Great Powers, Greenland, and Geostrategic Competition in the Arctic

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PATRICK CRONIN: Good afternoon, everybody. I'm Patrick Cronin. I'm the Asia-Pacific Security chair at the Hudson Institute, and it's a great afternoon to have a geostrategic discussion about the Arctic, which is the focus of today's discussion. A rapidly changing Arctic is the subject of both increased accessibility and cooperation but also the subject of heightened competition, especially among major powers. And there are various ways to define the Arctic. The Arctic Circle runs at 66 degrees, 33 minutes north latitude - about 1,650 miles south of the North Pole, which is about the distance from D.C. to Denver, Colo. Eight countries have territory north of the Arctic Circle - Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark - including Greenland, Russia, the United States, Canada and Iceland. The Arctic Ocean is the smallest of the world's five major oceans but also about five times bigger than the Mediterranean Sea. Global warming is likely to make the Arctic ice free in the summer by midcentury. And while this trend is opening up new shipping routes, with the Northwest Passage seen as international waters, it also poses extreme global repercussions.

In many ways, the United States appears, at least to me, to be lagging behind others in understanding the geostrategic importance of the Arctic with its commercial, energy, environmental and military and law enforcement dimensions. Washington's unfortunate recent diplomatic row with Denmark, to include canceling a presidential visit after the prime minister rejected President Trump's idea of the U.S. buying Greenland, was hardly an ideal means of educating Americans about the importance of the Earth's northern polar region. So let us reset the discussion today by turning to our expert panel to explore Great Powers, Greenland and Geostrategic Competition in the Arctic. We have five distinguished speakers, each allotted about 10 minutes for initial remarks, and then we'll have questions and answers to follow. I'm going to briefly introduce each of the five, and then we'll have them speak in order. The first is Dr. Kathryn Lavelle, who is the Ellen and Dixon Long professor in world affairs at Case Western Reserve University in Ohio. Dr. Lavelle is the author of the 2013 Cambridge University Press book "Money And Banks In The American Political System." And her current research explores multilateralism and world affairs as well as the rise of China within the international institutions that work to govern the Arctic.

Next we have Dr. Stacy Closson, who is a Global Fellow at the Kennan Institute across the street at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Dr. Closson is the author of the 2015 MIT Press book "Energy, Economics, And Geopolitical Futures: Eight Long-Range Scenarios." Her research focuses on global energy security, Russia-China relations and Arctic security. And we've asked her to concentrate her remarks today on Russia. Then we'll turn to Dr. Liselotte Odgaard, who orchestrated today's programs and is a senior fellow here at the Hudson Institute. Previously, Dr. Odgaard has been a visiting scholar at Harvard University, the Woodrow Wilson Center, Norwegian Nobel Institute, among others. And she will speak about her research on China's role in the Arctic. We're also delighted to have Inuuteq Holm Olsen, who is Greenland's minister plenipotentiary to the United States. Prior to his arrival in the - in Washington, D.C., in 2014, Minister Holm Olsen served as senior adviser for Greenland and Arctic affairs at the Danish Foreign Ministry, and he's uniquely qualified to bring us Greenland's perspective.

Last but not least, we're fortunate to have with us Dr. John Farrell, who is the executive director of the U.S. Arctic Research Commission, an independent federal agency that advises the White House and Congress on Arctic research and other matters. Among his many accomplishment, Dr. Farrell conducted the first successful international scientific ocean drilling expedition to the
high Arctic 15 years ago. And he'll offer a U.S. perspective on the Arctic and Arctic research. So let us begin with Katie (ph) Lavelle.

KATHRYN LAVELLE: Thank you. Thank you for that introduction, and thank you for inviting me and having me here at the Hudson Institute. It's really great to be here and to talk about such an important topic. In the brief time that I have to talk to you today, Lise asked me to focus on regimes and regime complexity. And so I thought I would do that basically by thinking about two aspects of regimes - what is the same about them and what is different. And the reason that I want to do this is because I think it forces us to think about what makes the Arctic a different kind of issue area for policymakers. Both of these paths will lead us to the same point with respect to territory and new considerations of territory. But I think that if we think about the similarities and the differences, it'll help us kind of organize our thoughts. So what is the same in terms of what similarities exist with the past? Well, if you took international relations at the introductory level in any American university, I'm sure you learned that when we think about a regime in terms of overall governance, we would define it as implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given issue area of international relations.

So generally, the principles and the rules and the decision-making procedures are embedded in treaties and international agreements. There's certainly plenty of them in the Arctic, of course, going back - however far you want to go back but more specifically probably to about a 1911, we'd start to see specific ones on the treaty for the preservation of protection of seals. So wildlife management at the international level appears at an early stage. The Spitsbergen or the Svalbard Treaty signed after World War I was an element of the peace settlement and created a regime for governance in the archipelago that remains in force today with respect to sovereignty as well as demilitarization of the archipelago. But I think most of us who are students of history know that during the Cold War, many of these efforts were hampered because the Arctic became a zone of contestation between the great powers. But there was progress, certainly in terms of negotiations and the ongoing unfolding of the Law of the Sea treaties. So it's helpful to think about how these treaties have unfolded because at different stages, different actors or different countries and interests have become involved and have played a role. We have expanded in terms of who negotiates the treaties and whether or not countries that are naval powers, countries that are landlocked, countries that have contiguous interests or not, get involved in the negotiations.

So the more recent round of the UNCLOS negotiations is with the third UNCLOS negotiations. The earlier ones, as you can see - I like the picture because it shows the earlier ones had really focused on how far the territorial waters of a country were, so how far out the territorial sea would be considered, again, thinking, is it as far as a cannon goes, or is it as far as naval ships can defend? But in the later negotiations, there's considerations about how far out a country's exclusive economic zone would extend. And certainly, one of the more important aspects of the UNCLOS III treaty had to do with the breadth of the continental shelf and determining how far out that would be. Geologists consider this area to be the area between the shoreline and the shelf break where no noticeable slope occurs. So this area's considered the continuation of land territory, whereas a country has exclusive economic rights to resources. So when we think about the Arctic, countries make competing claims in terms of where these lines are drawn, how far out they are extended. But we also know the history of these early negotiations.
We know that the United States did not ratify that particular treaty. And so now let's think about what differences exist, both in the Arctic and also with respect to what is different about the past. Well, since 1648, we've had notions of states and territory and international relations, and we think of territory as a fixed concept. What I like to remind people when I talk about the Arctic is that we thought about land. We thought about sea. Now we have to think about the ice - that it presents a new challenge and constant change. So the territory itself is subject to constant change, and both with respect to the weather patterns that might be annual, but also with the greater trajectory of global warming in the region. So in international relations, we've also expanded our idea of regimes to include notions of regime complexity. So rather than just thinking about one particular regime governing the area, we think of groups of institutions or a regime complex that address similar issues, but we debate now whether or not this is a good thing or a bad thing. It could be a good thing because, sometimes, these institutions can work together and provide complementarity. But sometimes, they can provide an opportunity for countries to do what we will call forum shopping, where you could go where you're going to get the best possible outcome.

