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**THE ARCTIC: ONE REGION, ONE COMMANDER**

**by**

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**A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.**

**The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.**

**Signature: \_\_\_\_\_**

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## **Abstract**

### *The Arctic: One Region, One Commander*

With the release of its new Arctic Region Policy (ARP), the US has taken its first steps toward engaging in the Arctic in a comprehensive way. This paper examines the current US Geographic Combatant Command (GCC) construct in the Arctic, including its command and control (C2) structure and physical and geopolitical seams, and suggests how it could be better structured to support US strategic objectives in the Arctic and the new US ARP. The paper also examines which GCC, one of the three existing GCCs or a new stand-alone GCC, would be the best choice. Assigning USNORTHCOM as the single Arctic GCC will provide clearer lines of authority, reduce the physical C2 seams now present, and allow the CCDR to better synchronize his military efforts with non-military efforts ongoing in the Arctic, without militarizing US foreign policy in the Arctic. It would be a significant second step toward communicating to internal and external audiences that the Arctic is strategically important to the US. Finally, the paper draws the conclusion that the US cannot go it alone to secure its interests in the Arctic, but needs to leverage the capabilities of other Arctic nations to serve collective common interests and avoid duplicating effort.

*We could ignore the Arctic. The Russian aren't. The Canadians aren't. Even non-polar nations like the Chinese aren't... The others will be ready. Will we?*  
-RADM Gene Brooks

## **INTRODUCTION**

The US could ignore the Arctic, but as Admiral Brooks, the Seventeenth District Commander, US Coast Guard, points out, other nations are not. Russia has taken actions in the Arctic, which some have suggested are aggressive, to stake claims in the Arctic.<sup>1</sup> Canada views the Arctic as critical to her future economic prosperity, vowing to exercise her sovereignty in order to protect it, particularly in the Northwest Passage.<sup>2</sup> Even China has demonstrated interest in the Arctic, procuring its own icebreaker and establishing an Arctic research center.<sup>3</sup> The US, despite having strategic and economic interests in the region, has not responded with the same sense of urgency.<sup>4</sup>

With release of its new Arctic Region Policy (ARP) in January 2009, the US appears to be reengaging in the Arctic. Much has changed since the previous policy was released in 1994. US Arctic policy cites four developments that influenced the new policy: updated US policies on homeland defense and security; the impact of climate change and increase in human traffic in the Arctic region; the establishment and growing influence of the Arctic Council; and the recognition of significant potential natural resources.<sup>5</sup> This new policy extends beyond national security interests, to include international governance, boundary issues, scientific cooperation; maritime transportation, environmental and conservation issues.<sup>6</sup> The US ARP assigns responsibilities across the entire Executive Branch, to include Secretaries of State, Defense, Homeland Security, Interior, Commerce, Energy and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.<sup>7</sup>

The President has specifically directed the Secretaries of State, Defense and Homeland Security in support of US ARP to implement the National Security and Homeland

Security interests in the Arctic. Coordinating, implementing and executing a coherent US Arctic strategy to secure and safeguard US interests in the Arctic is a complex assignment, requiring the unified efforts among these US Executive Departments, fellow Arctic nations, state and local governments, and Inter-governmental Organizations (IGOs). Although DoD has a principal role, DoS is assigned the leading role in implementing the US Arctic Policy.<sup>8</sup> DoD is further challenged with its own internal coordination because three Geographic Combatant Commanders (GCCs) are responsible for parts of the Arctic region. US European Command (USEUCOM), US Pacific Command (USPACOM) and US Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) all have various Areas of Responsibility (AORs) within the Arctic. DoD can contribute to achieving US strategic objectives in the Arctic by assigning a single Arctic commander under one of the existing three GCCs to provide effective command and control, to reduce the seams among the three GCCs and to communicate to domestic and international communities that the Arctic is strategically important to the US. Some may argue that a stand-alone Arctic GCC may be more appropriate to focus attention, priorities and resources on the Arctic and not have to compete against other requirements in an existing GCC. While a stand-alone GCC does address some of the existing command and control issues, the establishment of US Arctic Command may possibly militarize US foreign policy in the Arctic and send the wrong signal to the international community.

