

of the waterways, and the Karelian region regardless of any previous knowledge of the topics.

Perttu Tikka
Department of Geographical and Historical Studies
University of Eastern Finland, Joensuu Campus
PO Box 111, FI-80101, Finland
perttut@student.uef.fi

JOURNAL OF ARCTIC CLIMATE AND SECURITY STUDIES, Vol. 1, No. 1. Summer, 2023. Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies, U.S. Department of Defence. Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama: Air University Press. 190 p., maps, color illus., Free. Available only in PDF

This review introduces the U.S. Department of Defense's (DOD) Ted Stevens Center of Arctic Security Studies (TSC), one of six regional centers for security studies. It also reviews the first issue of the TSC's *Journal of Arctic Climate and Security Studies* (2023). The center is part of a change in U.S. security policy that focuses on homeland defense that now includes Alaska. Instead of using Alaskan-based troops to fight in the Middle East, as it did during the past 20 years, DOD is reorienting armed forces stationed in the Arctic to bolster domestic security and to meet the United States' NATO Article 5 commitment.

Melissa Dalton, former assistant secretary of defense with center oversight, outlines the TSC's three main tasks in her journal essay. These tasks are to provide executive education for DOD senior leaders; to foster outreach and engagement for Alaska military organizations, Native Peoples, and allies; and to conduct high-quality research and analysis to improve DOD's Arctic knowledge base.

The TSC established short seminars and five-day courses on the Arctic for senior civilian and military leaders, which are held both remotely and at various Alaska locations. Center staff facilitate outreach and engagement by interacting with Alaskan Indigenous communities and hosting tribal leaders at meetings and ceremonies. TSC associate director Craig Fleener is an accomplished Indigenous leader involved with the Arctic Council Permanent Participants and a senior Alaska Army National Guard officer. TSC leaders such as retired Coast Guard Admiral Matthew Bell, the center's dean, attend international forums such as the annual Arctic Circle Assembly in Reykjavik. Thus, the center seems to be meeting the first two tasks adequately. This review will focus on the last task—conducting high-level Arctic research and analysis—by looking at the scholarly quality of the TSC's first journal issue and the capability of the center's staff to engage in its own original scholarly research.

Fittingly, the journal begins with well-wishes by the Ted Stevens family, followed by Alaskan Senator Lisa Murkowski's introduction. As assistant secretary of the Interior, Ted Stevens advanced Alaskan statehood,

becoming an Alaskan state representative for two terms, the second as House majority leader. In 1968, Alaska's governor appointed Stevens to the U.S. Senate, a seat he held until 2009. Lisa Murkowski was appointed as U.S. Senator in 2002 and has subsequently been re-elected four times.

The TSC journal is introduced by the center director, retired Air Force Major General Randy "Church" Kee, whose vision is that the flagship journal "represent[s] a broad set of viewpoints." Thus, "submissions from Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic as well as Allies and partners represent our commitment to a diverse and networked approach to support broad and multidisciplinary Arctic and regionally oriented climate security" (p. 1).

The journal continues with Ambassador David Balton's essay summarizing the attempt by the Biden government in 2022 to create and implement Arctic policy for the United States. The essay illustrates how U.S. Arctic policy is spread across several agencies from committees to departments, leaving policy diffuse and largely ineffective. To control the many Arctic policy-shaping bodies, the federal government did what it does best: created two more bureaucratic entities. The Arctic Executive Steering Committee and the Interagency Arctic Research Policy Committee are both run from the White House by Balton.

In his essay, James A. Hursch, Defense Security Cooperation Agency director, explains that his office represents the nexus of U.S. foreign and defense policy in the Arctic because it supplies allies with weapons and military programs to enhance their security. The author unofficially bids farewell to so-called Arctic exceptionalism, whose proponents proclaim the northern region a zone of peaceful cooperation free of militarism, with the Arctic Council leading the way.

Essays about U.S. Arctic security policy from the DOD's perspective continue with contributions from the commanding general of U.S. Northern Command, the commanding general of the Alaskan Command, and the commanding general of the recently reactivated 11th Airborne Division (Arctic), Major General Brian S. Eifler. Eifler and co-author Natalie M. Hardy quote extensively from the boldly (and largely erroneously) titled U.S. Army publication, *Regaining Arctic Dominance—The U.S. Army in the Arctic* (2021).