And so without a doubt, the appearance of the Arctic Council within this regime complex is the most significant development, both because of the hope that emerged when the Cold War wound down, but also because of a knowledge of the environmental problems that grew in the area. So Mikhail Gorbachev had wanted to transform the Arctic, as I'm sure the other panelists are going to talk about, into a zone of peace. Certainly, the great powers wanted cooperation, but there are problems with respect to pollution, climate change and also how countries are going to adapt to it. So in our research, at least the team that I'm working with, we've highlighted three areas that we would carve out with this aspect of constant change that occurs in the Arctic. The three would have to do with new navigational opportunities and the new challenges that navigation poses. Also, we would think about natural resources with respect to who has rights to both mineral rights but also fishing rights in the area, and then, of course, as we've already talked about among ourselves, the importance of scientific research in the area and the presence that doing research brings. So briefly, because I - I'm running out of time and we wanted to give just a brief overview here, you can see that navigation is really fundamentally changed by the opening of certain routes. I think when we talk about, specifically, the issue of Chinese trade and anything that would come from Shanghai, you can see how much quicker the northern route will be when it is available - up to 40% less time in terms of shipping and costs.

This other map, also, if it's helpful at any point, it shows the new configuration of navigation in the area. I also brought the Geological Survey maps of the resources that are available, so even if you don't have your reading glasses - I guess you need the reading glasses near or far, right? Anyway, but just giving you a sense of the incredible mineral wealth and where it might be distributed in the region. So, you know, just in conclusion, these - what is the same and what is different really brings us to two policy implications that I think we really have to address and confront both in the United States and also in the world community. Specifically in the United States, obviously, it brings renewed attention and a renewed focus on the ratification process of the Law of the Sea treaty both because of the geostrategic importance but also because of American commercial interests in the region. And also, in the broader sense, I think, in terms of what is new and different, we have to think about the broader American commitment to multilateralism across these institutions, where we want to place our interests - where we want to place our attention and also the representation and the type and the quality of the
representation that we want to see in them. So thank you for your attention, and I really look forward to hearing the other panelists in the discussion to follow.

CRONIN: I do thank you very much.

(APPLAUSE)

CRONIN: Dr. Stacy Closson.

STACY CLOSSON: Well, I've been asked to speak to you about Russia. And I have four main points to make today. Russia has a lot riding on the Arctic in pursuit of great power. The second point is Russia has had a lot of challenges in the Arctic, but it's working to turn them into advantages. The third is we need to be wary of Russian tactics in the Arctic and be aware. And the fourth is there's still opportunities for cooperation in the Arctic because Russia needs partners. So on the first point, Russia has a lot riding on the Arctic as its premier political, military and economic region going out into the future. This is a political revival project. This sort of Arctic project is Putin's idea, but it harkens back to the Stalinist era of the heyday of a red Arctic. And all of the government's resources are being geared towards realizing this. And this is for very practical reasons.

Russia's got a large pit of landmass in the Arctic, at least a fifth of the Arctic Circle. It's got two-thirds of the Arctic population, so it's got a population that it needs to take care of in the high north. But also one-third of Russia's landmass is the Arctic. And militarily, it is - it demonstrates the Arctic and the presence in the Arctic, Russia's great power, as a major military force. The Northern Fleet has been there, and it's Russia's largest. It's based in the article - Arctic with critical access to the Atlantic Ocean. And it's the fleet's tactical nuclear weapons and strategic submarines that provide that strategic nuclear defense and deterrence. And so, therefore, most of its bases are in the western part of the Arctic going out into the Barents and Atlantic Ocean. Also, it's an economic project. It's a - it's to protect major oil, gas and minerals. It - our USGS has projected that 13% of oil, 30% of global gas reserves are in the Arctic, and most of that is in Russia's Arctic, including gold, platinum, diamonds and rare earth. So it's really critical to Russia that, in order to curb decline in places like Siberia, that it opens up and develops, in a sustainable way, the minerals in the high north. And this is critical because Russia estimates that its future 20% of GDP and its future 22% of exports will come from its high north. And so it is building a lot of attempt and working on commercial traffic via what the professor just talked about, the Northern Sea Route, especially to Asia.

And Russia's goal, really, is to go from 8% to 20% growth of the global LNG, liquefied natural gas, to - so to be a major player in the LNG market globally via the Arctic. The second point I want to make is Russia has had a lot of challenges in the Arctic, but it is working gradually to turn them into advantages. So you heard about the Arctic Council and the - and what we call the A8 and the Arctic 8, the titular nations around the North Pole there. And the majority of them are either NATO or European Union members or both. And the one that isn't is Russia. And so Russia is working to protect its northern borders and minerals. And this comes clear, since 2013, in all major strategic documents, foreign and security policy in Russia. They mention that this is the No. 1 threat to Russia - is NATO - and in the high north. But at the same time, Russia has turned these relationships with European and NATO members into positive things. In other words, it has concluded agreements in search and rescue, oil spill response, polar codes for navigation in its waters and fisheries. Also, the geological terrain - I think it doesn't need to be said that climate change is two times the rate of the rest of the world. Weather extremes -
there's lots of articles in Russia about the permafrost melting, buildings collapsing in cities and towns across northern Russia.

The pollution - there is an - there is a long - the Gorbachev speech was mentioned in Murmansk in the late '80s. That was due to an effort to clean up the north Russian Arctic from nuclear and other waste. Large expanse of land to navigate and to surveil and to secure, but it's also joined agreements on this behalf. Russia has joined agreements, including the U.N. Paris Agreement on emissions reduction but also on issues of methane, and it's building infrastructure and ice-cutting ships to deal with this difficult terrain. And then also, there's a socioeconomic issue for Russia. It's got population flight from the north. It's got at least 15% over the last 20 years. There's an internal Russian struggle for how you're going to develop the high north, as well. In order to maintain that population, are you going to work towards the oil and gas and minerals, which tend to be dirtier industries, as we know? Are you going to side with the environmental groups and the fisheries groups, who have different agendas? But I think what Russia's done on this is that the military base project - and I recently wrote an article for Center for Security Studies about this - feels to me as much a military and security project as it does a domestic development project. In other words, it's bringing in rubles. It's bringing in jobs. It's bringing services that we also see in our military towns and our countries. The third major point I want to make is that we need to be wary of Russian tactics in the Arctic. And they're not just in the Arctic, but they're bearing out in other places.

And the Svalbard or Spitsbergen treaty was mentioned, the 1920 treaty. I've done some research around the Svalbard Archipelago, and Russia is pursuing - not the Russian government, per se - but Russian academics, Russian media, Russian members of government pursuing a disinformation campaign on the sovereignty of those territories. That is, it is Norwegian territory under the treaty. But as members - signatories of the treaty, which is on up to the '40s - you're allowed to use the archipelago for scientific and economic pursuits, and you can live there. And the second-largest population is Russia. So I've tracked the discourse, the coming out of Russia on the archipelago, and there is some confusion about what the seabed of the archipelago has, who it belongs to, who can mine it and under what regime. Is it a strict Norwegian regime, or is it a regime under the treaty which is founded in the 1920s? And is there an economic zone? Because in the 1920s, there was no UNCLOS and EEZ. I think the second thing we need to be aware of is UNCLOS - and that was mentioned, as well, in the Law of the Sea - the question is now there's decisions going on within the U.N. about the continental shelf and their special commission on this.

There's overlapping claims between Canada and Denmark and Russia. You know, as I understand, even if the decision comes out in favor of one country, there still needs to be a negotiation. But I would say perhaps we need to start thinking about getting in on the front end of that, only because Russia has shown some signs of concern when it remarks about decisions regarding the nine-dash line for China around the Philippines and coming out in - not in favor of an official jurisdiction on that. And then finally, freedom of navigation was mentioned. And, you know, the Northern Sea Route - only Russia thinks it's its internal waters, and no one else agrees, including the Chinese, although the Chinese are paying about a half a million dollars per transit of that northern sea route, which creates a precedence, which we know in international law sometimes can become a norm. And so I think there's concern about where that Northern Sea Route goes in the future in terms of who can use it under what conditions, how much you
must pay, and what level of Russian security you must bring onboard or next to you in order to use it.

