

SUGGESTED READINGS

Alaska Primer¹

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Alaska security is often seen as a microcosm of broader trends across the Arctic. Climate change is an excellent example. International threats like climate change have local effects for Alaskans, impacting their human security. They see how devastating climate change can inflect on Indigenous communities, from food insecurity, melting sea ice, coastal erosion, and frequent flooding of their villages. Many communities can no longer traditionally hunt, and their villages are, in some cases, sinking into the sea. Some of the readings below offer first-person perspectives on these impacts from interviews. Geopolitics also plays an important role in Alaskan security, particularly how Alaska can maneuver in creating climate and security policy, showing how international level concerns, whether from geopolitics or climate change, have a real impact on individuals and communities.

Alaskans are also considering the role that China will play locally in their state's politics. While more national-security minded individuals focus on China through a geopolitical lens, Alaskans focus more on how they should interpret China locally. Is it worth accepting foreign investment to build infrastructure? And what costs come from working with China?

Alaskans note that focusing too much on climate change can obscure other issues and can distract from actions that can be taken now to improve the lives of Arctic peoples generally. For example, issues such as health inequity, poverty, education, cultural vitality, and justice all still exist. Further, the issue of missing Indigenous women and girls in Alaska as well as high suicide rates must be addressed. These human security issues are prevalent across the state, but perhaps most crucial is the question of food and societal security – which are interconnected – threatening the very survival of coastal communities.

Alaskans face a nexus of human security and national security. Questions of national security are certainly relevant to Alaskans but so too are the local issues of security that impact Alaskans in their everyday lives. Addressing that nexus is key for finding a nuanced approach to Alaska.

¹ This Suggested Readings was produced by a NAADSN graduate fellow to provide suggested readings for participants in the Advancing Collaboration in Canada-U.S. Arctic Regional Security (ACCUSARS III) workshop held from 24-25 March 2022.

Throughout this pre-reading list and ACCUSARS III, we invite you to consider the following questions:

- How is Alaskan security a microcosm of broader trends in Arctic security?
- Are there national and human security threats that should be addressed together? Are there threats that should remain separate?
- How can Alaskans address climate change as a security threat without obscuring issues of human security?

Apok, Charlene Aqpik, Malia Villegas, Abigail Echo-Hawk, and Jody Juneby Potts. ["We Are Calling to You: Alaska's Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls."](#) *Data for Indigenous Justice*, February 2021.

Alaska is fourth in the nation for the number of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. Anchorage is third in the nation, disproportionately high considering its size with 31 missing or murdered Indigenous women or girls, and a population of 294,000. This report touches on the scope of the problem in Alaska, discusses persistent issues with data collection, outlines what data there is and proposes recommendations and pathways forward. This includes establishing a data codebooks across agencies to ensure consistent data collection and reporting, improving oversight of investigations, establishing tribal review boards, mandate cultural training for law enforcement, provide support for families, and articulate clear system responsibilities for Alaska for addressing this issue.

Bowman, Liz and Qingchao Xu. ["China in the Arctic: Policies, Strategies, and Opportunities for Alaska."](#) *Center of Arctic Policy Studies: University of Alaska Fairbanks*, February 2020.

The objective of this report is to describe China's policy and positionality in the Arctic and, more specifically, to discuss the bilateral relationship between Alaska and China. As a non-Arctic state, China has limited capacity to impact regional decision making directly. Consequently, China has engaged Arctic stakeholders to increase its participation and influence within northern regional affairs. For public and private sectors in Alaska and the U.S. more broadly, it is critical to understand the role that China plays in the Arctic region already, as well as its plans. An accurate and unbiased analysis of the significant Arctic interests of China, as well as other nations with whom the U.S. may currently have strained relations, is vital to the security of the region. Understanding how other countries, non-Arctic nations, perceive and operate in the High North allows Alaska and the U.S. to create stronger and more beneficial partnerships in business and other endeavors such as scientific discovery and search and rescue. Consequently, our report is jointly written by scholars from both Alaska and China with expertise in their home countries' northern interests and policies. To frame this paper, the following two areas of inquiry are considered. Firstly, how is China already working in the Arctic? More narrowly, what has shaped the nation's interest in the North from its internal political development and how does it view its presence in the Arctic currently and into the future? Secondly, how should the state of Alaska interpret this engagement and what role does the state play within the complex national relationship the U.S. has with China?

Boylan, Brandon, and Jeremy Speight. [“Alaska’s Arctic Security Complex and Evolving Dynamics in Nome.”](#) *Center for Arctic Policy Studies: University of Alaska Fairbanks*, October 2021.

