



ARCTIC STRATEGY



DEPARTMENT
OF DEFENSE

NOVEMBER 2013

ARCTIC REGION





SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

SECRETARY'S FOREWORD

The Arctic is at a crucial point in its transformation from a relatively isolated region to one where receding ice is enabling increased human access. As climate change and the viability of new energy sources shape the global environment, these shifts will affect our strategic outlook going forward, especially in the Arctic. The United States is committed to working with allies and partners to keep the region stable and secure through this historic change. This Strategy articulates the balanced and collaborative approach that the Department of Defense will take as it prepares for changes in Arctic operating conditions, and potential changes in the future security environment due to the increased access and activity in the region. The Arctic is becoming more important, and regardless of the rate and scale of change, we must be ready to contribute to national efforts in pursuit of strategic objectives in the region.

On May 10, 2013, President Obama released the National Strategy for the Arctic Region. Throughout the strategy, the President articulated clear linkages between events in the Arctic and enduring U.S. national interests. Newly accessible areas present significant economic opportunities, and this growth requires responsible stewardship to preserve and sustain crucial elements of the global ecosystem. As more countries operate in the Arctic, more opportunities – as well as more challenges – will arise. The Department will seek to work with Arctic nations and other interested parties, focusing efforts where opportunities exist and action is needed, while also ensuring that our national security interests remain protected.

As the President noted, “The Arctic region is peaceful, stable, and free of conflict,” and it is the role of the Department of Defense to ensure this observation remains true for future generations. But we cannot maintain the current Arctic security environment by acting alone. The Department will operate within the established framework of international law and collaborate with allies and partners as much as possible.

The Department of Defense Arctic Strategy also recognizes the role that the Arctic region will play in shaping the global security environment in the 21st century. As we monitor how changes in the Arctic influence geopolitical landscapes, we will balance our Arctic investments against the Department’s responsibilities and objectives around the world, while collaborating domestically and internationally to help develop effective solutions.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Chuck Hagel", is located in the bottom right area of the page. The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single blue line.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Arctic¹ is at a strategic inflection point as its ice cap is diminishing more rapidly than projected² and human activity, driven by economic opportunity—ranging from oil, gas, and mineral exploration to fishing, shipping, and tourism—is increasing in response to the growing accessibility. Arctic and non-Arctic nations are establishing their strategies and positions on the future of the Arctic in a variety of international forums. Taken together, these changes present a compelling opportunity for the Department of Defense (DoD) to work collaboratively with allies and partners to promote a balanced approach to improving human and environmental security in the region in accordance with the 2013 *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*.³



An iceberg at the edge of Baffin Bay's sea ice is just one of the many sights from Thule Air Base, Greenland. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Dan Rea)

Security in the Arctic encompasses a broad spectrum of activities, ranging from resource extraction and trade to activities supporting safe commercial and scientific operations to national defense. Security cooperation activities and other military-to-military forms of engagement establish, shape, and maintain international relations and the partnerships necessary to meet security challenges and reduce the potential for friction. The Department will continue to build cooperative strategic partnerships that promote innovative, affordable security solutions, and burden-sharing in the Arctic, and seek to increase opportunities with Arctic partners to enhance regional expertise and cold-weather operational experience.

The Department will continue to train and operate routinely in the region⁴ as it monitors the changing environment, revisiting assessments and taking appropriate action as conditions change.

This strategy identifies the Department's desired end-state for the Arctic: ***a secure and stable region where U.S. national interests are safeguarded, the U.S. homeland is protected, and nations work cooperatively to address challenges.*** It also articulates two main supporting objectives: *Ensure security, support safety, and promote defense cooperation*, and *prepare to respond to a wide range of challenges and contingencies*—operating in conjunction with other nations when possible, and independently if necessary—in order to maintain stability in the region. Finally, it identifies the *ways and means* the Department intends to use to achieve these objectives as it implements the *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*.

