western and Russian diplomacy. However, doing so might foster greater Arctic security.

## *Invite Russia to the International Seapower Symposium*

The United States Government, working through the Navy Staff and the Naval War College, should invite the Russian Federation Navy and Coast Guard to the bi-annual U.S. Naval War College International Seapower Symposium (ISS). Held every two years since the inaugural event in 1969, this constitutes the largest and most influential maritime leadership forum in the world. This forum invites heads of navies and coast guards from around the world to collaborate on collective maritime security issues. Topics range from humanitarian assistance, search and rescue, domain awareness, law enforcement, and joint/multilateral operations – all aiming to enhance a common understanding of maritime security worldwide. With the global ramifications of a warming Arctic and rising Arctic maritime activity, maritime security in the Arctic region will likely become a consistent pillar of ISS in the future.



Figure 4. 24<sup>th</sup> International Seapower Symposium, Newport, Rhode Island

The Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014 resulted in regulations that prevent Russian invitation and participation in collaborative security forums and events such as ISS. Therefore, the Russian Federation Navy has not been present at ISS for the past three meetings.

Given the importance of dialogue and transparency, the U.S. Naval War College should request a policy waiver to allow an invitation to be extended to the Head of the Russian Federation Navy. Russian attendance at ISS would allow for more robust maritime security discussions, more transparency, and potential cooperation within the Arctic region. It would also allow the opportunity for all Arctic nations to meet and collaborate with non-Arctic maritime leaders on Arctic issues.

## *Invite Russia to the Newport Arctic Scholars Initiative*

The United States Government, working through the Navy Staff and the Naval War College, should invite the Russian Federation Navy and leading Russian Arctic academic and policy organizations to the Newport Arctic Scholars Initiative (NASI). Sponsored by the U.S. Naval War College, the Newport Arctic Scholars Initiative (NASI) is a unique forum that brings together Arctic maritime practitioners and academic experts to discuss regional security issues.

NASI events rotate between North America and Europe, reflecting the importance of diverse perspectives. Indeed, the events thus far have greatly added to regional discussions. NASI has focused on Arctic security awareness, capabilities, confidence-building measures, and the development of a future collective Arctic security framework. As climate change continues to evolve the region and Arctic military activity continues to rise, security of the Arctic region will likely become a consistent theme in international policy formulation. NASI aims to be the leading contributor to Arctic security organization and development in the future.



Figure 5. Newport Arctic Scholars Initiative 2019

Russian perspectives are critical to any Arctic discussions. Russian attendance at NASI would allow for the broadest view of Arctic security issues, including research, dialogue, publication, and recommendation opportunities to shape senior governmental and military officials' thinking on Arctic policies. It would also allow an opportunity for all Arctic states to meet and collaborate at a working group level on the full spectrum of Arctic issues, including the role of international organizations with respect to the Arctic Ocean, safety, climate change, Arctic Indigenous peoples, and future cooperation and policy understanding.

## *Keep the Arctic Council Mandate in Place*

In an era that has seen a return to great power competition, many states are frustrated by the limited Arctic Council mandate, but it is hard to detect an appetite for expanding the organization's reach to include defense and security issues. Although some believed U.S. Secretary of State Pompeo was opening the door to a wider mandate in his May 2019 speech, there is little evidence to support that. Pompeo used the ministerial level platform with its global audience as a venue to call attention to actions by two states (Russia and China) that he believed were threats to Arctic security. Pompeo stopped well short of making any proposals for change in his speech, and there has been no follow-up proposal in the year since by the Trump administration.

It is well to remember that both Russia and the United States insisted on the limited mandate at the Council's founding. Even if the United States were to make a proposal to broaden the mandate, there is no evidence that Russia would support it. Other members might also be wary, or opposed, and the Indigenous groups who are Permanent Participants would be unlikely to support this idea. Such a change would be further complicated by the numerous observers, comprised of states, intergovernmental and interparliamentary organizations, and non-governmental organizations.

If the mandate were to be expanded, the new emphasis on security and defense would likely become so weighty as to force a wholesale change within the organization. That could come at some sacrifice to areas in which the Council has excelled – the working groups which focus on environmental and sustainable development issues. As the Findings section of this report notes, there are other organizations better positioned to take on the security and defense mandate.

As part of its effort to finalize a strategic plan and implement related amendments of its structure and operations, member states must decide on the role of the thirteen non-Arctic states approved as observers. The plan should take into consideration the Arctic policies and strategies adopted by the observers who seek increased engagement in the region. To ensure that the Arctic region remains peaceful and stable in an era of surging global interest, the Council must be further empowered to shape policy in the region. The Council should focus on building a common agenda to strengthen the rules-based international order. To this end, member states should increase the Council's capacity to act by increasing its core funding and by establishing a substantial project fund to develop joint enforcement capacity in Arctic waters.

Critical shortcomings in functional areas such as air and maritime domain awareness, aids to navigation, maritime search and rescue, fisheries control, and enforcement of recognized resource claims are areas that could foster security cooperation among members of the Arctic Council. In the long term, such cooperation could be conducive to the willingness of member States to settle disputes and thus serve to limit competition over resources. However, to enable

the Council to act as a regional fisheries organization or otherwise enforce member states' sovereign rights, they must empower the Council by assigning it an expanded mandate.

## *Maintain Arctic Coast Guard Forum Mission*

Increased maritime activity in the Arctic Ocean, including surface, subsurface, and aviation activity, coupled with the lack of a global forum to discuss issues related to hard security, are driving discussions as to the most appropriate venue for Arctic security issues. The Arctic Coast Guard Forum (ACGF) is an independent, informal, operationally-driven organization – not bound by treaty – to foster safe, secure, and environmentally responsible maritime activity in the Arctic. All Arctic countries are members of the forum. Chairmanship duties rotate every two years in concert with the chairmanship of the Arctic Council. Iceland holds the ACGF chair from 2019-2021.

Security discussions in the ACGF are limited to soft security. The primary focus is on operational issues such as fishing, search and rescue (SAR), environmental monitoring and response, territorial integrity, support to civil society, and scientific research. While the forum may seem appropriate to discuss hard security issues, doing so raises several concerns. First, participants lack the authority to engage appropriate high-level political and military personnel necessary to hold valid security discussions. Command authorities within the eight Arctic countries vary significantly. The coast guards of Denmark and Norway are integrated parts of their respective navies. The Norwegian Coast Guard has its own C2 arrangements, and a separate law which provides it with limited policy authority which the Navy does not hold. The U.S. Coast Guard falls under the Department of Homeland Security rather than the Department of Defense. Finland's Coast Guard is under the authority of the Ministry of the Interior. The Swedish and Icelandic Coast Guards fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice. The Canadian Coast Guard is under the jurisdiction of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans. The Russian Coast Guard is a Component of the Federal Security Service (FSB). These differing command authorities make it challenging to hold higher level discussions as senior participants would not necessarily be the appropriate counterparts with whom to engage on relevant security issues.