Over the past few decades, scholars, practitioners, and activists have expanded the concept of security beyond strict nation-state and military definitions. Concurrent to these conceptual developments, the Arctic has become a distinct region of study, with its own environmental, cultural, political, and economic identity. In this paper, we apply a holistic interpretation of security to Alaska’s evolving Arctic space. Theoretical concepts of securitization and human security inform a novel matrix of various levels and types of security. Levels range from the local and communal to the international, while types include physical, military, economic, environmental, and cultural security. The matrix serves as a tool to differentiate and synthesize security in a variety of contexts, notably in Alaska’s Arctic. To illustrate the utility of the matrix, and to present a more complete picture of the security environment of the region, we analyze the current expanded port project in Nome, Alaska. In this case, we evaluate the ways in which the proposed project illustrates the complexity of and multiple perspectives on security, while also examining the new challenges of security in a rapidly changing environment with a diverse set of interests focused on the Bering Strait region. This exercise reveals how the expanded port project might remedy some security challenges but exacerbate others.

Carlo, Nikoosh. [“Arctic Observing: Indigenous Peoples’ History, Perspectives, and Approaches for Partnership.”](#) *Center of Arctic Policy Studies: University of Alaska Fairbanks*, March 2020.

Climate solutions require contributions from both people and institutions: Arctic researchers and policies, governments, communities and organizations, universities, the public and private sector, and individuals and leadership at all levels. Indigenous Peoples leading these efforts, grounded in our cultural values, and understanding of the Arctic environment, will lead to a broader, deeper, and stronger Arctic observation system. We, all people, must leverage our expertise and resources to create a future that is prosperous and just, with vibrant communities and healthy environments. To get there, we must work more collaboratively to address systemic inequity and bias and promote understanding of the tremendous value that different types of knowledge bring to a problem and the role these perspectives have in creating solutions. It is with this goal in mind that this paper reviews some general background about Indigenous Peoples in Alaska to demonstrate similarities in conditions across the circumpolar North, such as the influence of colonialism and other systemic sources that fuel inequity, the rapid environmental change that exceeds intergenerational knowledge, and the current conditions of relationships between communities and researchers. In addition, Alaska can demonstrate the strong potential for building a model for co-production of knowledge. Lastly, I provide suggestions for how we might approach building partnerships among scientists, Indigenous Peoples, and policymakers.

Carlson, Cameron, Troy Bouffard, and Dana Woodward. “[Exploring a Nexus of National and Human Security: Food and Energy Challenges in the U.S. Arctic.](#)” *Journal of Human Security*, No. 16 (2020): 30-40.

Changes in the U.S. Arctic are challenging both the national and human security dynamics of the region. Historically, the region’s significance had been defined by national security concerns, but the emerging concept of human security has come to provide a useful framework through which to define and demonstrate the nexus between the two. This paper provides an overview of the relationship between national and human security and the concerns shared by individuals working in both areas, with a more narrowed focus on the interrelated issues of both food and energy security within the U.S. Arctic. Considering the substantial overlap of aspects of food and energy on both national as well as human security, an analysis of the relationships involving each provides meaningful and extended context of the term “security” for the Arctic region.

Huntington, Henry, Mark Carey, Charlene Apok, et al. “[Climate change in context: putting people first in the Arctic.](#)” *Regional Environmental Change*, No. 19 (2019): 1217–1223.

Climate change is a major challenge to Arctic and other Indigenous peoples, but not the only and often not the most pressing one. We propose re-framing the treatment of climate change in policy and research, to make sure health, poverty, education, cultural vitality, equity, justice, and other topics highlighted by the people themselves and not just climate science also get the attention they deserve in research on global and regional environmental change. Climate change can often exacerbate other problems, but a singular focus on climate change—as is often the case in much existing environmental literature on the Arctic and elsewhere—can distract from actions that can be taken now to improve the lives of Arctic peoples. The same logic also applies elsewhere in the world, where diverse residents face a host of challenges, opportunities, and obstacles, with climate change but one among many issues. Our proposed approach to regional and global environmental change research draws on the ideas of decolonization, emphasizing collaborative approaches and Indigenous voices in research and policy instead of top-down measures designed outside the affected communities. Only in this way of contextualizing human-environmental experiences can the full effects of climate change be understood—and appropriate responses developed and carried out to adapt to global change.

Huntington, Henry, Philip Loring, Glenna Gannon, et al. “[Staying in place during times of change in Arctic Alaska: the implications of attachment, alternatives, and buffering.](#)” *Regional Environmental Change* No. 18 (2018): 489-499.

