



2023 SYMPOSIUM REPORT

JUNE 27 – 28



CENTER ON
IRREGULAR WARFARE
AND ARMED GROUPS



NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
FOUNDATION

EXPLORING OUR MARITIME STRATEGIES

Baltic-Black Sea | Arctic | Indo-Pacific |
Policy Recommendations For Our Future

The Naval War College’s Center on Irregular Warfare & Armed Groups (CIWAG) co-sponsored a maritime symposium in late June with the Naval War College Foundation. This two-day event was focused on global maritime challenges and attendant strategies in particular seas worldwide. One goal of the symposium was to discuss specific policy recommendations for facing these daunting threats and challenges. Attendees included accomplished scholars, practitioners, and maritime analysts from the Center for Naval Analysis, National War College, Center for Maritime Strategy, Yokosuka Council on Asia Pacific Studies, Ted Stevens Center on Arctic Studies, the new Irregular Warfare Center (IWC). In addition, a number of both current and former senior military officers attended from U.S. Northern Command, U.S. Naval Special Warfare, and the U.S. Coast Guard, and a former CNO of the Norwegian Navy/Coast Guard.

Introduction & Setting the Stage



COL (R) David Brown
CIWAG Director, U.S. Naval War College

RADM Peter Garvin
58th President of U.S. Naval War College

George Lang
Chief Executive Officer, NWC Foundation



Geoffrey Till, *John B. Hattendorf Center for Maritime Historical Research, U.S. Naval War College*

Curtis Bell, *Course Director, Maritime Security & Governance Staff Course, U.S. Naval War College*

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Keynote Speakers

Timothy Szymanski, VADM USN (Ret), *former Deputy Commander USSOCOM*

VADM Szymanski served as deputy commander of United States Special Operations Command (USSOCM), and is the former commander of U.S. Naval Special Warfare Command. He also served on the Joint Staff, in the J3 directorate for Special Operations, as GWOT branch chief, and as chief of staff of the Pakistan-Afghanistan Coordination Cell.



CAPT Dave Markle, *Deputy Commander Naval Special Warfare*

CAPT Markle served as the Commanding Officer of SEAL Team TEN. His staff assignments have included Naval Special Warfare Unit FOUR, JSOC, Naval Special Warfare Development Group and OPNAV. He earned a Master's in Public Policy from the Harvard Kennedy School.



Interviews

Chris Burns, Brig Gen USA (Ret), *Senior Advisor, Irregular Warfare Center*

BG Burns' 36 years of service culminated as Commander, Special Operations Command North. BG Burns served in numerous assignments within special operations throughout his career including numerous theater special operations commands, Joint Special Operations Task Force, U.S. Special Operations Command, and the Joint Staff.



Matthew Bell, USCG RADM (Ret), *Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies*

RADM Bell joined the Ted Stevens Center as Dean in April 2022. He is responsible for the executive education program designed to promote a shared approach to regional security. His 36-year Coast Guard career culminated as Commander, 17th Coast Guard District where he was responsible for operations throughout Alaska, the North Pacific, Bering Sea, and the Arctic Ocean.



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PANEL I: *Black Sea, Baltic, Northern Atlantic*



**Dmitry
Gorenburg**



**Lars
Saunes**



**Peter
Zwack**



**Liz
Wishnick**

- Speakers included former Norwegian CNO, CNA analysts, former Senior US RU attaché.
- Sino-Russian Maritime Partnership Joint Statement (Mar 2023)
- Joint patrols and exercises
- RU leverage against Black Sea grain trade
- Underseas gas pipelines and cables vulnerable to RU sabotage

Panel I focused on the specific challenge of Russian activities in northern maritime regions. Overall orientation on geography and Russian subversion in the Black Sea and Baltic areas was discussed along with the added dimensions of Chinese-Russian cooperation. Discussion of war-time operations in the Black Sea emphasized the vital nature of maritime logistics. Regardless of China and Russia joint statements, both seem to be seeking advantages that reflect distinct priorities. In the Baltic Sea, increased strategic integration is required due to subversive Russian maritime activities. Russian trawlers have crossed fiber cables over 140 times, and Norway is increasingly seeking partnership with naval patrolling from Britain, Germany and France due to suspected sabotage to Nord Stream pipelines. Coast Guards increasingly have a strategic role in addition to traditionally safeguarding coastal state maritime boundaries. As a result, constabulary activities are necessarily increasing.