To the contrary, the U.S. Army has never had Arctic dominance, shown by the service's failure to staff, equip, and train units for Arctic combat (or even survival) during WWII. For example, the attempt to retake the Attu Island in the Aleutians, which the authors refer to as evidence of dominance, was nothing short of a military disaster due to the U.S. Army's unpreparedness for Arctic operations. The 7th Infantry Division, which led the 1943 counterattack against 500 Japanese troops occupying the island, was untrained and poorly equipped for the frigid Arctic weather. Although they retook Attu, the troops suffered more casualties attributed to weather, disease, and vehicle accidents than to combat. Although there were fewer casualties when U.S. forces later reoccupied abandoned

Kiska Island, elements of the better-trained mountain divisions, along with Canadian troops, still suffered losses from weather and accidents.

Eifler and Hardy maintain that the reactivated 11th Airborne Division's cooperative work with Indigenous groups in Alaska will help them prepare for Arctic operations. Cooperative work in this case means Alaskan Native Peoples attending change of command ceremonies, and troops participating in a "Native immersion event" (p. 38) and a potlatch. While symbolically important, some means of extended interaction between 11th Airborne troop leaders and Native villagers could help the Division learn and practice traditional Arctic survival skills in a variety of climatic conditions.

Although many 11th Division soldiers do attend the eleven-day Northern Warfare Training Center course (some during the summer), there may be a better way to achieve cold-weather competence for a select few incoming company commanders, battalion executive officers, or division level officers (e.g., G-4). The TSC could create a cooperative partnership with the University of Alaska Anchorage to host active-duty Army officers who are enrolled in a university master's program. The university already has such a program for Air Force and Coast Guard officers. Officers approved for the Army's Advanced Civil Schooling program could be appointed TSC military fellows. The Army officers could take courses and spend extended periods embedded in Native villages to obtain data for their theses and to gain practical experience in Indigenous survival and operational skills. After study, these captains or majors could be assigned to the 11th Airborne Division, completing their theses during that assignment.

The journal continues with retired Coast Guard Officer Jeremy McKenzie providing an overview of U.S. Arctic policy that began with President Nixon's 1971 National Security Decision Memorandum, which contained the following six Arctic themes (p. 43):

sustainable development, environmental protection, international cooperation, security (including the preservation of the freedom of navigation), the establishment of an Interagency Policy Group, and scientific exploration.

Danish graduate student Lin A. Mortensgaard describes how U.S. Arctic security policy is changing for two reasons. The first is that an increasingly bellicose Russia and emerging superpower China are recreating a conflict-oriented North, which seems valid. The second is the U.S. public's increasing acceptance of an Arctic identity and the need for national security in the region. Americans, most of whom live in the lower 48 states, do not see themselves as residents of an Arctic country. Rather, they see Alaska as a place where they can visit the wilderness. Of the dozens of successful television shows set in Alaska during the last decade—whether the show's topic was fishing, living

off the grid, transportation, law enforcement/rescue, gold mining, or survival—most had Alaska in their titles, while none had the term Arctic. Thus, Mortensgaard's thesis is partly correct in that U.S. Arctic policy is exclusively conflict driven.

In the issue's only essay about Indigenous or autonomous regions (also the only essay to include foreign language sources), graduate student Renato Fakhoury describes how the relationship between Greenland and the Danish core area evolved toward independence from each other (yet the two remain interdependent). Citing Arctic Council speeches, Fakhoury details how Greenland benefits from Danish economic activities (especially imports), an educated Danish workforce, and block grants for infrastructure and social services. Denmark needs Greenland (along with the Faroe Islands) to retain sovereignty over Arctic Ocean natural resources. The author concludes that while Greenland's government benefits from the continued relationship with Denmark, it also seeks more independence in Arctic diplomacy.

Two authors, Yllemo and Hamilton (from the American Security Project, a Washington D.C. think tank), present another summary of U.S. Arctic policy "to educate and inform key stakeholders about priorities and interests in the region" (p. 89). The quote illustrates a prevailing neocolonialist view that those who live and work in the Arctic somehow need outside experts to explain the region to them. While military personnel and political appointees with no Arctic experience need educating and informing as they rotate through their newly assigned positions, Arctic residents know more about the region than they are often given credit for. Arctic residents could benefit from obtaining more formal education in fields such as strategic studies, which would help them more effectively interact with various public and private entities in the region.

