Executive Summary

“Our collective efforts must ensure we are ready to operate in and through the Arctic ... in all scenarios ... across all domains ... and against any adversary. The defense of our nations depends upon it.”

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION
Diminishing sea ice and the intensifying worldwide competition for natural resources have rapidly increased international interest in the Arctic. Alaskan Command (ALCOM) recognizes the challenges of synchronizing multiple combatant commands’ Service components within the Arctic, to include the ALCOM joint operations area (JOA), when 52% of that area extends over the maritime domain and 47% includes terrain above the Arctic Circle. For ALCOM, operational responsibilities and Service coordination with land and air component commands within the ALCOM JOA are facilitated by tasking and specific operations orders (OPORDs). Operational requirements and Service coordination in the maritime domain is challenging as ALCOM has no assigned maritime JOA. ALCOM relies on direct liaison authorized (DIRLAUTH) authority to coordinate Phase 0 operations with U.S. Coast Guard District Seventeen (D-17), Commander Third Fleet (C3F), and U.S. Fleet Forces Command / Naval Forces Northern Command (NAVNORTH) for maritime exercises and operations within the U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) area of responsibility (AOR), but these direct support relationships with ALCOM’s maritime partners require consistent engagement in order to achieve unity of effort within the ALCOM JOA across all domains.

BACKGROUND
The National Defense Strategy outlines a renewed focus on the great power competition between the U.S. and our near-peer adversaries: China and Russia. Russia maintains the preponderance of military forces currently operating in the Arctic. China’s “Arctic White Paper” outlines their strategic goals for utilizing the Arctic sea routes as a new “Silk Road,” and China is increasing investment in Arctic infrastructure and capabilities. Three things have changed since the U.S. Navy published its Arctic Roadmap in 2014:
   a. Environment: Climate change in the Arctic has resulted in more robust ice regression than predicted creating opportunity for human activities.
   b. Economics: The Arctic is opening up to economic opportunity at a greater rate than projected.
   c. Security: Military and commercial investments by China and Russia in the Arctic have exceeded analyst predictions and remain a significant, multifaceted security concern.

PROBLEM
The rapidly changing environment in the Arctic and the increased presence of great power competitors at the seams of multiple combatant commands threatens U.S. security and prosperity. A synchronized strategy to achieve unity of effort in the Arctic is required to counter near-peer adversary advances and developments.
OVERVIEW
ALCOM hosted the Arctic Maritime Symposium (AMS) 2018 in Anchorage, Alaska from 14-16 August. The event drew upon the expertise of senior military leaders, intelligence analysts, interagency operators, and Arctic maritime subject matter experts (SMEs) to address the strategic challenges associated with Arctic maritime operations. The three-day event focused on providing participants opportunities to engage with their cross-combatant command (CCMD) and intergovernmental counterparts through panel discussions as well as briefings led by experts in maritime strategy, academia, and policy. Additionally, Commander, U.S. 3rd Fleet (C3F) sent a guided missile destroyer, USS MOMSEN (DDG 92) to Anchorage, AK to conduct a port visit at the Port of Alaska in support of the symposium.

The AMS served as a first step to adopting a joint and interagency approach to understanding and protecting America’s security interests in the Arctic region. Setting the scene for the joint force in the Arctic, U.S. Air Force (USAF) Lieutenant General Ken Wilsbach, Commander, Alaskan Command (CDRALCOM) stated:

“AMS allowed us to better understand threats to our interests, strengthen relationships, and deepen our knowledge of the shared responsibilities that an opening Arctic brings to America and our allies and partners.”
– Lt Gen Wilsbach, CDRALCOM

There was a consensus among the leaders in attendance to rethink the National Strategy for the Arctic Region to include a more joint and interagency approach with specific tasks.

“We need to develop a cogent national strategy to set a whole-of-government approach that will drive refinements to our defense strategy and down the line. Let strategy drive the requirements, resources, and priorities.”
–Brig Gen John Hillyer, Mobilization Assistant to the Director of Operations, Headquarters, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM)

General Terrence O’Shaughnessy, Commander, NORAD and USNORTHCOM (CDR N&NC), spoke on the importance of Alaska to U.S. national security and homeland defense.