So I'll just end with, what are the opportunities for cooperation in the Arctic? Russia needs partners. It's for sure. And I've seen some reports that it's not exactly convinced that China is always the best partner for a variety of reasons. But there is some talk, including at the Wilson Center, where I'm at, by experts, of encouraging an international seaway - I talked about the Northern Sea Route - so encouraging kind of a St. Lawrence project, as it were, across the Arctic, and talk about maybe getting ahead of problems in the future on that. There's also concern about the offshore oil and gas development. Western sanctions limit Western companies from offering finance technology on offshore oil and gas drilling. But going out in the future, there could be a situation. And there has been the LNG plant 2 project, where France and Japan and China have all come on board for more liquefied natural gas production in Russia's Yamal Peninsula.

And the question is, how long are we as - going to limit our cooperation in these areas on offshore production, particularly if they occur in places like the Barents Sea? And then finally, I would say that Russia is a bit wary about China including itself not only as a near-Arctic state - and we'll hear next about China - but also as the Northern Sea Route as one of its three to four Silk Roads - the Polar Silk Road, as it calls it. And Russia has big plans on investment in infrastructure communications and using the sea route. And so the question will be to what extent Russia is going to be a fan of that, and to what extent Russia would work on more of either an agreement within the Arctic 8 on this or internationally. Thank you.

CRONIN: Stacy, thank you very much.

(APPLAUSE)

CRONIN: Now we turn to Dr. Liselotte Odgaard to talk about China.

LISELOTTE OGDGAARD: Thank you. Yeah, I'm going to talk about the probably most spoken about non-Arctic state with a presence in the Arctic. And I'm going to try to address three issues that have been talked about by people who looked at this. One is, to what extent does China behave in the Arctic like it does in other regions in the world? Second, does China adapt to the institutions and norms of the Arctic, or does it try to transform them? Third, is China a revisionist power in the Arctic? And fourth, is China playing an active role in the geopolitical dynamics that are on the rise in the Arctic? And I can already now tell you that the answer to all four, in my opinion, would be yes and no. So lack of clarity, but the first question - does China's Arctic presence follow that kind of pattern of strategic positioning we have seen from other regions? Well, it does on several key points, I would argue.

So China is obviously, as Stacy said, coupling its Arctic strategy to its Belt and Road Initiative for global development, hence its announcement in January ‘18 of a Polar Silk Road, and that clearly signals that China is in the Arctic for the long haul and it's going to stay there. It also signals that China's focus is primarily commercial scientific and it also intends to extract the political benefits it can from the Arctic presence that it is establishing. This effort involves developing an infrastructure in the Arctic in a scientific sense, in a communication sense and also with regard to key transportation infrastructure, which means that China will have access to a sort of network or a strategic presence, which may - or I would argue, at this point in time, is limited. So the Chinese presence now is not very big, but it gives it a strategic foothold in the
region, which - if China, at a future date, should want to increase its presence - will be very useful for China.

So in that sense, I would argue that China's presence in the Arctic follows the pattern we've seen in other regions. It is also investing, for example, in some alleged scientific projects - for example, satellites and other things that can have dual-use purposes and be used for military strategic purposes down the line if China should find that useful, but that kind of investment is no different from a lot of other states' investments, though. However, at this point in time, China's military engagement and interests in the Arctic are certainly very minimal, so - and also, for now at least, the Arctic remains a fairly peripheral region for China, and that can be seen if you look at various statistics. China's presence in most areas - I've just brought a few - is kind of on the level of Japan, more or less, which is another external power with interests in the Arctic. So in terms of the vessels that China has had in the area, as you can see, it's fairly limited compared to the residential powers. Sometimes, people list a lot of - an awful lot of projects as Arctic projects when they write about it, but the five main investments China has made that are listed as Arctic - it's really only one, the Yamal Gas Project, that is genuinely an Arctic project if you look at the details.

In terms of foreign direct investments, China's investment in the Nordic countries is - again, it's not impressive. It's there, but it's not major. If you look at it compared to others, you can see China's in the left corner, and Japan is in the middle. Again, it's more or less at the level of Japan, so not a major presence but also not totally insignificant. And that's just to say that while China follows a pattern we've seen from other regions, it's still a newcomer, and therefore, it's also possible, I believe, to influence the trajectory of China's presence, and that's important, I think. I also think it's a reminder that inferences from Chinese behavior in one region to other regions must be carried out with great caution because in some regions and towards some actors, China is clearly a major geostrategic and geopolitical challenge. But fortunately, in the Arctic, at least for now, China is pretty focused on its commercial interests. So at this point in time, it would be counterproductive for China to stir the pot too much geopolitically. And so at this moment in time, you could argue that China is, in some ways, keeping a relatively low profile. On the other hand, like I said in the beginning, its economic presence - such as its interest in rare-earth minerals, et cetera - has strategic implications that needs to be watched and that needs to be taken into account when engaging with China and the Arctic.

Second question - does China adapt to the rules and institutions of the Arctic, or does it transform them? Again, yes and no. When China came to the Arctic, it came to a region where there is already a fairly complex regime. There is a lot of institutions and regulations beforehand, and if China were to influence the Arctic, it would need to - or that's the conclusion China drew itself - to participate in trying to develop these institutions. We've also seen that in other regions. China is very much into getting a foothold in whatever institutions are in the region and then being cooperative initially, but also down the line, trying to change the rules in a way that is better suited to Chinese interests and perhaps less suited to those that were there originally. So - and China also forms new institutions in the Arctic. For example, we have the Arctic Circle Assembly in Iceland, which China has had a major hand in forming and which has now become a big forum where almost everyone with an interest in the Arctic comes to.

And that gives China a lot of opportunities to shape the dialogue and to sort of influence whatever interests and actors there is in the region, and sometimes, I've been told off the record, with a pretty heavy hand - so not just being the neutral bystander, but actually
influencing who gets allowed speaking time and things like that. So again, it's a fairly benevolent presence, you could say, for now. China has been fairly cooperative, not least on scientific issues, as Farrell will return to. It has been cooperative with India, with Japan, South Korea. Also on fisheries, China has agreed to a fisheries moratorium in the high seas, and then it will in return have the right to conduct scientific research in the Arctic as an external power. So the point here is that, for now, China has engaged with the existing institutions, and in many ways, in a productive and cooperative way. But of course, it's necessary to watch the tendency we have seen elsewhere that China enters into agreements and then, down the line, it just ignores those agreements and interpret the rules the way it sees fit. And this could also happen here if China, at a later date, were to think that these institutions should be shaped more to cater to China's specific interests. Is China a revisionist power? Well, for now, in the Arctic, it - of course, it is in these institutions to try to revise the frameworks so they take care of Chinese interests, but this revisionism does not take the form of a sort of very heavy hand or total ignorance of the rules.

As I said, for now, China has coupled on to the existing agendas, and it's also using science and other engagements to improve its image and to show it's a benevolent power in this region that doesn't want to be a spoiler. So it makes quite an effort to do that, and you can say that that means China has a sort of incremental revisionist agenda. For example, in the fisheries agreement, it got in that it wants to be able to conduct science in this area, and that's now part of the agreement. But so does Japan and South Korea, so China worked with those countries to get that formulation in. It's not just something China wants, but of course, again, that may change in future, but it's too early to say. What we can say is that it's part of all the institutions and regimes that will let China have a role in it. Fourth, is China an active part in the geopolitical dynamics that are on the rise in the Arctic? Again, yes and no. It has focused its investments - most of its investments are going to Russia, but that's not very surprising because Russia welcomes Chinese investments, whereas the other countries - the Nordic countries, Canada - are much more skeptical.

