Editors’ Note

The July–August 2024 issue of the *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs* (volume 7, no. 4) offers a comprehensive examination of the critical topic of homeland defense in the context of the evolving geopolitical landscape, with a particular emphasis on the Indo-Pacific region. Guest edited by Dr. Richard Newton and Dr. Cameron Carlson, this issue—a collaboration among Air University Press, the Homeland Defense Institute at the US Air Force Academy, and the College of Business and Security Management at the University of Alaska Fairbanks—brings together diverse perspectives from military leaders, academics, and policy experts to explore the multifaceted challenges and opportunities in defending the homeland against an array of threats.

The foreword by Dr. John M. Garver, director of the Homeland Defense Institute, sets the tone for the issue, which is cosponsored by the institute. The opening article by Dr. Cameron Carlson, Troy Bouffard, and Dr. Ryan Burke establishes the foundation by examining the concepts of pacing threats and pacing challenges, specifically in relation to China. The authors provide working definitions for these terms and highlight the necessity for the United States to address China’s growing capabilities while also preparing to counter acute threats.

Senior military leaders featured in the issue provide critical insights into the unique challenges of homeland defense in the Indo-Pacific era and the strategies needed to address the complex threats facing the region.

RADM Scott Robertson’s article, “Tackling Homeland Defense Challenges in the Indo-Pacific Era,” highlights the increasing threats to the North American homeland ranging from cyber to environmental to biological threats, as well as the challenges posed by malign state actors like China and Russia. Robertson emphasizes the need for homeland defense to be seamlessly integrated into strategies, plans, and operations, requiring coordination among combatant commands, services, interagency organizations, and allies and partners. He underscores the importance of pairing resources with policy and incorporating new realities both at home and abroad to safeguard the nation and prevent conflict worldwide.

Maj Gen Randy “Church” Kee (Ret.) focuses on the role of soft power in Arctic defense in his article, “The Role of Soft Power in Arctic Defense: The Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies and the Future of North American Homeland Defense.” Kee emphasizes the need to address the increasing geopolitical and security risks in the Arctic, including cyber, conventional, unconventional, and hybrid threats from strategic competitors. He highlights the establishment of the Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies (TSC), the first new Department of Defense (DOD) regional center in more than 20 years, tasked with ad-
Advancing Arctic awareness, supporting DOD Arctic priorities, reinforcing the rules-based order in the region, and contributing to deterrence efforts.

COL Matthew Tucker, US Army, and Lt Col Jason Buell, US Air Force, in their article “US Special Operations Command North’s Strategic Defense: Countering China’s Hybrid Warfare with the Band Framework and a Theory of Victory,” examine how SOCNORTH is tasked with defending the US homeland against the growing strategic competition with China. They outline SOCNORTH’s “Band” framework, which organizes its operations across three distinct operational environments: the Arctic region, the continental United States and maritime approaches, and the southern region including Mexico and the Bahamas. They also discuss SOCNORTH’s Theory of Victory, focusing on preventing strategic distraction, assuring power projection, degrading adversary capabilities, eroding adversary influence, and providing specialized military options.

These senior military leaders underscore the importance of integrated strategies, strong alliances, and soft power in addressing the complex threats facing the region. They emphasize the need for seamless integration of homeland defense into strategies, coordination among various stakeholders, and the utilization of both hard and soft power tools to counter challenges from strategic competitors like China and Russia in the Indo-Pacific era.

The issue features several articles that delve into specific aspects of homeland defense, providing in-depth analysis and insights from experts in their respective fields.

Lt Col Kristen “KJ” Heiserman’s article, “Snowblind: Investing in Logistical Infrastructure in the Arctic to Support the Indo-Pacific and NATO,” highlights the necessity of reinvigorating Arctic operational capabilities through Alaska’s logistical infrastructure. Heiserman emphasizes the importance of improving ports, fuel logistics, and transportation networks to sustain military and civilian activities in the region. The article underscores the crucial role of investing in Arctic resources and logistics for ensuring national security, maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific, and providing continued support to allies.

Dr. Scott Fisher, Dr. Graig Klein, Dr. Juste Codjo, and Dr. Juris Pupcenoks, in their article “Answering Authoritarian State Asymmetric Challenges: Tools for Deterring Hybrid Threats and Non-Military Coercion from China and Russia,” explore the use of information as a tool for deterring or punishing asymmetric challenges from authoritarian states like China and Russia. They argue that US policymakers should focus on criticizing censorship, advocating for freedom of information access, and using technical or cyber means to undermine information/communication controls in authoritarian states.

Dr. Michael E. Lynch and MAJ Brennan Deveraux’s article, “Landpower, Homeland Defense, and Defending Forward in US Indo-Pacific Command,”
emphasizes the importance of extending the definition of homeland defense beyond North American shores in the 21st-century geopolitical environment. They highlight the role of US military forces stationed throughout the Indo-Pacific in deterring potential aggressors, protecting US interests, and strengthening partnerships with countries in the region. The article advocates for hardening overseas facilities and expanding them to other locations to allow greater operational depth and build resilience through sustainment redundancy.