“As we move forward, our collective efforts must ensure that we are ready to operate in and through the Arctic, in all domains and in all scenarios.”
– Gen. O’Shaughnessy, Commander, NORAD and USNORTHCOM

U.S. Navy leaders in attendance reiterated the fact that the Navy is trying to reclaim and redevelop skills, capabilities, and equipment required for operating in the Arctic, which atrophied after the Cold War.
“We have to get the reps and sets in our training evolutions so we’re ready when we’re called upon to the Arctic; tabletop exercises will help us understand what forces we’re going to send.”
– RDML Douglas Perry, Director, Joint and Fleet Operations, NAVNORTH

The University of Alaska and the U.S. Naval War College were co-sponsors in the planning and execution of the symposium. Through AMS the academic community gained a deeper understanding of the needs and key challenges associated with military operations in the Arctic, while also identifying the necessity of a joint and interagency maritime policy to better govern activities in the Arctic.

“The Naval War College is uniquely positioned to help the Navy and DoD think through the challenges posed by sustaining both stability and security in the Arctic. This symposium helped the war college team here supporting this event gain a deeper understanding of the needs and identifying the keys players who will be instrumental in developing policy and leading activities in the Arctic.”
– Dean Tom Culora, Naval War College Center for Naval Warfare Studies

While on station, USS MOMSEN conducted joint exercises with the U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Air Force to demonstrate capabilities, if required, to support homeland defense (HD) and defense support of civilian authorities (DSCA) missions. MOMSEN arrived in Anchorage on 15 August. She faced logistical and navigational challenges while transiting to the Port of Alaska captured in the port visit after action report.
DETAILED SUMMARY

DAY 1 – ARCTIC OPERATIONS INTEGRATION
On Day 1, Lt Gen Wilsbach, CDRALCOM, provided a scene-setter brief on the importance of CCMD synchronization in the Arctic. U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski then outlined the strategic importance of the Arctic to U.S. Defense and National Policy via a pre-recorded address.

Following welcoming remarks by CDRALCOM, Admiral (ret.) Paul Zukunft opened the AMS by providing a strategic overview of the Arctic region as the conference stage setter. The former U.S. Coast Guard Commandant and AMS senior mentor hit on the most up-to-date challenges and requirements our joint and interagency force faces in the Arctic. The following is a recap of the issues addressed by Admiral Zukunft:

“Arctic climate change is well underway. The region is warming at twice the rate of lower latitude regions in the Northern Hemisphere. The U.S., allies, and partners lag in gaining full domain awareness and understanding of the Arctic region. This applies to both the physical environment and the increasingly complex human dimension.

Demand for resources to support Arctic missions exceeds the capability to provide. As such, the Arctic (and Arctic missions) remain under-resourced. The Arctic maritime region remains poorly understood. Soundings from 1912 and before remain the most current soundings on record.

While increasing tourism in the North American Arctic provides needed resources in a region which is chronically economically strapped, such tourism can potentially impact both fragile cultures and ecosystems.

The Trans Alaska Pipeline has conveyed needed resources across Alaska to U.S. energy markets. Like all hard infrastructure however, there are physical limitations, and reinvestments are necessary to sustain the capability.

U.S. Navy provides a terrific amount of undersea capability. However, U.S. security forces are poorly represented in surface and visible presence across the Arctic to project and protect U.S. sovereign interests.

U.S. competitors are testing U.S. and allied interests (and resolve) in the Arctic. Is the Russian Federation striving to be the Arctic ‘hegemon’? Russia’s Arctic LNG [Liquefied Natural Gas] plant at Yamal is providing much needed revenue for the Russian economy.