So while there is a lot of talk about projects with China, a lot of these projects haven't really gone ahead yet, either because countries such as Greenland or Denmark and Finland have said, no thank you, or they have said, wait a second; we have to have an internal debate about this first. So a lot of it is sort of suggestions that haven't happened yet, and of course, Russia is sort of part of very much part of these geopolitical dynamics in the region. But so far, it seems that China is more trying to stay away from these new political dynamics because, again, it would damage its commercial interests and its attempt to be seen as a sort of legitimate power that's benevolent and cooperates with everyone, so, for example, when there are sanctions against Russia because Crimea and Ukraine and the railway across Scandinavia that was also supposed to be part of the Nordic countries that were also supposed to go through part of the Russian Arctic suddenly doesn't go through to the Russian Arctic because China doesn't really want to deal with that issue or violate the sanctions in this area.

Another example is when China was stopped from buying the old naval base Gronnedal in Greenland, it didn't really complain. It didn't make a case out of it. It just kind of, OK, backed out. And that kind of behavior you could signal as or interpret as, at this moment in time, China doesn't really want to be the spoiler. If there is sort of too much geopolitical competition or criticism on the rise of China's role, then for now, it has a tendency in this region, in contrast to other regions, to sort of back out quietly and just drop the issue. And that is good news, I guess.
So in conclusion, I would say that China - so far, they have adjusted to regional circumstances. They have a particular interest in commercial issues and scientific issues and the shipping, et cetera. So for now, that is their focus. But they are establishing a sort of strategic foothold in key areas, which prepares them to bump up their engagement in the Arctic at a future date if they were to find that to be beneficial.

CRONIN: Thank you very much. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

CRONIN: Now we turn to Minister Inuuteq Holm Olsen.

INUUTEQ HOLM OLSEN: Thank you, and thank you for inviting me to this panel discussion - I'm glad to make my debut here at the Hudson Institute - and also for the focus on the Arctic, which I hope the institute will continue to have. I'm going to address on - upon several issues. First of all, you know, as a representative of the government of Greenland and, you know, that is here to promote U.S.-Greenland greater - U.S.-Greenland - U.S. relations, which we have seen, which also, you know, is very much a part of this discussion. I'll touch upon that, and then also about, you know, Greenland's economic development, especially because there's a lot of interest in the different natural resources that we have. And then I'll also want to, I think, touch upon the geo - especially the geoeconomic, you know, situation and how we see that. I mean, in the last, you know - I've been here five years representing Greenland, and I've seen this - a shift, you know, from a more environmental, climate change focus to a much more security-, you know, related focus here recently. And, you know, that has been expanded to security and defense.

And, I mean, from Greenland, we welcome the increase and more intense U.S. government cooperation and attention we have now, both to expand the relationship beyond military presence to also include increased trade, cooperation on energy and mineral sectors, as well as welcoming the reopening of the U.S. consulate in Nuuk, but also so we, hopefully, can resolve outstanding issues related to the service contracts related to the military presence, which we, as a host country to the military base, have a legitimate reason to address. And we think it is positive to seek greater engagement and cooperation on issues like rare earth and energy, where agreements to promote those two sectors have been signed between the U.S. and Greenland, and we look forward to see how we can develop the different sectors. We are keen and focused on diversifying our economy and to develop the different natural resources, as well as infrastructure. Right now, you know, Greenland is mainly - is very much dependent on one sector, namely the fisheries, for our exports. But we - I mean, but we also know that we quite well-endowed with their mineral resources. I mean, you name it, you know, we have it, almost, so to speak. And, I mean, there's no choice for us but to diversify. And we - I mean, we're looking at, you know - and we have to look at, you know, building infrastructure.

We have to, you know, look at other sectors, like tourism. You know, we have, you know, a lot of, like, hydropower potential. We have even sand now, you know, that's being focused on that we can supply the rest of the world with. So I mean, those are the kind of the avenues that we are going down on. And in that respect, you know, we play a role of a supplier, you know, of these natural resources. I think that's important to keep in mind. But we have a long-standing and constructive relationship, you know, for many years with the U.S. And we are committed to seek new ways to offer engagement that are mutually beneficial, and also as a close ally. And it's also important to underline the political statement of the government of Greenland in 2018,
which states, Greenland as an independent country will become a member of NATO. When it comes to economic development, you know, as I said, you know, it is imperative for us to diversify, you know, and expand the natural resources we utilize going from fishing to minerals and to other kind of - I mean, other products. We have been developing the mineral resources and took over the full responsibility, as well as income therein, in 2010. And now we are beginning to see the fruition of that work.

You know, two mines are open now, and we would like to see more in operation in the coming years. And Greenland as an - as any other open economy is open for business. Our main trade is towards Europe and Asia, but we would like to see a stronger trading relationship with our neighbors to the west. I think this is only natural as we are North American, you know - geographically and also, therefore, quite close to the north - you know, to Canada as well as the U.S. There's been a lot of talk about Chinese interests in Greenland, and it almost goes back, you know, a decade. And I think - I mean, there was an article in - a couple of years ago, in The Economist that said, you know, there were 3,000 Chinese in Greenland. So, I mean - I mean, so therefore - I mean, there's been a lot of hype in many ways but, you know, as Liselotte also mentioned, I mean, there are Chinese interests in the different commercial opportunities but also, you know, in other sectors as well I think that we have to be, you know, keenly aware of. And we are.

But it's also, at the same time, I think, important, you know, that people have the right, you know, facts, you know? And that's because, I mean, I think, incorrect facts and misconceptions can usually grow to become something very large. But, I mean, our most important trade relationship with China is in our fisheries exports that amount to about 200 million annually. When it comes to the mining sector, I mean, the company that has a license is - you know, that's in general, you know? A company that has a license, be it, you know - I mean, it's mostly Australian and Canadian companies that are mostly actively in Greenland and has the most licenses. I mean, they are responsible to develop the business case, you know, raise the money and find buyers for the products they're selling as well as develop the necessary infrastructure. So, you know, we have the rules and regulations in place, but it's the companies, you know, that are open that are operating internationally to raise the necessary capital themselves.

So we are open for business with those who wants to do business with us. But we are also aware of the security risks that have been posed, you know, when dealing with critical sectors, which is why a mechanism on screening is being developed together with Denmark and, I believe, in a EU setting as well. So it is important for us that the Arctic remains a region of low tension and cooperation. I think in the past, the Arctic has been pretty isolated from the rest of the world, but this has changed. And we are very much part of the globalized trading system today. And that's the reality that we live in now.

It is important to remember that, you know, what the five Arctic coastal states - that includes the United States as well as Russia - agreed upon - the Ilulissat Declaration in 2008 and reiterated again last year, actually, in Ilulissat as well - among other things to resolve issues through negotiations and in respect of international law. And we shouldn't forget and should have more focus, I think, on the multilateral cooperation on Arctic issues. It's quite important, you know, to keep on focusing on and - which is quite important, I think, for all of us, and, you know, much more - I think much more sustainable path in the future because, you know, decisions that are being agreed upon among the involved nations, you know, are usually much more, you know,
long-lasting in the future. So I think with these words I'll stop here, and I look forward to the discussions.

CRONIN: Minister Holm Olsen.

(APPLAUSE)

CRONIN: Now, finally, Dr. John Farrell.

