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ACTIVITY REPORT

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Northern Maritime Security: Threats In, To, and Through the Arctic and North Atlantic

Workshop Report

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Executive Summary

Co-organized by NAADSN, the Canadian Maritime Security Network (CMSN), the Embassy of Denmark in Ottawa, and the Government of Greenland, the *Northern Maritime Security: Threats In, To, and Through the Arctic and North Atlantic* workshop brought together diverse experts and practitioners from Canada and across the circumpolar region to assess the changing security environment from the European High North and North Atlantic through the North American Arctic. The dialogue reaffirmed that these regions can no longer be considered in isolation. Russian military capabilities, the defence of North America, transatlantic reinforcement, NATO planning, NORAD modernization, growing Chinese strategic interest, and the security of Arctic maritime approaches increasingly connect the regions strategically and operationally. At the same time, participants cautioned against treating the Arctic as a single, undifferentiated theatre or assuming that threats manifest equally across its vast and varied geography. This combination of greater strategic interconnectedness and geographic differentiation framed discussions throughout the workshop.

Discussions of the European High North focused principally on Russia, whose Arctic priorities combine economic and resource interests with the protection of strategic nuclear forces, and military infrastructure. Participants highlighted activities below the threshold of armed conflict, including interference, surveillance, influence activities, and potential threats to critical infrastructure. The case of Svalbard was discussed to illustrate how strategic competition also intersects with scientific cooperation and established governance arrangements. Participants emphasized the importance of distinguishing adversary capabilities from intentions and potential threats from those most likely to materialize. This calibrated approach is consistent with current Canadian policy, which identifies Russia as the primary military threat in the Arctic while also pointing to China's growing ambitions and increasing strategic alignment between the two states.

The workshop highlighted the increasing strategic convergence of NATO and NORAD interests in the Arctic, even as participants acknowledged the distinct mandates of the two organizations. Discussions emphasized that credible deterrence and defence rest not merely on military platforms but on the broader operational architecture needed to generate awareness, project presence, and sustain forces across the region. Maritime and pan-domain awareness, resilient command and communications systems, logistics, mobility, search and rescue, and infrastructure emerged as foundational requirements. Because polar geography and environmental conditions constrain all actors, capability development must be anchored in operational realities rather than abstract force-planning assumptions. Assessments closely mirrored Canada's contemporary approach to Arctic defence, reflected in investments in NORAD modernization, enhanced surveillance, expanded military presence, and improved capacity to operate across the North.



Jacob Isbosethsen, Head of Greenland's Representation in the USA

Discussions of the North American Arctic broadened the meaning of security. Northern Canadian and Greenlandic perspectives stressed that the Arctic is a homeland as well as a geostrategic space and that sovereignty and security depend upon resilient communities, infrastructure, economic opportunity, and meaningful Indigenous and Northern participation. Participants emphasized the potential for dual-use investments in ports, transportation, telecommunications, energy, and other infrastructure to support defence and maritime operations while addressing longstanding Northern infrastructure deficits. The recurring principle was that strategic investment should strengthen rather than bypass Northern communities, with Indigenous leadership, participation, and economic benefits contributing to durable Arctic security.

The practical challenges of maintaining awareness and presence across the North reinforced these conclusions. Given the region's scale and limited infrastructure, effective operations depend upon partnerships, mobility, local knowledge, information sharing, and the ability to concentrate and sustain resources where required. The Canadian Rangers, Indigenous and territorial partners, and exercises such as Operation NANOOK were highlighted as important elements of this approach. Rather than equating sovereignty with ubiquitous physical presence, participants emphasized developing a shared operating picture and ensuring that awareness can translate into timely action.

Coast guards also emerged as important contributors to maritime security. Icebreaking, search and rescue, environmental response, navigation services, maritime awareness, and support to other government

organizations contribute to everyday Arctic presence and resilience. Fleet renewal promises additional opportunities for interoperability, logistics, training, and cooperation between Canada, the United States, Greenland and Denmark. Participants nevertheless stressed that resilience cannot be measured by ships alone: capabilities depend upon infrastructure, institutions, personnel, Northern relationships, and sustained cooperation. *Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy* similarly identifies the Canadian Coast Guard as an important partner in supporting defence and security.