The Moon, Alessa, Solli, and Valentine essay, written by two retired U.S. Coast Guard officers, a retired Norwegian Army officer, and a professor of landscape architecture, presents a confusing discussion of information acquisition and its role in establishing strategic Arctic dominance. The following quote illustrates the confusing nature of the essay (p. 118).

[T]he domain of disorder is the central space between the other four domains. This realm is dominated by confusion, where differing opinions or conflicting understanding of relationships leads to poor system understanding. In this disordered space, detection of agents must almost certainly be driven by data, in order to avoid opinion or perception-based decision-making and move to one of the more comprehensible domains.

The next three essays consist of two discussions of Russian and Chinese Arctic strategy (neither containing native-language source material) and a legal perspective on how U.S. Arctic strategy depends on the UN Convention for the Law of the Sea.

The issue's final article deserves special attention because it is the sole submission based on original research, rather than merely restating policy documents or synthesizing secondary sources. In "Toward Integrated Deterrence. Sweden's Role on NATO's Northeast Flank," Lisa Aronsson and three other authors, all researchers at the U.S. National Defense University, envision how a NATO-member Sweden would contribute to American national security policy. Obtaining interviews from Swedish security officials in Stockholm and Washington D.C., along with conducting a scenario planning exercise, the authors outlined how Sweden would form an Arctic bastion of a U.S. integrative deterrence that incorporates "ally and partner perspectives, competencies, and advantages at every stage of defense planning" (p. 165). The authors concluded that to become a full NATO partner, Sweden needed to change public attitudes and traditions from two centuries of military non-alignment, to support the Alliance's nuclear mission, to strengthen its military, including fortifying the eastern border, and to become the leader of a modern and NATO-conforming Nordic security partnership.

While a valid study based on original research, albeit with debatable conclusions, the article has some potential shortcomings. For example, the authors cite a senior Swedish official in Washington who said in his interview that the kingdom could become the Nordic region's "preeminent military" (p. 168). Relying on government officials or senior military officers to predict future security preparedness is a tricky gambit. As an exchange officer with the Swedish K-4 Norrland Dragoons in the mid-1990s, I was stunned by the arrogance of its leadership, despite the Swedish armed forces having faced no combat for almost two centuries. Such opinions contradicted Sweden's official military publications during the late Cold War, which instructed its military to fight a guerilla war following the kingdom's inevitable defeat and occupation by Russia.

Another weakness of this paper is that there are no Swedish-language sources cited in the article. The lead author confirmed that none of the authors possesses Nordic language skills nor any real experience in Sweden. Language competence and first-hand experience would have allowed the authors to address Swedish reports about the country's lack of military preparedness. For example, defense expert Michael Reberg recently stated that despite fielding the patriot anti-missile system, Sweden could not repel a mass missile/drone attack like the ones occurring in Ukraine or Israel (Dagens Nyheter, 2024). The reality is that Sweden would have difficulty protecting itself from attack without help from other NATO countries, let alone fighting outside the kingdom's borders in response to an Article 5 request or on its own territory as part of American security policy.

The authors also refer to Russia as Sweden's "acute, near-term security threat" (p. 170), which minimizes the 500 years of warfare between Russia and Sweden that shapes its current security policy. Sweden has recognized

Russia as its primary enemy for nearly half a millennium. Quite simply, Sweden joined NATO for one reason—to protect itself from Russia following that nation's invasion of Ukraine.

While it could be argued the center's first journal issue met some of its educational objectives by presenting summaries of existing policy documents, the contributors did not represent the wide variety of viewpoints called for by the TSC's director. Authors consisted almost exclusively of senior elected and appointed officials, DOD civilians and contractors, and current or former military officers. To gain acceptance as a publication of high-quality research, the editors need to solicit submissions from experienced Arctic researchers outside of the U.S. defense community. The issue was not peer reviewed, despite its claim to the contrary (p. 190). Instead, the journal used an editorial review process and submissions were reviewed by center staff who either held a Ph.D. or were doctoral students. Solicited double-blind reviews by external specialists or experts in the field are needed to make the TSC journal a truly scientific one, a process the new editor has started.