Then there’s China. Their Arctic ambitions remain strategically and long-term focused; a great advantage when playing an ‘infinite game’. There will only
be a greater focus on resource extraction, tourism, and shipping by China and Russia. The U.S. needs a viable Arctic strategic deep-water port, and we need ice breakers today!”
– Admiral (ret.) Paul Zukunft, USCG, former Commandant of the Coast Guard

Following the keynote opening by Admiral Zukunft, the Joint and Federal Arctic Maritime Forces Panel provided a distinguished array of current Arctic operational leaders to introduce their missions and challenges in the opening ALCOM AMS panel. The intent of this panel was to learn from the operational (theater-wide) U.S. and Canadian commanders of forces assigned within an Arctic regional responsibility. Panelists described their Services’ current top operational priorities/force laydown to buy down risk in the Arctic.

“The Arctic is foreign territory for the USMC and USNORTHCOM - lots of demand for more forces, but we have limited assets. The Commandant’s direction was to get smart on Arctic ops, therefore ARCTIC EDGE 20 will include a Marine Corps Battalion or MEU [Marine Expeditionary Unit].”
– LtGen Rex McMillan, USMC, Marine Forces North (MARFORNORTH)

“China could upset current balance of power with its ambitions in the Arctic. Those of us in the Arctic need an expeditionary mindset, even though we are in our own internal waters.”
– Commodore Angus Topshee, Commander, Canadian Navy Fleet Pacific

“We need to outfit our amphibious force; front loaders, vertical lift, landing crafts, etc. to go ashore for disaster relief. This is harder to do in the far North. We need to exercise this, but we also need to focus on our capability gaps.”
– RDML Douglas Perry, NAVNORTH N3

“The environmental barriers associated with seismic activity, coastal erosion, etc. have an impact on Title 32 forces in Alaska. The U.S. is not properly equipped to fight in the Arctic. We need to improve Arctic sustainment capability, standardize equipment needs, develop extreme cold weather equipment packages and advance our joint Arctic exercise capabilities.”
– MG Hummel, Adjutant General, Alaska

“The nation needs to know that we have a ‘Fourth Coast’. As shipping increases, SAR requirements will increase. USCG has an ongoing dialogue with Russia on Bering Sea fisheries, port access routes, and search and rescue. China, however is outmaneuvering us in the Pacific and in the Arctic. Playing the long game across the globe requires new force generation.”
– VADM Linda Fagan, USCG Pacific Area Commander
Dr. Elizabeth Wishnick, Department of Politics and Law, Montclair State University, and Senior Research Scholar from the Weatherhead East Asian Institute at Columbia University and Brigadier General (ret) Peter Zwack, USA, Former U.S. Senior Defense Official and Attaché to Russia, Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University presented overview briefs on our Great Power Competitors: China and Russia.

Following the morning sessions, Mr. Carven Scott, Regional Director of the National Weather Service (NWS) in Alaska, addressed the impacts of changing ice in the Arctic. He educated the audience on the freezing spray impact on vessels at sea and how those unpredictable conditions have ultimately led to the loss of lives in the vicinity of St. George Island. He addressed the adverse conditions that impact aviation assets and hunter and tourist ground activities throughout the region. Mr. Scott also provided background on the Sea Ice Model Verification Project sponsored by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) Arctic Test Bed in collaboration with the Canadian Ice Center.

“Such initiatives by NOAA and the NWS Sea/Ice Center and the Alaska Environmental Science and Service Integration Center get beyond the typical “fly over” science required for Arctic Domain Awareness and Prediction.”
– Mr. Carven Scott, Regional Director, National Weather Service,

AMS senior moderator, Maj Gen (ret) Randy “Church” Kee escorted a select group of attendees to the Arctic Domain Awareness Center (ADAC) at the University of Alaska Anchorage, providing them an overview of the center’s initiatives and capabilities. During this time, those with clearances attended the Capabilities-Based Assessment brief given by Mr. Scott Dix, Operations Research Analyst from N&NC J8, then an Arctic Science and Technology brief by Dr. Bob McCoy, Director of the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) Geophysical Institute.

