

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
JOINT ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

February 6, 2020

12:01 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Geran Tarr, Co-Chair
Senator Joshua Revak, Co-Chair
Representative Chris Tuck
Representative Ivy Spohnholz
Representative Gabrielle LeDoux
Representative Laddie Shaw
Senator Mia Costello
Senator Lora Reinbold
Senator Donald Olson

PUBLIC MEMBERS PRESENT

Colonel Tim Jones—retired, Fairbanks
Brigadier General Julio "Randy" Banez—retired, Fairbanks (via
teleconference)
Commander James Chase—retired, Anchorage
Nelson N. Angapak, Sr., Anchorage
Colonel Robert Doehl—retired, Anchorage

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Scott Kawasaki

OTHER LEGISLATORS PRESENT

Representative Sharon Jackson
Senator Peter Micciche
Senator Mike Shower

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

PRESENTATIONS TO THE JOINT ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

- MAJOR GENERAL TORRENCE SAXE, Adjutant General, Alaska National
Guard; Commissioner, Alaska Department of Military and Veterans
Affairs

- DR. MICHAEL SFRAGA, Director, Polar Institute & Global Risk and Resilience Program, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars
- DR. MICHAEL SFRAGA, Director, Polar Institute & Global Risk and Resilience Program, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars
- LIEUTENANT GENERAL THOMAS BUSSIÈRE, Commander, Alaskan Command, United States Northern Command; Commander, Eleventh Air Force, Pacific Air Forces; Commander, Alaskan North American Aerospace Defense Region
- CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT DAVID WOLFE, Senior Enlisted Leader, Alaskan NORAD Region, Alaskan Command; Command Chief Master Sergeant, Eleventh Air Force
- MAJOR GENERAL PETER ANDRYSIAK, Commanding General, United States Army Alaska; Deputy Commander, United States Alaskan Command
- CAPTAIN MELISSA RIVERA, Chief of Staff, on behalf of Rear Admiral Matthew T. Bell, Seventeenth District United States Coast Guard
- COMMAND CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT WINFIELD HINKLEY JR., Command Senior Enlisted Leader, Alaska National Guard
- JASON SUSLAVICH, Director, National Security Policy and Senior Advisor, Office of U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan

- HEARD

WITNESS REGISTER

MAJOR GENERAL TORRENCE SAXE, Adjutant General, Alaska National Guard; Commissioner, Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided introductory remarks on JASC presenters; and delivered an overview of the Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, and the Alaska National Guard.

DR. MICHAEL SFRAGA, Director, Polar Institute & Global Risk and Resilience Program
Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars
Washington, D.C.

POSITION STATEMENT: Delivered a presentation entitled, Navigating the Arctic 7Cs.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL THOMAS BUSSIÈRE, Commander, Alaskan Command, United States Northern Command; Commander, Eleventh Air Force, Pacific Air Forces; Commander, Alaskan North American Aerospace Defense Region

Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Co-delivered a presentation entitled, Command Overview Briefing.

CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT DAVID WOLFE, Senior Enlisted Leader, Alaskan NORAD Region, Alaskan Command; Command Chief Master Sergeant, Eleventh Air Force
Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Co-delivered a presentation entitled, Command Overview Briefing.

MAJOR GENERAL PETER ANDRYSIAK, Commanding General, United States Army Alaska; Deputy Commander, United States Alaskan Command
Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Delivered a presentation entitled, America's Arctic Warriors.

CAPTAIN MELISSA RIVERA, Chief of Staff
Seventeenth District
United States Coast Guard
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Delivered a presentation entitled, Coast Guard Update.

COMMAND CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT WINFIELD HINKLEY JR., Command Senior Enlisted Leader
Alaska National Guard
Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Delivered an overview of Alaska National Guard operations.

JASON SUSLAVICH, Director, National Security Policy and Senior Advisor
Office of U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan
Washington, D.C.

POSITION STATEMENT: Delivered a presentation entitled, Arctic Security.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[12:01:22 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR JOSHUA REVAK called the Joint Armed Services Committee meeting to order at 12:01 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Reinbold, Costello, Olson, and Co-Chair Revak; and Representatives Tuck, Spohnholz, LeDoux, Shaw, and Co-Chair Tarr. The public members present were Colonel Tim Jones—retired, Brigadier General Julio "Randy" Banez—retired (via

teleconference), Commodore James Chase, Nelson N. Angapak, Sr., and Colonel Robert Doehl—retired.

CO-CHAIR REVAK recognized that Senator Micciche was in the audience.

12:03:59 PM

At ease.

Presentations to the Joint Armed Services Committee

[12:06:55 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR REVAK called the meeting back to order and thanked Senator Coghill for his work on Senate Resolution 2 (SR 2) that expresses the Senate's support for federal legislation establishing the United States Department of Defense Regional Center for Security Studies in Alaska.

He advised that the legislature established the Joint Armed Services Committee (JASC) in the 1990s in response to one of the first Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC) rounds. JASC is comprised of five House representatives, five Senators, and six public members who represent the interest of military services and agencies, local government, the Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA), and Alaska Natives.

CO-CHAIR REVAK explained that the JASC mission is to monitor and address potential realignments of military facilities and missions in the state of Alaska, advocate for the National Missile Defense System (NMDS), seek ways to attract new missions to Alaska bases, and support increased joint military training in Alaska.

CO-CHAIR REVAK said everyone should keep in mind that Alaska's military services and agencies are essential for national defense, joint training, preparedness, force protection, public safety, and the stability of the state's economy. He thanked all military attendees for their service to the nation and state.

CO-CHAIR REVAK recognized that Representative Jackson was in the audience.

[12:09:00 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR REVAK reviewed the agenda and advised that Major General Saxe would introduce the presenters.

[12:11:16 PM](#)

MAJOR GENERAL TORRENCE SAXE, Adjutant General, Alaska National Guard; Commissioner, Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs; Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, said the first presenter is Dr. Michael Sfraga who has some very good information in his presentation.

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DR. MICHAEL SFRAGA, Director, Polar Institute & Global Risk and Resilience Program, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington, D.C, said he was speaking both as the director of the Polar Institute at the nation's think tank and as an Alaskan. He spends most of his time in Washington, D.C. but his mortgage is in Fairbanks. He said his job is really a mission to elevate the presence of Alaska in the national and international forum on the issues that the JASC and presenters are addressing.

DR. SFRAGA commenced his presentation entitled, Navigating the Arctic 7Cs. He explained that Congress established the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars (WWICS) 51 years ago. He said that as the nation's think tank, it is significant that WWICS thought the Arctic was important enough to create the Global Risk and Resilience Program three years ago.