Mike Carey and Charlie McGillis, in their article “Navigating the Gray Zone: Reframing Space Strategy for Contemporary Operational Environments,” explore adapting gray-zone strategies to the unique operational dynamics of space. They emphasize synchronizing diplomatic, informational, and economic instruments to dissuade and deter adversaries while avoiding kinetic conflict. The article addresses legal frameworks governing space activities, the rise of commercial space ventures, and the need for collaboration between military and commercial entities to mitigate space threats.

Dr. James L. Regens and John S. Beddows, in their article “Warming Arctic—Geopolitical Rivalries: Risks to Continental Defense for North America and NATO’s Northern Flank in Europe,” examine the formidable challenge posed by a warming Arctic in a changing climate to homeland defense and national security for both the United States and its NATO allies. They highlight the escalating competition to assert influence over the Arctic’s vital sea routes, the ramifications of shifting sea levels on international borders and exclusive economic zones, and the pursuit of new economic interests. The article underscores the immediate imperative for a holistic strategy and command framework that seamlessly integrates the operational forces of the United States, Canada, and NATO Nordic member nations.

These articles provide valuable insights into various aspects of homeland defense, ranging from logistical infrastructure and asymmetric challenges to landpower, gray-zone strategies, and the implications of a warming Arctic, offering a comprehensive exploration of the multifaceted challenges and opportunities in defending the homeland.

The Views section of the issue offers several other insightful articles that explore various aspects of homeland defense and security.

Dr. Kelsey A. Frazier’s article, “Arctic Insecurity: The Implications of Climate Change for US National Security,” examines the multifaceted implications of changing environmental conditions in the Arctic for U.S. national security. Frazier highlights both the challenges and opportunities presented by diminishing sea ice, altered wave dynamics, increased wind speeds, and emerging weather phenomena. The analysis underscores the importance of leveraging technological advancements, fostering international collaboration, and ensuring robust infrastructure resilience
to navigate the operational risks and strategic complexities resulting from the Arctic's evolving climate.

Dr. Gaëlle Rivard Piché, in her article “Vulnerabilities and Hybrid Threats in the North American Arctic,” explores key vulnerabilities in Alaska and the Canadian Arctic, and how they interact to provide opportunities for China and Russia to advance their interests in the region at the expense of Canada and the United States. Piché emphasizes that resilience is the greatest defense against hybrid threats and is best achieved through a whole-of-society approach to mitigate vulnerabilities before they can be exploited.

CAPT Josh Taylor’s article, “Operation Noble Eagle–Pacific: Integrated Air and Missile Defense for America’s Pacific Homeland,” highlights the need for the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) to prepare for integrated air and missile homeland defense by establishing a named homeland defense operation. Taylor advocates for the establishment of a Joint Task Force — Homeland Defense (JTF-HD) to activate operational forces and staffs, augment with Reserve Component units, and create a coalition to bolster information sharing, operational collaboration, and regional defense.

Col Dr. William “Ox” Hersch and Lt Col Melissa “Sharpie” McLain’s article, “Inside The Gates: Cultivating Cognitive Security to Defend the Homeland,” emphasizes the importance of cognitive security in the twenty-first century, as adversaries like the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) wage comprehensive political warfare campaigns exploiting cognitive vulnerabilities and social media platforms. The authors argue that democracies must take steps to cultivate cognitive security within their societies and security enterprises, leveraging diverse populations and reinvigorating foundational principles of free speech, free markets, and inalienable human rights.

LTC Jeff Hayes’ article, “At 156°W: The Alaska Territorial Guard as a Solution to Arctic Capacity and Domain Awareness,” provides a historical perspective on the critical role played by Alaska Natives in the Arctic during World War II, first as the Alaska Territorial Guard and later as formally incorporated units of the Alaska Army National Guard. Hayes proposes that the Canadian Ranger program could serve as a model for restoring military service as a possibility for Alaska Natives while addressing domain awareness and other shortfalls confronting the United States in the Arctic.

Dr. Catherine Lantigua’s article, “Seize the Gender Inclusion Era to Enhance Homeland Defense and Security,” showcases her experiences implementing a Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) strategy outside the United States and in a culturally diverse context. Lantigua discusses the tools available to promote gender equity and the importance of cultural awareness and sensitivity in promoting
meaningful alliances with international partners to prioritize homeland defense and security.

Cleo Paskal’s article, “Protecting the Corridor of Freedom to America’s Asian Border,” examines the strategic importance of the “corridor of freedom” across the central Pacific, consisting of Guam, the Commonwealth of Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Marshall Islands. Paskal highlights the vital role this corridor plays in enabling the United States to extend its defense perimeter to Taiwan and its treaty allies in the region, and advocates for a “block-and-build” approach to maintain this Pacific buffer with Asia and counter China’s efforts to undermine the U.S. position.

These articles provide valuable insights into various aspects of homeland defense and security, ranging from the implications of climate change and vulnerabilities in the Arctic to the need for integrated air and missile defense, cognitive security, the role of indigenous populations, gender inclusion, and the strategic importance of the central Pacific corridor. Together, they offer a comprehensive exploration of the multifaceted challenges and opportunities in defending the homeland in the Indo-Pacific era.

Overall, this issue of the Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs provides a thought-provoking and comprehensive exploration of the multifaceted challenges and opportunities in defending the homeland in an era of great-power competition, with a particular focus on the Indo-Pacific region. It offers valuable insights and perspectives from a diverse range of contributors, making it a valuable resource for those interested in this critical topic.

—The Editors

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