JOHN FARRELL: Thank you very much - appreciate the invitation. And I appreciate the audience's 10 more minutes of attention because I stand between you and questions. OK. I'm going to talk about Arctic science and research as a sort of form of soft diplomacy in the larger geopolitical context of the Arctic. And I start with this slide. At least the younger members of the audience will recognize Conan O'Brien here when he went to buy Greenland. And so science does inform such activities. For example, when he tried to nail the sign into an iceberg, you're really not going to be able to pound a wooden stake into an iceberg given how tough an iceberg is, so we could have helped him out with that (laughter). So what science tells us about the Arctic region - it gives us information about the Arctic region that then informs the geopolitical discussion.

What science is telling us - excuse me for turning around - is that the Arctic is warming clearly more than two times faster than the rest of the globe. There's retreating glaciers and less sea ice. Ecosystems and species are changing, so it's impacting biology. Permafrost is thawing and the changing - the chemistry of the ocean's even changing, becoming more acidified, particularly in the Arctic. And there's rising sea levels. Just as an example, this is from a couple days ago. This shows the top of the world. And I appreciate the invitation, and I appreciate the audience's 10 more minutes of attention because I stand between you and questions. OK, I'm going to talk about Arctic science and research as a sort of form of soft diplomacy in the larger geopolitical context of the Arctic, and I start with this slide. At least the younger members of the audience will recognize Conan O'Brien here when he went to buy Greenland. And so science does inform such activities.

For example, when he tried to nail the sign into an iceberg - you're really not going to be able to pound a wooden stake into an iceberg given how tough an iceberg is, so we could have helped him out with that. So what science tells us about the Arctic region - it gives us information about the Arctic region that then informs the geopolitical discussion. What science is telling us - excuse me for turning around - is that the Arctic is warming clearly more than two times faster than the rest of the globe. There's retreating glaciers and less sea ice. Ecosystems and species are changing, so it's impacting biology. Permafrost is thawing, and the changing - the chemistry of the ocean's even changing, becoming more acidified, particularly in the Arctic. And there's rising sea levels. Just as an example, this is from a couple days ago. This shows the top of the world, and the little line - the orange line you see is sort of the average extent of sea ice coverage at the minimum ice extent, which is right now in September. This year, it's much pulled back from that average minimum level. You can see where the white is. It doesn't reach out into the orange area. So huge areas off of Alaska and eastern Russia were ice-free, where historically, there has been ice covering these regions - so a significant reduction in the concentration and the extent of the sea ice.

Another way to look at it in this chart - and I promise you there won't be any more charts. On the X axis is the month - June, July, August, September, October - and on the Y axis is going up
and down is how much area of sea ice there is in the Arctic. And you can see that, on average, it's in the gray zone there. That's about how much there is, and you can see we're just getting to the bottom of September there. And this year, the blue line, 2019, shows that it's tied for second place for the lowest amount - extent of sea ice in the Arctic Ocean. The record was set in 2012. So significant declines - this just one example of the many types of changes we're seeing. This goes well beyond the scientists. The military people have recognized that this ocean is opening and will make access for resources, fish stocks and new trade routes. This has long been recognized, at least over the last 10, 20 years. A lot of economic development in the Arctic is getting international attention, demand for resources. As we've heard from other speakers, it's rich in resources and it's getting more and more accessible not only to reduce sea ice, but also increase technology.

Again, as you've heard, we've - there's emphasis on shipping. There's pros and cons to that and great challenges. Even though it's a shorter route doesn't necessarily make it an economically viable pathway, but it's an interesting lot of discussion on that - fisheries, tourism, mining, oil and gas. So science is just one of the inputs to policymaking and political decision-making. There's also beliefs and ideology. There's economic and resource concerns. There's lobbying. There's even religious views. So really, even though I'm the last speaker, science usually has the first word on everything but the last word on nothing. So we give input to the process, but we don't make the final decisions. Those are left to the decision-makers' policals. So I'll talk a little bit about the U.S. government's approach to research from - with respect to the Arctic and then a few words about China before I close. So there has been, in this administration and previous ones, White House engagement on Arctic research at a very senior level.

Just two weeks ago, there was a meeting in the Eisenhower Executive Office in the White House, EEOB, that was chaired by the director of the National Science Foundation. It had very senior folks from 14 agencies, including the head of the Office of Science and Technology Policy Kelvin Droegemeier. This group gets together and discusses what they're doing on Arctic research. They put together a five-year plan that has funding against that. The U.S. spends approximately - and it's a ragged number, but approximately - $5 million a year on Arctic research across the agencies, depending on how you define it. And so they met to talk about forming the next five-year plan.

We're currently in the midst of one that began in the Obama administration, has been moving forward in this administration unabated, and there will be a new plan developed for FY '22 to '27. So there's a lot of activity, actually, and a lot of focus at a high level in the U.S. government on Arctic research. I represent a very small agency in the U.S. government called the U.S. Arctic Research Commission. We're very much linked with that group of people you just saw in the previous slide. We were created in 1984 through the Arctic Research and Policy Act, and our small commission of presidential appointees - as was explained earlier today, our primary goal is to provide advice to the president and Congress on what the nation should focus on with respect to Arctic research. So we release - I have a few copies with me, but it's on our Web site at arctic.gov - on a biannual basis a report called "Goals And Objectives." So we set out with these presidential appointees who travel far and wide and get great input from all kinds of people on what the nation should focus on with respect to Arctic research. We develop Arctic research policy for the nation. We do a lot of work to try to foster domestic coordination as well as international coordination, and we review federal programs.
We have five goals in this report. They're broad goals. One is to advance Arctic infrastructure. As you've heard about the falling permafrost, this really impacts roads, railways, buildings, airports. And so research into how to build - design and build better infrastructure in the North, both military and civilian, is critically important. We think it's important to assess what we have as a nation with respect to Arctic resources, to know what we have and then let decision-makers decide what to do with those resources. Environmental change obviously is a big focus, and we encourage research on that. People live in the North, including the state of Alaska, which makes us an Arctic nation. And we care a lot about their health and well-being, so we have emphasis on Arctic human health research. And we also try to emphasize international scientific cooperation in the Arctic.

So sort of the procedure within the U.S. government is that our agency releases this report. That goes to that interagency group that makes a plan and puts money against that plan. That goes into the president's budget, and then actually, the commission, our agency - because we are an advisory body, we then review that request and report to Congress on how well the president's budget marries up with that program plan. So that's sort of a powerful thing the commission has the opportunity to do. Some of the international aspects that we participate in and encourage - there have been these meetings started with the Obama administration in 2016 called Arctic Science Ministerials, where ministerial-level personnel - that would be, like, the head of the National Science Foundation in our case - from 26 countries - so much broader than just the Arctic nations - are showing up and having significant dialogue on how they can work together to pursue some very large Arctic research-type projects.

There was another one held in Berlin last year, and Japan will host the next one with Iceland in 2020. A few words about China since Liselotte was interested in that topic - so my perspective is that China's research - Arctic research is still relatively small, but it's increasing very rapidly compared to other nations. So the pace of increase is high - still not near what some of the major superpowers invest in the Arctic research like the U.S., but it's - the rate of increase is very high. So they want to improve their capacity. I think China sees science as an acceptable, normative way to participate in the Arctic, particularly as a non-Arctic nation. They've done a good job, in my estimation, of cooperating internationally with a variety of projects, including one you may have read about in the Washington Post called the MOSAiC thing, where they're freezing a ship into the Arctic for a year plus. And it's going to drift through, and China's participating in that, and it's going to resupply that drifting ship. They have been, also, a party to that Central Arctic Ocean Fisheries Agreement, and they - not just the Asian nations, but others - also encourage scientific research in that. They get funding from a variety of ministries in China.