He said he developed the "Arctic 7Cs" as a framework to explain why anybody should care about the Arctic and Alaska, but the bigger play is about the power competition between China, Russia, and the United States. He described the competition between the three countries in terms of a geopolitical game board.

DR. SFRAGA said China is playing the long-term strategy game "Go" so it's important to think about that regime's motives in everything the state and nation does. China has money, resource, and through that it has bought influence.

He said Russia is playing the game "Survivor." Much like Alaska, Russia's economy is built on oil and gas, petrochemicals, and natural resources. Russia is an oligarchy with an aging presidency with superior authority. Russia has a declining population of 150 million and a gross domestic product (GDP) the size of Italy. He said foreign direct investment from China has kept the regime afloat.

DR. SFRAGA said he's not being pejorative when he says the United States is playing the board game "Twister." It's just that the U.S. is everywhere, which is the way it should be as

the global superpower. He said this is the lens through which the nation's think tank sees the great power competition.

He explained that he inserted the Arctic into the great power competition because it frames how the three nations look at the world. No longer is the Arctic isolated from any of these competitive values. Alaska and the Arctic are part of the major geopolitical issues that the world faces and the United States should position itself accordingly.

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DR. SFRAGA turned to the slide, A New Ocean. He suggested that the United States has a fourth coastline to protect. It is 1.5 times the size of the United States and half the size of the continent of Africa. The new ocean is large and that is why so many are interested.

He displayed the slide, Navigating the Arctic's Seven Cs. These are the key issues facing the Arctic. First is climate; it is real, rapid, and relentless because the Earth is changing. Next is commodities. He said there probably wouldn't be a discussion on the Arctic if it weren't for the price of commodities and access to resources. Commerce addresses shipping everywhere, especially in the Arctic. Connectivity addresses all venues: internet, ports, charting. Communities encompasses local decision making all the way to threatened villages. He said there is a lot of cooperation in the Arctic as well as a lot of competition emerging from the Far East, Iceland, the Greenland-Iceland-United Kingdom (GIUK) Gap, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and the Baltics.

DR. SFRAGA said when he frames the Arctic, he uses "Navigating the Arctic 7Cs" as a marketing line to frame why a policymaker or anyone should care.

He turned to the slide, Climate, and pointed out that the Arctic ice pack is at its lowest in recorded history. The more the Arctic ice pack shrinks, the more opportunities and threats there will be.

[12:16:50 PM](#)

DR. SFRAGA displayed the slide, Commodities. He said Alaskans know what the commodities game is all about. If the Arctic pack ice were not changing, there would not be access to these commodities. He noted the photo that shows Russia's LNG plant in the Port of Sabetta on the Yamal Peninsula. The plant in Sabetta is one of many that the Russians are building along the Northern

Sea Route (NSR) with more than \$20 billion from China and money from Total, a French multinational oil conglomerate in the Arctic on the Russian side. Seventeen million metric tons of natural gas will come out of Sabetta every year.

DR. SFRAGA displayed the slide, Commerce. He noted that the northern sea route (NSR) is not going to challenge the Panama Canal or the Suez Canal, but it will continually be important to Russia and that should be on the United States' radar.

He addressed the slide, Commerce—Northern Sea Route. He described the Russian Arctic as a metaphorical "sandwich in the making." Russia has ground base ports and economic development along the NSR. Above the NSR are several islands that Russia has militarized either by refurbishing Soviet-era bases or new military base installations. He said President Putin has built himself an economic zone protected by military might.

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DR. SFRAGA directed attention to the slide, Commerce—Polar Silk Road. He said China envisions, One Belt One Road, everything back to the middle kingdom, including the Arctic. That is why they have invested so much money in the Port of Sabetta and throughout the northern routes of Russia.

DR. SFRAGA addressed the slide, China's Investment Abroad, and the slide, China in Africa. He said China has bought Africa. China bought countries, infrastructure, roads, natural resources, and invested in Chinese workers in almost every African nation. He said he takes China's investment in Africa as a barometer of motive, but also a cautionary tale.

DR. SFRAGA displayed the slide, Connectivity. He remarked that he did not know how Alaska has a viable economic development model if the State does not know what the maritime landscape looks like. Charting the Arctic is an imperative.

DR. SFRAGA addressed the slide, Communities. He said many communities in the north are stressed but they also have a great opportunity before them.

DR. SFRAGA said cooperation is the next "C." There are eight Arctic nations in the Arctic Council: Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, and the United States. This is a consensus building body that can only have binding agreements if all eight nations agree. For the most part there is a conception that the Arctic is peaceful and the Arctic Council

helps that. However, places like Ukraine and Syria, and other issues have stressed the Arctic Council.

DR. SFRAGA pointed out that observer nations like Singapore, South Korea, and Switzerland are interested in the Arctic because a new ocean is opening, and everyone thinks there is bounty for them. China is an observer nation and cannot vote, but they can assert their influence via investment in a country like Iceland. China may have some leverage as to whether Iceland is a part of a potential North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) exercise, so the United States needs to think through the cooperation related to the Arctic.

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DR. SFRAGA discussed the slide, Arctic Search and Rescue Agreement Areas. He pointed out the value of cooperation and the Arctic Coast Guard Forum. He said all eight Arctic nations are trying to overcome the tyranny of distance for the good of the cause for safety, search and rescue, and oil spills.

He directed attention to the slide, New Era of Great Power Competition. He said the United States resurrected the Second Fleet: the GIUK Gap, submarine warfare, and the Baltics because Russia has been so active in the Arctic.

DR. SFRAGA addressed the slide, Competition—Icebreakers. He noted that China has the ability to build more icebreakers for the Arctic and Antarctic, which is something that the United States should be thinking about.

DR. SFRAGA turned to the slide, Russia in the Arctic. He said all roads to Russia's future go through the Arctic. Russia is building along the entire NSR from Murmansk to the Bering Strait.

DR. SFRAGA displayed the next slide and reiterated that he refers to Russia's NSR expansion as a "sandwich." He said Russia has economic development ports, oil and gas development, and ships within its sovereign territory, but it is also building military bases.

DR. SFRAGA directed attention to a map that shows the Northern Sea Route and the traditional route through the Suez Canal. The NSR shows new or renovated military bases along the route. He pointed out the military bases in Alexandra Land, an island located in Franz Josef Land in the Barents Sea.

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DR. SFRAGA directed attention to a photo showing a military trefoil that Russia is building throughout the NSR to protect its economic interest. He noted that a military installation is located on Wrangel Island, just a few hundred miles from the Alaskan coast, that acts as a listening, air force, and radar station.

