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Leveraging Allies and Partners

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Leveraging Allies and Partners

By Rachel Ellehuus and Colin Wall

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THE ISSUE

Taking its cue from the 2018 National Defense Strategy's (NDS) commitment to "strengthen and evolve" U.S. alliances and partnerships, this brief examines potential areas of cooperation with two European countries—Norway, a North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) ally, and Finland, a highly capable partner. Its aim is to demonstrate the extensive benefits the United States can derive from fully embracing the unique skills and capabilities that its allies and partners have to offer. It does so by identifying areas of strategic convergence with the United States and the comparative advantages of each country and using these to generate concrete recommendations for greater cooperation.

INTRODUCTION

The United States' network of allies and partners is a force multiplier in magnifying U.S. legitimacy, influence, and geographic reach. Allies and partners bring unique perspectives, tailored capabilities and forces, and access to critical regions that complement U.S. assets. Likewise, allies and partners benefit from the deterrent and defense value of U.S. presence and benefits of working alongside the United States' capable, professional armed forces and high-end capabilities.

The mutual benefit of these relationships is recognized in the 2018 U.S. NDS, which identifies strengthening traditional alliances and attracting new partners as an objective in its own right as well as a means of achieving one of the NDS's main lines of effort: maintaining our competitive edge over adversaries.¹

First in this equation are European allies and partners. Europe and the United States share a wide range of mutual security and economic interests underpinned by shared values, military interoperability, and strong defense

industrial partnerships. As the United States implements the NDS, it will continue to look to these countries to help address long-term, strategic competition from revisionist powers; manage instability; stabilize conflict zones; and defend the rules-based order.

While much cooperation is underway bilaterally and through NATO, and the Office of the Secretary of Defense has begun work on the "allies and partners" line of effort, the Pentagon in recent years has overall not prioritized this aspect of the NDS.² Instituting a more deliberate, systemic approach to this cooperation could help the United States achieve greater strategic alignment and responsibility sharing with allies and partners. Opportunities include collaborative planning, pooled resources and procurements, investment in complementary capabilities and forces, alignment of security assistance tools, and more informed regional and functional strategies. In this way, allies and partners can augment one another and offset respective areas of risk.

This brief looks at U.S. cooperation with two countries: partner Finland and NATO ally Norway. Both are small but

capable nations whose security and defense objectives are closely aligned with the United States and who possess both the political will and capabilities to defend their interests. These countries offer regionally tailored expertise, capacities, and capabilities that can both stand on their own and complement U.S. contributions. They provide compelling examples of the benefits the United States can derive from increased collaboration with and reliance on its allies and partners.

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INTENT AND EXPECTATIONS

The United States is a global power with global interests. In areas where these interests are shared by its allies and partners, it expects them to provide support for defending these interests.

First and foremost, the United States expects to work with ally and partner countries to maintain “favorable regional balances of power” in their own neighborhoods.³ In the case of Finland and Norway, this entails the North Atlantic, Baltic, Barents, and Arctic regions. For U.S. defense planners, these areas constitute a single operational theatre.

More specifically, the United States relies on allies and partners to provide their own frontline national defense. This includes ensuring credible national defense capabilities by replacing or upgrading outdated systems, prioritizing the acquisition of strategic capabilities (e.g., air defense, maritime surveillance, or fighter aircraft), and enhancing security and resilience in increasingly important domains such as space and cyberspace.⁴ In NATO, this requirement of “self-help and mutual aid” is captured in Article 3 of the North Atlantic Treaty.⁵ In Finland’s case,⁶ the country’s Defense Forces Act requires the Finnish military to ensure the defense of the country and secure its territorial integrity.⁷ Allies and partners are also expected to hone their ability to receive reinforcements from other countries. For NATO countries, host nation support is an integral part

of the NATO operational planning process.⁸ For Finland, a Host Nation Support Memorandum of Understanding with NATO allows for logistical support to NATO forces located in or in transit through Finland, whether during an exercise or in a crisis.⁹ Finland also has bilateral host nation support agreements with its immediate neighbors, a recognition that conflict in a neighboring country would inevitably impact Finnish land, air, and maritime space.

A second expectation is that allies and partners assist with systemic counterbalancing against peer rivals who challenge the global order. For most European countries, this support will not be military. Rather, it will involve exerting political, economic, and diplomatic pressure on rivals using the regulatory power of multinational and intergovernmental organizations such as the European Union and World Trade Organization.