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PANEL II: *Arctic*



**Lawson
Brigham**



**Dmitry
Gorenburg**



**Walter
Berbrick**



**Matthew
Bell**



**David
Auerswald**

- Speakers included former senior USCG officers, CNA analyst, and experts from the Naval and National War Colleges.
- Climate change will continue to drive further maritime competition.
- RU has a major stake in these seas due to its extended coastal access.
- The US is not fully prepared to operate and compete in these waters.
- RU activity in the Arctic differs from their approach in other contested regions.

Panel II focused on the increasing interest in the Arctic as a zone of both cooperation and conflict. Sea ice reduction has increased ability to traverse these waters seasonally, and the continued discovery of natural gas and oil drives further competition. Although navigable waterways have increased, several of the straits are still below 20 meters draft in some areas. Russia is modernizing their arctic infrastructure, particularly in military support areas, including air fields, radars, and monitoring systems, and have also increased military exercises. The Ukraine war has necessarily reduced these activities. Enlargement of NATO may threaten Russia, but the west should avoid isolating Russia entirely, ideally identifying pathways to avoid conflict and miscalculation. The need for further operational interoperability between USN and USCG was highlighted, as well as more work on roles for allied Arctic partners. In addition, discussion revolved around alternative futures involving RU, CH, and Climate Change as primary pivot points.



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PANEL III: *Indo-Pacific*



**Jim
Holmes**



**Scott
Edwards**



**Andrew
Park**

- Speakers included a Naval War College professor, and analysts from Yokosuka Council on Asia Pacific, and Center for Maritime Security.
- IUU Fishing and environmental exploitation continues to be major issues in these seas.
- Piracy and various trafficking/smuggling remain key security issues.
- Continued lack of regional maritime security architecture

The 3rd panel covered various difficulties currently facing the U.S. and Allies in the Indo-Pacific maritime seas. Of particular concern is the overall lack, not only of cooperative regional security architecture, but of overall governance. Competing claims for economic zones and resources hinders solving this. China continues influence campaigns

to define its own view of presence and “maritime territory,” and continues to militarize maritime features and artificial islands. To date, it has 45 such locations, thereby increasing their surveillance capabilities, and improving military capable airfields. Some discussion revolved around the need and difficulty of building security partnerships while showing resolve against these trends. Maritime presence throughout these vast seas continues to be a major detriment to strategic progress. In addition, the linkages between maritime states and violent non-state actors contribute to a more complex threat environment, as well as undermine the international rules-based order at sea.



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PANEL IV: *Policy Implications*



**David
Stone**



**John
Driscoll**



**Jada
Fraser**



**Curtis
Bell**

- Speakers included two Naval War College professors, Chief of USCG Cutter Forces, and the editor of Georgetown Journal of Asian Affairs.
- Presence is important in many of these seas but also difficult.
- Need for Allies continues to be of primary importance.
- Education and engagement with international naval offices critical.

Panel IV and the follow-on session served as a lens focused on actual policy concerns and directions that the U.S. should enact, given the tremendous breath of challenges and threats on the seas and oceans of the world. It was agreed that only regional strategic approaches could fully address the contextual dimensions of overall problem sets. This might include creating or restructuring defense architectures,

reinforcing and building maritime partnerships in both capability and intelligence, strengthening areas of international law, conducting joint activities and exercises, sponsoring joint maritime educational endeavors, and collaboration on a wide variety of mutual concerns. Additionally, closer relationships that lean on partnered navies and coast guards is vital, and new smaller or mini-alignments on specific mutual projects and concerns, such as recent AUKUS and QUAD efforts, should be encouraged.

“.. cooperating on shared maritime security challenges with allies and partners through mini-lateral groupings is the most resource-effective approach to pursuing both U.S. and regional security interest in a secure, stable, and prosperous Indo-Pacific.”