### **US Arctic Region Policy**

In January 2009, President Bush issued National Security Presidential Directive (NSPD-66), US Arctic Region Policy (US ARP). This new policy affirms US' fundamental interests in the Arctic; recognizes the environmental, security and geopolitical changes ongoing in the region; and identifies broad policy objectives and implementing actions across

the US diplomatic, economic, environmental, scientific and security agencies.<sup>9</sup> This policy was issued a few weeks prior to President Bush leaving office and will serve as a framework for the new administration. This policy is in the implementation stages and will most likely undergo changes before it is in its final form to reflect priorities of the new Administration.

The new administration has taken a more inclusive international perspective than the previous administration. Rather than “going alone”, President Obama has sought international partnering to address world issues. In his speech to the United Nations on 24 September 2009, President Obama emphasized the value of international cooperation and international involvement to resolve the world’s pressing issues.<sup>10</sup> Will the US pursue a similar strategy in the Arctic?

The Secretary of State is responsible for coordinating and collaborating among the US executive agencies, the Arctic nations, and appropriate international forums to best implement these policies.<sup>11</sup> There will be disputes among the Arctic nations with respect to sovereignty, national resources and environmental stewardship, but the Arctic nations have committed to resolving their Arctic disputes through international law and through diplomatic means.<sup>12</sup> The US is in alignment with the other Arctic nations in resolving disputes peacefully, but the US also recognizes that it should have credibility in its military capability in the Arctic to support its diplomatic aims.<sup>13</sup>

While the US is committed to peaceful resolution of disputes, the US also asserts fundamental national security interests in the Arctic.<sup>14</sup> To execute US ARP as it relates to national security and homeland security, the President directed the Secretaries of State, Defense and Homeland Security to:

- Develop greater capabilities and capacity to protect US borders
- Increase Arctic maritime domain awareness
- Preserve Global mobility
- Project a sovereign US maritime presence
- Establish a risk-based capability to address hazards
- Determine basing and logistics support requirements, including airlift and icebreaking capabilities.<sup>15</sup>

DoS, DoD and DHS will not only need to work together, but also cooperate with the other Arctic nations and coordinate with the state, local and indigenous populations to implement these policies.<sup>16</sup> DoD can improve this collaboration and cooperation effort by simplifying its Arctic military command structure.

### **Single Military Commander for the Arctic**

The Unified Command Plan currently divides the Arctic region among three GCCs, USEUCOM, USNORTHCOM and USPACOM.<sup>17</sup> This construct does not lend itself to effective coordination or execution because it blurs US security responsibility and authority in the Arctic Region. The US ARP does not distinguish the Arctic by sectors and treats the Arctic as one region. The UCP should assign a single Arctic commander under one of the three existing GCCs to provide effective command and control, to reduce the seams among the three GCCs, and to communicate to internal and external audiences that the Arctic is strategically important to the US. USNORTHCOM represents the best choice for the Arctic GCC.

### **Effective Command and Control**

*Clear Lines of Authority:* The current command construct with three GCCs in one region does not adhere to principal tenets of command and control. Defense responsibilities and authorities in the Arctic are not clearly delineated, creating overlapping security responsibilities in one region. The chain of command should be simple, easy to understand,



with clearly defined responsibilities and authorities.<sup>18</sup> With overlapping responsibilities and authorities in the Arctic, which GCC is in charge? Uncertainty creates confusion for both internal and external audiences. A clearly defined chain of command not only benefits those inside the organization, it is also important to those outside the immediate chain of command in order for these activities or organizations to coordinate and execute their respective responsibilities.

*Timely Decision Making.* In the Arctic, there is not a formal process to synchronize and prioritize which strategies among the three GCCs are implemented.<sup>19</sup> According to the UCP, when GCCs share interests or activities in bordering nations and maritime areas, the commands will jointly coordinate those interests or activities.<sup>20</sup> If the strategies among the GCCs are not consistent, then the UCP joint coordination suggests that there will be a delay reaching agreement between the three GCCs. Commanders need to be able to make timely decisions to execute their missions.

*Unity of effort:* Combatant commanders are instrumental in unifying the actions between military and non-military units to achieve unity of effort.<sup>21</sup> Unity of effort is where the commands or organizations understand the objectives and are working together to achieve them. With release of the US ARP, the US has identified broad objectives and responsibilities that cut across multiple agencies. Three GCCs in the Arctic complicates the cooperation, communication and collaboration that needs to take place among the interagencies and other principal parties to achieve unity of effort. A single commander in the Arctic would provide clearer lines of authority, improve the cycle time for decision making and enable better collaboration with the other principal parties.