Another challenge involves the focus and mandate of the ACGF. While the success of the ACGF is due in part to its operational level of focus and its lack of a formal treaty, shifting the focus to a formal setting involving high level hard security talks could prove detrimental to the current success of the forum. It is recommended that the ACGF not be used as a forum to discuss hard security issues. The reasons for this are twofold. First, different authorities who have jurisdiction over the coast guards of the member States would not allow for the appropriate political/military personnel to meet in one forum to conduct hard security talks. Second, the core mission of the ACGF is operational and the lack of a treaty makes the talks informal, therefore high level discussion of hard security would be out of place and could diminish the noteworthy success of this forum. In fact, one of the reasons for the successes of the forum, despite the rising tensions between Russia and the West, is that the focus remains limited to its core mission.

## Recommendations - Launch New Multilateral Frameworks

### *Create an Arctic Ocean Maritime Symposium*

Increased maritime activity in the Arctic Ocean, including surface, subsurface, and aviation activity, coupled with the lack of a global forum to discuss issues related to hard security, are the impetus for the proposal to create an Arctic Ocean Maritime Symposium (AOMS). The AOMS would be expressly designed to tackle issues related to maritime security and defense; this forum would be vital due to the limitations on addressing these topics in other leading Arctic forums.

AOMS would be an initiative that promotes security, cooperation, and coordination among international naval leaders to meet common Arctic security challenges, opportunities, and responsibilities. The forum would exclude no one, but limit management rights to the eight Arctic states. AOMS would be an open and inclusive platform for discussion of globally relevant maritime security and defense issues related to the Arctic region. Its mission would be to generate a flow of information between naval professionals leading to common understanding and cooperative solutions to promote maritime security partnerships, preserve maritime access, and provide ready naval forces to respond to crises and contingencies.

The Arctic Ocean Maritime Symposium would be hosted biennially by the chief of navy from one of the eight Arctic States. The U.S. Chief of Naval Operations, in concert with U.S. Fleet Forces and U.S. Naval Forces Europe, could co-sponsor the event. Members of AOMS would include Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden, and the United States.

The Chairmanship of the Arctic Ocean Maritime Symposium would rotate every two years, and attendees would include chiefs of the navies and coast guards from the nations around the world as well as key members of their staffs. Member nations, led by the chair, would determine the symposium agenda. AOMS would ideally be a two-day forum for international naval leaders to host or participate in various meetings and working group sessions, announce news of their activities and achievements, network, and showcase their important work in the Arctic.

## *Create CUES Framework for the Arctic Region*

Throughout history, numerous incidents at sea have disrupted fishing, commerce, and navigation. States have taken steps to curb instability through maritime cooperation through agreements such as the International Regulations for Preventing Collisions at Sea (COLREGS 1972).

Though COLREGS successfully established broad rules for all mariners, there are other agreements that seek to specifically prevent misunderstandings and misperceptions between navies operating in the same waters. The 1972 Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Prevention of Incidents on and Over the High Seas – more commonly referred to as the Incidents at Sea or INCSEA agreement – accomplished a reduction of escalations throughout the Cold War. This landmark agreement was modeled by many European nations as they also created bilateral INCSEA agreements with the Soviet Union. Russia assumed responsibility for the bilateral agreements following the collapse of the Soviet Union and they remain in effect today in order to reduce misunderstandings and misperceptions.

In the post-Soviet era, the Western Pacific Naval Symposium (WPNS) sought to further expand on the definitions and agreements from COLREGS while building on the principles of INCSEA. At the 2014 WPNS in Qingdao, China, 21 Pacific states signed the non-binding ‘Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea’ (CUES) to reduce the chance of an incident at sea or an unintentional escalation. CUES was voluntarily adopted to standardize safety procedures, communications, and maneuvering instructions to allow for cooperation without escalation. Yet not all Arctic states are members of WPNS and thus signatories of CUES. As such, it is recommended that an Arctic CUES be developed for use in the Arctic region.

The two main areas of discussion for Arctic CUES cooperation are communication and safety. Streamlining procedures for both military vessels and civilian vessels is critical. As the Arctic becomes more accessible, laying the groundwork to build mutual prosperity for the region is vital.

An important first step is to establish a venue for discussions. The Arctic Council could be one such venue, and its mandate would ensure that topics of common operations would not stray into defense or security matters. Alternatively, the Arctic Coast Guard Forum or newly proposed Arctic Ocean Maritime Symposium could also facilitate discussions. Heads of Navy from Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States should create a new agreement for CUES in the Arctic region to increase dialogue and promote security cooperation between navies.

## *Create a High-level Political-Military Forum for the Arctic*

At a meeting in May 2008 in Ilulissat, Greenland, the five Arctic coastal states (Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia, and the United States) agreed to the Ilulissat Declaration, which outlined principles for future cooperation regarding issues related to the Arctic Ocean. The coastal states declared that they would cooperate to address challenges related to the Arctic Ocean, including the delimitation of the continental shelf, conditions for local and Indigenous communities, safety at sea, economic development, environmental problems, climate change, and the exploitation of natural resources. They also resolved that their cooperation would follow international law and that they would support existing forums and bodies, such as the Arctic Council. The meeting was a reaction to increased global criticism of the Arctic order, which was seen as ineffective by certain non-governmental organizations and non-Arctic states and entities, who instead argued for a radical transformation of the regional governance framework, including an Arctic Treaty.<sup>xlii</sup>

In the years following the Ilulissat Meeting, many observers and diplomats saw the Arctic Five (A5) as a controversial, potentially permanent Arctic forum. The body was criticized for failing to give a voice to local and Indigenous communities and for also discounting non-coastal states that might have legitimate interests in the Arctic Ocean (such as Iceland). Some observers and diplomats also argued that it could potentially undermine the Arctic Council and thus destabilize the existing Arctic order. At an A5 meeting in Chelsea, Canada in 2010, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton ended the idea of making A5 a permanent ministerial forum by publicly criticizing it for failing to include actors with legitimate interests in the Arctic. After 2010, the A5 was instead used as a forum in which civil servants could discuss practical issues that were clearly unique to the Arctic Ocean, such as high seas fisheries and the delimitation of the continental shelf.<sup>xliii</sup> Nonetheless, the principles of the Ilulissat Declaration were reaffirmed at the ten-year anniversary in 2018.<sup>xliv</sup>

For the aforementioned reasons, the A5 would likely not function well as a forum for dialogue on security-related issues in the Arctic. Arctic security issues involve areas both within and outside of the Arctic Ocean, such as in the so-called connecting seas (e.g. the Barents, Labrador, Greenland, and Norwegian Seas) and Northern Finland, Norway, and Sweden. The lack of inclusion of those non-A5 Arctic countries does not diminish their regional security concerns. Finally, the controversy that followed the Ilulissat meeting would likely follow any attempted reinvigoration of the A5 as a ministerial forum.

