

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2020

Memorandum on Safeguarding United States National Interests in the Arctic and Antarctic Regions

June 9, 2020

Memorandum for the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Commerce, the Secretary of Energy, the Secretary of Homeland Security, the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, and the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs

Subject: Safeguarding U.S. National Interests in the Arctic and Antarctic Regions

To help protect our national interests in the Arctic and Antarctic regions, and to retain a strong Arctic security presence alongside our allies and partners, the United States requires a ready, capable, and available fleet of polar security icebreakers that is operationally tested and fully deployable by Fiscal Year 2029. Accordingly, by the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, I hereby direct the following:

Section 1. Fleet Acquisition Program. The United States will develop and execute a polar security icebreaking fleet acquisition program that supports our national interests in the Arctic and Antarctic regions.

(a) The Secretary of Homeland Security, in coordination with the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Commerce, and the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), shall lead a review of requirements for a polar security icebreaking fleet acquisition program to acquire and employ a suitable fleet of polar security icebreakers, and associated assets and resources, capable of ensuring a persistent United States presence in the Arctic and Antarctic regions in support of national interests and in furtherance of the National Security Strategy and the National Defense Strategy, as appropriate. Separately, the review shall include the ability to provide a persistent United States presence in the Antarctic region, as appropriate, in accordance with the Antarctic Treaty System. The Secretary of Homeland Security and the Director of OMB, in executing this direction, shall ensure that the United States Coast Guard's (USCG) Offshore Patrol Cutter acquisition program is not adversely impacted.

(b) The Secretary of Homeland Security, acting through the Commandant of the Coast Guard, in coordination with the Secretary of Defense, acting through the Secretary of the Navy, and the Secretary of Energy, as appropriate, shall conduct a study of the comparative operational and fiscal benefits and risks of a polar security icebreaking fleet mix that consists of at least three heavy polar-class security cutters (PSC) that are appropriately outfitted to meet the objectives of this memorandum. This study shall be submitted to the President, through the Director of OMB and the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, within 60 days from the date of this memorandum and at a minimum shall include:

- (i) Use cases in the Arctic that span the full range of national and economic security missions (including the facilitation of resource exploration and exploitation and undersea cable laying and maintenance) that may be executed by a class of medium PSCs, as well as analysis of how these use cases differ with respect to the anticipated use of heavy PSCs for these same activities. These use cases shall identify the optimal number and type of polar security icebreakers for ensuring a persistent presence in both the Arctic and, as appropriate, the Antarctic regions;
- (ii) An assessment of expanded operational capabilities, with estimated associated costs, for both heavy and medium PSCs not yet contracted for, specifically including the maximum use of any such PSC with respect to its ability to support national security

objectives through the use of the following: unmanned aviation, surface, and undersea systems; space systems; sensors and other systems to achieve and maintain maritime domain awareness; command and control systems; secure communications and data transfer systems; and intelligence-collection systems. This assessment shall also evaluate defensive armament adequate to defend against threats by near-peer competitors and the potential for nuclear-powered propulsion;

(iii) Based on the determined fleet size and composition, an identification and assessment of at least two optimal United States basing locations and at least two international basing locations. The basing location assessment shall include the costs, benefits, risks, and challenges related to infrastructure, crewing, and logistics and maintenance support for PSCs at these locations. In addition, this assessment shall account for potential burden-sharing opportunities for basing with the Department of Defense and allies and partners, as appropriate; and

(iv) In anticipation of the USCGC POLAR STAR's operational degradation from Fiscal Years 2022–2029, an analysis to identify executable options, with associated costs, to bridge the gap of available vessels as early as Fiscal Year 2022 until the new PSCs required to meet the objectives of this memorandum are operational, including identifying executable, priced leasing options, both foreign and domestic. This analysis shall specifically include operational risk associated with using a leased vessel as compared to a purchased vessel to conduct specified missions set forth in this memorandum.

(c) In the interest of securing a fully capable polar security icebreaking fleet that is capable of providing a persistent presence in the Arctic and Antarctic regions at the lowest possible cost, the Secretary of State shall coordinate with the Secretary of Homeland Security in identifying viable polar security icebreaker leasing options, provided by partner nations, as a near- to mid-term (Fiscal Years 2022–2029) bridging strategy to mitigate future operational degradation of the USCGC POLAR STAR. Leasing options shall contemplate capabilities that allow for access to the Arctic and Antarctic regions to, as appropriate, conduct national and economic security missions, in addition to marine scientific research in the Arctic, and conduct research in Antarctica in accordance with the Antarctic Treaty System. Further, and in advance of any bid solicitation for future polar security icebreaker acquisitions, the Secretary of State shall coordinate with the Secretary of Homeland Security to identify partner nations with proven foreign shipbuilding capability and expertise in icebreaker construction.

(d) The Secretary of Defense shall coordinate with the Secretary of State and the Secretary of Homeland Security to continue to provide technical and programmatic support to the USCG integrated program office for the acquisition, outfitting, and operations of all classes of PSCs.

Sec. 2. General Provisions. (a) Nothing in this memorandum shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect:

(i) the authority granted by law to an executive department or agency, or the head thereof; or

(ii) the functions of the Director of OMB relating to budgetary, administrative, or legislative proposals.

(b) This memorandum shall be implemented consistent with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations.

(c) This memorandum is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

DONALD J. TRUMP

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