Moreover, the TSC staff structure needs to improve its academic profile to establish legitimacy as an Arctic research center. Many of the current 45 staff perform logistical or administrative tasks such as senior travel manager or protocol officer. Only three have the title of professor, although there are two dean slots that should be allocated to academics. As an example of staff inadequacy, the center has no Nordic or Russian linguists for monitoring press reports and official publications in the region and produce up-to-date briefings and scholarly articles. While there are contract researchers working for the center, neither a doctorate nor Arctic experience is required.

During my formal affiliations with six Arctic centers (in five countries plus Greenland), I learned that those with at least half of their positions allocated to educated and experienced researchers have a much greater chance for success than those with mostly administrative staff. For example, the Smithsonian Institution's Arctic Center, the gold standard of centers because of the quality and quantity of its research publications, has six staff positions, four allocated to doctoral-level researchers. The Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies has a faculty consisting of several dozen doctoral-level researchers, supplemented by active-duty fellows.

Without substantial scholarly expertise on the center's staff, however, the Stevens family's characterization of the TSC as "the foremost center on Arctic policy and security in the world" (p. 2) cannot be realized. The center's leadership and those with administrative oversight, such as Senator Murkowski, must realize that for the TSC to become a legitimate Arctic research center (much less an elite one), it needs to reallocate its staffing to include a substantial number of doctoral-level, experienced Arctic scholars capable of conducting world-class research and analysis.

REFERENCES

- Dagens Nyheter. 2024. Expert: Sveriges luftvärn kan inte stå emot större angrepp [Expert: Sweden's air defense cannot withstand major attacks]. 15 April.
<https://www.dn.se/sverige/expert-sveriges-luftvarn-kan-inte-sta-emot-storre-angrepp/>
- Journal of Arctic climate and security studies 1(2).
https://tedstevensarcticcenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/JACSS-Vol-1.-No.-1-20230906_revised_20230911_1936AKDT_V2.pdf
- U.S. Army. 2021. Regaining Arctic dominance: The U.S. Army in the Arctic.
<https://api.army.mil/e2/c/downloads/2021/03/15/9944046e/regaining-arctic-dominance-us-army-in-the-arctic-19-january-2021-unclassified.pdf>

Robert Wheelersburg
Retired anthropology professor and U.S. Army officer
114 Meadowbrook Lane
Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, USA
[*rwheelersburg@gmail.com*](mailto:rwheelersburg@gmail.com)

PAPERS TO APPEAR

- Jensen, M.L. Encounters Between Wolves, Humans, and Their Dogs in West and North Greenland.
- Stopp, M., and Nikčević, H. Adding to the Portfolio and the Narrative: Further Images of Eighteenth Century Labrador Inuit in England.
- Bayer, C., Van Wychen, W., Wendleder, A., and Main, B. Seasonal Variability of Ice Motion for Hubbard and Valerie Glaciers, Alaska.
- Murray, M.S., Sankar, R.D., Loseto, L., Pulsifer, P., and Dawson, J. Canadian Coordination in Support of Sustained Observations of Arctic Change.
- Moioli, S., Tuulentie, S., Ólafsdóttir, R., Siikavuopio, S., Vack, H., Zivojinovic, I., Elomina, J., Engen, S., and Rautio, P. The Potential of DPSIR Framework to Develop a Holistic Picture of Arctic Industries and Livelihood—A Scoping Review.
- Tuihedur Rahman, H.M., Ingram, S., Liang, Q., and Natcher, D. Warming Arctic and its Cascading Impacts on Water, Energy, and Food (WEF) Systems: A Case Study of Iqaluit, Nunavut.
- Hildén, M., Kułakowska, M., Magnuszewski, P., Obermeister, N., and Sivonen, M.H. Climate Change in the Arctic—A Policy Simulation With and For Emerging Leaders.
- Smith, L., Maio, C., Bigelow, N., and Eagle, M. Assessing Coastal Wetland Carbon and Mineral Accumulation Response to Changing Climate, Cape Espenberg, Alaska.
- Matthiesen, H., Gotfredsen, A., Eriksen, A.M., Hollund, H., and Grønnow, B. Quantifying Degradation of Archaeological Bone In Situ and in Museum Storage—A Comparison Between Environment and Degradation Over 43 Years For Bones From the Aasivissuit Site, Western Greenland.
- Bongelli, E., McLoughlin, P., Dowsley, M., Cluff, H.D., Campbell, M., and Taylor, M.K. Range Dynamics of Barren-Ground Caribou Implied by Historical Population Cycles and Logistic Growth.