

ACTIVITY REPORT



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Ten Key Takeaways from The North American Arctic: Security Challenges and Opportunities

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- **Canada and the US are experiencing a miscommunication**, essentially speaking past one another, regarding Arctic threats and the Arctic as an avenue of approach to North America (e.x. Canada avoids using the term “adversary”).
- The American perspective on Arctic is that it is a frontier, uninhabitable. **The US is an Arctic nation that is not an Arctic nation** - the Arctic is often viewed as an Alaskan issue.
- **The US is security-focused** and feels particularly vulnerable in the face of Russia’s tests of its Air Identification Zone; it feels that Canada underestimates the US concern for North American defence and the protection of the homeland.
- **The US is concerned about the erosion of the Rules-Based International Order (RBIO)** by Russia and China. Emergence of Russia-China strategic cooperation and influence in the Arctic is problematic.
- **The US approach to the Arctic is strategic** (driven by global considerations and new strategic weapons systems); **whereas Canada has an operational focus** (theatre – Canadian and North American context) which leads it to look inward (a passive approach, often with an emphasis on human security rather than traditional hard security, focus on indigenous rights and Arctic sovereignty which itself has a different understanding in Canada versus the US)
- In speaking of the different Arctics – **three Commands carve the Arctic**: 1) EUCOM / SHAPE; 2) INDOPACOM; 3) NORTHCOM
- Domains are specific to component Commanders; but these are antithetical to an all-domain C2. **Does the Tri-Command structure need revisiting?**

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- **The geography of the Arctic is shifting.** What considerations of a continental defence command that includes other domains; what about moving beyond the binational to include Mexico and/or Greenland (when it becomes independent from Denmark)?
- There has been a maturation of the Arctic security conversation towards operational capabilities. Consider the rights and **inclusion of indigenous peoples** when it comes to Arctic exercises. Canada utilizes Arctic assets (such as indigenous knowledge) to complete the operating picture
- There is a **need for dialogue on the challenges of responsibility in the Arctic.** What sort of collective action internally or externally is required? There is a need to talk about how the US and Canada work together on North American defence – there are opportunities for cooperation in the domains of space, the North Warning System (modernization/upgrade/life-extension/replacement), expand NORAD, dual-use systems, additional patrolling, binational cooperation at the local level.