He displayed the slide showing NATO's Trident Juncture 2018 exercise and stressed that the United States should not forget Norway, Sweden, and Finland on the other side of the Arctic. He said the Russians have overflights and interest in the Baltic Sea, the North Sea between the GIUK Gap, and activities that have become the "new great game."

DR. SFRAGA turned to the slide, North Korea's Strategic Threat. He said do not rule out North Korea because the United States is in the neighborhood. North Korea is a nuclearized country run by a dictator. It is a rogue nation that runs like a cult, which is why the United States has located so much of its assets in the region.

DR. SFRAGA said he considers Alaska the nation's vanguard because the Arctic is a new ocean. It is a new landscape of competition which is why the United States must be diligent in what it does in Alaska.

DR. SFRAGA concluded his presentation emphasizing that the United States can no longer see the Arctic or Alaska as isolated. They are part of the bigger geopolitical play for the entire world, not just for a boutique issue called the Arctic.

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CO-CHAIR REVAK thanked him for the information and recognized that Senator Shower was in the audience.

REPRESENTATIVE TUCK remarked that China's influence is a concern. He pointed out that the United States decided to get cheaper goods and support Wall Street by shipping all its manufacturing to a communist country that economically invades other countries. He said he believes the United States can be self-sustaining and manufacture its own goods.

He noted that the United States has two icebreakers that are sister ships with one providing parts for the other. He said it is disturbing that the one icebreaker is only used in the South Pole. He noted that he drafted a resolution to name one of the

new icebreakers coming to Alaska the "Polar Bear" and to dedicate the vessel exclusively for Alaskan waters.

REPRESENTATIVE TUCK emphasized that the United States cannot let Alaska's economic opportunities slip through its fingers. He also expressed hope that the United States gets off the board game Twister and on to the board game Risk to really take advantage of what Alaska has to offer.

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CO-CHAIR REVAK asked Dr. Sfraga to elaborate on China's "Polar Silk Road" and their One Belt One Road notion; how China's Arctic strategy presents opportunities and challenges for the United States; and what their relationship is with Russia in the Arctic.

DR. SFRAGA replied Russia and China are two countries that do not necessarily like each other, but they share a boarder. It is a marriage of convenience.

DR. SFRAGA explained that Russia's President Putin needs direct foreign investment because the country is a declining super power demographically and economically. China is the exact opposite. It is the number-two economy in the world and soon will be first. Russia just opened an 8,000-kilometer pipeline between the two countries that is an alliance of convenience based on Russia's "Survivor" strategy. However, China is assuring its diversification of energy, agriculture, and other things as part of its board game Go strategy. China's belt-and-road thinking is that everything comes into China, not out of China.

DR. SFRAGA said President Putin and President Xi Jinping of China knowingly play their relationship against the United States. They shake hands with big smiles attached. He noted that Russia and China conducted Arctic military exercises because they like that it gets under the skin of the United States.

DR. SFRAGA maintained that China does not negotiate, they set the terms based on their belt-and-road vision of the world where everything connects to them. Not all of China's investments are nefarious, but the United States should always question their investments.

DR. SFRAGA pointed out that China likes choke points to go away. For example, the world courts have said China has no right to islands in the South China Sea and negotiations should occur

with the Philipppians and Vietnam. But China has built islands in the South China Sea anyway. China thinks navigation in the South China Sea is part of their belt-and-road or board game Go strategy, regardless of the United States Navy (USN) sailing in those waters or a trade block against them.

DR. SFRAGA said the United States cannot take China's activities in Singapore, Iceland, Russia, Australia, or New Zealand in isolation. China's activities are all part of their all roads lead back to the inner kingdom and that is how they influence the world with their economic power.

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CO-CHAIR REVAK noted that the United States Coast Guard (USCG) conducted its last surface freedom of navigation with an icebreaker in the Arctic in 1957. He asked how important United States operational presence in the Arctic will be in the future.

DR. SFRAGA answered extremely important; presence is power, whether a Polar Security Cutter, icebreaker, or USN ship. Presence in the Arctic shows, if for no other reason it demonstrates possibility. He noted that NATO ran into problems during the Trident Junction exercise, but the NATO countries learned a lot. USN presence in the Arctic sends a message back to China and Russia.

COLONEL JONES asked if China is developing greater military capability targeted at Arctic operations. For example, icebreakers or naval vessels suited towards Arctic operations.

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DR. SFRAGA answered yes; China's Arctic efforts, whether it's research, investing in the Sabetta LNG plant, or exercises with Russia, is one part of the belt-and-road. He said China looks at the Arctic like they look at the Antarctic and the United States should not forget that because China is adding more bases in the Antarctic. They have satellite and telecommunications capacity in the Arctic and Antarctic. This directly ties to their military capacity, which directly ties to their space program. Being a top-down nation allows China to make these things happen. He emphasized that the United States cannot take China's activities in isolation.

DR. SFRAGA said China has the ability to build more light, mid-weight, and heavy icebreakers in their own shipyards to sail north and south. The vessels will be for research, but they also have other ways of demonstrating their interest in the Arctic.

There will be more Chinese naval ships in tandem with the Russians in the Arctic where they say they are peacefully researching and developing the Arctic. However, their aspirations and weapons systems are clear, as demonstrated by their defensive and offensive weapons in the South China Sea.

DR. SFRAGA emphasized that the United States is not going to war with China over the Arctic, but there could be a miscalculation. China does not think in soundbites like the United States or in survival mode like Russia. China has a long-term play, whether it is looking at Africa or the Arctic.

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REPRESENTATIVE SPOHNHOLZ remarked that the United States does not have proper Arctic representation. She asked what the highest priority is for presence: deep-water port, icebreakers, or the governor's proposal to use the former naval base at Adak as an emergency oil depot.

DR. SFRAGA replied his answer is a blanket yes. The United States is making progress on integrating polar security cutters, F-35 fighters, missile defense, and strategic assets at Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER) for the nation's security. But the nation needs a deep-water port. Pick one location and do a Manhattan Project on it, he said. If the deep-water port location is Nome, then go all in on Nome by making sure the location can service USN, search and rescue, and USCG assets. The port should be multipurpose with fiber connectivity. The state and the nation should proceed in an aggregated fashion.

DR. SFRAGA said it's a good idea to take a hard look at Adak and Dutch Harbor as well. Adak has a facility that could function as a fuel depot or a place for USN ships during the season.

DR. SFRAGA said considering his previously noted options is wise for both the nation's and state's security. The United States has been talking about a deep-water port for a long time, but there is not a lot of money available. The State working together with federal and private companies for a public-private partnership in one place might seem like the way to go.