AREAS OF STRATEGY CONVERGENCE

As the NDS indicates, there is scope and desire for deeper cooperation with allies and partners. Getting there requires a better understanding of the areas of strategy convergence and specific comparative advantages each country brings. A review of U.S., Finnish, and Norwegian strategic documents reveals considerable alignment on security interests and objectives, as well as some divergences in policy or approach.

ENSURING SECURITY AND DEFENSE IN NORTHERN EUROPE

The most significant mutual interest is ensuring security and defense in Northern Europe, including the Arctic and its surrounding waters (for Finland, this includes the Baltic Sea region).¹⁰ All three countries emphasize the need to credibly deter adversaries and guarantee their own defense here. Specific to the Arctic, they agree that a stable, conflict-free region is in the interest of all.¹¹ They are united in their concern about growing geopolitical interest in the Arctic, including from non-Arctic nations. They are aware of the challenges that the Arctic climate’s harshness poses for access—much less sustained military presence—and recommend several steps to address this.

The first is enhancing awareness in the region. This includes awareness of environmental activity and awareness of activity by competitors, such as Russian military movements or Chinese dual-use scientific infrastructure.¹² Finland and Norway have both increased investment in situational and domain awareness capabilities. Finland is investing in ground-based surveillance systems, its Squadron 2020 and HX Fighter programs, and cutting-edge radar and sonar capabilities.¹³



U.S. Marines walk after landing on January 16, 2017, in Stordal, Norway. Source: Ned Alley/AFP/Getty Images

For Norway, in addition to its new P-8A Poseidon Maritime Patrol Aircrafts, the country recently updated its ground-based SINDE-1 radar systems and maintains air surveillance capability via its five Fridtjof Nansen-class frigates.¹⁴ Even before climate change accelerated the thawing of Arctic permafrost and altering of ice patterns,¹⁵ the region was characterized by challenging weather and atmospheric conditions due to unique solar and electromagnetic phenomena.¹⁶ All three strategies address this challenge. The 2019 U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) Arctic Strategy calls for improving DOD’s “ability to understand its operational environment” in the Arctic as a prerequisite to operating effectively.¹⁷ Similarly, Finland’s Arctic strategy cites “shared situation awareness” among countries as being of crucial importance.¹⁸ Norway’s Foreign and Security Policy and forthcoming Defense Planning Report¹⁹ assign Norway the role of NATO’s de facto eyes and ears in the Arctic, with the responsibility to provide situational awareness to the transatlantic community.²⁰ Its Arctic strategy specifies the need to develop “nautical charts and ice data” to facilitate a detailed understanding of the physical environment—knowledge that will be applicable toward a range of ends.²¹ Military exercises and training to refine operational familiarity with the region are also underway via large-scale exercises like Cold Response or Trident Juncture 2018 and smaller ones like Exercise Reindeer.²² Finland, Norway, and the United States also have a mutual interest in improving their crisis response and search-and-rescue capacities.²³

Another shared objective is developing a resilient infrastructure to access and connect the region. This includes physical infrastructure such as roads, bases, and airstrips

as well as investments in digital and communications infrastructure.²⁴ Some work is already being done via such projects as Space Norway’s communications satellites, designed to help bring internet connectivity to the region,²⁵ or various Finnish road, rail, and airport projects.²⁶

Improvements in these areas do not only relate to military concerns—they are also necessary to support civilian tasks, such as trade, economic development, scientific research, and disaster response. For example, Finland views building infrastructure as enabling the development of oil and gas resources and as a means of attracting investment. It sees its regional navigation skills as improving accident response time and facilitating shipping opportunities.²⁷ Norway notes the business-enhancing benefits of building infrastructure and deepening regional expertise.²⁸

SUPPORT FOR THE RULES-BASED ORDER

A second area of convergence is safeguarding the rules-based order, both regionally and globally. The U.S. DOD is blunt about its responsibility and willingness to enforce that order, stating that the U.S. military will “challenge excessive maritime claims in the Arctic.”²⁹ The Norwegian and Finnish strategies frequently speak of the importance of adherence to international law.³⁰

