

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

January 25, 2001
1:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Gene Therriault, Chair
Senator Randy Phillips, Vice Chair
Senator Drue Pearce
Senator Bettye Davis

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Rick Halford

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 3
Relating to the deployment of F-22 Raptor aircraft at Elmendorf Air Force Base.

MOVED SJR 3 OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

SJR 3 - No previous action recorded

WITNESS REGISTER

Senator Loren Lemam
State Capitol Room 115
Juneau, AK 99801

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of the bill

Lt. Col. Burton Wiggins
Chief of F-22 Weapons System Requirements
Langley Air Force Base (AFB), VA

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions about F-22

Lt. Col. Larry Jones
Chief of Weapons System Requirements
Elmendorf AFB, AK

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions about F-22

John Joeright
Intern with Senator Loren Lemam

State Capitol, Room 115
Juneau, AK 99801

POSITION STATEMENT: Explained the provisions of SJR 3

Mark Farmer
Military Freelance Reporter/Analyst
P.O. Box 22208
Juneau, AK 99802

POSITION STATEMENT: Strongly supported SJR 3

ACTION NARRATIVE

TAPE 01-01, SIDE A
Number 001

CHAIRMAN GENE THERRIAULT called the Senate State Affairs Committee meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. He announced that Senate Joint Resolution 5 had been waived from committee for immediate floor action that morning so SJR 3 was the only item on the posted agenda. Present were Senators Phillips, Davis, and Chairman Therriault.
#SJR 3

SJR 3-F-22 RAPTOR AIRCRAFT AT ELMENDORF AFB

CHAIRMAN THERRIAULT said that Senator Loren Lemman, the bill sponsor, was present and ready to testify and that there were two people ready to testify and answer technical questions via teleconference. Next he asked Senator Lemman to come forward and introduce the committee to the idea encapsulated by the resolution.

SENATOR LEMMAN said that Elmendorf Air Force Base is in his senatorial district. He has become interested in this topic in the 9-years that he has represented Elmendorf. He was also pleased to say that his son is now in the Air Force Academy and dreamed of flying for the Air Force one day. Having the opportunity to talk with him about Air Force aircraft had piqued his interest. He went on to say that the resolution supports the placement of F-22 aircraft at Elmendorf. The Air Force is currently developing and proving the F-22 as replacement aircraft for aging F-15 aircraft and it is possible that Elmendorf could become the home for the F-22 and perhaps the next wave. He then asked John Joeright, intern from UAS, to come to the witness table with him. He explained that the intern program allows students to interact with legislators and the opportunity to learn the legislative process first hand.

SENATOR LEMMAN said that Lt. Colonel Burton Wiggins and Lt. Colonel

Larry Jones were online to answer questions after Mr. Joeright presented the opening statement.

SENATOR PEARCE arrived at the meeting.

JOHN JOERIGHT testified that SJR 3 encourages the United States Air Force to select Elmendorf Air Force Base for deployment of the F-22 Raptor. It would complement defense capabilities and significantly boost Alaska's economy. During the construction phase, the Raptor would inject between \$50 million and \$300 million into the Alaska economy and create about 846 jobs. The Raptor would replace aging F-15, Eagle Air Superiority Fighters and ensure U.S. air dominance for at least the next 3 decades. Air superiority is a prerequisite to military operations and Alaska is a forward base located in perhaps the most strategic location in North America.

He went on to say that with other nations on the verge of developing aircraft on par with the F-15s, Alaska should have the best fighters to combat potentially lethal action by foreign powers.

MR. JOERIGHT said that Lt. Colonel Larry Jones from Elmendorf AFB was online and prepared to answer questions pertaining to impacts at Elmendorf. Lt. Colonel Burton Wiggins from Langley AFB was also online and ready to answer technical and tactical questions.

CHAIRMAN THERRIAULT asked if the \$150 to \$300 million construction would occur at Elmendorf.

MR. JOERIGHT said that it was through the Alaska economy but referred the question to Lt. Colonel Jones for further explanation.

CHAIRMAN THERRIAULT asked Lt. Colonel Jones if the stationing of the aircraft in Alaska would mean a substantial increase of facilities.

LT. COLONEL LARRY JONES said that it would include some new facilities and remodeling or upgrades to others.

CHAIRMAN THERRIAULT asked for other questions or testimony.

MARK FARMER, a military freelance reporter and analyst, came forward to testify. He stated that he is fully in favor of the joint resolution and wholeheartedly recommended that all the legislators and other legislators make themselves aware of what is at stake. The F-22 is literally the premier fighter aircraft coming online in the next few years. He said he wasn't speaking as a journalist but rather as an Alaskan who makes his living flying in

fighter jets, taking pictures and traveling around covering military activity.

MR. FARMER believes that Alaska has become perhaps the crown jewel of the United States test and training ranges. He drew a comparison between Alaska and the Nellis range complex. It is the United State's most highly instrumented test and training range in Nevada, covering about 5,000 square miles. This site is limited by encroachment and environmental concerns and the fact that they have only a small amount of restricted air space. Alaska, by comparison, has 63,000 square miles of air space for military use. He said that the F-22 has remarkable weapons, radar and super cruise capabilities. It can fly upwards of 1,000 miles per hour without afterburners.

Although Mr. Farmer characterizes himself as being liberal and having many environmental concerns, he thinks that the military in Alaska is doing an excellent job mitigating their impacts. Their weapons impact ranges are in 2 small areas of the entire 63,000 square miles. He went on to say that what Alaska really has to offer these aircraft is the ability to train and test the aircraft at its maximum without having to keep it in a very small test and training range.

As an Alaskan, he wanted to encourage the committee members to do all that they could to make sure that after Langley AFB gets the first wing, that Alaska is set to get the F-22 next. He said that looking at the third wing, which is the prime unit at Elmendorf AFB having three squadrons of F-15s, two of which are air superiority fighter squadrons, they have been given the most advanced active electronic radar in the world along with fighter data link. He said that these are very F-22 like capabilities. Alaska is already being prepared for using those capabilities so there is much to look forward to.

He closed in saying that he was urging support of the F-22 in particular and the military in its endeavors with Alaska's vast test and training ranges.

SENATOR PHILLIPS asked Mr. Farmer if he had a military background.

MR. FARMER said that he had been with the Coast Guard and now works primarily with the Air Force.

CHAIRMAN THERRIault asked if there were any other questions or testimony. There was none. He then said that there were no proposed changes to the legislation so there was no committee substitute for consideration.

SENATOR PHILLIPS moved that SJR 3 be moved from committee with individual recommendations.

CHAIRMAN THERRIAULT asked if there were objections and there were none. He announced that the next meeting was Thursday February 1, 2001, when they would be hearing SJR 8. He adjourned the meeting at 1:45 p.m.

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