Nonetheless, the A5 – and the enduring success of the Ilulissat Declaration – illustrates the possibility of creating a new security forum outside of the Arctic Council. It shows that Arctic governance can be fungible and that the states can create new bodies that are tailor-made to their requirements. Depending on the circumstances, a new forum could include a few or all of the Arctic States, specially tailored to address specific concerns of the members. Governance

should not be viewed as limited to a single Arctic Council forum, but rather the focus should remain on the pursuit of commonalities in order to address and improve regional challenges.

# Implementation Plan

In order to improve Arctic security and stability – and prevent an Arctic security dilemma from taking place – it is necessary for all Arctic states to resume dialogue. The recommendations of this report focus on attainable mechanisms that will improve dialogue and reduce the likelihood of misperceptions or misunderstandings in the region that could raise regional tensions or spark conflict. Though the region is assessed as having a low probability of conflict erupting, there is no question that maritime activity is rising and threatens to increase regional instability. The inclusion of Russia in Arctic security dialogue recognizes the emerging Arctic security challenges and at the same time considers the sanction regime imposed on military cooperation with Russia.

Realistically, a small step approach to renew military security dialogue is vital for developing rules and norms in the Arctic. This allows Arctic nations to find ways to cooperate while still deterring aggression. Dialogue is a critical element of developing trust and relationships that can prevent inadvertent conflict. The first step will be to invite Russian scholars and military professionals to take part in academic research groups focused on Arctic security issues, like the Newport Arctic Scholar Initiative. This format can be used to further develop a consensus for regional findings and recommendations. Doing so can increase transparency by sharing information and relevant Arctic research while building a mutual understanding of Arctic security challenges. If successful at lower levels, approved dialogue should be resumed at specific higher level events, such as inviting Russian participation in the International Seapower Symposium hosted bi-annually by the Naval War College.

Once dialogue has resumed, the next step will be to implement the recommended frameworks – such as Arctic CUES and AOMS – in the Arctic security environment. Successful implementation of these frameworks – alongside a more stable political situation – will enable the creation of additional security frameworks, to include restarting the Arctic CHOD meetings. Doing so will offer further mechanisms for dialogue on important security challenges and provide further high-level avenues for discussions on Arctic security matters.

Though the implementation plan calls for immediate mechanisms to improve dialogue among the Arctic nations to reduce the chance of an inadvertent escalation leading to an Arctic security dilemma, there is a reasonable assumption that further measures and timelines should be tailored to the evolving geopolitical and geostrategic environment.

# Conclusion

The Arctic region is facing challenges to a rules-based existence and the existing framework of governmental and security forums may not be sufficient to meet the new frontier of economic development and strategic competition. The Arctic exceptionalism that ensured the region remained largely peaceful for decades is dissolving along with the diminishing ice pack covering the top of the world.

The existing disputes in the Arctic are related to unresolved historical borders and territories, interpretation of UNCLOS with regard to the Svalbard archipelago, and the Arctic nautical passages. There are potential disputes related to the ongoing process surrounding the overlapping claims for the extension of the continental shelves of Arctic coastal states. However, the vast majority of Arctic resources are undisputed and clearly within the Arctic states' territory, territorial waters, or designated exclusive economic zones. There are growing economic interests from states outside the Arctic, introducing new stakeholders to the region while creating opportunities and security concerns.

The current Arctic multinational governance structure, particularly the Arctic Council and regional foras, are crucial for maintaining an international rule based system and enhancing regional safety and sustainable development. The complexity of international law and great power competition poses hard challenges to the Council's approach, particularly to multilateral governance and cooperation.

A thawing Arctic creates profound changes in the geopolitical landscape and Arctic regional security is increasingly connected to both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans' security infrastructure. The geostrategic environment is evolving. Russia is re-emerging as a regional security actor in Europe and NATO is also turned increased attention to the High North. This evolving landscape is highlighting shortfalls in security dialogue and transparency. The relationship between Russia and NATO remains tense and the current dialogue is not suitable to reduce tension caused by the increased military activity and the growing security dilemma framed by great power competition. However, with its longstanding history in the region, the alliance does present valuable utility with respect to deterrence and operational information sharing among Arctic states. The geopolitical environment has changed and there is an increasing security interest by Asian countries that needs to be recognized and there is an opportunity to restart a new security dialogue as the existing framework is reviewed.

In our recommendations, we see a need to reinforce, restore, and scale the current multilateral framework to the new geopolitical environment while also introducing new multinational frameworks. There is a need for a high level political military forum for the Arctic region to facilitate a security dialogue in parallel with the Arctic Council. To adapt to increased international interests, we recommend the creation of an Arctic Ocean Maritime Symposium (AOMS) and develop an Arctic Code for Unplanned Encounters (CUES) to prevent

unintentional escalation, mirroring similar arrangements and dialogue among Navies in the Pacific and the Indian Oceans.

The key to our recommendations is to start a process of establishing dialogue and transparency by inviting all Arctic nations – to include Russia – to take part in multinational frameworks for Arctic security and dialogue. A first step will be to invite Russia to the International Seapower Symposium and take part in the ongoing academic research by the Newport Arctic Scholar Initiative. We are recommending an implementation plan that recognizes the geostrategic landscape and the emerging Arctic security challenges, while considering the effect of sanctions regimes imposed on military cooperation with Russia. These recommendations are viewed as necessary to ensure regional security and stability in an increasingly open Arctic.