– Jada Fraser



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See full biographies from our 2023 Maritime Symposium program at:

<https://usnwc.edu/News-and-Events/Events/Center-on-Irregular-Warfare-and-Armed-Groups-2023-Maritime-Symposium>



David A. Brown, Director of the Center on Irregular Warfare & Armed Groups (CIWAG)



Geoffrey Till, John B. Hattendorf Center for Maritime Historical Research, U.S. Naval War College



Curtis Bell, Director of the Maritime Security and Governance Staff Course, U.S. Naval War College



Timothy Szymanski, VADM USN (Ret), former Deputy Commander USSOCOM



Lars Saunes, RADM (Ret), former Chief of Royal Norwegian Navy



RDML Sean Regan, Deputy Director J3, NORTHCOM



Matthew Bell, RADM USCG (Ret), Ted Stevens Center, Arctic Studies



CAPT Dave Markle, Deputy Commander of U.S. Naval Special Warfare Command



Chris Burns, Brig. Gen. USA (Ret), Senior Advisor, Irregular Warfare Center



Peter Zwack, Brig. Gen. USA (Ret), former Attache to Russian Federation



CAPT John Driscoll, USCG, Chief, Office of Cutter Forces



David Auerswald, Professor, National War College



Walter Berbrick, Former Professor, U.S. Naval War College



Lawson W. Brigham, Global Fellow, Wilson Center Polar Institute



Scott Edwards, Research Fellow, Yokosuka Council on Asia Pacific Studies



Jada Fraser, Editor-in-Chief, Georgetown Journal of Asian Affairs



Jim Holmes, Professor, U.S. Naval War College



Dmitry Gorenburg, Senior Research Scientist, CNA



Douglas Jackson, Senior Analyst, Project Director, CNA



Andrew Park, Senior Analyst, Center for Maritime Strategy



David Stone, Professor, U.S. Naval War College



Liz Wishnick, Chinese Foreign Policy & Arctic Strategy, CNA



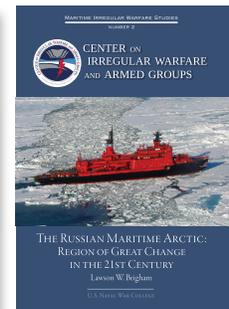
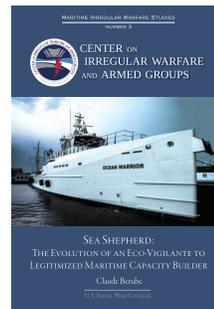
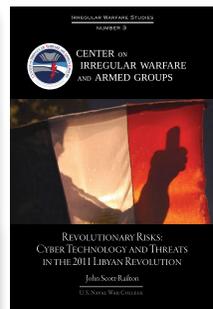
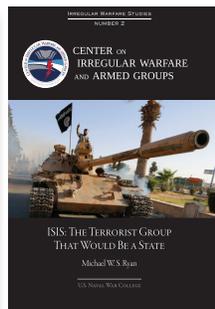
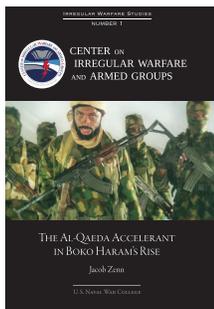
CENTER ON IRREGULAR WARFARE AND ARMED GROUPS

The Center on Irregular Warfare & Armed Groups (CIWAG) at the U.S. Naval War College ensures that education and research on irregular warfare and armed groups remains timely and easily accessible to military officers and their interagency counterparts who devise strategies for dealing with armed groups around the world.

“Bringing Operators and Academics Together”

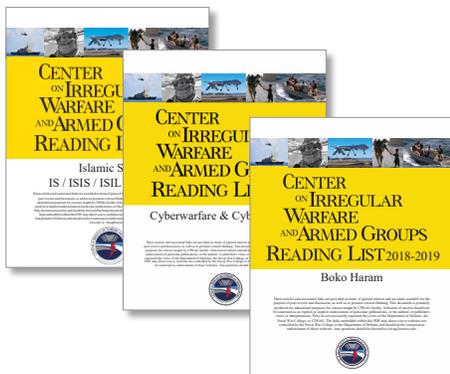
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MIWS: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/marine-warfare-studies/>



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