



COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

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Hearing Statement of Transportation & Maritime Security Subcommittee Ranking Member LaMonica McIver (D-NJ)

Arctic Security in an Era of Global Competition: Safeguarding U.S. Interests in Frigid Waters

March 26, 2026

The Arctic is no longer a remote or frozen frontier. It is rapidly emerging as a central arena of geopolitical competition, economic activity, and national security risk. As sea ice recedes and access to the region increases, so too does the urgency for the United States to define and defend its role in the Arctic. Russia has significantly expanded its military footprint, and China is actively attempting to position itself as a global Arctic stakeholder.

The reality is simple: the Arctic is becoming more contested, more accessible, and more consequential to our national security. Unfortunately, at the very moment when strategic focus and coordination are most needed, the United States is falling behind. We are operating with limited icebreaking capacity, underdeveloped infrastructure, and significant gaps in domain awareness. The Coast Guard, which serves as the primary Federal presence in the Arctic, continues to face workforce strain, aging assets, and increasing mission demands. This is not sustainable. We cannot expect the Coast Guard to carry out complex and expanding missions in one of the most challenging environments on Earth without the tools, personnel, and resources necessary to do so. But capability gaps are only part of the problem.

Our strength in the Arctic has always depended not just on presence, but on partnership. Cooperation with allies like Canada and our broader Arctic partners is essential to maintaining a stable and secure region. Yet recent actions by President Trump and his administration have placed unnecessary strain on those relationships at a time when unity is critical. President Trump has threatened to invade Greenland, an insane proposition that has angered and bewildered our NATO allies.

And Trump has launched a reckless, illegal war in Iran without attempting to build support among NATO allies—only to then call upon those allies to place their service members in harm's way to assist the U.S. These actions have increased terrorist threats to the homeland and our allies, generated a growing energy crisis, and emboldened our adversaries around the globe—including in the Arctic. When we undermine trust with our closest partners, we do not strengthen our position. We weaken it.

Let me be clear: the United States cannot lead in the Arctic alone. And we cannot afford to create conditions where our allies question our reliability and trustworthiness. When we fail to lead with clarity, purpose, and credibility, we risk ceding influence in a region that is increasingly vital to our national security and economic future. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today on how we can close these gaps, strengthen our partnerships, and ensure that the United States is prepared to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing Arctic.

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