Concerning the role of non-Arctic nations in the region, all three supported China becoming an observer in the Arctic Council in 2013 but maintain that international affairs in the Arctic are primarily the responsibility of the Arctic nations.³¹ The DOD Arctic strategy goes further, stating that “The United States does not recognize any other claims to Arctic status by any State” other than the eight Arctic Council nations.³² Finland and Norway have a more balanced approach. While a 2019 government analysis noted the drawbacks of working with China, Finland signed a Joint Action Plan with China earlier that year that included cooperation in the Arctic (research, environmental protection, sustainable development, and shipping).³³ Norway has worked with China on infrastructure projects, such as the Hålogaland suspension bridge.³⁴ The Norwegian government’s new High North strategy document supports cooperation with non-Arctic countries in the region (based on adherence to international law) and urges that the debate on China’s role in the Arctic should remain fact-based and nuanced.³⁵

MANAGING DISRUPTIVE TECHNOLOGIES

The third area of convergence is managing the implications of disruptive technologies, such as 5G and 6G networks,

artificial intelligence (AI), and machine learning. This includes taking advantage of the opportunities this technology creates. While Norway and the United States advocate for joint investment in defense-related innovation,³⁶ Finland's strategy focuses more on regulation and managing the security risks these technologies pose, which is consistent with the EU approach.³⁷ Both countries participate in the U.S. Joint Artificial Intelligence Center's (JAIC) Partnership for Defense program, which provides "a forum for like-minded defense partners to discuss their respective policies, approaches, and challenges in adopting AI-enabled capabilities."³⁸

AREAS OF STRATEGY DIVERGENCE

The starkest divergence in the current strategies is on climate change. Finland and Norway's strategies explicitly define climate change as a security challenge, whereas neither the NDS nor the National Security Strategy (NSS) mentions it.³⁹ Norway's white paper observes that climate change is exacerbating risks and instability in fragile states and regions, and plans to adjust its development aid to address this.⁴⁰ Finland's white papers take a similar approach and make building "climate resilience" in developing countries part of its policy.⁴¹ This divergence is less pronounced in the Arctic, where Finland and Norway both note climate change's effects on the operating environment, and the 2019 U.S. Arctic Strategy acknowledges challenges resulting from a "changing physical environment."⁴² There is greater alignment at the departmental level as well,

where a January 2019 U.S. DOD report recognizes changing climate as a national security issue given its impact on DOD missions, operational plans, and installations.⁴³

Another area of divergence is nuclear nonproliferation. Although all three countries agree on the importance of nuclear nonproliferation, Finland and Norway cite nuclear disarmament as a priority—although Norway, as a member of a nuclear alliance, balances that aspiration against NATO's official position in a way that Finland does not.⁴⁴ In contrast, the NSS and NDS do not discuss disarmament and use careful, qualified language to speak of arms control more broadly: "We will consider new arms control arrangements if they contribute to strategic stability and if they are verifiable."⁴⁵ The 2018 Nuclear Posture Review is even more pointed. It criticizes the UN Nuclear Weapons Ban Treaty as injecting "disarmament efforts into non-proliferation fora" and dismisses the treaty as based on "wholly unrealistic expectations of the elimination of nuclear arsenals without the prerequisite transformation of the international security environment."⁴⁶ While neither Finland nor Norway has signed the treaty or took part in the negotiations, there is significant support among their publics for the nonproliferation agenda.

Considering the importance of these issues to global security, reconciling the U.S. and Nordic views should be a priority. Given U.S. president-elect Biden's stance on climate change (Biden has promised to rejoin the Paris Climate

Figure 1: Convergences and Divergences of Strategic Objectives and Interests

CONVERGENCES			DIVERGENCES
SECURITY AND DEFENSE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Credible national defense capabilities Resilience in space and cyberspace Ability to respond to "gray zone" threats Enhanced security cooperation Domain awareness High North Develop resilient infrastructure in High North (physical, digital, and communications) Crisis response and search-and-rescue capacity in High North 	RULES BASED ORDER <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Universal adherence to international law, regionally, and globally A peaceful, stable, cooperative Arctic Manage China's growing role in the region 	EMERGING TECHNOLOGY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Researching and understanding new technologies Investing in innovation Taking advantage of security opportunities Managing risks and implications for ethical use Developing international norms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nuclear disarmament* Climate change*

* These divergences are based on our assessment of existing U.S. strategies. Early statements from the Biden administration indicate that its climate and nonproliferation strategies will be more aligned with those of Finland and Norway.