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<sup>xv</sup> The Barents Observer about proposed new legislation regarding passage in NSR in Russian Law: <https://thebarentsobserver.com/en/security/2019/03/izvestia-what-awaits-foreign-military-vessels-northern-sea-route> (last updated 08.03.2020).

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## Appendix A

### Arctic Forums and Organizations

#### *United Nations*

The Arctic is part of the global governance framework under the United Nations. The region comes under the international law regime, but the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea is particularly applicable in the Arctic Ocean, as in any other maritime part of the globe. Arctic nations are members of the UN and are responsible under the UN Charter. Under the Charter of UN, the UN Security Council is responsible for maintaining international peace and security and shall act in accordance with the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations. The specific powers granted to the Security Council for the discharge of these duties are laid down in Chapters VI, VII, VIII, and XII. Of the Arctic nations, Russia and the U.S. are both Arctic states and permanent members of the UN Security Council.

On the international system level, the UN Security Council maintains a forum for dialogue between nations; that dialogue may include Arctic and non-Arctic states when applicable. The UN Charter empowers the General Assembly to consider principles for arms control and disarmament and the UN has facilitated the negotiation of several multilateral arms control treaties. As global confidence-building measures (CBM) these treaties also applies to the Arctic region. In many ways, the UN serves as a confidence-building measure between nations facing potential security conflicts, to include the Arctic region.

There are several principal organs of the UN that apply to the Arctic. The many international organizations and agencies of the UN form a layer of cooperation that provide international norms, standards, and regulations. The International Maritime Organization (IMO) is particularly relevant in the Arctic, with the IMO's Polar Code detailing additional requirements for ships operating in polar waters.

The Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) makes recommendations to coastal states on matters related to establishing the outer limits of continental shelves. Though the CLCS will rule on the scientific evidence presented by a state, they will not determine boundaries between overlapping claims as this is held to be a matter of negotiation between states. The International Court of Justice based in The Hague, Netherlands rules in accordance with international treaties, conventions, and international custom and general principles of law. The court's primary objectives are settling legal disputes submitted by states and advising on legal questions brought by international organs and agencies.

The UN provides an international governance framework for the Arctic. Empowered by the UN Charter these systems can serve to mitigate conflict and regulate the Arctic region as part of the global international system. However, the ability of the UN to mitigate and resolve conflict relies on the member states. Given the global great power competition between the US, Russia, and China – all permanent members of the UN Security Council – it is unlikely that the

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UN will be able to take decisive action if there is a disagreement within the Security Council members.

### *Arctic Council*

There are several fora for Arctic development and the most dominant is the Arctic Council (AC). AC permanent members represent the eight Arctic states. Permanent participant status has been granted to six organizations representing Arctic Indigenous peoples. There are additionally thirteen states, thirteen intergovernmental and inter-parliamentary organizations, and twelve non-governmental organizations that have been granted observer status. The Arctic Council is the leading intergovernmental forum promoting cooperation, coordination, and interaction on issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic. The organization does not cover security matters.

### *Arctic Coast Guard Forum*

The Arctic Coast guard Forum (ACGF) is an independent informal, operational driven organization designed to foster safe, secure, and environmentally responsible activity in the Arctic. All Arctic countries are members of this forum and the chair rotates every 2 years in concert with the chairmanship of the Arctic Council. The forum agrees on following strategic goals:

- Strengthen multilateral cooperation and coordination within the Arctic maritime domain, and existing and future multilateral agreements
- Seek common solutions to maritime issues related to the agencies fulfilling the functions of coast guards within the region
- Collaborate with the Arctic Council through the sharing of information
- Facilitate safe and secure maritime activity in the Arctic region, with sustainable development to be promoted as appropriate
- Contribute to a stable, predictable, and transparent maritime environment
- Build a common operational picture to ensure proper protocols for emergency response coordination, and safe navigation
- Work collaboratively to advance the protection of the marine environment
- Maximize the potential for Arctic maritime activities to positively impact the communities, lives, and culture of Arctic communities including Indigenous peoples
- Integrate scientific research in support of Coast Guard operations as appropriate

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- Support high standards of operations and sustainable activities in the Arctic through the sharing of information, including best practices and technological solutions to address threats and risks

The forum mandate does not include hard security issues or military cooperation beyond governance matters.

## **National Arctic Forums for Cooperation**

There are several other state sponsored forums that accommodate cooperation and coordination between academia, businesses and governments.

### *International Arctic Forum*

Russia has been sponsoring the International Arctic forum in St Petersburg. In 2019 it brought together representatives from 52 nations, science and business communities, on issues impacting sustainable growth in the Arctic region.

### *Arctic Circle Assembly*

Iceland has been sponsoring the Arctic Circle assembly and Forums with the aim of strengthening the international focus on the future of the Arctic. Since 2015 the assembly has been arranged in Iceland and forums have been taken place in Alaska, Singapore, Greenland, Canada, Russia, USA, Scotland, Faeroe Island, Korea and China.

### *Arctic Frontiers*

Norway has been hosting the Arctic Frontiers since 2006, assembling a global scientific conference on economic and environmental sustainable growth in the North. The main premise is to connect academia with decision-makers from government and businesses. This forum, as with the other Arctic forums, provides a dialogue and communication between science and research focused organizations and government and industry in the Arctic. Security interests are not part of their agenda.

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## Regional Forums for Security and Cooperation

There is one Arctic but many distinct Arctic regions based on climate, accessibility, geography, economic activity, and history and culture of the different Arctic states. The Arctic region connects the Asian, European and American continents while linking the Pacific Ocean and the Atlantic Ocean. The Euro-Atlantic region is often referred to as the High North, whereas the Eurasian-Pacific region links Asia to Europe around the Pacific Ocean. Alaska and the Canadian Northern territories are connected to the North American continent and Russia from the Kara Gate to the Bering Strait is the largest part of the Arctic, linking Europe and Asia.

### *Euro-Atlantic Region*

Security of the European High North is part of the European security architecture. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization is the dominant military alliance, with five of eight Arctic states being NATO members. Sweden and Finland are not NATO members but are close NATO partners in the Arctic. Four of the five Arctic coastal states are members of NATO. Though the fifth coastal state, Russia, was a member of the NATO-Russia Council (NRC) established in May 2002, all military and civilian cooperation through this forum has been suspended since 2014 in response to the illegal annexation of Crimea. Yet the last meeting of the NRC in Brussels in July 2019 concluded that while NATO and Russia hold fundamentally different views, both are committed to continue a dialogue.