So on top is a research base they have in Svalbard, and below is a research vessel. And they're building a new - they just delivered a new Arctic research icebreaker in July, and there's even discussion about them having an ice-strengthened - or icebreaker that will be nuclear-powered in the future. And sometimes, we hear, well, China says they're a near-Arctic state. Well, there is one kind of link I think that's a legitimate link to make in that regard, and that's with respect to this. As the Arctic warms - you may have seen stories about this - the jet stream actually becomes a bit more wavy. And as a result, sometimes you have cold outbreaks of air from the North coming far south and vice versa. You'll have warm air moving farther north rather than a linear jet stream. Here's an example of that - what happened in the U.S. in 2014. We had these - we're having more and more these things called polar vortex. And sometimes, what these lead
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to is - you get these weather patterns where the air does not move out in your area, and so China has experienced some intense periods of smog that are related to this climate pattern. So I'm going to end with that, and thank you very much.

(APPLAUSE)

CRONIN: Well, we've heard five perfect presentations. All speakers had to be brief, so they have a lot more to say. And I want to just try to tease out a few points, especially along the lines of the focus of today, which was meant to focus on some of the geostrategic competitions. I want to try to get to a pointy end of some of these issues if I can by at least directing a few questions here, and then we'll turn it out to the audience. And I wonder if I can begin with you, Stacy, and talk about Russia relative to, say, China in terms of the approach. We heard Liselotte talk about, you know, yes or no. Kind of - China doesn't want to rock the boat too much right now and really is not in a position to do so, and yet, there are differences between even how Russia sees the potential Polar Silk Road as maybe competition. But there's the famous planting of the flag by Russia, which was clearly not a very nuanced sort of action to sort of stake a ground here. And I'm wondering about - what is the most, you know, strategic aim of Moscow, you know, when it thinks longer-term about the Arctic and its resources and its sea lines of communication?

CLOSSON: I mean, I think that a very straightforward answer would probably be absolute control over minerals; absolute control over oil and gas development, obviously; absolute control over the seaway, and that includes security of seaway, surveillance of seaway and maritime activity of the seaway. And so I think if you ask for strategic aim and then deterrence - you know, a bulwark of deterrence against any potential threat - and we see that in a lot of their air, sea and land maneuvers in and around the Arctic areas, particularly on the western portion of its Arctic zone - that doesn't mean that it won't open itself up to cooperation where necessary, particularly in the areas of finance, areas of technology, areas of investment, areas of offshore platforms for oil and gas development. But I think the word sort of control is probably something that comes to mind.

CRONIN: Excellent. And I wonder, Liselotte, about - I mean, you were very evenhanded and balanced on the China approach. I mean, you read someone like Anne Marie Brady's book on China in the Arctic, and it's much more alarming in terms of China's longer-term ambitions and the fact that China doesn't have the firewalls between the commercial side and the scientific side and the party state in Beijing, unlike these democracies. So, you know, there is a difference there, it seems, over the long term - skepticism about China's long-term ambitions, even if you're pointing to the sort of very early stages, really, of China's interests. And they're feeling their way here in the Arctic. But as you look out over China's more long-term ambitions of the China dream here, you know, after 2035 and 2049, I mean, these resources presumably become absolutely vital to the future of China.

I want to ask you specifically about what you think about the long-term ambitions of China but also maybe some of the near-term concerns expressed by friend Lyle Goldstein recently, who was essentially reaching out to the military community, saying, look. It's not so much the military maneuvers you have to worry about. It's more the fisheries, frankly. And so if you think about, OK, the South China Sea is very different, yes. But it's hard to overlook the coral reefs that were destroyed in the reclamation projects by China. As China looks out for more sort of rich fishery
fields, the Arctic becomes a real possibility. So how do you see those kind of ambitions from China in the Arctic?

ODGAARD: Well, I don't think that China's ambitions in the Arctic is different from other places. But the question is, what can China get out of the Arctic at the moment? It's mainly commercial. It has a genuine scientific interest in the area, as John pointed out. I would say it positions itself strategically so that further down the line, it can increase its engagement heavily if it were to find that interesting. But I would say the good news for the Arctic is that at the moment, there is much increased policy coordination both, for example, in the EU with regard to investment screening, as Inuuteq Holm Olsen pointed out - we coordinate that with the U.S. and with other allies these problems we see with the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative. I think with regard to the Arctic, there could be more coordination because you will see some of the same problems with China in the Arctic as you see elsewhere, I'm sure, if you just leave things as they are. You know, you also see in other areas, for example, China entering into that agreement on the moratorium on high fisheries but only to ignore it at a later date if it decides that it wants to send large fishing fleets to the Arctic and that it can do it without getting too much into trouble. Yeah, that could happen.

But I think the key point here is that China enters the Arctic at a time where there is actually a lot of awareness of the problems with China. So there is a good chance to sort of preclude these or, you know, take these things into account and preventing those things from materializing in the Arctic, I would say, because we are also at the stage where countries that are not so happy with China's breaches of the rules are trying to create mechanisms to prevent that from happening in the future. So in that sense, I think that China's behavior is like it is elsewhere. But I also want to stress that for now, for China and India in the Arctic, it has a lot of potential. There is the shipping routes, the shipping industry. Shipbuilding is important for China. It wants to be in there. It follows these development. But again, for now, the engagement is limited. It is interested in the rare-earths, obviously, which - it has a near monopoly on processing. Its interest in bases. But when it is told no, which it has been a number of times, it quietly backs out. And that is because China is not, at the moment, in a position to have a heavy hand in the Arctic.

It would just be counterproductive for them. And that, frankly, gives other nations a lot of opportunity to manage China so that we can, you know, have the benefits of China's engagement. Like John said, there is a real interest for China in some of the environmental issues in the Arctic. It doesn't just affect - we talk about jet streams, but there is also the Himalayas and these areas - are also linked to what is going on in the Arctic. I think that we should welcome to extend to China's engagement in these things but again also have the same preventive mechanisms here that we are having in other regions to protect ourselves against abuse. And there, I feel there is a bit of a lack of coordination between powers who agree on that in the Arctic - be better. Yeah - be better arranged.

CRONIN: Thank you. And I've got a very brief question for the other three panelists before we open up - and this one for Minister Holm Olsen. You know, in short - and you alluded to the Chinese on the ground in Greenland, you know? It seemed like China wanted to buy Greenland, and now it seems like America wanted to buy Greenland or at least one American. What is going on with - I mean, strategically here between U.S. and China when you think about Greenland as a strategic center of gravity here in the Arctic region?
HOLM OLSEN: Well, I think, you know, the U.S. is finally, I think, waking up to what's going on in the Arctic and increasing its engagement. But, I mean, that was the same thing that happened - I don't know - maybe seven, eight years ago. You know, while we've been developing, you know, the mineral resources sector and all that, you know, Denmark finally woke up, you know, and OK. Oh, you know, we must be more engaged. And now that's - it seems like a deja vu, you know, for us. But, I mean, yeah. I mean, we read that - you know, that from a U.S. standpoint, the China - you know, it poses security risks. But for us, you know, as I said, you know, it's - we want to diversify our economy. And we welcome, you know, greater U.S. commercial engagement as well in this sector because we're not interested in only, you know, having one country monopolizing, you know, certain aspects of our commercial, you know, relations. So that's - I mean, besides diversifying the economy - wanted to diversify our relations.

CRONIN: Sounds very similar to others around the world, I think, probably. I want to go to Katy and ask about the multilateral institutions that you, you know, described and maybe didn't talk enough about in terms of the Arctic Council. You hear of these strategic sort of issues that are rising. Are those institutions, you know, beyond, even, UNCLOS up to the task? Obviously, coordination is important. But I mean, are they going to be able to manage this growing competition in the Arctic?

