



# CONFERENCE BACKGROUND

## High North II/NATO II: Oslo and Brussels

June 16 - June 22, 2019

### Registration Now Open

#### Conference Focus

Since the beginning of the 2018 program year, the Defense Orientation Conference Association has periodically examined the meaning of the changing strategic environment of the Arctic and the High North for the United States and her allies. In March 2018, the High North I conference provided an opportunity to survey the critical military missions assigned to Alaska and their role in the defense of U.S. interests in North East Asia, the broader Indo-Asia-Pacific, as well as the Arctic. With regard to the Arctic, that conference examined the changing environment of the Arctic and its political, military, and economic implications for regional and global stability. During the broad agenda of the NATO I conference in July 2018, DOCA considered the role of the United Kingdom as a power in the High North and the dynamics for European and American security of a resurgent Russia, including briefings on the Russian challenge at Mons, NATO's military headquarters.

For this conference, DOCA will convene in Oslo and Brussels to concentrate on security in Northern Europe given the continued resurgence and nature of Russian activity, the emergence of “near-Arctic” nations, such as China, seeking to expand their presence and influence, and the strategic challenges emanating from the changing environment of the Arctic. The response of the United States to these developments over a brief period of time include a focused development of an Arctic strategy, the reestablishment in 2018 of the Second Fleet by the United States Navy and additional investment by the Department of Defense in antisubmarine warfare systems, and enhanced rotational presence for the Marine Corps in Norway. The United States was also a key participant in NATO’s second Trident Juncture exercise in 2018, the largest NATO military exercise in Norway since the 1980s.

In **Oslo**, the conference will consider:

- key elements in the bilateral U.S.-Norwegian relationship,
- Norway’s priorities for NATO, including perspective on the “two percent” defense spending goal,
- the importance of regional defense cooperation with the Nordic nations, including non-NATO Finland and Sweden,

- Norway's contributions to Allied defense through its industrial base,
- areas of competition and cooperation with Russia from Oslo's perspective,
- Norwegian perspectives on the implications of Brexit for Europe, and
- the political, military, and economic implications of the changing environment in the Arctic and the High North.

In **Brussels**, the conference will consider:

- key U.S. political and military objectives for the Alliance in the defense of Northern Europe and the North Atlantic,
- the strategic competition with Russia in the region and implications for NATO in the Nordic and Baltic regions,
- the implications of the changing environment of the Arctic and the emergence of new actors in the region for NATO,
- implementation of decisions taken at both the Warsaw Summit in 2014 and the 2018 NATO defense ministerial meetings, especially with regard to Joint Force Command - Norfolk and related U.S. force posture decisions, and
- NATO's perspective on the importance of the Marine Corps prepositioning program in Norway and allied exercises such as Trident Juncture 2018.

### Agenda

A detailed agenda for the conference is in coordination and will be available prior to the conference. The conference will begin Sunday evening, June 16th, and is expected to conclude by late afternoon on Friday, June 21st. Listed below are some of the principal engagements for the conference agenda. Members are advised that the agenda may change due to operational considerations.

**Sunday, June 16th (Oslo)** - Arrivals in Oslo. The conference will kickoff with the traditional "icebreaker" reception for all attendees on Sunday evening, June 16th, at 6:30pm.

**Monday, June 17th - Wednesday, June 19th (Oslo)** - DOCA is coordinating engagements with Ambassador Kenneth Braithwaite and the U.S. Embassy country team, senior officials of the Norwegian Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, members of the Norwegian Stortinget (parliament), the American Chamber of Commerce Norway, Norwegian defense industry, and independent experts.

**Thursday, June 20th (Oslo - Brussels)** - Engagement in the morning followed by travel to Brussels. Recommended flight - SAS 4745 direct from Oslo (OSL) to Brussels (BRU) departing at 4:25pm. Members taking this flight may take advantage of group transportation by bus to OSL and to the

Hilton Brussels Grand Place. This flight is not part of the registration fee and must be reserved by members directly. Please consult the registration form for additional information.

**Friday, June 21st (Brussels)** - DOCA is coordinating with the NATO secretariat and the United States Military Representative, Lieutenant General John K. Love, USMC, for engagements with senior Allied and American officials at NATO Headquarters.

**Saturday, June 22nd (Brussels)** - Departures from Brussels.

### **Conference Hotels**

The **Thon Hotel Bristol Oslo** will serve as the headquarters hotel for the conference in Oslo. The **Hilton Brussels Grand Place** will serve as the headquarters hotel for the conference in Brussels. Please note that all hotel reservations must be made by rooming list through DOCA. Consult the registration form for additional information.

### **Registration**

Please complete and send the enclosed registration form to DOCA before Wednesday, May 15th. After May 15th, please contact Kathy Carter to ensure the availability of hotel rooms and conference rates.

Members interested in attending the conference are encouraged to register as early as practicable.

**Important program announcements and updates will be provided via email when available.**