### *Arctic Security Forces Roundtable*

The Arctic Security Forces roundtable is a security forum co-hosted by EUCOM that is designed to broaden partnerships and cooperative efforts among nations with strategic interests and responsibilities in the Arctic. Originally among the member nations – that included Western European states with Arctic interests as well as the Arctic states – Russia has not participated since 2014. Apart from the NRC, there are no current military security focused forums that include all Arctic states.

### *European Union*

The European Union has significant Arctic interests, with member states being Arctic nations as well as the impacts on Arctic environmental and economic developments on the broader EU community. The EU is not strictly a security organization, but does address security

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issues, such as combating terrorism, organized criminal activities, and cybercrime. NATO and EU share strategic interests and hold regular political consultation on security issues in Europe. The EU has formed the EU Arctic Forum Foundation consisting of three pillars: the Arctic economic forum, EU Arctic forum and a Science policy forum.

### *Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe*

With 57 participating states in North America, Europe, and Asia, the OSCE is the world's largest regional security organization. The OSCE strives for stability, peace, and democracy for more than a billion people, seeking to attain these goals through political dialogue about shared values and through practical work that aims to make a lasting difference. The OSCE is a forum for political dialogue on a wide range of security issues and a platform for joint action to improve the lives of individuals and communities. The organization uses a comprehensive approach to security that encompasses the politico-military, economic and environmental, and human dimensions. Through this approach, and with its inclusive membership, the OSCE helps bridge differences and build trust between states by co-operating on conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation.

Russia continues to view the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) as one of the backbone organizations of Europe. The Organization is undergoing transformation, shifting from hard security to focus more on human rights and soft security issues. The Organization's ability to prevent a military conflict seems less likely given the diminishing national commitment levels to the organization.

### *Barents Euro-Arctic Cooperation*

On the sub-regional level, the Barents Euro-Arctic Cooperation is contributing to dialogue among member nations and synchronizing efforts to meet common safety challenges. The members of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council are Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the European Commission. The chairmanship of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council rotates between Finland, Norway, Russia, and Sweden. The forum does not facilitate any security discussions beyond soft power.

### *Eurasia Pacific Region*

The Arctic in the Pacific extends to the Aleutian Islands chain and borders to the Pacific. The Asian Arctic security architecture is linked to individual countries' Arctic policies and strategies and there are no dedicated multinational forum for dialogue or transparency in Arctic security development.

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The U.S. Indo-Pacific Combatant Command (INDOPACOM) has responsibility for the Arctic region the Sea of Okhotsk (Russian border), while the U.S. Northern Combatant Command (NORTHCOM) at the Bering strait in the Bering Sea. With allies and partners, INDOPACOM states it is committed to enhancing stability in the Asia-Pacific region by promoting security cooperation, encouraging peaceful development, responding to contingencies, deterring aggression, and, when necessary, fighting to win. This approach is based on partnership, presence, and military readiness.

### *Alaska and Canadian Northern Territories*

The close defense cooperation between Canada and the U.S. covers the defense interest of the North American Arctic. The North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) is a U.S. and Canadian bi-national organization charged with the missions of aerospace warning, aerospace control, and maritime warning for North America. Aerospace warning includes the detection, validation, and warning of attack against North America whether by aircraft, missiles, or space vehicles, through mutual support arrangements with other commands.

### *Russia*

The Arctic region includes five NATO countries, which Russia views as a unique threat to security. Securing the region through combining civilian and military activity is a necessary first step to enacting control in a fast changing Arctic. The Russian security service (FSB) and the new Russian Arctic military command structure support both military deterrence and the extension of governance to secure borders and enforce regulations.

The Northern Fleet Joint Strategic Command was established in December 2014 to give greater autonomy to the Russian Navy's Northern Fleet. In 2021, the Northern Fleet will become a separate Military District covering the Arctic region and bordering territories. The Northern Fleet HQ military activities are guided by Russian official military and foreign policies in the Arctic.<sup>xliv</sup> The strategic significance of the Arctic is directly connected with the significant economic contributions of the Arctic zone, as well as security implications for the Russian maritime nuclear forces and bastion defense.

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## Appendix B

### 2020 NASI Scholars

Scholars are asked to join a consensus signifying that they endorse “the general policy thrust and judgments reached by the group, though not necessarily every finding and recommendation.” They participate in the Newport Arctic Scholars Initiative in their individual, not their institutional capacities.

**DR. WALTER A. BERBRICK** is an associate professor in the War Gaming Department and founding director of the Arctic Studies Group at the U.S. Naval War College. He serves as the co-lead scholar of the Newport Arctic Scholars Initiative and Coordinator of the Naval War College’s area of study for the Arctic region. He has led more than 20 major research projects and authored or co-authored more than a dozen reports and publications on joint and naval warfare, national security, strategy, and the Arctic region. Previously, he served as Senior Adviser to the special representative for the arctic region at the Department of State, was awarded an International Affairs Fellowship with the Council on Foreign Relations, and served more than 10 years in the U.S. Navy.

**RADM (RET.) LARS SAUNES** retired from the Navy from the position as Chief of Royal Norwegian Navy August 2017 and is now CNO Distinguished International Fellow at the USNWC. He is a Submariner by trade and has held different command position on Kobben and Ula class submarines. He has been the commander of the Norwegian task group, Chief Naval operations at joint HQ, Commander submarine operating authority, Commandant and commander of the Norwegian Coast guard as well as Chief of the Royal Norwegian Navy. He has served as the head naval section of the Norwegian defense high joint command and the Norwegian defense research Institute. He is an alumnus from USNWC NCC class 2004.

**LCDR RICHARD A. COBB** joined the Canadian Armed Forces in Dec 1992 as a Naval Warfare Officer (NWO). After basic and NWO training he volunteered for submarine service and was posted to HMCS Ojibwa. He served on several submarines including HMAS Waller and Farncomb while on exchange with the Royal Australian Navy. Upon his return to Canada he served as Combat Officer in HMCS Victoria. LCdr Cobb then served in various staff positions in the RCN including Maritime Command N32 as a submarine operations planner and as a training Officer at Venture Canada’s Naval Officer Training centre. Next he was appointed as Commanding Officer of Patrol Craft Training Unit responsible for the eight patrol ships on Canada’s West coast. He then filled various staff position until he was posted to NDHQ in Ottawa as the Arctic Desk Officer. LCdr Cobb’s spouse is also a NWO. Together they have a seven year old daughter Alexandria.