¹The DoD strategy uses a broad definition of the Arctic, codified in 15 U.S.C. 4111, that includes all U.S. and foreign territory north of the Arctic Circle and all U.S. territory north and west of the boundary formed by the Porcupine, Yukon, and Kuskokwim Rivers; all contiguous seas, including the Arctic Ocean and the Beaufort, Bering, and Chukchi Seas, and the Aleutian islands chain.

²National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) scientists in J.E. Overland and M. Wang (2013), *When will the summer Arctic be nearly sea ice free?*, *Geophys. Res. Lett.*, 40, doi:10.1002/grl.50316.

³This strategy is nested under *National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 66 / Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD) 25*, Arctic Region Policy, the 2013 *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*, and the 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance. It complements DoD's *Strategy for Homeland Defense and Defense Support of Civil Authorities (HD&DSCA)*.

⁴For additional information on the Navy's historic involvement in the Arctic, see *The Impact of Climate Change on Naval Operations in the Arctic* (Center for Naval Analysis, 2009).

I. U.S. INTERESTS IN THE ARCTIC

U.S. national security interests in the Arctic are delineated in National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD) 66/Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD) 25, *Arctic Region Policy*.⁵ This policy states that national security interests include such matters as missile defense and early warning; deployment of sea and air systems for strategic sealift, strategic deterrence, maritime presence, and maritime security operations; and ensuring freedom of the seas. Preserving freedom of the seas, which includes all of the rights, freedoms, and uses of the seas and adjacent airspace, including freedom of navigation and overflight, in the Arctic supports the nation's ability to exercise these rights, freedoms, and uses of the sea and airspace throughout the world, including through strategic straits.

Arctic Boundary as defined by the Arctic Research and Policy Act (ARPA)

All United States and foreign territory north of the Arctic Circle and all United States territory north and west of the boundary formed by the Porcupine, Yukon, and Kuskokwim Rivers; all contiguous seas, including the Arctic Ocean and the Beaufort, Bering and Chukchi Seas; and the Aleutian chain.¹



Credit: US Arctic Research Commission

Acknowledgement: Funding for this map was provided by the National Science Foundation through the Arctic Research Mapping Application (amap.org) and Contract #0520837 to CH2M HILL for the Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee (IARPC).

Map author: Allison Gaylord, Nuna Technologies. May 27, 2009.

1. The Aleutian chain boundary is demarcated by the 'Contiguous zone' limit of 24-nautical miles.

The 2013 *National Strategy on the Arctic Region* frames the whole-of-government approach that provides the overarching context for the Department's efforts. It lays out three main lines of effort in the Arctic: advance U.S. security interests; pursue responsible Arctic region stewardship; and

⁵ The January 2009 National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD)-66, dual-titled as Homeland Security Presidential Directive (HSPD)-25, or NSPD-66/HSPD-25, established the policy of the United States with respect to the Arctic and outlined national security and homeland security interests in the region. Homeland security interests include preventing terrorist attacks and mitigating those criminal or hostile acts that could increase the United States' vulnerability to terrorism in the Arctic. The Department has a role to play in responding not only to traditional (e.g., military) threats, but also to a range of other potential national security challenges (e.g., smuggling, criminal trafficking, and terrorism as the lead agency or in support of other government agencies).

strengthen international cooperation. The goal of the *National Strategy for the Arctic Region* is “an Arctic region that is stable and free of conflict, where nations act responsibly in a spirit of trust and cooperation, and where economic and energy resources are developed in a sustainable manner that also respects the fragile environment and the interests and cultures of indigenous peoples.”