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REPRESENTATIVE SPOHNHOLZ agreed that going all in on one deep-water port makes a lot of sense. She asked if Nome or the North Slope are possible deep-water locations. The North Slope has an intersection of many strategic issues for the State to

potentially link crude oil and natural gas with northern friends.

DR. SFRAGA replied he would go hard on a multi-purpose deep-water port in Nome or someplace in the Bering Strait. Nome makes sense considering that the Bering Strait is strategic because of shipping via Russia and China; fishermen, fisheries, and fish migrations; and possible oil spills.

He said regarding the vision for a deep-water port on Alaska's North Slope, maybe the United States could build a North Slope version of Russia's Sabetta LNG plant on the Yamal Peninsula. He said it does not have to be expansive, but it could be yet another port.

DR. SFRAGA stated that the deep-water ports can serve via an elevated plan for integrating economic and national security benefits, perhaps as part of a great public-private partnership. The North Slope would require dredging, but the location might be a good place to build a miniature Sabetta plant. In terms of the nation's security and multipurpose deep-water port, maybe it is Nome, he said. An overall strategy to secure U.S. energy makes sense for all locations, but the United States should choose one lead port between the Aleutians, Nome, and Barrow.

SENATOR OLSON suggested Cape Blossom in the Kotzebue area as a possible deep-water port. He voiced concern about the development under way in North Korea and asked Dr. Sfraga to comment.

[12:39:44 PM](#)

DR. SFRAGA replied he has learned from top analysts to hedge everything that North Korea says, but the country has leveraged its relationships very well. China does not want to see a western country have influence on its border. China has supported the North Korean regime and President Putin has made sure that North Korea speaks his words as well. North Korea is far more in the China and Russia sphere than in the western nations' sphere. The United States will see more saber rattling from North Korea, but they have not stopped developing their nuclear arsenal as leverage with China, Russia, and the United States.

CO-CHAIR TARR noted that the House Resources Standing Committee will hold a talk on foreign landownership issues tomorrow.

CO-CHAIR REVAK commented that Dr. Sfraga adds value to the Arctic dialogue and asked where to find more information about his background.

DR. SFRAGA replied the Woodrow Wilson Center website has a full program description and contact information.

12:41:43 PM

CO-CHAIR REVAK asked Major General Saxe to introduce the next presenter.

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE said the next presentation is by Lieutenant General Bussiere and Chief Master Sergeant Wolfe. He described them as "absolute team players."

12:42:22 PM

LIEUTENANT GENERAL THOMAS A. BUSSIERE, Commander, Alaskan Command (ALCOM), United States Northern Command (USNORTHCOM); Commander, Eleventh Air Force, Pacific Air Forces (PACAF); Commander, Alaskan North American Aerospace Defense (NORAD) Region; Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER), Alaska, commended Major General Saxe for his leadership. He said he could not do his mission without the Alaska National Guard; it is a unique relationship that really does not exist in other states.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL BUSSIERE explained that the first command is the North American Aerospace Defense (NORAD) Command. It is the nation's longest standing bi-national defense treaty with Canada. NORAD sits alert everyday with fighters, tankers, and Airborne Warning and Control System (AWAC) aircraft to defend the sovereign airspace of the United States and Canada.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL BUSSIERE reported that NORAD aircraft intercepted Russian bombers that penetrated the Canadian Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) last week. He said NORAD started to publicly release Russian intercepts in 2018 and that is the reason for the uptick in press reporting. NORAD is a bi-national command with Canadian senior officers and enlisted officers that help the United States perform its mission in Alaska.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL BUSSIERE said the next command is Alaskan Command (ALCOM), a sub-unified command under United States Northern Command (USNORTHCOM). He noted that Major General Pete Andrysiak, Deputy Commander for ALCOM and Commander for the United States Army Alaska (USARAK), will also address the

committee. ALCOM is responsible for facilitating homeland defense operations in the Alaska Joint Operation Area as well as supporting the governor and Major General Saxe in any defense support for civil authorities if there is any type of natural disaster or unnatural disaster.

He said the third command is the Eleventh Air Force which is all the air forces in Alaska, Hawaii, and Guam. The responsibility of General Brown and Pacific Air Forces (PACAF) is to organize, train, and equip forces to be ready to deploy anywhere.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL BUSSIERE noted that mission partners are strategically important to their mission's success: Major General Andrysiak's team at USARAK; USCG partners at District Seventeen; the National Guard in Alaska, Hawaii, and Guam; partners in the United States Air Force Reserve; and the mission support from every federal and state entity. He said Alaska is a unique environment and the partnership with federal and state entities is extremely close.

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LIEUTENANT GENERAL BUSSIERE displayed the slide, Strategic Importance of Alaska, and its global geographic importance. He said Alaska has always been strategically important but decreasing Arctic sea ice has created a resurgence of awareness. Alaska is a great military training area as well as an area to train and equip forces to operate in the Arctic.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL BUSSIERE noted that General Terrance J. O'Shaughnessy, Commander of USNORTHCOM and NORAD Command, recently talked about how the United States is no longer a sanctuary. In the past, the United States looked at the Arctic, Pacific, and Atlantic oceans as a moat and somewhat of a sanctuary. He said that is no longer the case because the oceans are avenues of approach for potential adversaries to hold United States security objectives at risk.

He said their number-one priority is to defend the homeland. In Alaska, the primary defense is any type of actions in and through the Arctic. The United States has a very strong relationship with Canada via a binational treaty.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL BUSSIERE addressed the slide, Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA). He said ALCOM facilitates support civil authorities in any type of natural disaster. ALCOM facilitates search and rescue in the state through the Alaska Air National Guard (AKANG). ALCOM is prepared via routine

exercises to support the governor, Major General Saxe, and lead authorities, usually the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), in any type of natural disaster. He directed attention to photos the November 2018 earthquake that occurred in Alaska to illustrate the point.

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LIEUTENANT GENERAL BUSSIÈRE addressed the slide, Operational Overview and Two-Year Outlook. He detailed that Arctic Edge will occur in February and March 2020. It is a major exercise under USNORTHCOM to train all services in cold weather Arctic operations. The exercise is an opportunity every other year for the services to come to Alaska and practice Arctic cold-weather operations.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL BUSSIÈRE explained that the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex (JPARC) is the air and ground training range in the Fairbanks area. JPARC provides world-class training for air and ground joint forces. JPARC facilitates PACAF for Red Flag-Alaska, a multi-nation air exercise that usually occurs three times a year during the summer months.