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**PROF. WILFRID W. J. GREAVES** is Assistant Professor of International Relations at the University of Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. His research examines the intersections between international security and environmental politics with respect to climate change, energy extraction, Indigenous peoples, and the circumpolar Arctic. He has also published on subjects related to Canadian foreign policy, counterinsurgency, and complex peace operations. Professor Greaves is the author of more than twenty peer-reviewed articles and book chapters, and co-editor (with P. Whitney Lackenbauer and Heather Nicol) of *One Arctic: The Arctic Council and Circumpolar Governance*. A second edited book and a monograph on sovereignty, security, and environmental change in the circumpolar Arctic are both forthcoming from University of Toronto Press. He teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in international relations, Arctic politics, Canadian foreign policy, and global security, and is a Network Coordinator for the North American and Arctic Defence and Security Network (NAADSN), funded by the Canadian Department of National Defence. Professor Greaves holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Toronto, and was previously Lecturer at the Trudeau Centre for Peace, Conflict and Justice and a Visiting Scholar at UiT the Arctic University of Norway.

**CAPT (N) ANDERS FRIIS** joined the navy in 1986. Upon his graduation in 1990, Friis served in the submarines. In 1997 Friis attended the Norwegian Perisher and subsequently got his first command at sea as CO of HDMS SAELEN. After four years as submarine commander, Friis attended the senior staff course and was promoted to the rank of Commander in 2002. From 2002 to 2004 Friis served as the Commanding Officer of the Danish Navy Special Forces. From 2004 to 2006 Friis served as aide-de-camp to the Danish Chief of Defense and thereafter XO of HDMS ABSALON. In 2007 Friis was promoted to Commander s.g. and became program manager in charge building IVER HUITFELDT-cl. In 2011 Friis was appointed CO of HDMS ESBERN SNARE and deployed twice to of Task Force 508 to carry out anti-piracy operations. In 2014 Friis was promoted to Captain and worked with capacity building, civil reconstruction and other international contributions. February 2017 Friis became DCOM of the Joint Arctic Command in Nuuk, Greenland and from September 2018 to January 2019 Friis was in command of Standing Naval Maritime Group ONE and temporary promoted to Commodore. As of January 2019, Captain Friis is in command of 2nd Squadron.

**CDR JOHANNES RIBER** has a long naval career, with multiple deployments and staff positions. He has worked as an analyst to the Danish Institute for International Studies and completed a M.A. in International Security Studies from the University of Leicester. He has since authored and co-authored multiple articles on maritime security, most recently on Russian maritime strategy. He has contributed to the Danish Defence Force's white paper on the Arctic and been invited as an advisor to UNODC on maritime crime. He has since 2015 been the deputy director at the Institute for Strategy at the Royal Danish Defence College.

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**MAJ STEEN KJÆRGAARD** is the head of The Center for Arctic Security Studies at the Royal Danish Defence College based in Copenhagen. Steen holds a Master's degree in Military Studies from The Royal Danish Defence College and a Master's degree in International Security Studies from the University of Leicester, (UK).

**CAPT (RET.) ERKKI MIKKOLA** retired from the Navy from the position as Commander of Finnish Coastal Fleet April 2019. He is surface warfare officer and has held command position on Turunmaa class corvettes and 7th Missile Squadron. Other duties include for example Head of Strategic Planning Team at the Finnish Ministry of Defence, Assistant Chief of Staff Plans and Policy at the Naval Headquarters, Liaison officer at U.S. Joint Forces Command and Head of Maritime Operational Art Teaching Group at Finnish National Defence University.

**CDR TOR IVAR STRØMMEN** is a senior lecturer and doctoral research fellow at the Norwegian Defence University College – Royal Norwegian Naval Academy. There he researches and teaches naval operations, seapower, maritime strategy, geostrategy, and naval history. He is also a researcher in the Seapower 2040 research programme, providing deep analysis and background information to the Norwegian Chief of the Navy. Commander Strømmen has served in the Royal Norwegian Navy for 23 years in different positions within the operations department on missile torpedo boats, frigates, navy staff, and in NATO's SNMG1 staff. His operational service includes three years as N3 in Norwegian Navy. He joined the permanent academic staff at the Royal Norwegian Naval Academy in 2016. He holds a Bachelor's degree in marine systems design (shipbuilding), a Master's in history (Naval strategic history), and is presently researching for his doctoral thesis in seapower theory (Seapower theory for coastal states). Thereto, he is a member of the Norwegian Naval Institute's strategic advisory group, and a long-serving member in the Naval Institute's committee responsible for arranging and hosting the biannual Norwegian Seapower symposium.

**MS. INGRID HANDELAND** has a Master of law from the University of Bergen with specialisation in the Law of the Sea and in Chinese Commercial Law. She recently joined the Seapower 2040 project at the Royal Norwegian Naval Academy as a researcher and will primarily study topics related to UNCLOS, China, Svalbard, and the Northern sea route. Thereto part of CNO Norway's legal advisory team – she focuses on UNCLOS and related topics that directly influences Norwegian maritime operational planning. Beyond formal studies at the Law department, Ms. Handeland had an extended stay in China as a trainee in Jia Yuan Law Offices. Thereto 6 months as a trainee at the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Beijing.

**CDR ANDREAS FORSMAN** is currently serving as the Commanding Officer of the Joint Operations Division at the Swedish National Defence University, a position he has had since October 19. His previous position was Acting Commanding Officer and Deputy Commanding Officer of the Swedish Naval Warfare Centre. CDR Forsman has earlier served at the Joint

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Operations Directorate at the Swedish Armed Forces Headquarters where he served as Head of Special Staff. He has also served as SO2 Capability and Development where he was responsible for forming the requirements and specification for EU Battlegroup - Nordic Battle Group 15. CDR Forsman has carried out several operational tours of duty in Afghanistan and the Balkans. CDR Forsman holds a Master in International Relations from King's College London and is a graduate from the Advanced Command and Staff Course in United Kingdom. He is married to Linda and they have two sons, Philip and Oscar.