Source: Based on author's own analysis compiled through multiple sources. Please reference the endnote section for complete citations.

Accord and “reestablish climate change as a priority for the Arctic Council”),⁴⁷ commitment to strategic arms control,⁴⁸ and desire to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. defense and “bring us closer to a world without nuclear weapons,”⁴⁹ the incoming U.S. administration may present new opportunities for cooperation with our Nordic allies and partners in exactly these two areas.⁵⁰

COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES

Whether by virtue of geography, experience, or level of investment, each of the three countries in this study has comparative advantages that it brings to these areas of convergence. These include tangible goods such as forces, capabilities, geography, and specialist industrial bases, as well as less appreciable ones like legitimacy, influence, and regional or functional expertise.

In the case of the United States, the main comparative advantages it brings to Finland and Norway are its economic and political weight, the ability to quickly deploy forces and capabilities worldwide, and the ability to deploy and sustain a significant forward presence in Northern Europe. NATO ally Norway also benefits from the U.S. comparative advantage in nuclear and missile defense capabilities, which underpin NATO’s nuclear posture and missile defense architecture. Finally, Finland and Norway both benefit from the United States’ strong defense industrial base and the acquisition of top-tier capabilities such as the F-35, F-18, and P-8. Likewise, Finland and Norway have several comparative advantages of value to the United States.

INFLUENCE

Regional Security Relationships: Finland and Norway participate in multiple regional security arrangements in the Nordic-Baltic region such as Nordic Defense Cooperation (NORDEFCO), Nordic-Baltic Cooperation, and the Northern Group. These arrangements enable a layered regional defense model in the Nordic-Baltic region by improving joint planning, defense capabilities, interoperability, and military mobility among their members,⁵¹ in turn creating stronger partners for the United States in northern Europe.⁵² As articulated in the NDS, the United States supports such security cooperation among like-minded countries: “Enduring coalitions and long-term security partnerships, underpinned by our bedrock alliances and reinforced by our Allies’ own webs of security relationships, remain a priority.”⁵³ This latter point indicates the United States sees security cooperation, even if it is not part of it, as advantageous. This layered framework now includes participation in flexible, coalition-

defense models such as the UK-led Joint Expeditionary Framework or the European Intervention Initiative.⁵⁴

European Union: Finland’s influence as a member of the European Union is also a comparative advantage compared to the United States and Norway, which are not EU members. In many instances, Finland’s positions in the European Union—such as ensuring a close relationship with NATO or maintaining sanctions on Russia—are well aligned with U.S. and Norwegian views. During its EU Presidency in the second half of 2019, Finland was instrumental in arguing for third-country participation in EU defense initiatives such as the European Defense Fund (EDF) and Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO). With the United Kingdom no longer in the European Union, Finland’s pragmatic voice will be even more important in shaping EU policies. While it does not have any decision-making power in the European Union, Norway’s membership in the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) gives it some influence in shaping new EU policies and legislation early on.

Cooperative Relations with Russia: Finland and Norway share extensive land, sea, and air borders with Russia. As such, they seek to balance a strong national defense with cooperation on areas of common interest.⁵⁵ This includes cross-border cooperation on search and rescue, fisheries management, nuclear safety, and environmental protection. Finland maintains a 24/7 military command-level direct line of communication with Russia as a conflict prevention and confidence-building measure.⁵⁶ Likewise, Norway maintains direct lines of communication between the Norwegian and Russian armed forces despite the suspension of military



U.S. defense secretary Jim Mattis (L) exchanges documents with Finnish defense minister Jussi Niinisto (R) while signing a trilateral agreement of intent between the United States, Finland, and Sweden at the Pentagon in Washington, D.C..

Source: Mandel Ngan/AFP/Getty Images

cooperation between Norway and Russia following Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea.⁵⁷ The Barents Cooperation among Norway, Finland, Sweden, and Russia is another forum for building trust among the countries of this subregion.⁵⁸ For Finland, the most distinct feature of its security and defense policy is its nonaligned status. To this end, Finland emphasizes consistency in its foreign policy, good relations with neighbors, mediation and dialogue to resolve conflict, and clear messaging on its will to fight if its independence is challenged. This arguably lends legitimacy to Finnish security and defense in dealing with Russia that the United States and Norway do not have.⁵⁹

GEOGRAPHIC REACH AND EXPERTISE

Finland and Norway's geographic proximity to the strategically significant High North and the Arctic is itself a comparative advantage. While the United States has the capabilities to deploy and operate in the region, this presence is not permanent and must contend with anti-access/aerial denial challenges presented by Russia. In contrast, Finland and Norway's operations in the region are part of their home defense mission and thus a routine fixture of the environment.