The strongest theme across the workshop was interconnectivity. Threats in, to, and through the Arctic cross geographical, institutional, and operational boundaries, while their character and intensity vary considerably across the region. Effective responses therefore require stronger cooperation across military and civilian organizations, closer coordination among Allies, evidence-based threat assessment, improved domain awareness and sustainment, investment in dual-use infrastructure, and meaningful Northern and Indigenous participation. The challenge is to strengthen deterrence and defence while ensuring that greater strategic attention also contributes to a secure, resilient, and prosperous North. This overall formulation is strongly consistent with current Canadian and Allied policy, which links Arctic security with sovereignty, defence, Indigenous and Northern partnership, economic development, and deeper cooperation among Arctic Allies.

1. Introduction

The workshop brought together academics, experts, military and coast guard practitioners, diplomats, and Northern leaders to examine maritime security threats in, to, and through the Arctic and North Atlantic. Its geographical scope deliberately stretched from the European High North through the North Atlantic to North America, reflecting the extent to which these regions constitute connected strategic approaches rather than discrete security environments.

The workshop proceeded through keynote addresses and four thematic panels addressing the European High North, Arctic strategic approaches, the North American Arctic, and coast guard cooperation. Discussions considered how Allies can strengthen sustainable contributions to Euro-Atlantic defence and security, how Allied roles vary geographically, and how cooperation can contribute to deterrence and security amid strategic competition and climate change.

Opening discussions established an important distinction that resurfaced throughout the workshop. Greater strategic attention to the Arctic does not mean that every part of the region faces the same threat, or that every challenge demands a military response. Geography, operational realities, local circumstances, and the type of activity involved matter enormously. Understanding the Arctic as interconnected therefore requires differentiation as much as integration.

2. Neighbours, Allies, and Arctic Homelands

The keynote addresses placed strategic competition within a broader conception of Arctic security centred on cooperation, international law, communities, resilience, and relationships. Greenland was presented simultaneously as part of North America's geography, an integral actor within the Kingdom of Denmark, and an increasingly active participant in international Arctic affairs. Canada and Greenland share significant geographical, cultural, political, and economic interests, creating opportunities for deeper bilateral and circumpolar cooperation.

A central message was that the Arctic is a homeland, not simply a strategic frontier. This framing has practical implications. Arctic security policy must account for the people who live in the region and ensure their meaningful participation in decisions affecting their communities. Greenland's emphasis on "nothing about us without us" and discussions later in the day about Inuit leadership in the Canadian Arctic reinforced a common principle: stronger security and a stronger local voice should be mutually reinforcing rather than competing objectives.

Climate change further complicates this environment. Changing sea ice, thawing permafrost, more unpredictable weather, and changing maritime accessibility have practical consequences for communities and security organizations alike. At the same time, growing interest in minerals, fisheries, tourism, renewable energy, shipping, and scientific research is increasing pressure on infrastructure and governance systems.

The resulting security agenda extends far beyond conventional military threats. Participants highlighted cyber vulnerabilities, misinformation, critical infrastructure, maritime safety, search and rescue, and the requirement for better domain awareness. These challenges reinforce the continuing importance of international cooperation alongside renewed investment in defence and deterrence.

3. The European High North: Russia, Strategic Competition, and Grey-Zone Activity

The first panel examined the changing European High North, with particular attention to Russian strategy and the implications of Russia's ongoing war against Ukraine.

Participants described Russia's Arctic interests as deeply rooted rather than as a wholly new development after 2022. Resource extraction, the Northern Sea Route, strategic nuclear forces, and defence of Russia's northern territories have long made the Arctic central to Russian economic and security planning. The Kola Peninsula and Northern Fleet remain especially significant because of their role in Russia's nuclear deterrent and ability to project maritime power into the North Atlantic.