**LCDR, DR. STEFAN P. LUNDQVIST** is an active duty officer holding a Ph.D. in political science with mass communication from Åbo Akademi University, Finland. Since 2010, he is a Military Lecturer in the Department of Military Studies of the Swedish Defence University. Until his turn towards academia, he served in various sea- and shore-based staff positions at tactical and operational levels of command. His areas of expertise include International Relations, strategy, maritime security, operational planning and operations assessment. Stefan Lundqvist is an elected member of the University Faculty Board and serves on the Committee on War Studies. He is the course manager of the core course in military theory and strategy of the Higher Staff Master's Programme. His research has been published in edited volumes and journals including Defence Studies and the RUSI Journal. His current research focuses on Arctic and Baltic Sea security. Very recent publications include: Robert M. Klein, Stefan Lundqvist, Ed Sumangil and Ulrica Pettersson, 2019, "Baltics Left of Bang: The Role of NATO with Partners in Denial-Based Deterrence," Strategic Forum, No. 301. Washington: NDU Press. Stefan Lundqvist, , "Jointly Navigating the BalticArctic Strategic Space: The Case of Sweden and Finland," in Cutting the Bow Wave 2020, NATO CJOS COE.

**CDR RACHAEL GOSNELL** graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 2001 with a BS in Political Science (with honors) and Spanish minor. As a Surface Warfare Officer, she served onboard USS SHILOH (CG-67), USS HARRY S. TRUMAN (CVN-75), and as the Weapons Officer and Combat Systems Officer onboard USS STOCKDALE (DDG 106). While ashore, Commander Gosnell was stationed at Naval Support Activity La Maddalena, Italy and at the Pentagon, where she served in OPNAV 513 Strategy & Policy as a Navy Strategist and as Speechwriter for the 30th Chief of Naval Operations, ADM Greenert. Her most recent assignment was teaching as a JPMP in the Political Science Department at the U.S. Naval Academy. She is currently a Foreign Area Officer serving in the Commander's Action Group for Commander, Allied Joint Force Command – Naples and Commander, Naval Forces Europe – Africa in Naples, Italy. CDR Gosnell earned a Masters in International Security Studies from Georgetown University through the Navy's Politico-Military Master's Program. She also holds a Master's of Engineering Management from Old Dominion University. CDR Gosnell is pursuing doctoral studies in International Security and Economic Policy at the University of Maryland, with a focus on U.S. Arctic strategy and Arctic security dilemma dynamics. She has published numerous articles relating to Arctic security and presented extensively on the topic in both Europe and North America. Awards include the Meritorious Service Medal (2), Navy

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Commendation Medal (4), Navy Achievement Medal (2), Top Gunner Award, Navy League Award, and various campaign and unit awards. She served on the U.S. Naval Institute Editorial Board for six years, where she was elected both Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Board.

**LCDR EARL H. POTTER**, U.S. Coast Guard currently serves as a rotating faculty member in the Government section at the United States Coast Guard Academy, where he teaches courses in American Government and International Relations. Prior to joining the faculty at the CGA, LCDR Potter served aboard four ships, most recently as the Commanding Officer of the CGC ROBERT YERED in Miami, FL. LCDR Potter also served a year in the USN Fifth Fleet AOR, as the Commanding Officer of the CGC MAUI, homeported in Manama Bahrain. For his prior staff tour, he served as the Aide to the Pacific Area Commander in Alameda, CA, where he supported his principal in the oversight of all operations west of the Rockies to the waters off the East coast of Africa, including the stand up of Arctic Shield. He is a career cutterman and will return to sea following his staff tour at the CGA. Originally from Mystic, CT, LCDR Potter is a 2007 graduate of OCS and holds a Master's in International Affairs from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, and a Master's in Public Administration from the Harvard Kennedy School.

**CAPT BRIAN L. SITTLLOW**, U.S. Navy, commanded Submarine Squadron 4 and USS Boise and has held a variety of other leadership positions throughout his career in the submarine force. Sittlow has conducted several deployments in the Atlantic, Arctic, and Pacific Oceans on fast attack and strategic ballistic missile submarines. He earned a degree in marine engineering from the Naval Academy, received an M.A. in national security and strategic studies from the Naval War College, and was the first American to complete the Norwegian Submarine Command "Perisher" Course.

**DR. JOSHUA TALLIS** is a political-military analyst studying maritime security, polar affairs, and the role of seapower in U.S. strategy. He serves as a research scientist at the Center for Naval Analyses and an adjunct professor at The George Washington University. His field research experience includes embedding as the command analyst with the Truman aircraft carrier strike group on the U.S. Navy's first Arctic carrier deployment since the end of the Cold War. Dr. Tallis' research from that deployment represented the first assessment of real-world Arctic carrier operations in nearly 30 years. He is the host of the CNA podcast "Polar Politics," and his research on the Arctic and U.S. maritime strategy has been published in outlets such as *Proceedings* magazine, Defense One, Defense News, and CIMSEC. He is the author of the book, *The War for Muddy Waters: Pirates, Terrorists, Traffickers, and Maritime Insecurity*, and holds a Ph.D. in international relations from the University of St Andrews.

**DR. MARY THOMPSON-JONES** joined the U.S. Naval War College in 2017, bringing expertise as a career diplomat, professor, and published author on U.S. foreign policy and the practice of diplomacy. She holds the chair for Women in National Security and Diplomacy, and

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teaches in the National Security Affairs Department where she also serves as Sub-course Director for the Policy Analysis course. She is the author of the book, *To the Secretary: Leaked Embassy Cables and America's Foreign Policy Disconnect*, (Norton 2016), which received favorable coverage in national media. Her current research focuses on the Arctic region, diplomacy, and U.S. foreign policy in Europe. Her diplomatic experience spans a 23-year career as a foreign service officer in leadership roles in the Czech Republic, Canada, Guatemala, Spain, and Washington, D.C. She retired with the rank of Minister-Counselor and is the recipient of several Superior and Meritorious Honor awards. Before coming to the U.S. Naval War College, she directed a Master's program in Global Studies and International Relations at Northeastern University. She holds a Doctorate in education from the University of Pennsylvania, a Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy from the Fletcher School, and undergraduate degrees in journalism and political science from California State University.

**LCDR DMITRY SHVETS**, United States Navy, recently served as the Director of the International Surface Warfare Officer Course. LCDR Shvets was born in Kiev Ukraine and raised in Philadelphia, PA. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Electrical Engineering from the United States Naval Academy, a Master's Degree in Electrical Engineering from the Naval Postgraduate School, and a Master's Certificate in Cyber Warfare, Electronic Ship Systems and Energy from the Naval Postgraduate School. Afloat, he served as Communications Officer on the USS STOUT (DDG 55), Training Officer on the USS WINSTON S. CHURCHILL (DDG 81); Weapons Officer on the USS ANTIETAM (CG 54), and Combat Systems Officer on the USS ANTIETAM (CG 54).