Maj Gen (ret) Kee provided an overview of existing and potential opportunities for maritime operations and exercises in the Arctic during the Senior Flag Perspective; Operational & Exercises Integration Panel. Operations and exercises discussed in this panel included USNORTHCOM’s ARCTIC EDGE (AE), USINDOPACOM’s NORTHERN EDGE (NE), U.S. European Command (USEUCOM’s) TRIDENT JUNCTURE (TJ), USCG’s ARCTIC SHIELD, and Expeditionary Strike Group 3’s Joint Logistics Over-the-Shore (JLOTS) Alaska endeavors.
This Senior Flag Perspective Panel for Operational Integration provided a distinguished array of operationally engaged 1-star flag and general officers/SES equivalent professionals with maritime and/or Arctic experience. Panelists described from their current position and/or recent experience, the challenges, concerns, needs, and opportunities to improve unity of effort in providing relevant maritime operational presence in the Arctic to secure and defend respective U.S. and Canadian interests.

DAY 2 – GREAT POWER COMPETITION
AMS keynote speaker on Day 2, Admiral (ret.) Sam Locklear, former Commander, U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM), discussed the growing importance of leadership in Washington to force people to make financial commitments in the Arctic.

“It requires leadership in Washington to force people to make financial commitments; the only way you get a true interagency effect in this country, it has to come from the White House.”

When asked if the National Defense Strategy (NDS) should address the Arctic, Locklear replied,

“The world is getting smaller, and competition is happening beyond the classic places, in places we had not prepared well for. In the 1990s the contemplation of how the Arctic would play into the NDS was so far in the future that it didn’t warrant much consideration, but the reality is that the changes are upon us today for a variety of reasons; I think the Arctic should be laid out in the NDS, and I think it will be as we go forward.”

Dr. Walter Berbrick, Arctic Studies lead from the U.S. Naval War College moderated the question and answer session with Admiral (Ret.) Sam Locklear, USN on 15 August 2018.
When asked if there were any parallels between the South China Sea (SCS) and the Arctic after having decades of lessons to draw on, Admiral Locklear stated,

“When I was PACOM, I felt like we weren’t doing anything in the South China Sea. It wasn’t that we couldn’t do anything, because we could. We could have thrown China out of the SCS, but the costs were enormous and not worth the benefit. There was a mismatch of national interest. So we need to define what is important to us in the Arctic.”

When asked what we can do in the Arctic today, the admiral responded,

“Our intelligence capability is the best in the world. We need to empower the intel community to tell us what is happening in the Arctic. We need the best, most wonderful surveillance system in the Arctic. Knowledge is power, knowledge is deterrence. Russia for example, prioritizes the Arctic within their national interest. The average American doesn’t see themselves as an Arctic nation. This forum is important to have that dialogue.”

Many audience members were curious if standing up a Joint Interagency Task Force (JIATF) in the Arctic, or JIATF-Arctic, similar to the JIATF-South organized out of U.S. Southern Command (USSFOUTHCOM) to command and control forces in support of Counter Illicit Trafficking Operations, Admiral Locklear quipped,

“When you run out of good ideas, you stand up another command… Then you spend years setting it up in order to look like you are showing some interest. However, a Joint Interagency Task Force for the Arctic would be an excellent solution to Arctic advocacy efforts otherwise lacking a US Navy flag officer – a critical component for the manning, training and equipping of naval forces in any region.”

Wrapping up the keynote address, Admiral Locklear concluded with his perspective on Russia and freedom of access issues.

“If the Russians want to get aggressive in the Arctic, they have the capacity. If they decided to do that, I don’t know that a coalition is going to make a whole lot of difference. If we think there is an illegal claim in the Arctic, then we are bound legally to go challenge that when we can, and we have to be able to go do that in the Arctic. Being able to go where you want to go in the world, that’s a freedom of access issue. What do we need to do to defend the American
people and interests from the security effects of climate change? The budget process is not far-looking. The Services have got to get into far-thinking.”
– Admiral (ret.) Locklear, former Commander, USPACOM

BG (ret.) Peter Zwack then moderated a panel on the Great Power Competition. Mr. Mark E. Rosen, Senior VP and General Counsel at the Center for Naval Analysis; Dr. Wishnick; Mr. Jim Townsend, Global Fellow, Polar Institute, Wilson Center, Former Assistant Secretary of Defense for NATO and EU, and Dr. Carl Van Dyke, N&NC Geo-Political Adviser participated in this panel. Ms. Faith Martineau, Executive Director, Alaska Department of Natural Resources then briefed the audience on the private and commercial investments and ongoing operations throughout Alaska.