The DoD Arctic Strategy outlines how the Department will support the whole-of-government effort to promote security, stewardship, and international cooperation in the Arctic. The Department’s strategic approach to the Arctic reflects the relatively low level of military threat in a region bounded by nation States that have not only publicly committed to working within a common framework of international law and diplomatic engagement,⁶ but have also demonstrated the ability and commitment to do so. In consideration of enduring national interests in the Arctic and existing strategic guidance, the Department’s end-state for its strategic approach to the Arctic is: ***a secure and stable region where U.S. national interests are safeguarded, the U.S. homeland is protected, and nations work cooperatively to address challenges.***

⁶In the Ilulissat Declaration (May 28, 2008), all five Arctic Ocean coastal States (United States, Russian Federation, Canada, Norway, and Denmark on behalf of Greenland) committed themselves to the orderly settlement of overlapping territorial claims through the established framework of the international law as reflected in the U.N. Law of the Sea Convention (LOSC). The Declaration affirmed that the legal framework provided by the LOSC is sufficient for the management of the Arctic Ocean and that there is no need to develop a new comprehensive international legal regime to govern this Ocean.

II. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE SUPPORTING OBJECTIVES

The Department's two supporting objectives describe what is to be accomplished to achieve its desired end-state. These objectives are bounded by policy guidance, the changing nature of the strategic and physical environment, and the capabilities and limitations of the available instruments of national power (diplomatic, informational, military, and economic). Actions taken to achieve these objectives will be informed by the Department's global priorities and fiscal constraints. In order to achieve its strategic end-state, the Department's supporting objectives are:



Members of the Applied Physics Laboratory Ice Station participate in Ice Exercise (ICEX) to assist operations and training in the challenging and unique environment that characterizes the Arctic region. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Tiffini M. Jones)

- ***Ensure security, support safety, and promote defense cooperation.***⁷
 - Relationships with allies and partners are important enablers of cooperation in meeting security and defense commitments. These relationships also play an important role in conflict prevention, and, if prevention and deterrence fail, in coordinating an international response to security and defense challenges. Although the Department of State is the lead for regional diplomacy, DoD has a supporting role enhancing the region's capability and capacity for multilateral security collaboration, and responding to requests for assistance from interagency and international partners both within and outside the Arctic. This collaborative approach helps prevent conflict and provides the stability needed to facilitate the sustainable economic development envisioned in the *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*. The Department of Defense will seek out areas of mutual interest to build strategic relationships and encourage operational-level partnerships that promote innovative, affordable security solutions and enhance burden-sharing in the Arctic. Science and technology (S&T) can provide non-contentious opportunities for cooperation, and DoD will coordinate research initiatives with the Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee (IARPC).
 - The Department has an important role supporting other Federal departments and agencies in safety-related missions in Alaska and in responding to requests from civil authorities to support them with disaster relief or humanitarian assistance at home or

⁷Per the 2013 *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*, U.S. security in the Arctic encompasses a broad spectrum of activities, including national defense.

abroad. Although the Department has seldom been tasked to execute these missions in the Arctic, it may be asked to do more in the coming decades.

- ***Prepare for a wide range of challenges and contingencies***—operating in conjunction with other States when possible and independently if necessary—in order to maintain stability in the region.
 - Future challenges in the Arctic may span the full range of national security interests. These challenges and contingencies may take many forms, ranging from the need to support other Federal departments and agencies—or another nation—in responding to a natural or man-made disaster to responding to security concerns that may emerge in the future.

III. STRATEGIC APPROACH

The Department will pursue comprehensive engagement with allies and partners to protect the homeland and support civil authorities in preparing for increased human activity in the Arctic. Strategic partnerships are the center of gravity in ensuring a peaceful opening of the Arctic and achieving the Department’s desired end-state. Where possible, DoD will seek innovative, low-cost, small-footprint approaches to achieve these objectives (e.g., by participating



Soldiers conduct medical evacuation training at Fort Wainwright, Alaska. (USARPAC Public Affairs photo)

in multilateral exercises like the Search and Rescue Exercise (SAREX) hosted by Greenland, COLD RESPONSE hosted by Norway, and Canada’s Operation NANOOK, or through Defense Environmental International Cooperation Program-supported engagements on Arctic issues). The Department will also evolve its infrastructure and capabilities in step with the changing physical environment in order to ensure security, support safety, promote defense cooperation, and prepare to respond to a wide range of challenges and contingencies in the Arctic in the coming decades. The Department will accomplish its objectives through the following *ways*:

- Exercise sovereignty and protect the homeland;
- Engage public and private sector partners to improve domain awareness in the Arctic;
- Preserve freedom of the seas in the Arctic;
- Evolve Arctic infrastructure and capabilities consistent with changing conditions;
- Support existing agreements with allies and partners while pursuing new ones to build confidence with key regional partners;
- Provide support to civil authorities, as directed;
- Partner with other departments and agencies and nations to support human and environmental safety; and
- Support the development of the Arctic Council and other international institutions that promote regional cooperation and the rule of law.⁸

⁸The Arctic Council’s charter states, “The Arctic Council should not deal with matters related to military security.” It could be argued that search and rescue is a (human) security interest, and oil spill response is an (environmental) security interest; thus, the Council has a demonstrated ability to address a range of “soft security” issues.

The Department will apply the four guiding principles from the 2013 *National Strategy for the Arctic Region* as it pursues these eight *ways*.⁹ This means DoD will work with allies, partners, and other interested parties to safeguard peace and stability. It will make decisions using the best available scientific information, and will pursue innovative arrangements as it develops the capability and capacity needed in the Arctic over time. It will also follow established Federal tribal consultation policy. These four principles will underpin all of the Department's activities as it implements this strategy through the *means* described in this section.

Protect the Homeland and Exercise Sovereignty. From the U.S. perspective, greater access afforded by the decreasing seasonal ice increases the Arctic's viability as an avenue of approach to North America for those with hostile intent toward the U.S. homeland, and the Department will remain prepared to detect, deter, prevent, and defeat threats to the homeland. Additionally, DoD will continue to support the exercise of U.S. sovereignty. In the near-term¹⁰, this



A C-17 Globemaster III aircraft and its aircrew assist in deploying 120 Soldiers for Operation Arctic Response, an Army Emergency Deployment Readiness Exercise. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Laura Turner)

will require some ability to operate in the Arctic, which the Department will maintain and enhance by continuing to conduct exercises and training in the region. In the mid- to far-term, this may require developing further capabilities and capacity to protect U.S. air, land, and maritime borders in the Arctic in accordance with the 2013 *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*.

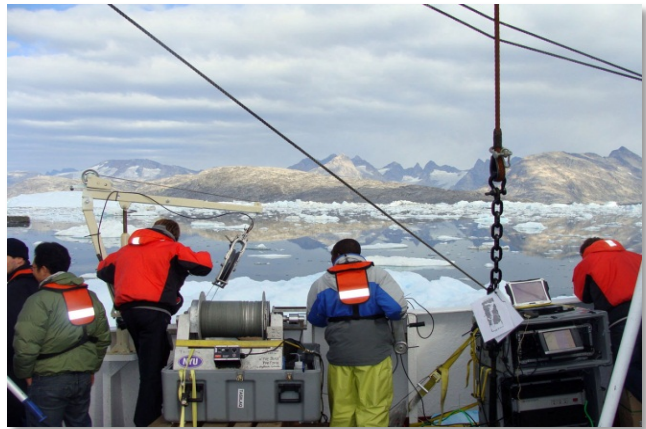
As directed by the 2011 Unified Command Plan, Commander, U.S. Northern Command (CDRUSNORTHCOM) is responsible for advocating for Arctic capabilities. In execution of this responsibility, CDRUSNORTHCOM will collaborate with relevant Combatant Commands, the Joint Staff, the Military Departments and Services, and the Defense agencies to identify and prioritize emerging Arctic capability gaps and requirements. These efforts will be informed by the most authoritative scientific information on future Arctic conditions. For purposes of mission and infrastructure vulnerability assessments and adaptation to climate change, the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics (OUSD(AT&L)) will identify projections of future conditions to be used. The Department of Defense will collaborate with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to ensure efficient use of resources to avoid duplication of effort in research, development, experimentation, testing, and acquisition. Forums such as the DoD-DHS Capabilities Development Working Group are among the means to facilitate this cooperation.