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## Contributing NASI Observers

Observers participate in NASI discussions but are not asked to join the consensus. They participate in their individual, not their institutional, capacities.

**PROF. VALUR INGIMUNDARSON** is Professor of Contemporary History at the University of Iceland and the Chair of the EDDA Research Center. He holds a Ph.D. in History from Columbia University in New York. He has authored, co-authored, and edited several books and has published extensively on topics such as Arctic geopolitics, governance, and national policies; Icelandic foreign, security, and Arctic policies; Iceland's defense and security relations with the United States and NATO; the politics of justice and memory in Europe; U.S.-German Relations and U.S.-European relations; and post-conflict politics in the former Yugoslavia.

**MS. ANNA B. DAVIS** was born and raised in the Siberian city of Krasnoyarsk, Russia, where she earned a B.A. in Teaching English and German Languages. While living in Japan, as military spouse, Anna studied the Japanese language, history, and culture at a Tokyo Preparatory School. She earned a M.A. in Diplomacy and Military Studies from Hawaii Pacific University where she focused on the Asia-Pacific region and completed her professional paper, titled "Clash of Empires: Russia's and Japan's Foreign Policies. National Identity as a Determinant of Foreign Policy amid Territorial Dispute." Prior to moving to Newport, Anna worked as a Researcher/Analyst/Translator for Cubic Applications, and volunteered for San Diego World Affairs Council. Currently, as a Research Associate at the Russia Maritime Studies Institute, U.S. Naval War College, she focuses on translation, research, and analysis of Russia's Maritime Doctrine, State Armament Program, the Arctic Policy and Russia's activities in the region, naval strategy, warfare, and operations.

**DR. MIGUEL C. RODRIGUES** is a graduate of the Naval War College. He has completed almost 23 years of federal service with assignments in Lithuania, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, Canada, and Washington. In Ottawa, he covered the Arctic portfolio, when the chairmanship of the Arctic Council passed from Canada to the United States. Miguel graduated with High Distinction in History from Dartmouth College, has Master's degrees in foreign policy from Johns Hopkins SAIS and public health from Harvard, and is a Doctor of Medicine. He speaks several languages, among them German, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, and French.

**MS. LILLIAN HUSSONG** is a Ph.D. candidate at the Rutgers University Division of Global Affairs (DGA), where she is currently writing a dissertation on American strategy and security in the Arctic and Baltic regions. Hussong has spoken at the International Arctic Social Sciences Association, the International Studies Association, the Wilson Center, and the Arctic Circle. She currently serves as a Research Assistant at the Arctic Institute. Hussong previously earned an

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M.A. in Holocaust & Genocide Studies and a B.A. in Historical Studies, both with Program Distinction, from Stockton University.

**AMB. JULIETTE C. MCLENNAN**, known as Judy, retired from the U.S. Government in 1992 where she served as the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, under President George H. W. Bush. She also served under President Ronald Reagan, as the Manager of Blair House, The President's Guest House. Judy is the founder and Chair of the C. Thomas Clagett, Jr. Memorial Clinic/Regatta for Sailors with Disabilities. Judy currently is a member of the Naval War College Foundation Board of Directors and its Executive and Communications Committees and she is on the Board of the Newport Hospital Foundation. Over the years she has served on numerous national and local charitable Board of Directors as well as being one of the three co-founders of the U.S. Friends of the World Food Program in 1995. Judy has two grown children and she resides in Portsmouth, RI with her three yellow Labradors.

**DEAN THOMAS E. MANGOLD, JR.** was born in New Jersey, educated at Harvard University (B.A., M.P.A.), and commissioned through Officer Candidate School. Most of his thirty-year naval career was spent at sea, serving onboard various small combatants, ultimately commanding USS Rodney M. Davis (FFG-60). Ashore, Professor Mangold worked in a wide variety of staff billets in the Pentagon, including strategic planner in the NATO Branch (OP 614) on the Navy Staff, strategic planner in the Russia Branch (J5 RUE) of the Joint Staff, head of the Strategy Branch (N513) on the Navy Staff, and director of the Navy Special Projects Office on the Navy Staff. He also served as naval attaché to the People's Republic of China. Professor Mangold retired from active duty at the rank of captain in April 2016. Professor Mangold has served as Dean of International Programs since January 2012.

**DEAN THOMAS J. CULORA** is Dean of the Center for Naval Warfare Studies, U.S. Naval War College. A former naval aviator with over 3000 flight hours, his command tours include Commanding Officer of USS Boxer, an amphibious aircraft carrier and of a Maritime Strike Helicopter Squadron the HSM-47 "Saberhawks." His shore assignments included serving on the Joint Staff where he developed U.S. policy for NATO enlargement and as Deputy Director for Strategy and Policy on the Navy Staff. From 2001-2002 he was an Olin Fellow at Harvard University and a military Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York from 2006-2007. He holds an M.A. from the Naval Postgraduate School in International Relations and an M.A. from the Naval War College in Strategic Studies where he graduated with distinction. He holds a B.F.A. from the School of Visual Arts in New York and maintains an active studio and art career.

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For the past few decades, the Arctic region has undergone significant changes, environmentally, economically, politically, and militarily. Without new and improved forums and mechanisms for security and cooperation, the region now risks falling into increased tensions and conflict. Arctic States need to advance regional dialogue and security cooperation to ensure the Arctic remains open, peaceful, and stable. *Conflict Prevention and Security Cooperation in the Arctic Region: Frameworks for the Future* outlines a way forward based on two pillars: reinforce, restore, and scale current multilateral frameworks; and launch new multilateral frameworks. Failure could lead to a future in which States strengthen their militaries and threaten regional security interests, and new regional mechanisms replace existing ones as the source of peace and stability for the region.

The U.S. Naval War College (NWC) sponsors the Newport Arctic Scholars Initiative (NASI) to assess issues of current and critical importance to maritime policy and strategy and provide policymakers and Heads of Navy with concrete judgments and recommendations. Diverse in backgrounds and perspectives, NASI scholars aim to reach a meaningful consensus on policy through private deliberations. NASI deliberations are independent of any one organization or government and solely responsible for the content of this report. NASI scholars are asked to join a consensus signifying that they “endorse the general policy thrust and judgments reached by the group, though not necessarily every finding and recommendation.” Each NASI Scholar also has the option of putting forward an additional or a dissenting view.

*Cover photo: A map of the Arctic region  
designed by Ms. Natalia Grant,  
Graphics Department, U.S. Naval War College.*



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