He detailed that Northern Edge is an every other year exercise that supports joint operations for the United States Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) and PACAF that occurs in the May to June timeframe. He said Northern Edge brings forces into Alaska's phenomenal training ranges to hone the ability for forces to operate together as a joint team.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL BUSSIÈRE said Operation Colony Glacier is an annual operation to recover the 54 multiservice members who perished in a C-124 aircraft crash on Colony Glacier. As of 2019, some portion of the remains and personal effects of 44 multiservice members have been recovered.

He highlighted that the first F-35 fighter are expected to arrive at Eielson Air Force Base (EAFB) in March 2020. A team of civic leaders and the delegation met in Dallas-Fort Worth several weeks ago to recognize and sign the bulkhead of the first F-35 fighter scheduled for delivery to EAFB. A ceremony to commemorate the first F-35 fighter arrival at EAFB is scheduled in May 2020.

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CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT DAVID WOLFE, Senior Enlisted Leader of the Alaskan NORAD Region, Alaskan Command; Command Chief Master Sergeant, Eleventh Air Force; Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson,

Alaska, addressed the slide, Operational Overview and Two-Year Outlook—Professionalizing Arctic Service Initiatives. He said the effort to establish an Arctic leader qualification process is underway. The initiative takes an established course and provides more opportunities for individuals to become aware of the different strategic resources and the strategic importance of Alaska. The initiative will provide a multi-force database of qualified leaders with Arctic experience should there be a reason for Arctic deployment.

CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT WOLFE said Alaska has world class training ranges in the air, ground, and the Gulf of Alaska. He noted that the United States Marine Corps (USMC) and the United States Navy (USN) participate in various joint exercises in Alaska. The Armed Services have reaffirmed their interest in training activities within the Alaskan environment, their participation is congruent with where the nation is and with the near-fear competition in the national defense strategy.

[12:53:17 PM](#)

LIEUTENANT GENERAL BUSSIERE directed attention to the chart that illustrates that partnerships and engagements are essential for mission success. He said he quickly learned how important the Alaska Native community is for learning, sharing different leadership techniques, and cultural exchanges. This has resulted in participations with National Security Roundtables, Alaska Day, and various forums including one held yesterday in Juneau. He said the participation of federal and state partners, as well as state and local leadership, is essential to mission success with NORAD Alaska, ALCOM, and the Eleventh Air Force.

CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT WOLFE explained that the Department of Defense (DOD) focuses on recruiting individuals and retaining families. There are many initiatives within the state to help military spouses and DOD appreciates the continued advocacy by the Alaska State Legislature. DOD supports anything that makes teaching or nursing certificate transfers easier or encourages the portable career lifestyle for military spouses. H said they face challenges when they come from other states, but there are many success stories in Alaska.

[12:55:41 PM](#)

LIEUTENANT GENERAL BUSSIERE addressed the slide, Take Away. He said they take their responsibilities for homeland defense very seriously. It is their number-one priority for the nation. The Arctic's changing conditions from climate change presents both an opportunity and challenge. The posture at Combined Commands

helps all the Armed Services train at their premiere ranges to be ready to execute the national defense needs in the Arctic.

CO-CHAIR REVAK stated appreciation for the Combined Commands' presence and involvement in Alaska, especially with their increased community involvement in rural areas

SENATOR REINBOLD asked him to provide more detail on who is taking the lead on the Arctic Edge exercise in March and to share any goals.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL BUSSIÈRE replied Arctic Edge 2020 is an exercise that ALCOM, under USNORTHCOM, must execute by law. Arctic 2020 is roughly 1,300 military members coming into the state to primarily participate in cold weather exercises on the North Slope for small ground-team operations to secure long-range radar sites. Both U.S. and Canadian small team forces will set up cold weather camps.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL BUSSIÈRE noted that there will be a team of about 40 USN dive team members in Juneau practicing cold weather operations. Although the operations in Juneau are not necessarily part of Arctic Edge, it is aligned with the Ice Exercise (ICEX) where the USN sets up their cold weather camps about 20 miles north of the North Slope to practice and do research from a USN perspective.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL BUSSIÈRE detailed that Arctic Edge 2020 begins the end of February and runs through about the first week of March.

[12:58:41 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE TUCK mentioned DOD's continuing strong investment in Alaska and highlighted the need to help the Port of Anchorage. He said the State would appreciate anything that DOD can do to help, whether it is oversight, weighing in, or leveraging federal dollars.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL BUSSIÈRE said he worked with the mayor of Anchorage for almost a year. Port of Anchorage update meetings have occurred with the mayor, port manager, the commanders of United States Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM), USNORTHCOM, and other entities. He said DOD recognizes that the Port of Anchorage is extremely important as well as the financial stresses that the municipality is under to get the port redone. DOD is actively engaged to try to help with this.

CO-CHAIR REVAK mentioned the statement about taking care of spouses and families and asked if there are any specific issues that military spouses and family members need help with.

[1:00:42 PM](#)

CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT WOLFE answered he characterizes taking care of military families as healthy and trending in the right direction. He said the best-case scenario for a military spouse with a license is to get into the state certification system as quickly as possible, especially in high demand career fields where there are shortages. DOD appreciates anything that the legislature can do to quickly remove the challenges and stress for military families.

[1:02:57 PM](#)

MR. ANGAPAK thanked Lieutenant General Bussiere for his active participation within the Native community where the net result has created a desire among Native young people to look at the United States Armed Forces. He said the hope is for continued visible participation by the United States Air Force (USAF) and United States Armed Forces.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL BUSSIÈRE replied being a part of the Alaska Native community discussions and culture is an honor and he looks forward to continued engagement.

CO-CHAIR REVAK said Alaska offers some of the best training in the country, especially at JPARC. Alaska has training air space the size of Florida, sea space the size of Virginia, and ground maneuver land space the size of Delaware. Many feel Alaska is perfect for combined arms live fire training as it relates to the power competition with Russia and China. He asked what the legislature can do to assist DOD with their preparation to take advantage of Alaska's training opportunities and possible JPARC expansion.

[1:05:24 PM](#)

LIEUTENANT GENERAL BUSSIÈRE replied current air space is sufficient for joint training needs. He said what would be helpful is to have the continued education of state and local leadership for understanding the strategic value of training at JPARC. Local and community partners in Fairbanks have provided great support for the airspace around JPARC.

He noted that there are potential opportunities during Northern Edge to address perceived naval activity impacts to state fisheries in the Gulf of Alaska. Prior to May 2019, the military

made sure to actively approach local and tribal leadership around the Gulf of Alaska to provide an education on what the Northern Edge exercise was doing.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL BUSSIÈRE said that from a strategic perspective, DOD and all services realize that the training ranges in Alaska are essential for fifth-generation training in the future, both for United States and international partner forces.