Russia's behaviour was characterized by an important tension between cooperation and coercion. Moscow continues to have incentives to preserve sufficient regional stability to facilitate resource development and economic activity, while simultaneously investing in military infrastructure and capabilities and employing



From left to right: Dr. Marc Lanteigne, Serafima Andreeva, Dr. Kari Roberts, Dr. Paal Sigurd Hilde, and Dr. Sergey Sukhankin.

malign activities below the threshold of open conflict. Participants discussed jamming, surveillance, influence activities, demonstrations of military power and other forms of strategic signalling, and threats to critical infrastructure as examples of the increasingly ambiguous strategic environment confronting European Arctic states.

Participants discussed Svalbard to illustrate this ambiguity. While its distinctive legal framework continues to function and is not under direct challenge, experts raised concerns about indirect political pressure and activities by Russia and China that test established interpretations and practices. Scientific activity itself can acquire geopolitical significance when concerns arise around dual-use research, access, infrastructure, or competing legal interpretations.

Nevertheless, the discussion sounded an important note of caution. Arctic threats should be assessed according to their actual likelihood, capability, geography, and strategic value rather than assuming that every adversarial capability translates into an equally probable threat across the entire circumpolar region. This distinction between possible, probable, and strategically consequential activity became important to discussions of the North American Arctic as well.

4. Connecting NATO, NORAD, and the Arctic Approaches

The second panel moved from threat assessment toward the architecture required to defend the Arctic and North Atlantic.

From NATO's perspective, the changing strategic environment reinforces the relationship between the High North and wider Euro-Atlantic defence. NATO's regional planning increasingly treats the North Atlantic and Arctic as connected spaces, while new Allied geography following Finland's and Sweden's accession has created opportunities to strengthen planning across the European Arctic. Participants consequently raised the broader question of how NATO's northern command arrangements and NORAD's North American responsibilities might interact more effectively.

From a North American perspective, three requirements stood out: integrated defence against advanced strategic delivery systems and platforms, domain awareness, and the ability to project and sustain capabilities across the Arctic. Search and rescue remains integral to this operating picture given the scale and difficulty of northern operations. Participants emphasized that the central problem is not merely acquiring platforms or detecting threats, but being able to position, support, communicate with, and sustain assets across vast distances.



From left to right: Commander Kasper Flinker Ladegaard, MGen CA (Chris) McKenna, Commander Caroline Hoefsmit, RAdm (Ret'd) Brian Santarpia (RCN), and Dr. Rob Huebert.

This discussion highlighted a series of interconnected capability challenges:

1. **Domain awareness:** detecting and understanding activities across air, maritime, subsea, space, cyber, and other domains.
2. **Command, control, and communications:** moving information reliably despite distance and difficult communications environments.
3. **Sustainment:** ensuring that personnel and platforms can operate for meaningful periods far from southern support hubs.
4. **Mobility and access:** establishing suitable forward locations and infrastructure.
5. **Response capability:** ensuring awareness can translate into credible action when required.
6. **Interoperability:** allowing Canadian, American and European Allied assets to work together efficiently.

Participants also examined submarine competition and under-ice operations. One important argument cautioned against assuming that adversarial submarines can operate easily throughout Canada's Arctic waters. Depth, ice conditions, choke points, navigation and geography significantly constrain operations. Accordingly, investment decisions should be informed by realistic assessments of where submarines are most likely to operate and what capabilities are needed to detect, track, deter, or respond to them.

The broader lesson was that Arctic deterrence depends upon credibility, and credibility requires more than signalling intent. It rests upon awareness, communications, infrastructure, logistics, appropriate capabilities, trained personnel, and the demonstrated ability to operate with partners.

5. North American Arctic: Sovereignty, Infrastructure, and Northern Leadership

Discussions of the North American Arctic broadened the concept of security substantially. Military readiness remained important, but participants repeatedly connected sovereignty with community wellbeing, infrastructure, economic development, Indigenous leadership, and local capacity.