Both countries possess the regional expertise and specialist capabilities needed to operate effectively in these regions. In the Baltic, Finland's expertise in navigating the Baltic's shallow waters and understanding the challenging geography of the archipelago are invaluable to exercise planning and safe navigation. Finland's Squadron 2020 program will further bolster its surface warfare and antisubmarine capabilities in the Baltic Sea.⁶⁰ Norway has taken a similar leadership role in the Atlantic, advocating for the reestablishment of NATO's Atlantic Command (declared operational in September 2020) and joining the trilateral P-8A Poseidon Maritime Patrol Aircraft program between the United States, United Kingdom, and Norway, which takes a coordinated approach to antisubmarine warfare from the High North to the Greenland-Iceland-UK gap.⁶¹ Importantly, both countries continue to invest in high-end strategic capabilities to ensure a credible national defense. These include submarines, the Norwegian Advanced Surface to Air Missile System (NASAMS), P-8 maritime surveillance aircraft, and the F-35 in the case of Norway. For Finland, flagship capabilities include the F-18 (and its follow-on HX Fighter Program), Squadron 2020, land presence via Jaeger Brigade's two battalion-level units,⁶² NASAMS, and surveillance capabilities via its Ground Master 400 systems—a long-range air defense radar.⁶³

In the Arctic, Finland and Norway offer expertise in navigation, nautical charts, icebreaking capabilities,⁶⁴ and specialist meteorological skills (e.g., determining the composition of snow, air, and ice) that are critical to ensuring safe passage and managing rescue operations in the region. Finland and Norway's long-term scientific and research data are also vital to understanding the effects of climate change and increased activity in the Arctic. Finally, Finland and Norway possess the hardened infrastructure, bases, and reception facilities needed to operate in the region. They regularly use these to host cold-weather training and exercises such as Cold Response in Norway and Northern Griffin in Finland, which bring together NATO allies and partners and draw on the winter warfare and Arctic expertise of Finland's Jaeger Brigade and Norway's Brigade Nord.⁶⁵

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TOTAL DEFENSE

The NDS calls on the United States to “defend U.S. interests from challenges below the level of armed conflict” and “bolster partners against coercion.”⁶⁶ These challenges include everything from disinformation to attacks on critical infrastructure to economic coercion. This renewed emphasis on below-the-threshold threats plays to Finland's and Norway's final comparative advantage: their employment of a so-called “Total Defense Concept,” which takes a comprehensive approach to security that engages all elements of society in the country's defense.

Norway's strategy calls for mutual support and cooperation between the armed forces and civil society in connection with conflict prevention, contingency planning, crisis management, and consequence management across the entire spectrum, from peace to armed conflict.⁶⁷ Norway emphasizes the dangers of disinformation, cyber, and hybrid threats and prescribes a combination of societal resilience, civil preparedness, and enhanced civil-military cooperation to counter them.⁶⁸ NATO's Trident Juncture 18 exercise (which included NATO partners) tested the



Comparative Advantages of **FINLAND & NORWAY**



Finland

- Non-aligned status
- Pragmatic voice in the European Union
- Knowledge of the Baltic/Baltic Sea environment
- Capacity for mediation
- Robust conscript and reserve system

BOTH

- Cooperative relationship with Russia
- Arctic land presence
- Knowledge of the Arctic environment and regional expertise
- Sophisticated “Total Defense” model
- Cold weather capabilities
- Participation in regional arrangements that multiply influence, capacity, capability
- Understanding of Russia (i.e., intel, politics, military culture)
- Surveillance capabilities

Norway

- Active, pragmatic member of NATO
- Maritime awareness in the High North
- Arctic and North Atlantic maritime and air presence

Source: Based on author's own analysis compiled through multiple sources. Please reference the endnote section for complete citations.