## **Reduce the Seams**

As an Arctic nation, the US, including DoD, needs to better understand the Arctic environment, its physical, cultural and political dimensions, in order to more effectively operate in the Arctic. Although the ice cap is melting, the Arctic environment is still harsh and demanding.<sup>22</sup> The native Alaskans cite preservation of culture as their number one priority.<sup>23</sup> Politics abound, with ongoing disputes between fellow Arctic nations that up to now have been positive and cooperative.<sup>24</sup> Will this cooperative behavior continue?

DoS, DoD and DHS, through the USCG, need to manage through these physical, cultural and political dimensions in the Arctic, as well as their own internal cultures, to integrate their efforts to ensure this cooperative behavior between Arctic nations continues and does not escalate into a competitive race for resources. By reducing the geographic commanders responsible for Arctic security from three to one, DoD can better contribute to reducing the physical and geopolitical seams present in the Arctic.

*Physical Seams:* The 2008 UCP divides up the Arctic Ocean into three geographic regions. USEUCOM is responsible for the Arctic Ocean east of 045° W to west of 100°E, Greenland and the Atlantic Ocean east of 45°, an area covering Greenland, the waters covering the eastern half of Greenland to the northern part of Russia. USNORTHCOM is responsible for the Arctic Ocean east of 169° W to west of 45° W, an ocean area covering the western half of Greenland to half of the Bering Strait. USPACOM is responsible for the Arctic west of 169° W and east of 100° E, an ocean area from the northern part of Russia to the western half of the Bering Strait.<sup>25</sup>

With the exception of Greenland, the UCP divides the Arctic Ocean up by longitude, creating some interesting overlaps in responsibility. USEUCOM and USPACOM are jointly

responsible for the Arctic ocean above Russia, divided at 100°E. USEUCOM and USNORTHCOM are jointly responsible for the Arctic ocean around Greenland, divided at 45°W. USNORTHCOM and USPACOM are jointly responsible for half of the Bering Sea. The UCP does direct the GCCs to coordinate when there are overlapping interests, but it does not identify a lead GCC to work through these coordination issues.<sup>26</sup>

Perhaps when there was limited shipping and human traffic in the area, this division of responsibilities was sufficient. However, the evidence suggests that the Arctic is evolving into a busier place with more ships, more people and more challenges, but without the commensurate increase in capability to understand the operating environment, to enable safe navigation, and to respond to emergencies.<sup>27</sup> The US Arctic Policy identified the need to enhance Arctic Maritime Domain Awareness, to develop Arctic waterways management, and to determine basing and logistic support requirements.<sup>28</sup> A single GCC in the Arctic would reduce the coordination issues created by divided areas of responsibility and better focus the Arctic priorities and funding to address these shortfalls in capability.

*Geo-Political:* Six of the eight Arctic nations: Russia, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Denmark and Iceland, are in USEUCOM's AOR. Through NATO, its Theater Security Cooperation Program and military to military relations, USEUCOM has fostered and built cultural, military and diplomatic relations with these countries over the last 50 years.<sup>29</sup> Developing a mutual understanding of the six Arctic nations' issues and challenges inside and outside the Arctic is an advantage for USEUCOM over the other two GCCs.

Some of the current Arctic issues involve countries within USEUCOM's AOR. US, Europe and other countries view the straits within the Northern Sea Route (NSR) as international straits rather than Russia's contention that these straits lie within Russia's

internal waters and should be controlled by Russia.<sup>30</sup> Although not a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the US considers UNCLOS' navigation and overflight provisions as consistent with existing maritime law and fundamental to freedom of navigation for all nations.<sup>31</sup> The US will challenge coastal nations from making excess or erroneous maritime claims to ensure these excessive claims do not become the accepted standard.<sup>32</sup>

Russia's recent test firings of two Sineva submarine-launched ballistic missiles in the vicinity of the North Pole raised some potential security concerns.<sup>33</sup> Russia has emphasized peaceful cooperation in the Arctic, but with these test firings, is Russia still committed to peace in the Arctic?

