

The United States has been an Arctic nation with important interests in the region and **recognizes the need of international collaboration** along with an integrated approach to sustain healthy ecosystems, meet national security needs, responsibly manage resources, support scientific research, account for indigenous communities, protect the environment and strengthen international cooperation.

The U.S. policy's international aims are **to promote participation in the Arctic Council**, develop agreements with other Arctic countries, support the ratification of the *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea* (UNCLOS) and continue to cooperate with other countries on Arctic issues through the United Nations and its specialized agencies.

The U.S. would like to thank *Forum for 21st Century* for initiating the discussion and organizing the conference on this issue. After a careful analysis of the second draft let us declare our position and include our suggestions.

STRATEGY

Through the National Strategy for the Arctic Region we express our priorities to meet the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. We will develop new ways of operating and innovative solutions to meet the reality of changing Arctic environment.

The strategy of the USA is built on three key points:

a) security interests – enable our aircraft and vessels to operate, consistent with the international law, support scientific and safe commercial operation to national defense

b) responsible stewardship – protect and conserve the environment, establish an integrated Arctic management framework, increase understanding of the Arctic

c) international cooperation – bilateral and multilateral relationships including the Arctic Council, promote collective interests and shared Arctic state prosperity, enhance regional security

POLITICAL DIVISION

- The U.S. **is the only Arctic state that is not party to the UNCLOS**. Upon ratification of the Convention a country has a ten-year period to make claims to an extended continental shelf which gives it exclusive rights to resources on or below the seabed of the extended shelf area.

- **We have yet to ratify the UNCLOS**. Only by joining the Convention we can maximize legal certainty and best secure international recognition of our sovereign rights with respect to the U.S. extended continental shelf in the Arctic and elsewhere, which may hold vast gas, oil and other resources.

- While we are not currently a party to the Convention, **we will continue to observe and support principles of international law** reflected in the Convention.

SECURITY DIMENSION

- The highest priority of the U.S. is **to protect the American people, the sovereign territory and rights, interests and national resources**. We will promote security, safety and stability in the region through a combination of bilateral, multilateral cooperation and independent action. There is a requirement for military commands to monitor the region and develop a strategy for avoiding confrontations and assuring friendly cooperation.

- We will work to **maintain and preserve the region as an area free of conflict**, acting in concert with allies, partners and other interested partners.

- We will establish military bases in the Arctic to increase our influence in the region. It is critical to develop a plan of action to ensure U.S. leadership in this evolving region to both anticipate challenges and offer transparent resolution to these challenges.

NATURAL RESOURCES

- The U.S. draws attention to the danger of uncoordinated development and pollution such as emissions of black carbon and other substances from fossil fuel combustion. **We will maintain our close relationship with Canada** in order to protect the Arctic natural resources.

- The climate change will play a significant role in shaping the future security environment. The Arctic states could enter into **joint development agreements** that would enable them to **mutually share the exclusive rights** as regards natural resources in the contested areas without abandoning their claims.

- The Arctic Council requires stronger environmental protection capability and might borrow some ideas from the more developed polar regime, the Antarctic Treaty System. The Treaty was championed by the U.S. during the Cold War and is widely considered to be one of the most successful treaty regimes ever established. On the other hand, the U.S. policy argues against those parts of the ATS which are restricting commercial and military activities in the Arctic region.

- With global problems increasingly affect both poles, it would seem to be a good strategy for the Arctic and the Antarctic to influence management and cooperation.

TRANSPORT

- The U.S. has an interest in preserving all of the rights, freedoms and uses of the airspace and sea recognized under international law. We will enable safe transit by sea, under sea, and air assets and necessary infrastructure. **Existing international law provides a set of**

rules governing the rights, freedom and uses of the world's oceans and airspace, including the Arctic. Within this framework, the U.S. shall develop waterways management regimes including traffic schemes, vessel tracking and ship routing in collaboration with other Arctic states. We will also encourage other nations to adhere to international principles. This strategic partnership will promote innovative, low-cost solutions that enhance the Arctic maritime transportation system and the safe, secure and free trade.

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

- The region holds sizable proved and potential oil and natural gas resources that will provide valuable supplies to meet our energy needs. **We are committed to working with stakeholders, industry and other Arctic states to explore the energy resource base, develop and implement best practices to enable the environmentally responsible production.**

- We agree with the establishment of the Arctic Research Centre for the Incessant Cooperation (ARCTIC) which shall monitor the sea, the impacts of the climate change and effects of natural resources management of the Arctic states.

PROTECTION OF INHABITANTS

- The U.S. supports coordination with native people living in the Arctic area. We have established the **tribal consultation policy** that emphasizes respect, trust and shared responsibility.

- **Protecting the unique environment is a central goal of U.S. policy.** We will endeavor to do no harm to the sensitive environment or to Alaska native communities and other indigenous populations that rely on Arctic resources. We will approach our interests in respecting the needs of indigenous communities.

CONCLUSION

- The Arctic is a unique and valuable place with changing environment. **We realize and promote the need of international cooperation.** We will work with other Arctic nations to develop complementary approaches to shared challenges and to coordinate regional and economic development. We invite the suggestion of *Forum for the 21st Century* to establish a legal agreement consisting of all frameworks listed in issues above.