

**Title:** Uniting NATO in the Russia-Ukraine Crisis—and beyond.

**Speaker:** The Honorable Kenneth J. Braithwaite II, 77th Secretary of the Navy

**Date:** 23 February 2022

**Location:** Pringle Auditorium

**Time:** 1200-1315

Hosted by Arctic Studies Group

**POC:** Prof. Walter Berbrick

### **Synopsis**

In recent weeks, Russia has stepped up planning for potential military action in Ukraine, including positioning tens of thousands of combat forces near the Ukrainian border. Despite uncertainty about intentions and timing, NATO must be prepared to deter and impose severe costs for further Russian aggression in Ukraine. Secretary Braithwaite will discuss the consequences and strategic risks of further aggression against Ukraine, and the unique strengths that the alliance brings to bear in this crisis. Chief among these strengths is the presence of ready and flexible maritime forces working together to deter and defend its Allies from any possible threats at sea or from the sea.

### **Bio:**

The Honorable Kenneth J. Braithwaite II served as the 77th Secretary of the Navy. He previously served as the 31st U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Norway. Secretary Braithwaite is the first former U.S. Navy flag officer to serve as Secretary of the Navy.

Secretary Braithwaite graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1984 with a bachelor's degree in naval engineering and political science. In 1995, he earned a master's degree in government administration, graduating with honors from the University of Pennsylvania, Fels School of Government. Secretary Braithwaite was designated as a naval aviator in April 1986. His first operational assignment was to Patrol Squadron (VP) 17, NAS Barbers Point, Hawaii, from where he flew anti-submarine missions tracking adversary submarines throughout the Western Pacific and Indian Ocean regions. In April 1988, Secretary Braithwaite designated as a public affairs officer, with his initial tour aboard the aircraft carrier USS America (CV-66). Additional duty assignments included Commander, Carrier Group 2 and Commander, Striking Force Sixth Fleet. He made both a North Atlantic Treaty Organization Force (NATO) deployment to the North Atlantic, operating above the Arctic Circle, and a Mediterranean and Indian Ocean cruise, during which the battle group responded to tensions in the Persian Gulf. In 1990, he was assigned to the staff of Commander, Naval Base Philadelphia as chief of public affairs. The Secretary left active duty in 1993, continuing his service in the Navy Reserve, where he was assigned to numerous commands from Boston to Norfolk. In October 2001, Secretary Braithwaite assumed command of Navy Reserve Fleet Combat Camera Atlantic at NAS Willow Grove, Pennsylvania. During this tour, the command was tasked with providing support to the Joint Task Force Commander, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. In March 2003, Secretary Braithwaite deployed for Operation Iraqi Freedom in support of naval operations to capture the port of Umm Qasr. Following this tour, he served as commanding officer of the Navy Office of Information East.

Secretary Braithwaite served as commander of Joint Public Affairs Support Element–Reserve from October 2004 to October 2007. While in command, and following the devastating earthquake in Pakistan

in 2005, he deployed to Pakistan as part of the Joint Task Force for Disaster Assistance, serving as the director of strategic communication working for both the Joint Task Force Commander and the U.S. ambassador in Islamabad. In his final Navy assignment, the Secretary served as the Vice Chief of Information. In this capacity, he was the Navy Reserve liaison and advisor to the Chief of Information, responsible for formulating strategic communication counsel to the leadership of the Department of the Navy. Concurrently, he served as the head of the Navy Reserve public affairs program and as an adjunct advisor to Commander, Navy Reserve Force.

Secretary Braithwaite's civilian career has included executive leadership roles in the health care and petroleum industries. He also served as a senior advisor to U.S. Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA). During his time in office, Secretary Braithwaite led the Navy and Marine Corps during the COVID-19 pandemic. Under his leadership, the Navy and Marine Corps partnered with the United States Coast Guard to produce the Tri-Service Maritime Strategy, "Advantage at Sea." He also expanded the Navy Department's preparation for the emerging Arctic theater and reorganized the Department's force structure with the establishment of an Atlantic and First Fleet.

Secretary Braithwaite also worked to reinvigorate the Department of the Navy's emphasis on core values of Honor, Courage and Commitment. He strengthened connections between the past and the future through his support of a new National Museum of the United States Navy and through historic ship name designations such as the in-development Constellation-class frigates, whose namesakes were among for the original six frigates that established the United States as a maritime force in 1794.

The Secretary's decorations include the Legion of Merit, Defense Meritorious Service Medal (with oak leaf cluster), Meritorious Service Medal, Navy Commendation Medal (five awards), one with Combat "V", Navy Achievement Medal, Combat Action Ribbon and numerous campaign and service medals.