LAVELLE: Right. Well, I think one of the important points to remember is it - kind of what you've alluded to, UNCLOS is a treaty. The Arctic Council's not really an international organization as we would think of it in the field because it wasn't established by a treaty, so it doesn't have the same type of state membership that the other ones do. The other thing is that it's explicitly prohibited from the military affairs, which makes other organizations like NATO and some of those perhaps more significant. It - you know, I think what impressed us on the fieldwork that we did with the Arctic Council is just actually how effective it is. So it's a very decentralized organization, and it's one that operates very much through working groups and through scientific research.

It's one that, I think, most observers would have expected not to have sustained the pressure of the sanctions on one of its members - Russia. And the fact that it's actually been able to continue to operate and to move forward - I - my sense is that it's very much an organization where it matters who's - for the term of the leader of the organization. So that makes it very different than a very established treaty-based international institution like UNCLOS. But I think more than anything, the fact that it's progressed forward and that it's still existing under the pressure that it's had is - it makes it much more of a survivor now. You know, how much of a capacity that has in terms of the incredible challenges that it faces is - as you've pointed to, it does give you pause.

CRONIN: And John Farrell, one question I really wanted to ask you was, especially thinking about leveraging scientific cooperation and exploration or activity in the Arctic, I mean, what is your moonshot? What would you really think would be important to undertake that's not already underway that could have a long-term benefit for humanity?

FARRELL: Sure. For many years, the scientific community has been talking about a pan-Arctic observing network. And we've been talking about it and talking about it, and we haven't made the kind of progress we really need to, in part because of finance, in part because of getting international agreements together where you have nations allowing other nations to put buoys
CRONIN: Excellent. All right. The floor is open for questions. Now we have a microphone out here, don't we? Or do I have the only microphone? Yes, we do have mics in the back here. Sure. Dr. Nagao is standing up closest to the microphone, so we'll get the first question.

SATORU NAGAO: (Inaudible).

CRONIN: So you're asking about whether the Chinese have used a nuclear submarine in the Arctic?

ODGAARD: Can I briefly say something on nuclear submarines then? I know there's - some people have talked about the possibility of, you know, China having nuclear submarines in the Arctic under the ice. But just briefly, Chinese nuclear submarines, I think, are quite noisy. So if they were to enter the Arctic, we would certainly know it in advance. And secondly, China has - it - they're developing submarine launch long-range ballistic missiles that, you know, they can put to use so that - it's very hard to see the need for them to have that kind of capability in the Arctic, I would say.

CRONIN: Yes, sir, in the front row. There's a microphone coming to you.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: So my capstone group is actually working on the Arctic as our topic, effectively looking at who should be the security guarantor of the Arctic. So you have a lot of - the possibility of great power competition. You have a lot of different organizations that are in the Arctic. So in your opinions, should there be one main organization that's in charge of security in the Arctic? So should the Arctic Council finally add a more security, you know, aspect to it? Or should there be a brand new multilateral organization created that's specifically focused on security in the Arctic? Or should the U.S. unilaterally be the security guarantor of the Arctic and kind of use our hegemonic power to be that security?

CRONIN: And sorry. Just to clarify, what do you mean by security in the Arctic?

RYAN: So security in terms of, you know, you have a lot of, you know, economic opportunities that are opening up. But also, you have that great power competition. So, essentially, who should kind of be the mediator of that in the Arctic?

CRONIN: So broadly speaking, even, what is the governance of the Arctic? I mean, these are huge questions, but we can start with Liselotte and just go right down the line if anybody has something to say.

ODGAARD: Well, just briefly, I would reiterate what I already said before. I think that there already is a lot of institutional governance in the Arctic. We have - we may need to expand those to take into account geopolitical issues and other issues. But really, the power - the residential powers have a major interest in coordinating their policies so as to keep the region cooperative and to avoid some of the sort of less pleasant issues you see in other areas. And I think that could be explored more, so I think it's a cooperative venture between the Arctic powers and cooperation also, of course, with other observer states in the Arctic Council to ensure that that happens.

CRONIN: (Unintelligible) comments?
**LAVELLE:** Yeah. I would point out - I'm sure your group has come across the problem of defining the Arctic because it isn't so clear. So you would essentially have to be pulling off pieces of countries, and this gets to something that Gida (ph) said earlier about Russia. One thing we uncovered is that in the high north or in - peoples in the Arctic might feel very differently about Russia if they live near Kirkenes than people who live in Moscow. People kept making that determination. Also, let's not forget the indigenous people. We haven't had a chance to talk about both representative of - representatives in the Arctic Council. But also, there are the people who, we would say in governance studies, are acted upon yet do not act on much of what is occurring there with respect to climate change and the types of geostrategic interests we're talking about. So I think that, you know, for us to sit here and make those kinds of debate is - and I'm a professor, so I don't want to say it doesn't lead anywhere. But I think that some of the bigger problems that are encountered on the ground are also encountered theoretically.

**HOLM OLSEN:** I think - I mean, you've touched upon the indigenous peoples aspect as well, you know, as the Arctic Council - in the Arctic Council. I think, you know, for many indigenous peoples across the Arctic, you know, there are different forms of security that they are, you know, concerned with. There's environmental security. There's food security, you know? And the list could go on. But the Arctic Council, by statute, are not allowed to deal with military security. But still I think, you know, that a lot of - I mean, there's still - you have the Arctic U.S. - not U.S. - Arctic Coast Guard Forum. And I'm sure, you know, the Alaskans can talk about, you know, their cooperation with Washington, for example, on a number of different issues. So - but it's interesting, you know - I mean, Canada just released its Arctic strategy where they, you know, are saying that, you know, the Arctic Council should grow from a policy-shaping to a - making actual policies, you know? But from my experience, you know, it's very, very difficult to, you know, try to alter just a little bit the statutes of the Arctic Council. So, you know, I'm not optimistic, you know, in terms of creating something new or altering something - the existing ones.

**CRONIN:** Stacy, do you want to say anything?

**CLOSSON:** Yeah. I think there's disagreement among the members themselves - the Arctic Council members on, you know, coming up with the security council, coming up with a security forum. I believe the security forum attempted to meet, but then sort of Ukraine events occurred, and there were those that didn't attend. I think that - I think the way NATO views it is that is the hard security threat is being handled by NATO. I think that's how it views it. But a pan-Arctic - there is some talk about how - in what form would you have greater confidence security building measures? At the moment, they're sort of mostly bilateral or trilateral kind of exercises involving search and rescue. But I'm not - you know, it's an ongoing - it's a good research question.

**CRONIN:** You say NATO again on the hard security. But maybe from the Russian perspective, Russia's handling the hard security...

**CLOSSON:** True.

**CRONIN:** ...Against NATO.

**CLOSSON:** Absolutely.
CRONIN: And then the question is whether Russia and China would actually end up trying to cooperate against these Western forces or whether now there’s more division there, and it’s very hard to say. John, any thoughts on this subject?

FARRELL: Briefly. Yeah, I question the premise of great power competition in the Arctic itself. And what I would refer you to is a discussion that was held at the 8th Symposium on the Impacts of an Ice-Diminishing Arctic on Naval and Maritime Operations that was at the Wilson Center in July 17, 18. There was a whole panel on that topic. And personally speaking - not in my capacity, but personally - I thought the remarks of Heather Exner-Pirot were pretty good, and I thought she really hit the mark. So I would refer you to this.