Canada, one of the eight Arctic nations, is in USNORTHCOM's AOR. The US and Canada have strong diplomatic, economic and military relations.<sup>34</sup> CDRUSNORTHCOM, is also Commander, US element, North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), a bi-national command of the US and Canada. USNORTHCOM, as a function of its missions in homeland defense and Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA), works daily with members of Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Health and Human Services (HHS), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA).<sup>35</sup> This daily interaction builds communications skills and cultural awareness between USNORTHCOM and these agencies, which is important to achieving unity of effort. Effective operations in the Arctic will require similar coordination skills with non-military agencies or activities.

Within USNORTHCOM's AOR, Canada has raised similar freedom of navigation issues with respect to the Northwest Passage (NWP). Canada views the NWP as internal waterways under the jurisdiction of Canadian law and not an international strait as claimed

by the US and other countries.<sup>36</sup> With the opening of the NWP during the summer of 2007, control of the NWP has become a contentious issue, particularly from Canada's perspective.<sup>37</sup> Although less contentious, Canada and the US also have territorial disputes with the US in the Beaufort Sea.<sup>38</sup>

USPACOM does not have any Arctic nations within its geographic AOR, but does have non-Arctic nations that are very interested in the Arctic for its energy resources, for its potential shorter shipping distances to Europe and for its impact on Asian security.<sup>39</sup> China and the Republic of Korea are ad hoc observers on the Arctic Council. China and Japan both have invested in icebreakers. China has also established a joint Arctic research center within the Arctic region.<sup>40</sup>

As the NSR becomes more accessible to merchant traffic, Japan anticipates a marked increase in military and merchant shipping around the Japanese archipelago to reach the NSR.<sup>41</sup> Mr. Kotani of the Ocean Policy Research Foundation raised some interesting geo-security questions regarding Russia and the United States at the recent Arctic Security Policy and Law in an Age of Climate Change Conference at the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island. Will the Arctic allow Russia to become a coastal nation? Can the US increase its presence in the Arctic and maintain its Pacific presence?<sup>42</sup> These questions expand the Arctic debate outside the Arctic and reflect an interrelationship between the Arctic and other parts of world.<sup>43</sup> Although USPACOM does not have any Arctic nations within its AOR, these questions and others similar to it, suggest that USPACOM should be actively engaged in the Arctic.

## **USNORTHCOM Best Choice for Arctic GCC**

Each of the existing GCCs could make an argument to be the single commander for the Arctic. Selection of any one of them to be the single Arctic GCC would be an improvement over the current construct. However, NORTHCOM represents the best choice to be the single Arctic GCC over the existing GCCs because of its existing HD mission in Alaska, its effective coordination skills with non-military agencies and its strong existing security relationship with Canada. These advantages align with the strategic objectives of the current National Defense Strategy (NDS) and US ARP.

Consistent in the NDS and US ARP's national security and homeland security interests is the primacy of protecting the US borders and defending the homeland.<sup>44</sup> Although NORTHCOM and PACOM are Combatant Commands with geographic Homeland Defense (HD) responsibilities, USNORTHCOM is the logical GCC lead because of its geographic responsibility.<sup>45</sup> USNORTHCOM is responsible for the lower 48 states, Alaska, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands. USPACOM is responsible for Hawaii, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and insular territories throughout the Pacific Ocean.<sup>46</sup> USEUCOM "supports and contributes to protection of the US homeland within its AOR", but does not have geographic HD responsibilities.<sup>47</sup>

USNORTHCOM daily interaction and effective coordination with DHS, HHS, FBI and DEA provides USNORTHCOM a better understanding of organizational cultures other than the military. As the GCC for the Arctic, USNORTHCOM would be expected to have significant interactions with DHS, USCG, DoS and possibly IGOs, such as the Arctic Council. This interagency experience would greatly assist USNORTHCOM as it coordinates with DHS and DoS to resource and implement the actions within US ARP.

CDRUSNORTHCOM's third advantage is his strong security relationship with Canada, particularly when wearing his NORAD hat. NORAD is a bi-national command of US and Canada that has functioned for nearly 50 years. Although US and Canada are at odds with respect to the NWP, both are committed to continental security and Arctic security.<sup>48</sup> However, both countries are stretched pretty thin with an ongoing economic recession and overseas commitments in Afghanistan that are impacting resources that could be applied to the Arctic.<sup>49</sup> The US and Canada should consider increased cooperation and sharing of costs and responsibilities in the Arctic to collectively improve continental security.<sup>50</sup> With Canada at its side, the US is better positioned to protect its interests in the Arctic through better Maritime Domain Awareness, coordinated waterways management and potential basing access rights.