ALCOM J2 hosted an Intelligence Community - Arctic Working Group Panel at the ALCOM Combined Headquarters (CHQ), while Mr. Peter Philips from Philips Publishing led the symposium attendees through an open forum discussion on the private and commercial operations in the Arctic. Mr. Philips recorded the discussion questions from the symposium with the intent of pulling answers to specific questions from leaders of the private and commercial sector for follow-on publication in Pacific Maritime Magazine.

On the afternoon of Day 2, AMS participants conducted a tour of USS MOMSEN and the Port of Alaska. These tours, along with the briefs and panels from the morning session, compelled participants to Analyze current and prospective maritime operations and strategies as they pertain to security concerns associated with unregulated military and commercial investments by Russia and China in the Arctic.

NOTE: For a detailed summary of efforts led by ALCOM’s Public Affairs Officer (PAO) and U.S. Pacific Fleet Environmental and Public Relations team during the port visit of USS MOMSEN, please contact the ALCOM PAO.

DAY 3 – SYNCRONIZING POLICY AND STRATEGY
Gen O’Shaughnessy led the morning discussion on Day 3 by addressing the Strategic Imperative of the Arctic through the lens of homeland defense as it pertains to four critical enablers: Domain Awareness, Communications, Infrastructure, and Presence.

“Of great interest to me as the Commander of NORAD and U.S. Northern Command is that Russia and China are fielding advanced military capabilities, such as long-range air and sea launched cruise missiles, as well as developing new employment doctrines intended to exploit perceived gaps in our defense capabilities.

It is for these reasons that the defense of the homeland requires us to reinvigorate our efforts to ensure we remain ready to operate in and through the Arctic.” “We must work with the military Services, Office of the Secretary
of Defense, Joint Staff, and fellow combatant commands to identify shared equities within four key enablers: Domain Awareness, Communications, Infrastructure, and Presence.

We will continue to conduct complex joint and combined exercises, just like ARCTIC EDGE 18. Exercises such as this enable us to build the experience base and muscle memory within our joint force.

Our collective efforts must ensure we are ready to operate in and through the Arctic … in all scenarios … across all domains … and against any adversary. The defense of our nations depends upon it.”
– Gen. O’Shaughnessy, Commander, NORAD and USNORTHCOM

U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan complimented the commander’s comments during his remarks via video teleconference:

“Alaska is the cornerstone of America’s Ballistic Missile Defense, the hub of air combat power for the Arctic and Pacific, and the strategic platform for expeditionary forces. We’re clearly building those up, but we need to be the logistics base for America’s power projection.”
– U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan

The Senator’s remarks also included background on recent National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) approval of a new Arctic Strategy while calling for a review of Arctic ports and setting aside money for six Polar Icebreakers.

The remainder of Day 3 panels covered current and/or recent experiences in trying to understand the rapid changes of physical environment of the Arctic Domain, the role of technology to
increasing domain awareness in support of commanders and operational decision-making as well as the increasingly complex human dimension of the Arctic Coastal and Maritime regions and the requisite infrastructure to support those operations.

To generate informed strategic messaging for joint and interagency maritime operations and policy in the Arctic, AMS concluded with two panels that addressed international relationships critical to maintaining stability in the Arctic while simultaneously analyzing the current joint and interagency government policies required for greater synchronization between academic and policy institutions, senior leaders with interests in maritime operations in the Arctic, and the first-nation tribal leaders of Alaska.

These “wrap-up” panels brought together a set of diverse U.S. and international leaders with varied diplomatic, military and academic backgrounds. The flag officers and senior-level policy makers and strategists provided their multi-disciplined vantages and Arctic-minded experience to address the compelling insights to the ALCOM Arctic Maritime Symposium offering reflections for onward future action.