[1:06:52 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR REVAK thanked the presenters. He said JASC looks forward to finding ways to assist military members, spouses, and families moving forward.

[1:07:15 PM](#)

At ease.

[1:13:49 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR REVAK called the meeting back to order.

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE announced that the next presenter is Major General Peter Andrysiak who was previously stationed in Alaska and has been in the Pacific for quite some time.

[1:14:42 PM](#)

MAJOR GENERAL PETER ANDRYSIAK, Commanding General, United States Army Alaska; Deputy Commander, United States Alaskan Command; Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, expressed his gratitude to the legislature and JASC members for hosting the meeting as well as taking care of and recognizing the contributions of 11,000 active duty soldiers, families, and civilian workforce.

He said his goal is to provide committee members with an update on USARAK, its focus, and its plan over the next year.

[1:16:00 PM](#)

MAJOR GENERAL ANDRYSIAK commenced his presentation entitled, America's Arctic Warriors explaining that USARAK is vital to the national security and critical to protecting the nation and projecting military power into the Indo-Pacific. He said Alaska provides the United States Army (USA) with a forward presence in support of USINDOPACOM as well as DOD in Alaska and the Arctic for USNORTHCOM. The unique disposition of USARAK in Alaska allows for rapid deployment across the Pacific.

MAJOR GENERAL ANDRYSIAK referenced Operational Approach and said since taking command in July 2019, USARAK headquarters has focused on laying a strategic approach that addresses more long-term issues. The top priority is making sure USARAK provides authentic care for soldiers, civilians, families, and veterans that is not at the expense of readiness. He said that breaking out "care" separately makes sure USARAK focuses on the right things to assure readiness and resiliency. Prioritizing leader development and growth provides USARAK with its competitive edge. USARAK prioritizes being a great teammate in Alaska by building and sustaining mutual trust through cohesive teams via joint forces and relationship reinvestments with local and Alaska Native communities.

[1:20:48 PM](#)

MAJOR GENERAL ANDRYSIAK addressed Readiness saying that USARAK tries to leverage and grow its skills within the Arctic environment. Now they are focused on large scale combat operations versus their previous 18-year focus on counter insurgency operations.

He said what is unique to Alaska and not accounted for in models is the environment. USARAK tries to make sure to properly align its units within its personnel and funding resources. He noted that he always tries to tell senior leaders that everything in Alaska takes longer and is harder during winter.

MAJOR GENERAL ANDRYSIAK detailed that USARAK will receive the new Joint Light Tactical Vehicle (JLTV) in 2020. USARAK has a near-term solution to replace its Small Unit Support Vehicle (SUSV) for winter overland mobility. USARAK is pushing hard for military construction funding to improve its maintenance facilities, particularly for the 1-25th Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT) at Fort Wainwright. USARAK prioritizes accounting for its environment during the modernization process.

He explained that in USINDOPACOM, Army Forces (ARFOR) focuses on supporting the Army-Pacific via America's First Corps by participating in a series of exercises called Courage Sentinel. The exercises focus on areas of responsibility that are associated with the Indo-Pacific. In Oceania there are a series of 2020 exercises taking place in Australia, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, and New Caledonia. America's First Corps will take command and control responsibility for the exercises. The National Guard brigade will rotate through the exercises as well.

MAJOR GENERAL ANDRYSIAK detailed that the 4th Brigade Combat Team – Airborne, 25th Infantry Division (4/25 IBCT(ABN)) is participating in Defender Pacific, an exercise that focuses on Southeast Asia, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Brunei.

He explained that the other NORTHCOM focus area for USARAK is on its cold regions. He noted that Alaska is the only state that borders the Arctic. USARAK has an inherent responsibility to train and operate in extreme cold weather and does so at the Northern Warfare Training Center (NWTC) at Black Rapids, Alaska. USARAK is looking at how to expand training and the ability to thrive in this environment to units outside of Alaska.

MAJOR GENERAL ANDRYSIAK said USARAK regularly trains with its partners across the state to support a wide variety of contingencies that could happen in Alaska. Activities include supporting a rescue mission under its defense support to civil authorities and protecting the nation under the Homeland Defense. USARAK also participates in several training venues with state and joint interagency, intergovernmental, and multinational partners. USARAK maintains its readiness to respond rapidly and decisively.

[1:25:47 PM](#)

MAJOR GENERAL ANDRYSIAK mentioned Joint Regional Training Center Rotation and detailed that the entire rotation for the 4/25 IBCT (ABN) at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) at Fort Polk, Louisiana is 45 days. This provides the opportunity for the brigades to fight with coalition partners from Canada and Japan. The brigade's journey started the previous summer when they deployed 1,400 pieces of equipment through the Port of Anchorage as part of a larger emergency deployment readiness exercise. The exercise provided lessons about the unique capabilities and the tidal fluctuations that are inherent in the Port of Anchorage. Joint partners via JBER were instrumental for a successful exercise.

MAJOR GENERAL ANDRYSIAK referenced Operation Inherent Resolve and detailed that United States Central Command (USCENTCOM) deployed the 1-25th Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT) to Iraq in September 2019. He said prayers go out to SBCT for their safe return. A portion of SBCT remains at Fort Wainwright and they continue to train in support of other operations with USARAK.

[1:28:38 PM](#)

MAJOR GENERAL ANDRYSIAK referenced America's Arctic Warriors—Arctic Tough and said the nation's strategic outlook will

continue to demand USARAK forces answer the call. He said senior leaders recently visited USARAK and noted the need to strengthen the strategic footprint of the USA in Alaska through future cold weather training and long-range weapons testing.

MAJOR GENERAL ANDRYSIAK said USARAK is extremely appreciative of the community and the support they receive from around Alaska. He detailed that USA has focused on improving the quality of life for soldiers and families. Upgrades include updated dining facilities, improving food quality and quantity, renovating common spaces, refurbishing barracks, and improving exercise facilities so that soldiers can prepare for new combat readiness fitness testing. USARAK recently received \$38 million to improve its winter maintenance facilities to provide a controlled environment to maintain equipment.

MAJOR GENERAL ANDRYSIAK remarked that he has never served anywhere that appreciates the military, its service members, and families more than Alaska. Community leaders continuously demonstrate their unconditional support and the legislature enacts legislation that supports the military.

He thanked JASC members on behalf of the USARAK soldiers and families for making the "Last Frontier" a great place to live and thrive, and for inviting him to talk at the meeting.

[1:32:41 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR TARR expressed appreciation that he addressed quality of life initiatives. She noted that she was part of the Alaska Defense Forum that met the fall of 2019 in Fairbanks. She said she was surprised to learn that soldiers really are not as integrated into the communities they are adjacent to as some might think. She asked how the legislature might play a role in improving the way of life for soldiers.

