

LETTER OF INTENT ON MAINTAINING THE ARCTIC CHALLENGE  
EXERCISE AT HIGH QUALITY FLAG LEVEL  
AMONG  
THE DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND  
THE MINISTRIES OF DEFENCE OF DENMARK, FINLAND, NORWAY, AND SWEDEN

- References:
- A. Letter of Intent on USA participation in ACE development towards flag level exercise among air chiefs of Denmark, Finland and Norway, and the Swedish Armed Forces, signed October 16, 2017
  - B. ACE's Final Exercise Report Arctic Challenge Exercise 2019 (ACE 19), dated September 10, 2019

1. Introduction:

This Letter of Intent (LoI) between the Department of the Air Force of the United States of America and the Ministries of Defence of Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden, hereinafter referred to as the Participants, aims at maintaining the Arctic Challenge Exercise (ACE) at high quality, flag level.

In 2017, the Nordic air chiefs and the chief for the U.S. Air Forces in Europe signed an LoI aiming to develop ACE into a flag level exercise, while emphasizing the need for U.S. Air Force participation in order to attain this goal.

ACE 19 met the criteria for a Flag Level Exercise in accordance with the parameters set up in the NORDEF CO FINAL STUDY REPORT for "High intensive Air Combat Flag Exercise" (30 June 2015), and became Europe's largest tactical air exercise in 2019.

In March 2020, the Nordic ministers of defence reached an agreement to enhance Nordic-Transatlantic relations by, among other initiatives, working to secure participation and maintain flag level engagement in future Arctic Challenge Exercises with the U.S. Air Force.

2. Intent:

The Nordic nations and the United States share an interest in upholding security and stability in the Nordic and Baltic Sea regions, the North Atlantic Ocean, and the Arctic. All parties share a mutual interest in ensuring this region's security.

This LoI demonstrates the commitment of the Participants to the exercise and their intent to maintain ACE as a flag level, tactical air exercise. This LoI does not supersede the Oct 2017 LOI (Ref A).

3. Way Forward:

The Participants are to strive for mutual involvement in the planning, execution, and evaluation of the exercise to ensure its continued quality and relevance.

This LoI is not a legally binding commitment between the Participants under international or national law.

This LoI will be revisited in 2026 to ensure continued relevance with regard to its scope and the Participants' capabilities.

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EXERCISE (ACE) AT HIGH QUALITY FLAG LEVEL

**FOR THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE OF THE KINGDOM OF DENMARK**

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The Honorable Trine Bramsen  
Minister of Defence

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Date

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Location

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**FOR THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE OF THE REPUBLIC OF FINLAND**

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The Honorable Antti Kaikkonen  
Minister of Defence

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Date

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Location

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**FOR THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE OF THE KINGDOM OF NORWAY**

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The Honorable Frank Bakke Jensen  
Minister of Defence

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Date

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Location

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**FOR THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE OF THE KINGDOM OF SWEDEN**

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The Honorable Peter Hultqvist  
Minister of Defence

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Date

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Location

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EXERCISE (ACE) AT HIGH QUALITY FLAG LEVEL

**FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE OF THE UNITED STATES OF  
AMERICA**

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The Honorable John P. Roth  
Acting Secretary of the Air Force

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Date

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Location