From left to right: P.J. Akeeagok, Kate Todd, Dr. Rasmus Leander Nielsen, Ranj Pillai, and BGen Dan Rivière.

Greenland provided a useful comparative perspective. Its increasing role in defence and foreign policy discussions demonstrates how local agency can grow alongside heightened geopolitical interest. Participants also stressed the value of dual-use investments that provide security capabilities while producing tangible benefits for communities. Emergency preparedness and locally grounded Arctic training likewise demonstrate how local capacity can contribute simultaneously to community resilience and national security.

The Canadian discussion reinforced this point through a particularly clear proposition: there can be no meaningful Arctic sovereignty without Inuit security. Sovereignty is sustained not only by patrol vessels or military installations but by viable communities, economic opportunities, infrastructure, mobility, cultural continuity, and meaningful Northern participation in decisionmaking. Infrastructure projects have security significance precisely because they can strengthen both Canada's ability to operate in the North and its peoples and communities.

Participants discussed projects such as Grays Bay and potential infrastructure at King Point as examples of the relationship between strategic access and Northern development. Ports, roads, telecommunications, energy systems, and other infrastructure can improve defence and maritime operations while supporting resource development and local economies. Yet speakers cautioned against repeating historical patterns in which development occurred in the North without creating lasting local benefits. Indigenous equity, ownership, leadership, and participation were presented as foundations for sustainable development and security.

This approach also changes how infrastructure should be evaluated. Instead of examining defence, economic, and community infrastructure requirements separately, governments have an opportunity to identify

investments that generate multiple effects. Dual-use should mean dual benefit: enhancing operational effectiveness while also strengthening Northern connectivity, resilience, and prosperity.

6. Presence, Domain Awareness, and Operation NANOOK

The extraordinary scale of Canada's northern operating environment formed another recurring theme. Joint Task Force North operates across an enormous territory with a comparatively small permanent military footprint and consequently depends heavily on partnerships, mobility, information sharing, and the Canadian Rangers.

This reality makes domain awareness a prerequisite for effective action. Canadian organizations cannot maintain persistent physical presence everywhere. They need to develop a shared understanding of activities across the region and be able to concentrate resources where required.

Operation NANOOK provides an important mechanism for putting these relationships and capabilities into practice. The exercise series has expanded considerably since its creation and now provides opportunities for the Canadian Armed Forces to work with other government departments, territorial and Indigenous partners, and international allies and partners. Participants pointed toward a larger multinational and pan-domain iteration envisioned for 2027 as part of efforts to increase the scale and sophistication of northern exercising.

Exercises can serve several purposes simultaneously: testing command arrangements and communications; improving interoperability; identifying logistics bottlenecks; validating infrastructure requirements; integrating local knowledge; and demonstrating credible Allied capacity to operate in northern conditions. There is opportunity for NATO to further develop and cohere its existing activities aimed at enhancing regional vigilance, strengthening shared awareness of the operating environment, and improving the responsiveness of Allied forces. Such efforts can also reinforce deterrence through a visible and sustained presence in and across the North American and European Arctic theatres.

7. Coast Guards and the Changing Maritime Security Environment

The final panel underscored the centrality of coast guards to Arctic security. Their responsibilities occupy the intersection between safety, sovereignty, security, environmental protection, community support, and maritime governance.

The Canadian Coast Guard's Arctic Region was presented as an institutional innovation intended to improve northern service delivery and relationships, including more direct engagement with Inuit and other Indigenous partners. Its activities demonstrate why security cannot be separated neatly from everyday government presence. Icebreaking, aids to navigation, environmental response, maritime communications, and search and rescue make northern activity possible while simultaneously contributing to Canada's situational awareness and presence.