MAJOR GENERAL ANDRYSIAK replied base closures have contributed to the military becoming more isolated. He said one community sponsored program USARAK has setup up connects online-registered soldiers and community families for special occasions. USARAK also generates opportunities for community leadership to come to the installation on a more frequent basis. He said USARAK is also creating more opportunities on Fort Wainwright for restaurants and other facilities.

He said USARAK is looking at increasing community interaction from multiple angles. For example, garrison commander, Colonel Chris Ruga is working on a program for in-processing and

orientation to do an off-installation bus tour to show what recreational opportunities exist, where to get a vehicle fixed, or other things that are available from the Fairbanks community. He said Fairbanks is the priority but they are working on something similar at JBER.

[1:35:23 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR REVAK asked if a railroad tied to the Lower 48 would enhance opportunities for units to train in Alaska.

MAJOR GENERAL ANDRYSIAK answered that it is a cost benefit analysis, but the bigger part of the question is that USA needs to grow more capability to get units into Alaska for leveraging JPARC capacity. USA needs to grow coming up to Alaska at different times to understand the operating limitations for soldiers and equipment in a cold environment.

[1:37:29 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR REVAK thanked him for his service and his work for the soldiers and the communities. He said JASC looks forward to working with him in the future to make Alaska an even better place for service members.

[1:37:51 PM](#)

At ease.

[1:40:52 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR REVAK called the meeting back to order.

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE said the next presenter is Captain Melissa Rivera, United States Coast Guard (USCG). He noted that she has spent a lot of time in Juneau and Sitka, most recently as the commander of cadets, and has served for 29 years.

[1:41:14 PM](#)

CAPTAIN MELISSA RIVERA, Chief of Staff, Seventeenth District, United States Coast Guard, Juneau, Alaska, extended regrets from Rear Admiral Matthew T. Bell, Commander, Seventeenth District, who was unable to attend the meeting.

She said her presentation entitled, Coast Guard Update, would focus on some of the major USCG service activities around the state.

CAPTAIN RIVERA stated that in November 2019, the Alaska State Legislature sent a letter to the Alaska delegation asking for their help in fixing the VHF-FM radio outages that are hurting

emergency maritime communications with USCG. That month the Alaska congressional delegation sent a letter to Commandant of the United States Coast Guard, Admiral Karl L. Schultz, expressing their concerns with the VHF-FM system. Vice Commandant of the United States Coast Guard, Admiral Charles W. Ray, testified before the U.S. Senate in December 2019 and was asked about the Rescue 21-VHF-FM communications in Alaska. She said this issue that has the highest level of attention.

CAPTAIN RIVERA stated that she and the entire service is as concerned with the communications in Alaska as the legislature. She said she will discuss what this does and does not affect, what mariners should do, and what the USCG has done and is doing.

She detailed that communication issues affect mariners' ability to contact the USCG on VHF-FM radios in some areas of Southeast and Southcentral Alaska. VHF-FM is generally good out to about 20 nautical miles, but transmission is based on line-of-sight and depends on the power and height of both the transmitting and receiving radio antennas. Sometimes even within the tower's theoretical range, a mountain or cliff could block a boater's ability to either transmit or receive.

CAPTAIN RIVERA said current outages are also affecting boaters' abilities to speak with the USCG on VHF-FM. The outages do not affect mariners' ability to speak with each other on VHF-FM and does not affect any other means of communication such as satellite communication – either talk or text, high frequency (HF) communication, Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB), or cellphones, just with the Coast Guard.

She said mariners should always, even with fully operational towers, have multiple means to communicate distress situations, especially when operating in areas where the USCG is experiencing outages. Mariners should always remain vigilant and monitor VHF channel 16 for distress calls, evaluate their ability to safely respond, and always relay any distress calls they hear to the USCG by any means possible.

CAPTAIN RIVERA said the communication problem did not catch the USCG completely off guard because the equipment is aging. They started testing new technology a few years ago and it looked promising and worked well in the laboratory setting. However, the solid oxide fuel cells the new technology uses failed, which put USCG back to contracting for generator replacement because

transmission sites were extremely remote and required independent power generation sources.

CAPTAIN RIVERA said the USCG began experiencing greater than normal failures with their power generation equipment during the summer of 2019. At that time, USCG was completing a contract to replace the power generation equipment at 22 sites with scheduled completion by 2023. The USCG has since accelerated the contract to complete the generator replacements at six sites in 2019, seven in 2020, three in 2021, and six in early 2022.

CAPTAIN RIVERA explained that the maintenance and repair contract for communication sites expired under normal terms in December 2019. The USCG learned that a new maintenance and repair contract required expansion in some areas to enable more services and streamline some services. The new contractor is Silver Mountain LLC, based in Palmer, Alaska. The USCG is confident that the new contract will enable quicker response times for repair and maintenance. She said weather is a major factor in accessing communication sites, even during the summer months where strong winds and fog can prevent access or limit the time contractors can spend on site.

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CAPTAIN RIVERA referenced Housing and Homeporting and noted that the USCG received a \$32.4 million appropriation for housing in Kodiak for FY2020. This is phase two of a multiphase effort to address a shortage in USCG family housing. The USCG intends to use the FY2020 funding in combination with phase-one funds, appropriated in FY2018, to cover costs associated with planning, design, demolition, site work, construction, and outfitting new housing units.

She explained that the combined phase funding of \$64.7 million will provide for much of the utility, road, site work, and construction needed to address the total housing needs. Most housing units will be three bedroom duplexes and the remaining will be four bedroom duplexes. The current project is in the planning phase and the USCG anticipates awarding a construction contract in FY2022. She directed attention to a photo of the Upper Government Hill Coast Guard Family Housing Project in Kodiak that was completed in 2016.

CAPTAIN RIVERA detailed that the USCG used \$20.6 million in FY2020 funding to upgrade waterfront infrastructure in Sitka to homeport a new Fast Response Cutter (FRC). The planned FRC upgrades include the installation of a floating dock, moorage,

shore tie upgrades, as well as improvements to the existing cutter support facility. The USCG anticipates getting six FRCs with two homeporting in Ketchikan, one in Sitka, one in Seward, and two in Kodiak.

[1:49:18 PM](#)

CAPTAIN RIVERA said the United States is an Arctic nation so the USCG polar icebreakers are a vital and central part of national and economic security in the polar regions. To ensure that the USCG maintains its ability to protect national interests, assert national sovereignty, and meet international commitments in the Arctic and Antarctic, they need six new polar ice breakers, now designated polar security cutters (PSCs), and at least three must be heavy.