Total Defense Concept to include the ability of allies and partners to provide host nation support to Norway under a whole-of-government framework.⁶⁹

Similarly, Finland's strategy involves all sectors of the government and society in defense planning in both peacetime and crisis.⁷⁰ It devotes considerable attention to hybrid threats and disinformation in its policy documents. Finland's sophisticated “Comprehensive Security Model” is a whole-of-society security approach that recognizes the danger of gray zone challenges and the need for societal resilience to withstand them.⁷¹ Notably, Finland does not draw a sharp conceptual line between conventional and gray zone security, viewing both as on the spectrum of conflict and affecting the entire breadth of challenges simultaneously.⁷²

Both countries are at the forefront of using legislation to address hybrid threats and build resilience. In January 2020, Finland introduced new statutes on foreign real estate investment requiring entities whose domicile is outside the European Union or European Economic Area to apply for permission to buy property in Finland.⁷³ The decision on whether to allow the sale rests with the Ministry of Defense, working with the Ministry of

Economic Affairs, Finnish intelligence services, and other government entities. Similarly, Norway recently updated its 1998 National Security Act to establish principles for prohibiting companies from accepting investments from countries with whom Norway does not have adequate security arrangements.⁷⁴

NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR COOPERATION

Section III of this report identified three areas of convergence between the United States, Norway, and Finland: (1) ensuring security and defense in Northern Europe, (2) safeguarding the rules-based order, and (3) managing the implications of emerging technology. Within each, there is both opportunity and logic in pursuing the enhanced cooperation called for in the NDS.

SECURITY AND DEFENSE IN NORTHERN EUROPE

NATO's deterrence and defense model and U.S. defense plans for Europe rely on individual European countries maintaining credible national defense capabilities and being able to receive and support reinforcements. The geographic proximity of Finland and Norway to the High North, Baltic, and Arctic; their expertise in these regions; and their commitment to maintaining a robust

self-defense capacity presents opportunities for greater alignment with the United States.

First and foremost, the United States should support these countries' efforts to maintain credible national defense capabilities. This includes facilitating the acquisition of new strategic capabilities to Finland and Norway quickly and on the most favorable terms possible (the United States has security of supply agreements with both countries⁷⁵). This might entail easing export controls, offering flexible financing arrangements, or expediting acquisition for first-tier allies and partners. In the case of Finland, the United States can support its strategy of self-reliance by accommodating Finland's security of supply needs. To best harness these countries' robust national defenses, the United States should maintain a regular presence in the region for deterrence purposes and to test interoperability and host nation support agreements. Two immediate areas of focus could be exercising the joint use of port and air facilities in Greenland and Norwegian seas and air-to-air cooperation between Finland and Norway (with the eventual inclusion of U.S. assets).

In terms of capability cooperation, "selective interdependence" (through delegation or joint procurement) is likely a step too far given all three countries' focus on self-sufficiency in national defense. However, it is possible to reduce costs by relying more on capabilities allies and partners already possess. With respect to the Arctic, Norway and Finland have a comparative advantage in cold weather capabilities, such as Finland's icebreaker fleet. Greater U.S. reliance on Finland's icebreaking capabilities in the European Arctic could negate the need for the U.S. to duplicate those capabilities. Alternatively, the United States could purchase icebreakers from Finland rather than pursue a national development scheme—provided political obstacles can be overcome.⁷⁶ Similarly, Norway's large merchant fleet could assist the United States with strategic sealift in the region rather than the United States deploying its assets.⁷⁷ Similar opportunities exist on space capabilities, where the United States and Norway already cooperate via Norway's Arctic Satellite Broadband Mission.⁷⁸ Given the U.S. Space Development Agency's intent to expand polar coverage⁷⁹ (a difficult and expensive prospect) and Norway's extensive experience in launching satellites to cover polar regions,⁸⁰ there may be room for cooperative endeavors.

Finland and Norway's regional expertise with the harsh Arctic environment also offers opportunities for cooperation on building and maintaining resilient critical

infrastructure and effective domain awareness.⁸¹ On the former, Finnish and Norwegian investments in physical infrastructure in the Arctic can provide the basis for transport corridors to improve military mobility for NATO and the European Union. Their knowledge of the effects of melting permafrost, or the logistical and personnel requirements for servicing a far north base, is essential here. On communications and digital infrastructure, the United States would benefit from the Nordics' understanding of the disruptive effects of unique Arctic atmospheric phenomena and help in closing existing communications gaps.⁸² Given the high price and difficulty of building in the region, exploring cost-sharing or joint construction might make sense.