### **Strategic Communication**

Admiral Allen, Commandant of the Coast Guard, described US Arctic Region Policy as US' first real steps toward engaging in the Arctic.<sup>51</sup> A second step would be for the President to establish a single GCC responsible for the Arctic region, which would reinforce the message to domestic and international communities that the Arctic represents a strategic security and economic interest to the US.

Even though the Arctic represents a strategic region with significant resources, many in the continental US do not know that the US is an arctic nation and have largely ignored the region.<sup>52</sup> With the release of the new US ARP and the suggested establishment of USNORTHCOM as the single GCC for the region, the US Government would raise public awareness of the Arctic and communicate to the public why the Arctic is important for US interests.

Consultation and coordination with the indigenous population in Alaska is extremely important before establishing a single GCC in the Arctic. There are Executive Orders (13175 and 13084) that require all federal agencies to consult with Native American and Alaskan tribes before undertaking actions that would impact a recognized tribe.<sup>53</sup> Fortunately, Joint Task Force Alaska, a subordinate command of USNORTHCOM, is headquartered in Alaska. Its leaders are familiar with the recognized tribes in Alaska and, in the view of Admiral Brooks, “the best program for Native American consultation”.<sup>54</sup> USNORTHCOM should leverage this expertise to clearly convey to the indigenous population what USNORTHCOM’s mission will be, as the sole Combatant Commander (CCDR) of the Arctic, in order to dispel any preconceived notions of militarizing the US Arctic policy.

In addition to the public internal audience, the federal government needs to engage in “a national dialogue on the Arctic”.<sup>55</sup> The US ARP and the suggested new GCC structure in the Arctic begin the dialogue, but the discussions need to continue among all affected federal government agencies to implement the best possible US Arctic strategy.

Strategic communication also serves the international community. The international community does look to the US for leadership and partnership, including in the Arctic. “Without US leadership to help develop diplomatic solutions to competing claims and potential conflict, the region could erupt in the armed mad dash for its resources.”<sup>56</sup> However, the US should lead with humility, inclusiveness, and not arrogance. International community has criticized the US for a tendency to go it alone on security issues.<sup>57</sup> In its Arctic engagement, the US should take deliberate measures to partner with the other Arctic nations. USNORTHCOM should work closely with Canada, and the other Arctic nations, to collectively enhance Arctic security and deter aggressive behavior.



### **Counter-Argument/Rebuttal**

Rather than place the Arctic responsibilities under an existing GCC, some may argue for a stand alone Arctic GCC. An Arctic GCC would be able to focus his or her attention, priorities and resources on the Arctic and not other competing areas within the respective AORs of USEUCOM, USNORTHCOM or USPACOM. The Arctic GCC could model its organizational structure on USAFRICOM.

USAFRICOM was established in September 2008. USAFRICOM does have responsibilities similar to the other GCCs, but with a focus on partnering within Africa at the regional and country levels and supporting other US government agencies acting in the AOR.<sup>58</sup> Before USAFRICOM was established, USEUCOM, USCENTCOM and USPACOM were all responsible for areas within Africa, which created confusion, division of responsibilities and unity of command issues.<sup>59</sup> USAFRICOM was also established to recognize the growing threat to US national interests of failing states in Africa, particularly in the Sub-Saharan region.<sup>60</sup> These command and control issues are very similar to those in the Arctic region.

Consolidating the three GCCs into one GCC does make sense for USAFRICOM and in the Arctic to resolve division of responsibilities and confusion on which GCC is in charge. However, AFRICOM is experiencing difficulties emerging as a new GCC because it has not been able to integrate interagency personnel into its command; outside parties are not clear on its intentions; and DoD has not been able to identify where the command headquarters and forces would be located in Africa.<sup>61</sup> Some have viewed AFRICOM becoming the lead for all US government activities in Africa, “thereby militarizing US foreign policy”.<sup>62</sup> The military plays a vital role in protecting the national interests of the US, but it is just one

instrument or element of national power to achieve political ends. The Arctic nations, including the US, are committed to peaceful resolutions of disputes in the Arctic. A standalone Arctic Command, with interagency personnel into it, would possibly militarize US foreign policy and send the wrong signal to the international community.