⁹Many of DoD's *ways* align with what the National Strategy for the Arctic Region terms *supporting objectives* to its three lines of effort, but DoD's strategy follows the classical "ways-ends-means" construction.

¹⁰ This strategy identifies three timeframes to be used for implementation planning: the near-term (present day-2020); mid-term (2020-2030); and far-term (beyond 2030). These timeframes are approximate due to uncertainty in climate change projections.

Engage public and private sector partners to improve all domain awareness in the Arctic.

Although NSPD-66/HSPD-25 focuses on maritime domain awareness, the Department has responsibilities for awareness across all domains: air, land, maritime, space, and cyberspace. Adequate domain awareness is an essential component of protecting maritime commerce, critical infrastructure, and key resources. In the near-term, the Department will work through the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) to maintain air tracking capabilities in the Arctic. As the maritime domain becomes increasingly accessible, the Department will seek to improve its maritime detection and tracking in coordination with DHS and other departments and agencies as well as through public/private partnerships. The Department of the Navy, in its role as DoD Executive Agent for Maritime Domain Awareness, will lead DoD coordination on maritime detection and tracking. Where possible, DoD will also collaborate with international partners to employ, acquire, share, or develop the means required to improve sensing, data collection and fusion, analysis, and information-sharing to enhance domain awareness appropriately in the Arctic. Monitoring regional activity and analyzing emerging trends are key to informing future investments in Arctic capabilities and ensuring they keep pace with increasing human activity in the region over time.



Scientists from the Naval Undersea Warfare Center monitor icebergs while a topside computer system gathers data collected from an autonomous undersea vehicle. (U.S. Navy photo)

In the near- to mid-term, the primary means of improving domain awareness will be continued use of innovative, low-cost solutions for polar Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) needs as well as enhanced international collaboration. DoD will take steps to work with other Federal departments and agencies to improve nautical charts, enhance relevant atmospheric and oceanic models, improve accuracy of estimates of ice extent and thickness, and detect and monitor climate change indicators. In particular, the Department of the Navy will work in partnership with other Federal departments and agencies (e.g., DHS, the Department of Commerce) and international partners to improve hydrographic charting and oceanographic surveys in the Arctic.

The Department will continue to collaborate with other Federal departments and agencies and the State of Alaska to monitor and assess changes in the physical environment to inform the development of Arctic requirements and future capabilities. To that end, the Department will leverage work done by the scientific and academic communities and seek opportunities to contribute to the observation and modeling of the atmosphere, ocean, and sea ice conditions, including acoustics conditions, to enhance military environmental forecasting capabilities. These collaborations will help inform the development and design of future ice-strengthened ship designs, when required.

Preserve freedom of the seas in the Arctic. The United States has a national interest in preserving all of the rights, freedoms, and uses of the sea and airspace recognized under international law. The Department will preserve the global mobility of United States military and civilian vessels and aircraft throughout the Arctic,¹¹ including through the exercise of the Freedom of Navigation program to challenge excessive maritime claims asserted by other Arctic States when necessary. The Department will continue to support U.S. accession to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (hereafter referred to as the Law of the Sea Convention (LOSC)) because it codifies the rights, freedoms, and uses of the sea and airspace the Department seeks to preserve; provides a means for the peaceful resolution of disputes; and ensures international recognition of resources rights on the extended continental shelf.

Evolve Arctic infrastructure and capabilities consistent with changing conditions.