Growing and diversifying vessel traffic increases the importance of these functions. Canadian Coast Guard vessels provide platforms that enable various departments and agencies to operate in regions where maritime access is difficult. Cooperation with the Canadian Rangers and Coast Guard Auxiliary further highlights the importance of people already living in Northern communities.



From left to right: Dr. Suzanne Lalonde, Superintendent Jeremy McDonald (CCG), Director General Neil O'Rourke (CCG), and Captain William Woityra (USCG)

Fleet renewal offers significant opportunities for expanded presence. Discussions of new Canadian and American icebreakers and bilateral and trilateral industrial cooperation via the Canada-US-Finland Icebreaker Collaboration Effort (ICE) Pact suggested that increasing fleets could create new possibilities for reciprocal support, coordinated logistics, joint training, interoperability, and persistent North American Arctic presence.

Participants emphasized that resilience cannot be measured in ship numbers alone. Capital assets, infrastructure, institutions, partnerships, and people must develop together. A modern fleet without trained crews, reliable communications, northern logistics, local relationships, or supporting infrastructure will not deliver its full strategic effect.

8. Cross-Cutting Findings

The discussions across the workshop revealed several themes that cut across geographic regions, institutional mandates, and individual panels. Taken together, these cross-cutting findings highlight the practical requirements for strengthening northern maritime security while remaining attentive to the distinct conditions, priorities, and partnerships that shape different parts of the Arctic and North Atlantic.

The Arctic and North Atlantic must be understood together

The distinction between European and North American Arctic security is becoming less pronounced operationally. Russian forces based in the European Arctic can threaten North America, transatlantic reinforcement depends upon secure North Atlantic routes, and North American continental defence increasingly intersects with NATO planning.

Threat assessments require discipline

Participants simultaneously emphasized a worsening global and Arctic security environment and cautioned against exaggeration. Threat assessment should distinguish capability from intention and possibility from probability, while considering geography, logistics, technological constraints, and adversary preferences.

Domain awareness must lead to decision advantage

Sensors are only one element of domain awareness. Information must be fused, interpreted, and shared across organizations, enabling decisionmakers to respond quickly. Investments in surveillance therefore need complementary investments in communications, information sharing, and command-and-control systems.

Logistics are inseparable from deterrence

The Arctic imposes unusual costs in distance, transportation, maintenance, communications, personnel support, and emergency response. Forward infrastructure, pre-positioned resources, access agreements, and Allied interoperability should be considered components of deterrence rather than merely administrative considerations.

Dual-use infrastructure should produce shared benefits

Northern infrastructure can strengthen military mobility and sustainment while improving community connectivity and creating economic opportunities. Projects are most likely to generate durable strategic value when Northern and Indigenous partners participate meaningfully in their identification, design, ownership, construction, and operation.

Local capacity is strategic capacity

Canadian Rangers, Coast Guard Auxiliary members, other Northern residents, Indigenous organizations, and local governments already provide knowledge, presence, response capacity, and legitimacy that outside organizations cannot readily reproduce. Building security should strengthen this local capacity rather than substitute for it.

Cooperation must become habitual

Relationships built before crises improve effectiveness during them. Regular exercises, exchanges, interoperable systems, shared planning, and sustained institutional relationships between Canada, the United States, Greenland and the Kingdom of Denmark, and other NATO Allies can reduce barriers when rapid action is required.

9. Policy Considerations

The discussions suggest several practical priorities for Canada and its partners.