### **Conclusion**

The Arctic is undergoing fundamental changes. As the polar ice cap melts, the Arctic is becoming more accessible to maritime and human traffic, creating opportunities in fishing, ecotourism, new maritime trade routes and energy exploration, but also introducing diplomatic, security, economic, and environmental challenges. Despite the clamor in the media, the Arctic is not an ocean in crisis, requiring emergency acts. The Arctic does need the active leadership, full commitment and complete cooperation by the Arctic nations, including the indigenous populations, to manage these opportunities, while protecting sovereign rights and the fragile Arctic environment. Up to now, the Arctic nations have not been fully engaged. Most notably, the US has not exerted her leadership in this region.

With the release of its new Arctic Region Policy, the US has taken its first steps toward engaging in the Arctic in a comprehensive way. The US ARP recognizes the Arctic challenges and identifies the actions the US needs to accomplish to meet these challenges. The new US administration understands the collective strength of partnering with other nations to help solve world issues. It should apply this same philosophy to its US ARP to address these opportunities and challenges in the Arctic.

Assigning USNORTHCOM as the single GCC for the Arctic would be a significant second step toward US engagement in the Arctic. A single military C2 structure will provide

clearer lines of authority, reduce the physical C2 seams now present, and allow the CCDR to better synchronize his military efforts with non-military efforts ongoing in the Arctic.

USNORTHCOM represents the best choice to be the single GCC over the other existing GCCs, or a new stand-alone GCC, because of its existing HD mission, its effective coordination skills with non-military agencies or activities and its strong existing security relationship with Canada aligns best with achieving the strategic objectives outlined in the US NDS and US ARP. USEUCOM and USPACOM do have a role in the Arctic, a supporting role to USNORTHCOM. Their significant relationships with Arctic and non-Arctic nations will be important in implementing USNORTHCOM's mission and working through some of the geopolitics issues in the Arctic.

While a stand-alone Arctic GCC would improve the existing C2 structure in the Arctic, the risk of militarizing US efforts in the Arctic would negate the improvements in C2. USAFRICOM is currently struggling with this perception. The military instrument is a means to support foreign policy, not the other way around.

The US ARP and the suggested NORTHCOM GCC structure in the Arctic are the first steps in US engagement in the Arctic, but the hard part will be implementing these policies. The "national dialogue" on the Arctic has begun, but discussions need to continue among all affected federal government agencies, other Arctic nations, and international forums to implement the best possible US Arctic strategy.

### **Recommendations**

1. **Assign USNORTHCOM as lead GCC in the Arctic implementation plan.** USEUCOM, USNORTHCOM and USPACOM are each developing or revising their theater strategy to incorporate the new US ARP. DoD has not assigned a lead GCC to work through

the policy's implementing actions. USNORTHCOM has equities in each of the national security and homeland security implementing actions. With its HD mission and its strong interrelationships with the USCG and Canada, USNORTHCOM represents the best GCC to lead DoD's implementation efforts in support of the US ARP.

## **2. Update UCP to Assign USNORTHCOM as the Arctic GCC.**

The UCP currently assigns three GCCs responsibility for the Arctic region. The US ARP does not distinguish the Arctic by sectors and treats the Arctic as one region. The UCP requires updating to assign USNORTHCOM as the supported commander for the Arctic Region and USEUCOM and USPACOM as supporting commanders. A single military C2 structure will provide clearer lines of authority, reduce the physical C2 seams now present, and allow USNORTHCOM to better synchronize his military efforts with non-military efforts ongoing in the Arctic.

## **3. Partner with Other Arctic Nations**

President Obama has emphasized a more inclusive international relationship than the previous administration. Rather than "going alone", President Obama has sought international partnering and international involvement to address world issues. The US needs to pursue a similar strategy in the Arctic.

The Arctic is evolving into a busier place with more ships, more people and more challenges. The US ARP identified shortfalls in US capabilities to understand the Arctic operating environment, to enable safe navigation, and to respond to SAR and oil spill emergencies. The US does not need to solve these shortfalls alone because the other Arctic nations have common interests in security, safe navigation, environmental protection and

sustainable energy development. Arctic nations have discovered that working together “can advance their national agendas, build alliances, reap valuable information and save money.”<sup>63</sup> Arctic nations can leverage their respective existing capabilities and develop new capabilities to serve collective common interests and avoid duplicating effort. There should be few arguments against this win-win proposition.

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