The Department will periodically re-evaluate requirements necessary to meet national security objectives as conditions change and the Combatant Commanders identify operational requirements for the Arctic in updates to their regional plans. Once operational requirements are defined, solutions for associated supporting infrastructure requirements should seek to

leverage existing U.S. Government, commercial, and international facilities to the maximum extent possible in order to mitigate the high cost and extended timelines associated with the development of Arctic infrastructure. If no existing infrastructure is capable of sufficiently supporting the requirement, modifications to existing bases, such as the addition of a new hangar, will be made as part of the military construction or facilities sustainment, restoration, and modernization processes.



From South Mountain, Thule Air Base and Mount Dundas are captured during a short period of January twilight in Greenland. (U.S. Air Force photo by Michael Tolzmann)

Uphold existing agreements with allies and partners while building confidence with key regional partners.

Security cooperation activities and other military-to-military forms of engagement establish, shape, and maintain international relations and the partnerships necessary to meet security challenges and reduce the potential for friction. The 2012 and 2013 Northern Chiefs of Defense (CHoDs) meetings and the Arctic Security Forces Roundtable workshops and meetings are examples of means for promoting information-sharing and partnership-building necessary to develop cooperative approaches to common challenges. Therefore, in cooperation with the Department of State, DHS (in particular, the U.S. Coast Guard), and other relevant agencies, the Department will continue to build cooperative strategic partnerships that promote innovative, affordable security solutions and burden-sharing in the Arctic. It will also seek to increase bilateral exchanges, including in science and technology, and take advantage of multilateral training

¹¹As expressed by Commander, U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM), Commander, U.S. Transportation Command (USSTRANSCOM), and Commander, USNORTHCOM, in a May 2008 memorandum, the United States needs assured access to support U.S. national interests in the Arctic. Although this imperative could be met by regular U.S. Government ships in open water up to the marginal ice zone, only ice-capable ships provide assured sovereign presence throughout the region and throughout the year. Assured access in areas of pack ice could also be met by other means, including submarines and aircraft.

opportunities with Arctic partners to enhance regional expertise and cold-weather operational experience.

Provide Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA) in Alaska and provide Foreign Humanitarian Assistance and Foreign Disaster Relief (FHA/FDR) in other non-U.S. territorial areas of the Arctic. When directed by the appropriate authority, the Department will be prepared to support civil authorities in response to natural or manmade disasters, or to conduct FHA/FDR operations in cooperation with allies and partners.

Partner with other agencies and nations to support human and environmental safety.

Some of the near-term safety-related challenges include meeting international search and rescue obligations and responding to incidents such as oil spills in ice-covered waters, as reflected in the recently concluded Agreement on Cooperation on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic and Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic. The Department will leverage existing capabilities to respond to requests for support from civil authorities in coordination with other departments and agencies and nations.




The threat of avalanche presents a real danger to Marines training in Norway's subarctic climate and rugged terrain. (Photo by Lars Erik Solend)

Where appropriate, the Department will support other departments and agencies in maintaining human health; promoting healthy, sustainable, and resilient ecosystems; and consulting and coordinating with Alaska Natives on policy and activities affecting them. Finally, the Department will continue to integrate environmental considerations into its planning and operations and to contribute to whole-of-government approaches in support of the second line of effort in the 2013 *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*.

Support the development of the Arctic Council and other international institutions to promote regional cooperation and the rule of law. The Department recognizes the value of the Arctic Council in efforts to understand the changing Arctic environment and developing cooperative approaches to regional challenges, and supports the Department of State in the continued development of the Council. Although the Department of State is the lead for diplomacy, DoD has a role to play in enhancing the region's multilateral security cooperation environment. Accordingly, DoD will work with allies and partners within the framework of international institutions, ranging from the Arctic Council to the International Maritime Organization (IMO), to maintain stability and promote cooperation.