1. **Build the connective tissue between NATO and NORAD.** The objective need not be a new institutional architecture. Greater information sharing, complementary planning, liaison arrangements, and exercises could help bridge the Euro-Atlantic and North American defence spaces while respecting existing mandates.
2. **Treat sustainment as a capability.** Procurement needs to consider where assets will operate, how they will be supplied, where crews will be based, how communications will function, and how they will be supported during prolonged northern operations.
3. **Prioritize a shared pan-domain operating picture.** New sensors and platforms should contribute to an architecture capable of sharing useful information across military services, coast guards, and relevant government organizations, as well as with Allies where appropriate.
4. **Expand realistic Arctic exercising.** Exercises should test not only tactical proficiency but logistics, communications, multinational command relationships, infrastructure resilience, civilian-military coordination, and sustained operations at various scales.
5. **Systematically identify dual-use infrastructure opportunities.** Defence investments should be assessed for their potential to produce durable community and economic benefits, while Northern infrastructure proposals should consider potential contributions to national resilience, emergency response, and security.
6. **Place Northern and Indigenous partners at the centre of implementation.** Consultation alone is insufficient where governments and Indigenous organizations possess governing responsibilities, knowledge, capabilities, or rights relevant to Arctic security. Effective policy should seek partnerships that incorporate their priorities and expertise from project design through implementation.
7. **Strengthen cooperation with Greenland.** Geography, cultural relationships, infrastructure requirements, and shared North American security interests provide strong conditions for practical cooperation in maritime awareness, search and rescue, emergency preparedness, infrastructure, training, research, transportation, and people-to-people relationships.

Relevance to MINDS Defence Policy Challenges

The workshop addressed several issues that align closely with the MINDS Defence Policy Challenges, particularly those concerned with protecting Canadian sovereignty, reinforcing continental defence, and ensuring that the Canadian Armed Forces are ready, resilient, and relevant in a rapidly changing security environment. Current MINDS priorities situate these requirements within intensifying strategic competition, technological change, evolving partnerships, and a security environment in which Canada's geography no longer provides the protection it once did. Discussions of Russia explored the implications of its military capabilities and activities in

the European High North and North Atlantic, while consideration of China focused on its growing strategic interest and expanding activity in the Arctic. Participants also examined activities below the threshold of armed conflict and risks to critical infrastructure. Across these discussions, they emphasized the importance of assessing threats according to capabilities, intentions, geography, and operational feasibility, providing a more differentiated understanding of how strategic competition may affect Canada and its Arctic approaches. This framing is consistent with *Our North, Strong and Free* and *Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy*, both of which identify a changing Arctic security environment as an increasingly important consideration for Canadian defence and security.

The discussions were particularly relevant to the defence of Canada and North America and Canada's contributions to collective deterrence and defence. Participants examined the strategic connections among NORAD modernization, NATO's northern and western flanks, the North Atlantic, and the European High North, reinforcing the importance of cooperation with the United States and other Allies. *Our North, Strong and Free* similarly connects securing Canada's Arctic with continental defence and Canada's ability to make meaningful contributions to NATO and other partnerships. Workshop discussions underscored that effective implementation requires more than acquiring new platforms. Maritime and pan-domain awareness, command and control, resilient communications, logistics and sustainment, infrastructure, mobility, interoperability, and regular exercising all contribute to the ability to detect, understand, deter, and respond to threats. This systems-level perspective speaks directly to MINDS priorities around expanding and enhancing military capabilities while strengthening the foundations required for a ready and resilient force.

Finally, the workshop reinforced the importance of integrated approaches and sustained partnerships in strengthening Arctic security. Participants highlighted the complementary contributions of the CAF, other federal departments and agencies, the Canadian Coast Guard, territorial governments, Indigenous governments and organizations, Northern communities, industry, and international Allies and partners. This is consistent with current federal policy, which situates Arctic security within broader relationships with Indigenous and Northern partners and emphasizes strengthening cooperation with Arctic Allies, including the United States, the Nordic states, and Greenland. Discussions further demonstrated how dual-use infrastructure, local knowledge and capacity, information sharing, and sustained exercising can support both operational effectiveness and Northern resilience. Accordingly, the workshop suggested that strengthening northern maritime security requires not only appropriate military capabilities, but also the relationships, infrastructure, access, and institutional coordination necessary to generate, employ, and sustain those capabilities across Canada's Arctic and its wider North Atlantic approaches. This emphasis on bringing together defence capabilities, partnerships, and Northern priorities reflects the broader direction of current Government of Canada Arctic and defence policy.