The senior U.S. representative on the International Panel was Mr. Jon Harrison, Senior Arctic Adviser from the State Department.

“There is value in diplomatic work as the U.S. desires an Arctic free of conflict. This is achieved by positive international relationships and economic investments led by the State Department. The U.S. must still be present in the Arctic in order to support the efforts of the State Department with regards to law enforcement and strategic deterrence. Also critical is the maintenance of stewardship practices with regards to leasing programs for oil exploration and fisheries management. The U.S. will support exploration and will also sign the High Fisheries Agreement to support these areas of investment.”
– Mr. Jon Harrison, Senior Arctic Advisor, U. S. Department of State

Panelists described their principal concerns and reasons for optimism for U.S. and their allies’ interests in the Arctic region. Each panelist provided their recommendations for practical policy revisions to advance a more effective U.S. and international presence in the Arctic that supports the peaceful opening of the region aligned to U.S. and allied interests. To this end, Rear Admiral Lars Saunes, Royal Norwegian Navy (Ret) informed us that:

“Norway’s Arctic Strategy is important from a geopolitics and social development aspect as nearly 80% of Norway’s GDP comes from the Arctic; and Norway is really rich! Climate change has increased North Atlantic fish stocks by over 50% in last decade. Additionally, Norway is NATO’s ‘northern flank’ and critical to our allied posture, paying special attention to Russian military buildup. Arctic intelligence and readiness requires Norway to spend nearly 50% of its sailing time in the Arctic due to the increased presence of...
Russia in the North Atlantic.”
– Rear Admiral Lars Saunes, Royal Norwegian Navy (Ret), Former Chief of Royal Norwegian Navy

Symposium participants gained useful action points that advance new Arctic strategies in development across the U.S. government, ideas for improved collaboration in a diverse array of measures (and estimated resource measures) that support improved Arctic presence and shaping the Arctic region in accordance with U.S. and allied interests.

“Canada is one of world’s largest diamond producers, and those resources, along with iron and nickel, are in the Canadian Arctic. In order to ensure resource sustainability for Canadians and First Nation residents, peaceful resolution of conflict is critical. For this reason, our military is leading to push for development and requirements; ship through the Northwest Passage, forward operating locations, logistics, etc., all driven by military requirements.”
– Commodore Angus Topshee, Canadian Fleet Pacific, Royal Canadian Navy

International cooperation and information sharing was identified by multiple participants as the key to successful conflict resolution in the Arctic. To this end, Commander Senior Grade Michael Hjorth from Denmark stated that:

“Greenland, and the Faroe Islands, are responsible for much of the information sharing and education on climate change and the impacts it has on trade in the Arctic Ocean. Competing Danish and Russian claims on expansion of continental shelf need to be addressed. However, the Arctic Coast Guard Forum recently conducted an Arctic Search and Rescue exercise in 2017. Hosted by Denmark, the exercise addressed a mass casualty situation on a cruise ship and led to significant collaborations and information sharing with Arctic nations as a positive trend to international collaboration.”
– Commander Senior Grade Michael Hjorth, Danish Joint Arctic Command's Liaison Office, Faroe Islands

Finally, the international panelists examined concepts that support better international security from a presence and strategic perspective.

"Finland has over 800 miles of shared border with Russia. The three highest security threats to Finland are Russia, Russia and Russia. The good news is, the Russian military capabilities in Arctic are not as threatening as they were
during the Cold War. The bad news is, U.S. capabilities have atrophied. Without an improved dialog with Russia, we cannot inform them that they are misbehaving. Regardless, we cannot work from any sort of position of strength at this time. Finland has lots of knowhow on Arctic Maritime issues and technology and we are willing to share it with our partners in order to support their possibilities to operate in the Arctic in the future."
– Brigadier General Pekka Toveri, Defence, Military, Naval and Air Attaché Embassy of Finland