Regarding domain awareness in the Arctic, Norway and Finland have valuable expertise, skills, and data that they may be able to provide the United States as it becomes more active in the region.⁸³ The United States can also draw more on the advanced surveillance capabilities of both countries in monitoring adversary activity (e.g., Russian military build-up, dual-use Chinese projects⁸⁴) and indications and warnings.⁸⁵ Finally, the Nordics' deep familiarity with Russian strategic thinking, military culture, and internal politics could add nuance to U.S. analysis of Russian intentions.⁸⁶ While some information sharing already takes place bilaterally, in formats like the Nordic-Baltic-United States forum and within NATO (including Finland through the Alliance's 30+2 dialogue),⁸⁷ new mechanisms are needed to overcome technical and bureaucratic obstacles to efficient information and intelligence sharing. Such obstacles were apparent in Operation Nanook when the United States and Canada waited weeks for approval to use the Danish nautical charts needed to safely navigate the waters off Greenland.⁸⁸ While existing memoranda of understandings (MOUs) allow for greater cooperation in these areas, it may be necessary to initiate technical discussions among countries' armed services or Ministries of Defense to identify concrete opportunities for cooperation.

Finally, Finland and Norway's successful use of a Total Defense concept can help the United States and NATO define competition more broadly and integrate this new understanding into military planning, training and exercises, and strategic communications efforts. Alignment in this last area is one objective in the 2018 U.S.-Sweden-Finland Statement of Intent.⁸⁹ The Hybrid Center of Excellence in Helsinki is already a hub for sharing best practices on identifying vulnerabilities and building resilience toward hybrid threats, and there is scope for more:



The icebreaker Ahto stops in the middle of an ice field off the coast of Tornio, northern Finland on February 5, 2016, to test how an oil spill would flow under the arctic ice.

Source: Sam Kingsley/AFP/Getty Images

addressing hybrid threats in the Arctic, crafting legislative measures to increase societal resilience,⁹⁰ and improving civil preparedness and civil-military coordination.

THE RULES-BASED ORDER

Given the increasing activity in and militarization of the Arctic, the absence of a forum for discussing security issues in the region is no longer an acceptable risk. The United States should begin high-level discussions with its Nordic friends to identify what kind of trust-building mechanisms, public forums, or track-two process could be created (or reactivated) to allow the reopening of military-to-military conversations with Russia in the Arctic. In the interim, the United States can lean on Norway and Finland's direct lines of communication with Russia to mitigate the possibility of accidents, miscalculation, or inadvertent escalation in the region. It is equally important that all three countries express support for international norms and law, particularly with respect to maritime law and freedom of navigation in the Arctic. They should also better coordinate their responses in the face of potential violations (which may result, for example, from Russia's dubious interpretations of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea with respect to the Northern Sea Route). Finland, given its nonaligned status and focus on mediation, may be perceived as an honest broker in such difficult conversations.⁹¹

On China, Finland can try to shape EU policies on managing Chinese presence in Europe and the Arctic in a way that is aligned with the United States, Norway, and NATO. Norway can play a similar role in NATO, joining U.S. efforts to create consensus on regional investments, policies, and

procedures that support a balanced approach in the Arctic. Norway's nonpermanent seat on the UN Security Council in 2021-2022 offers an additional opportunity to strengthen cooperation and adherence to international law in the High North. Finland and Norway's relatively better relations with Russia could again be useful here.⁹²

EMERGING TECHNOLOGY

Managing the opportunities and challenges associated with Emerging and Disruptive Technologies (EDTs) features prominently in all three countries' defense strategies and is an increasing priority for the European Union and NATO. Efforts include aligning regulations, setting standards for use of EDTs in military operations, and limiting adversary access to sensitive technologies. Here again, Finland and Norway, through their respective memberships in the European Union and NATO and partnerships at the subregional level, can ensure coherence among these efforts. NATO is also considering an arms control agenda for EDTs with military applications to which both countries could lend valuable expertise. Longer term, collaboration on innovation—including joint procurements⁹³—is needed for the United States and Europe to maintain dominance.