CRONIN: All right. (Inaudible). Yes, ma’am? Microphone coming.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Very much interested in this whole discussion here and was very much an integral part in trying to get the multilateral cooperation going in the Arctic in terms of the science. And of course this involves more than scientists; it involves politicians, military - you name it, it involved it from all sides. And one of the aspects that I - and I'd like your opinion on this - was when - I was very active in a group called the Pacific Arctic Group, which are representatives, government and individuals from the six Pacific nations - Japan, South Korea, China, Russia, Canada and the United States. Now, this is not the Arctic Council, but many of those players were active in the Arctic Council. And the reason that the Canadians and we set up this program was the realization that on the Atlantic side of the Arctic, the European side mostly and the Greenlandic side, was - were primarily being observed by high-quality vessels, a lot of financial support, been going up there for a long time, including the Russians, who've certainly been the leaders in Arctic research.

But at the same time, we realize that so, for the United States, we're a Pacific Arctic country. And we realize that the amount of observations taken in the area that would affect us being able to observe incoming weather fronts, you know, whole seasonal variation, fisheries, was not fully covered. And we did benefit from the Chinese, the Japanese and South Koreans, who decided to invest a lot of their money into really good ships and put people on, and we invited them to the Arctic to come with us. And the point I want to make is that they then have continued to take samples for the United States in our own waters and seafloor to give them to us scientists because we didn't have the money in the United States to do it. So I'm - I wanted to pose this question of who may want to answer it. Do you think that the United States needs partners and not only control in the Arctic? Because we're in a difficult situation. I'd like your opinions about that.

CRONIN: Sure. But why don't we ask John for all her questions?

FARRELL: Well, thank you, Kathy. Kathy is a colleague from way back when. Absolutely, we need partners. And you ran one of the most cooperative projects with the Russians that we had in the Arctic, and that was a perfect example of it. So yes, it's not just a matter of who's controlling it, but it's a need for international cooperation, collaboration, particularly in the north where it's expensive, time-consuming and challenging. So the more partners that we can get to do these activities, the better off we are.

CRONIN: Right. Short answer to a long question. But yes, sir. We'll go over here.
AUDIENCE MEMBER: I have two quick questions for Mr. Farrell. One of your slides mentioned a research goal being looking at infrastructure in the Arctic. The U.S. military is particularly interested in basing and permanent basing of airfields and ports and things like that. I wanted to ask, is that kind of infrastructure viable right now or will it become more viable in the future? And secondly, for Mr. Olsen, you mentioned Greenland being open for business but aware of security concerns. I'm wondering are those security concerns strictly business related or is there a military risk you're worried about or - can you elaborate on that?

FARRELL: OK, I'll go first.

(LAUGHTER)

FARRELL: Yeah. So you asked, is their research viable for this topic of Arctic infrastructure? In fact, I'm very pleased to say that just last week I sat in on a panel at a DOD funding entity called ESTCP. And I forget what the acronym stands for - Environmental Science and Technology something or other, but ESTCP. And they were in the midst of making final selection on proposals to directly address this very topic of Arctic infrastructure design - a design tool that would look at the rapid environmental changes that are going on and give guidance to engineers better than the current guidance they have, which is outdated, about how to design infrastructure that will last 20, 30, 40 years in a rapidly changing environment. So this is of great importance to places like Thule Air Force Base in Greenland and other bases that we have in the north, not just in the U.S. but Pan-Arctic.

HOLM OLSEN: I mean, through Denmark, you know, we are a member of NATO. So, you know, that's pretty well established. You know, the U.S. - as John said, you know, the U.S. has Thule Air Force Base. But Pentagon also issued a statement, a letter of intent last year - they'll be building a series of airports and looking at, you know, possibly, you know, dual use in one of those. And so - but in terms of, I think, you know, the - so I think I can answer that. It's much more, you know, business-related when it comes to different security risks but not only. You know, people will say, we are aware that, you know - that, you know, there are creative ways of operating and then using different, you know, infrastructure for different - you know, for different use but purposes as well.

CRONIN: OK, We have time for maybe one or two more questions. This gentleman in the middle here in this - very middle of this whole pack. Sorry.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: My question is for Mr. Olsen. You mentioned the subject only in passing of Greenland independence. And I wonder - it's an important topic, and I think, as global warming takes place, I've heard many comedians describe Greenland will be the Iowa of the next century, and we'll all be importing our food from Greenland. But more seriously, what is the future of Greenland's independence or relationship? And you also mentioned in passing that if Greenland were to ever become a separate country, which I assume it well could, that it would be a member of NATO, and I don't know how that decision could be made today on the future residents of Greenland. But could you just expand on that general theme? I think it's of broad interest. Thank you.

HOLM OLSEN: Yeah. I mean, you know, we began, you know, the process of self-determination in '79, and that was expanded in 2009 with a self-rule act that determines the relationship between Greenland and Denmark. And the range - you know, there's a whole list of areas that we have still - remain to take over responsibility of. So - and there's also a section
dealing with secession, a possible secession, and how that should proceed. So it's a well-known, you know, kind of established goal of ours to - in the long term, to seek or to come to a point where we can take a decision on that issue. And that's something that Denmark also respects, you know. And - but, I mean, we're not focused on the set of use. It's more the process itself of taking over, you know, one area of responsibility from another. That's been going on for the last 40-plus years. So - but that's pretty broad, you know, kind of agreement, I would argue. I mean, most political parties in the Greenland Parliament are for it.

I mean, there's one that we know that are - that is against it and have currently one member. And - but one of the concerns that's been expressed, especially when we talk about possible independence of Greenland - especially, I think, on the U.S. side - is, you know, they're afraid that we're not going to - you know, that we're going to leave, you know, because there have been, I mean, other countries that have independence aspirations have sometimes stated that - you know, that are members of NATO, that they will not, you know, seek that. So I think it's important just to, you know - just to, I think, state that we are a close ally of the United States, and we'll continue to be so, even though, you know, it's not only up to us. We know that.

CRONIN: Right at the end of the 90 minutes that we had allotted for this county event, so I'm sorry about asking more questions. But I just - we come down and just a final word from each speaker. And especially, just a quick answer to the question, does the Arctic become yet increasingly important, you know, every year forward now, especially from the view of, you know, the actors you were talking about but, in general, in international relations?

ODGAARD: I think it becomes increasingly important commercially and environmentally in terms of climate change. But I actually think there is good hope that it doesn't become a geopolitical mess (laughter).

LAVELLE: Yeah. I think it's definitely going to remain as important as it has become simply because the entire configuration of global politics is under stress but also change right now, with respect to the rise of China, with respect to every country's engagement and just kind of the overall - yeah - planetary conditions that we're living under.

HOLM OLSEN: Definitely because (laughter) - especially from my seat here as well, you know, I mean, I've seen the - you know, the proliferation of U.S. interests - but not only the U.S., I mean, but also in general, you know, a lot of number of countries. And that's not going to, I think, go away just - I mean, it's not just, you know, the flavor of the month we're speaking about here. But my only worry is that, you know, with different administrations comes different focuses. You know, what the future might bring from a U.S. perspective - I hope you will continue to have a focus on the Arctic, and I expect it so.

CLOSSON: Yeah. And I guess from Russia's perspective, they have no choice. I mean, it is both an economic and political and military project, but also a climate and environmental issue. So absolutely, it's going to remain central to Russian foreign and security policy.

FARRELL: (Inaudible) exclamation point.

(LAUGHTER)

CRONIN: All right. You heard a great panel here on the Arctic. Thank you. Please welcome and thanks (ph) our speakers.
(APPLAUSE)

CRONIN: Thank you very much.