Outlining their priorities, each country identified their strategic perspectives on China and Russia. Of note, Iceland’s Deputy Chief of Mission, Hreinn Pálsson stated:

“Iceland is a small country with a very strategic location. For this reason, we rely on the rule of law and have great faith in the Arctic Council as a means to address bilateral treaties with our neighbors. We need to focus on the oceans and improve whole-of-nation efforts at addressing the security concerns in the GIUK gap [the gap being the open ocean between Greenland, Iceland, and the United Kingdom]. Maritime capabilities, to include P-8s in Iceland are important to support the 1951 bilateral treaty with U.S. in light of recent Russian submarine activity. However, the largest embassy in Iceland is Chinese (and they built our symphony hall) and we do not have an FTA (free trade agreement) with the U.S., but we have one with China.”
– Minister Hreinn Pálsson, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Iceland
The final panel of the symposium was the Strategic Outlook and Integration panel moderated by Maj Gen (ret.) Kee. This multi-disciplined collection of Arctic-minded experts addressed the difficulties of competing against Russia and China in the Arctic without a combined strategy. The senior panelist offered reflections for onward future action in the Arctic to include the appropriate command and control mechanism to address advocacy, training, force requests for Arctic operations as well as the partnerships required during Phase 0 operations and beyond. Panelists described their principal concerns and reasons for optimism for U.S. national interests in the Arctic region. Additionally, each panelist provided their perspective on interagency policy an effective presence to support that policy.

“We can better leverage existing authorities as opposed to simply asking for new authorities (which generally have an extended timeline to deliver). Work with what you have first. The Great Power Competition is real in the Arctic today and the Arctic is becoming the global [competition] hot spot. U.S., allies and partners should seize initiative as we can and should ‘dominate’ the economic zone of the Arctic.”
– Maj Gen (ret.) Kee, former USEUCOM Director of Plans and Policy, Director, Arctic Domain Awareness Center

Panelists agreed that while demonstrating presence in the Arctic to better secure interests is important, there is a price tag associated with any surge in presence. This of course requires national interest to secure funding. Panelists also examined concepts that support better regional security, to include practically addressing management of potentially difficult geo-political flash points such as Bering Strait waterways management or the creation of a new command and control (C2) structure such as a Joint Interagency Task Force. When asked if this type of C2 or an appropriately assigned US Navy flag officer would help or hinder the coordination of a synchronize strategy and advocate for funds, training and or equipment, Admiral Locklear reminded us:

“Although a JIATF is a great model that can be resourced with joint assets and help prioritize efforts depending on the problems you are trying to address, but what forces would be assigned? What forces does the U.S. Navy have that can operate in the Arctic under any C2 arrangement?”
– Admiral (ret.) Locklear, former Commander, USPACOM

Ultimately, symposium participants gained useful action points that advance new Arctic strategies in development across the U.S. government, ideas for improved collaboration in a diverse array of measures (and estimated resource measures) that support improved Arctic presence and shaping the Arctic region in accordance with U.S. and allied interests.
CONCLUSION

Overall, AMS reinforced the importance of partnerships with tribal, maritime operators, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and whole-of-government to “up our game” in the Arctic. The three day event was highly successfully in advancing the goal of developing a more unified understanding of the challenges faced in a number of critical areas (science and technology (S&T), domain awareness, DoD planning and coordination, etc.) as a result of diminishing sea ice and increasing interest in the Arctic. While ALCOM has long understood the challenges posed within the unique JOA, the understanding has been much more limited beyond the headquarters due to a number of difficulties to include a diminished understanding of the strategic significance of the region as well as perhaps its growing importance to others beyond the U.S. and its allies. With a new combatant commander at the helm of N&NC, and an enhanced relationship with the academic and interagency partners in Alaska, the Arctic Maritime Symposium may serve as a turning point in advancing a more unified understanding for what is at stake within the Arctic. This will prove to be key for those who have defined or mandated interests in providing for the DoD specific operational and planning requirements in what is now an evolving and dynamic operating environment.
A full copy of this report is available in PDF format on the AMS18 website:


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