IV. CHALLENGES & RISKS TO THE STRATEGIC APPROACH

This strategy furthers defense objectives while positioning the United States to take advantage of opportunities in the Arctic during the coming decades in accordance with the 2013 *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*. It also addresses some of the risks inherent in the trade-offs and tensions among U.S. interests and objectives, including:

- *Projections about future access to and activity in the Arctic may be inaccurate.* Significant uncertainty remains about the rate and extent of the effects of climate change, including climate variability, in the Arctic. There is also uncertainty about future economic conditions, and the pace at which human activity will increase in the region. The challenge is to balance the risk of having inadequate capabilities or insufficient capacity when required to operate in the region with the opportunity cost of making premature and/or unnecessary investments. Premature investment may reduce the availability of resources for other pressing priorities, particularly in a time of fiscal austerity. The key will be to address needs in step with the rate at which activity in the Arctic increases while balancing potential investments in Arctic capabilities with other national priorities. The Department will mitigate this risk by monitoring the changing Arctic environment and geostrategic situation to determine the appropriate timing for future capability investments. Designating CDRUSNORTHCOM as the Arctic capability advocate was a significant step forward in the effort, but success will require Departmental adaptability in planning, budgeting, and acquisitions.
- 
- Arctic sea ice. (NOAA photo)
- *Fiscal constraints may delay or deny needed investment in Arctic capabilities, and may curtail Arctic training and operations.* As the Department downsizes to meet budgetary targets, it will have to prioritize engagements for the resulting smaller force. There is also a risk that desired investments in Arctic capabilities may not compete successfully against other requirements in the Department's budgetary priorities. Where possible, DoD will mitigate this risk by developing innovative ways to employ existing capabilities in coordination with other departments and agencies and international partners, and by enhancing scientific, research, and development partnerships. CDRUSNORTHCOM plays a key role in mitigating this risk as the Arctic capability advocate within the Department's planning and programming activities. Commander, U.S. European Command (CDRUSEUCOM) and Commander, U.S. Pacific Command (CDRUSPACOM) also play a role by fostering collaborative working relationships with regional partners.

- *Political rhetoric and press reporting about boundary disputes and competition for resources may inflame regional tensions.* Efforts to manage disagreements diplomatically may be hindered if the public narrative becomes one of rivalry and conflict. The Department will mitigate this risk by ensuring its plans, actions, and words are coordinated, and when appropriate, by engaging the press to counter unhelpful narratives with facts. The Under Secretary of Defense for Policy will monitor DoD activities, programs, and posture in the region to ensure the Department is sending a clear message to key audiences regarding the Department’s efforts to promote security, safety, and defense cooperation.
- *Being too aggressive in taking steps to address anticipated future security risks may create the conditions of mistrust and miscommunication under which such risks could materialize.* There is some risk that the perception that the Arctic is being militarized may lead to an “arms race” mentality that could lead to a breakdown of existing cooperative approaches to shared challenges. The Department will mitigate this risk by focusing on collaborative security approaches as outlined in the 2013 *National Strategy for the Arctic Region*, and by supporting other Federal departments and agencies where they have leadership roles. Building trust through transparency about the intent of our military activities and participation in bilateral and multilateral exercises and other engagements that facilitate information-sharing will be a key means of addressing this risk.

V. CONCLUSION

The Department will work collaboratively with allies and partners through the ways and means outlined in this strategy to support the development of the Arctic as a secure and stable region where U.S. national interests are safeguarded, the U.S. homeland is protected, and nations work cooperatively to address challenges. Priority will be given to addressing key near-term challenges primarily in key enablers, including: shortfalls in ice and weather reporting and forecasting; limitations in C4ISR due to lack of assets and harsh environmental conditions; and limited domain awareness. The

key will be to address needs over time as activity in the Arctic increases, while balancing potential Arctic investments with other national priorities. This approach will help the United States achieve its objectives as outlined in the *National Strategy for the Arctic Region* while mitigating risks and overcoming challenges presented by the growing geostrategic importance of the Arctic.



Arctic Survival School teaches signal fires. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Willard E. Grande II)