



# COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY

Ranking Member Bennie G. Thompson

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Hearing Statement of Transportation & Maritime Security Subcommittee Ranking Member Shri Thanedar (D-MI)**

### ***Strategic Competition in the Arctic***

**July 18, 2023**

With a dramatically changing climate and growing aggression from other nations, the Arctic has never been more central to America's national security. Temperatures in the Arctic are rising at three times the global average. Ice levels have begun to recede drastically, creating both environmental catastrophe and conflict over trade routes, natural resources, fishing rights, and global power. I am eager to learn more about how the melting ice in the Arctic will affect our national security, as well as global economics and competition. The region also provides tremendous opportunity for cooperation, from scientific discovery to international trade.

The Arctic is home to almost four million people, including enduring indigenous populations, whose continued safety, sovereignty, cultures, and livelihoods must be protected. The U.S. Coast Guard plays an essential role in safeguarding a rules-based order in the Far North. Investing in a resilient Arctic community, through disaster relief, scientific mission support, search and rescue, law enforcement, and community relations, the Coast Guard bridges the gap between the United States's military presence and our humanitarian efforts.

Unfortunately, the Coast Guard's icebreaking capabilities are outmatched by our enemies, and rising threats from China and Russia pose a serious risk to American prosperity and security. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today on how our nation can invest in the infrastructure and capabilities needed to maintain a powerful presence in the harsh conditions of the Arctic.

The Arctic does not belong to one nation, and it is essential that the United States support robust international organizations to foster cooperation in the region. This work has been hampered by non-Arctic nations, like China, seeking to profit from illegal fishing and other harmful activities, as well as Russian aggression against Ukraine, that has shattered the fragile trust needed to bring diverse nations together on issues in the Far North.

I look forward to learning more today about the mechanisms for cooperation in the Arctic, including international organizations, and how this has been hampered by the growing threats we face. I am glad to see the Committee continuing our work on this subject, and it is essential that Congress continues to invest in the Coast Guard's capabilities in the Arctic, including through robust funding for new Polar Security Cutters.

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