

Table 1: A Comparison of the Elements of U.S. Policy in the Arctic from Nixon to Biden¹

	Nixon/ Ford	Carter	Reagan/ Bush	Clinton	Bush	Obama	Trump	Biden
Sustainable Development	x	x	x	x	x	x	x ²	x
Environment	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
International Cooperation	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Achieve Better Outcomes in Multilateral Forums							x	
Russia and China as potential threats							x	x
Security	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Prevent Terrorism					x	x		
Preservation of Freedom of Navigation	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Interagency Arctic Policy Group /Interagency Arctic Research Policy Group	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Science	x	x	x	x	x	x	x ³	x
Joint Arctic/Antarctic Strategy Focus				x				
Involving Indigenous Peoples in decision-making				x	x	x	x ⁴	x
Climate Change					x	x		x

¹ All data is from the policy documents listed in the section titled “Timeline of U.S. Arctic Policy Using Documents” unless otherwise noted.

² The Trump Administration signed the Rovaniemi Joint Ministerial Statement of 2019 that committed to sustainable development. There are no mentions of sustainability in the various strategy documents that the administration has produced.

³ Signed the 2017 Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation but no mention of science in the strategy documents produced.

⁴ Mentioned in Coast Guard Arctic Strategic Outlook. Not mentioned in other documents.

Environmental Change/Reduced Ice							x ⁵	
No need for separate Arctic Treaty					x	x	x ⁶	x
Should accede to UNCLOS					x	x		x
Customary International Law				x			x ⁷	x
Icebreaker Procurement						x	x	x
Polar Security Cutter (new name for icebreaker)							x ⁸	x

⁵ Climate change is no longer mentioned as it was previously. Only a discussion of diminishing ice.

⁶ Given the Trump admin’s public comments on international organizations, treaties, and America First-- this author believes that it is reasonable to assume that this is still an element of U.S. policy.

⁷ Mentioned in the Navy Strategic Outlook for the Arctic.

⁸ The icebreaker has been rebranded as a Polar Security Cutter. The reasons for the rebranding have not been made public, but the branding does seem to fit the Trump administration's focus on security.