The relationship between stability and change in social-ecological systems has received considerable attention in recent years, including the expectation that significant environmental changes will drive observable consequences for individuals, communities, and populations. Migration, as one example of response to adverse economic or environmental changes, has been observed in many places, including parts of the Far North. In Arctic Alaska, a relative lack of demographic or migratory response to rapid environmental and other changes has been observed. To understand why Arctic Alaska

appears different, we draw on the literature on environmentally driven migration, focusing on three mechanisms that could account for the lack of response: attachment, the desire to remain in place, or the inability to relocate successfully; alternatives, ways to achieve similar outcomes through different means; and buffering, the reliance on subsidies or use of reserves to delay impacts. Each explanation has different implications for research and policy, indicating a need to further explore the relative contribution that each makes to a given situation to develop more effective responses locally and regionally. Given that the Arctic is on the front lines of climate change, these explanations are likely relevant to the ways changes play out in other parts of the world. Our review also underscores the importance of further attention to the details of social dynamics in climate change impacts and responses.

PBS Digital Studio. “After the Ice PBS Series Part [One](#), [Two](#), and [Three](#).” YouTube, April 2021.

In a major government report, Alaska Native Elders document radical changes in climate such as food insecurity, warmer temperatures, melting sea ice, coastal erosion, and frequent flooding. In the After the Ice series, elders from villages in the Bering Sea region of Alaska share with Terra their observations of their melting world, how they’re adapting, and their vision for an uncertain future. These first-person accounts of climate change are crucial for policymakers to see the real-life impacts of climate change on ordinary people. Listening to these stories helps illuminate how international threats like climate change have a real impact on individuals and communities – and thus must be addressed in any nuanced and broad understanding of Alaskan security.

The Renewing Indigenous Economies Project. “[Renewing Indigenous Economies: An Interview with Sam Schimmel, Siberian Yupik and Kenaitze Indian](#).” YouTube, 23 April 2020.

The Renewing Indigenous Economies Project (RIEP) provides ideas for restoring Native American dignity and renewing tribal economies. The project provides educational materials building on the customs and cultures that allowed American Indians to thrive before contact, for tribal leaders to break the bonds of colonialism. To revive their economies, indigenous peoples must re-establish and restore their dynamic customs, culture, and dignity that existed before colonization. Sam Schimmel is an Alaska Native with a passion for subsistence hunting and fishing, both of which keep him connected to tradition and infuse his efforts to combat the suicide, drug abuse, and cultural erosion that riddle Native communities. Having seen the effects of climate change in Alaska firsthand, Sam is also working to raise awareness of its impacts on tribal communities. He is an active member of Alaska’s Climate Action Leadership Team and serves on the Cook Inlet Tribal Youth Council as well as the Youth Advisory Board of the Center for Native American Youth.

Slats, Richard, Carol Oliver, Andrew Miller, Robert Bahnke, Helen Bell, Delbert Pungowiyi, Jacob Mercurief, Norman Menadelook Sr., Jerry Ivanoff, and Clyde Oserok. "[An Indigenous Perspective to the 2019 Arctic Report Card.](#)" NOAA, 22 November 2019.

Since 2006, the Arctic Report Card, which is a report led by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Arctic Program, has provided a comprehensive annual summary on the state of the Arctic climate and environment, authored by an international team of experts. The Arctic Report Card is written for a non-technical audience, aiming to reach the broader public, the media, and policymakers alike. The elders' contribution was a highlight within the 2019 report, providing firsthand accounts of what communities across the Bering Sea region are facing as sea ice loss and warming temperatures drive a host of changes relating to food security, community infrastructure, travel, animal health, and overall community well-being.

Steffen, Abigail, Stephen Arturo Greenlaw, Maureen Biermann, and Amy Lauren Lovecraft. "[Alaska's Climate Change Policy Development.](#)" *Center of Arctic Policy Studies: University of Alaska Fairbanks*, March 2021.

Scientific observations have monitored High Northern environmental conditions for well over a century. Alaska Native and other Indigenous Peoples' knowledge systems have developed over millennia to promote human prosperity under a wide range of conditions. Both show rapidly changing environmental conditions in Alaska and the Arctic have been ongoing for over three decades. Observations reveal that ecosystems across the Alaska region have changed, affecting how people rely on food sources, plan their lives, and do their jobs. This report examines the evolution of climate change policy in the state of Alaska since the first major recognition of "global warming" in the late 20th century as a threat. Over time, in the absence of comprehensive and sustained federal or state policies, there has been an emergence of local climate plans - municipal, borough, and Tribal - across the state. To assist the reader in understanding what climate plans have been developed, why, and what impacts they may be having, we identify emerging patterns of policy motivation, funding, and activities that can be traced within and between plans. The report ends with comprehensive contact information for each location and activity documented.