The U.S. Partnership for Defense, established in September 2020 under the DOD's Joint Artificial Intelligence Center (JAIC), offers another framework for cooperation on EDTs. It consists of 12 countries (including Norway and Finland) that have all invested and demonstrated ability in AI. The group is focused on joint problem solving and setting the stage for strategic cooperation, for example, by developing ethical principles on AI.⁹⁴ In this context, Finland could share its expertise on AI education and Norway its expertise in developing "digitally competent soldiers."⁹⁵ Both countries are well equipped to advise the JAIC as it develops AI tools for information and influence operations. Longer-term ambitions for the group include joint research on and codevelopment of AI services.

A final emerging technology domain ripe for cooperation is cyber. Finland, which is repeatedly deemed the most resilient nation to cyberattacks,⁹⁶ could share best practices in terms of technical solutions and educating individuals and businesses on cyber hygiene. Finland is also at the forefront in establishing a legal architecture for cyberspace, including clear rules on attribution. For its part, Norway leads on cyber resilience at sea, having opened a maritime cyber resilience center (Norma Cyber) in November 2020 to minimize cyber risks to the shipping industry. Such expertise could be transferred

Figure 3: Opportunities for Cooperation

<p>01 AREA OF CONVERGENCE</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Security and Defense</p>	<p>01 AREA OF CONVERGENCE</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Rules-Based Order</p>	<p>01 AREA OF CONVERGENCE</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Emerging and Disruptive Technologies</p>
<p>02 COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE</p> <p>↓</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proximity • Land presence • Self-defense capacity • Cold-weather capabilities • Regional security arrangements 	<p>02 COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE</p> <p>↓</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cooperative relations with Russia • Non-aligned status (Finland only) 	<p>02 COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGE</p> <p>↓</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AI education and cyber resilience (Finland) • Legal architecture for cyberspace (Finland) • “Digitally competent soldiers” and cyber resilience at sea (Norway)
<p>03 OPPORTUNITIES FOR COOPERATION</p> <p>↓</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition of strategic capabilities • U.S. presence in region • Increase reliance on allied and partner capabilities 	<p>03 OPPORTUNITIES FOR COOPERATION</p> <p>↓</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to violations of international law • Deconfliction and trust-building with Russia 	<p>03 OPPORTUNITIES FOR COOPERATION</p> <p>↓</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exchange best practices, expertise, and personnel • Aligning regulations • Innovation and joint procurements • Develop ethical principles

Source: Based on author’s own analysis compiled through multiple sources. Please reference the endnote section for complete citations.

through NATO’s Cyber Center of Excellence in Estonia or bilateral personnel exchanges among National Security Agencies and cyber commands.

FROM STRATEGY TO IMPLEMENTATION

The inclusion of “strengthening traditional Alliances and attracting new partners” as one of three lines of effort in the 2018 NDS is a testament to the role allies and partners play in complementing and amplifying U.S. power and maintaining an edge over adversaries. Notably, the NDS does not restrict this deeper cooperation to treaty allies, thus holding the door open for more targeted cooperation with partners as well. Yet fully realizing this potential requires deliberate thinking on the areas of strategy convergence with individual allies and partners and the comparative advantages each brings.

In many ways, Finland and Norway are ideal countries with which to begin implementation of this line of effort. Both are politically willing, militarily capable, and making real investments in their national defense while contributing to collective security through international, regional, and subregional organizations. The focus of their national defense strategies—namely ensuring security and defense in Europe, protecting the rules-based order, and preparing for the challenges and opportunities presented by emerging technologies—align with many U.S. priorities. More importantly, each has comparative advantages in areas

where the United States is lagging (such as robust Arctic forces, capabilities, and infrastructure), an understanding of how to compete across the spectrum of conflict, and success in building resilience through a whole-of-society approach.

While this brief examines Finland and Norway, its approach can serve as a template for increasing the breadth and



(L-R) Norway’s Prime Minister Erna Solberg, Iceland’s Prime Minister Sigurdur Ingi Johannsson, Finland’s President Sauli Niinisto, Denmark’s Prime Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen and U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry take their seats during a luncheon at the U.S. Department of State.

Source: Brendan Smialowski/AFP/Getty Images

depth of cooperation with other allies and partners. Given the multiple demands on our security and defense assets, not to mention the many important, non-defense policy goals that demand funding, smartly sharing resources and responsibility with allies and partners in areas of mutual interest is not only a practical necessity, but it is also the most important comparative U.S. advantage relative to our global rivals. It is the means by which we can keep one another safe, preserve peace and stability in vulnerable regions such as the Arctic, and set fair and ethical rules for the technological challenges of the future. ■

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