Conclusion

The workshop underscored that northern maritime security is increasingly shaped by the strategic connections within and across the North American Arctic, North Atlantic, and European High North. For Canada, this requires thinking across geographic and institutional boundaries while avoiding the assumption that threats are uniform across the circumpolar region. Russia's military capabilities and strategic posture, China's growing interest and activity, technological change, risks to critical infrastructure, and activities below the threshold of armed conflict all warrant sustained attention. At the same time, participants emphasized the importance of grounding policy and capability development in careful assessments of intent, capability, geography, accessibility, and operational feasibility. This balance between heightened vigilance and disciplined threat assessment is particularly important as Canada makes substantial new investments in Arctic and continental defence. It corresponds closely with the current emphasis of the MINDS Defence Policy Challenges on generating timely, actionable insights for a security environment characterized by intensifying strategic competition, technological disruption, and growing demands on the Canadian Armed Forces.

For the policy community, the discussions also reinforced the importance of treating capability as a system rather than a platform. Investments in surveillance, ships, aircraft, and other military capabilities will generate their intended effects only if they are supported by resilient communications, command and control, infrastructure, logistics and sustainment, trained personnel, and the capacity to operate effectively with domestic and international partners. Maritime and pan-domain awareness must similarly be connected to mechanisms that enable information to be shared, interpreted, and translated into timely decisions and action. This perspective is consistent with *Our North, Strong and Free*, which defines a ready, resilient, and relevant CAF in terms that include appropriate equipment and infrastructure, the ability to sustain operations, and forces capable of operating across land, sea, air, cyber, and space domains. For northern maritime security in particular, the policy challenge is therefore not simply to increase presence, but to develop a sustainable capacity to understand, access, operate in, and respond across the North when and where required.

The conference further demonstrated that this capacity cannot be generated by DND/CAF alone. The Canadian Coast Guard and other federal departments and agencies, territorial governments, Indigenous governments and organizations, Northern communities, Allies, and other partners bring authorities, assets, infrastructure, expertise, and local knowledge that are integral to effective northern operations. Canada's current Arctic policy similarly emphasizes shared governance, cooperation with Indigenous and Northern partners, stronger relationships with Arctic Allies, and the contribution of the Canadian Coast Guard to defence and security. For policymakers, this places a premium on mechanisms that make cooperation routine rather than episodic. Exercises, information-sharing arrangements, infrastructure planning, cross-government coordination, and sustained relationships can help identify gaps before a crisis and clarify how different capabilities and authorities fit together. Dual-use infrastructure is especially relevant in this regard: well-designed investments can improve

operational access, mobility and sustainment while also strengthening connectivity, resilience, and economic opportunity in the North.

Looking ahead, the workshop identified several areas that warrant further policy-focused research and engagement. Some related to strategy and planning. These include testing how NATO and NORAD planning and activities can remain complementary as the strategic connections between the North Atlantic and North American Arctic deepen; assessing which maritime, aerospace, subsea, cyber, and infrastructure threats are most plausible in different parts of the region. Others focus on capability and readiness. Key questions include how investments in domain awareness can produce decision advantage across departmental and Allied boundaries, and what practical measures can address persistent challenges associated with Arctic logistics, sustainment, communications, and infrastructure.

The workshop also highlighted the importance of governance and partnerships. Future work could examine how dual-use infrastructure can reconcile defence requirements with Northern and Indigenous priorities, and how the CAF, Coast Guard, other federal organizations, territorial and Indigenous governments, and Allies can exercise together against realistic multi-domain contingencies. These issues align closely with the MINDS program's core purpose of bringing external expertise to bear on pressing Defence Policy Challenges and generating relevant and timely advice for the Defence Team. Future workshops should move beyond identifying challenges toward testing specific policy options and implementation pathways. Scenario-based discussions, targeted comparative studies, and deeper engagement with Northern and Indigenous partners can offer practical insights and help assess the feasibility, trade-offs, and operational implications of different approaches.