She detailed that USCG received an appropriation of \$675 million in FY2019 for the first PSC with an additional \$20 million for long-lead-time materials for the second PSC. The USCG and the USN, through an integrated program office, awarded VT Halter Marine in Mississippi the contract for the first PSC in April 2019. VT Halter plans to begin construction in 2021 with delivery scheduled for 2024. The first PSC will be homeported in Seattle. The Homeland Security Appropriations Act of 2020 provided \$135 million for long-lead-time materials for the second PSC. The PSC will be vital for the nation to achieve its strategic goals in the Arctic.

CAPTAIN RIVERA reviewed the "Three Lines of Effort" from the USCG April 2019 Arctic Strategic Outlook:

- Enhance capability to operate effectively in a dynamic Arctic domain.
- Strengthen the rules-based order.
- Innovate and adapt to promote resilience and prosperity.

CAPTAIN RIVERA said the Offshore Patrol Cutter (OPC) remains the USCG's highest acquisition priority. In June 2019, the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) granted the Eastern Shipbuilding Group (ESG) extraordinary contract relief for OPC construction due to the impact of Hurricane Michael. DHS determined that granting limited relief for the first four hulls was essential to the national defense, in the best interest of the government, and necessary to facilitate timely OPC delivery. ESG facilities have resumed operations but with significant impact to cost and schedule due to labor availability, increased overhead expenses, labor pricing, and other factors. The USCG has begun procurement activities to complete the remainder of

the OPC program of record for OPCs 5-25. Alaska will receive OPC hulls three and four from ESG. The vessels will be homeported in Kodiak, effectively replacing the current USCG cutters Douglas Monroe, and Alex Haley. ESG originally scheduled delivery for OPC-3 in FY2023 and OPC-4 in FY2024. However, impacts from the hurricane have delayed the delivery timeline to a date to be determined.

[1:52:31 PM](#)

CAPTAIN RIVERA stated that the USCG conducts its 11 statutory missions throughout the state year round. In the summer, a surge of mission executions occurs in the Arctic. She noted that Operation Arctic Shield 2019 ended on October 31.

She provided the following statistics for the 2019 USCG operational season:

- Forward deployed two MH-60 helicopters with crews to Kotzebue and Utqiagvik from July 1 to October 31.
- Executed 25 search and rescue cases with 13 lives saved and 28 lives assisted.
- 233 personnel conducted 415 deployments to 102 locations.
- Inspected 236 of 380 regulated facilities.
- Executed 475 commercial vessel exams.
- Executed 25 port state control exams.
- Conducted 22 hazardous material container inspections.
- Conducted ice training for 31 first responders in 2 Arctic communities.
- Provided training to 3,924 children in 24 remote villages via The Kids Don't Float Program.
- Contacted 59 commercial fishing vessels, conducted 27 boardings, and 5 voyage terminations via The Living Marine Resource Program.
- Executed 15 C-130 aircraft sorties with over 28,000 miles flown.

CAPTAIN RIVERA explained that the USCG Sector Anchorage spearheaded the new Marine Safety Task Force (MSTF) model to conduct missions in the remote regions of their area of responsibility. Employing 32 active and reserve search personnel, the USCG deployed MSTF to execute marine safety and environmental protection missions in rural villages not on the road system in the Arctic and rural Western Alaska. The USCG deployed a hub-and-spoke method to execute MSTF teams from 13

hub communities to complete multiple missions in remote villages.

CAPTAIN RIVERA highlighted the following MSTF successes:

- Partnership with civil air patrol transportation saved valuable time, reduced costs, and allowed USCG personnel to transit seamlessly between villages.
- Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation joined USCG personnel for two deployments into the Arctic and Western Alaska.
- MSTF teams inspected over 60 percent of USCG Sector Anchorage's 380 facilities, a massive improvement over the sector's prior annual average of only 12 percent.
- MSTF activities include facility and commercial vessel inspections, container inspections, gold dredge vessel examinations, commercial fishing vessel dockside examinations, pollution prevention, response training and exercises, and boating safety training.

[1:55:37 PM](#)

CAPTAIN RIVERA reported that commercial traffic in the U.S. Arctic off Alaska increased in 2019. She cited the following statistics:

- Cruise ships increased from 3 in 2018 to 9 in 2019, with 7 more transiting from the Bering Sea to Wrangel Island in Russian waters.
- Cargo traffic increased 20 percent from 75 to 95 vessels.
- Tug traffic increased 8 percent from 53 to 57 vessels.
- Adventurer traffic increased 240 percent from 5 to 17 vessels.
- Tanker traffic increased 28 percent from 40 to 51 vessels.
- Both government and research vessel traffic decreased.
- Boat cargo vessel traffic remained consistent.

CAPTAIN RIVERA said that after nearly eight years of work, USCG District Seventeen staff completed the Bering Strait PARS in December 2017. The USCG composed a joint proposal with Russia for the International Maritime Organization (IMO) to designate a voluntary two-way shipping route from Nunivak Island through the Bering Strait. Included in the joint proposal were three areas to avoid. The IMO approved the proposal in March 2018, and it is currently in use. She directed attention to the pictures that

show the Bering Strait PARS and noted that the effort provides a common and safe route for this increasing vessel traffic.

CAPTAIN RIVERA said the current PARS addresses the continuation of the two-way shipping route from the Bering Strait across the North Slope to Canada's maritime corridors project. The PARS comment period opened in December 2018 with an extended closure of June 30, 2020 due to requests from subsistence hunters, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and industry. The USCG District 17 is working closely with waterway users to plan public meetings and get as much information as possible to compose an accurate study of waterway activity to propose a potential route that meets all waterway user needs.

[1:57:46 PM](#)

CAPTAIN RIVERA turned to the Alaska Marine Highway System slide. She advised that the USCG has locations in 14 communities throughout Alaska, three of which are accessible by road to Anchorage, Homer, and Valdez. The remaining USCS locations require airplane or ferry service for access.

CAPTAIN RIVERA remarked that Alaska communities welcome and integrate USGC families, including transferring in and out, schools, activities, sports, travel for medical care, and vacations. She said Alaska communities probably welcome USGC members more readily than anywhere else. She noted that the USCG recently named Cordova as an official "USCG City." Fifteen percent of all USCG cities in the United States are in Alaska, which is a testament to how genuinely Alaskans welcome USCG members and make them feel like a valuable part of the community.

CAPTAIN RIVERA said just as is happening to all other people living in coastal communities, reduced goods and services due to a lack of ferry service during USCG assignments will increase hardship to service members during their tour in Alaska. To many USCG service members and their members outside of Alaska, lack of ferry service may likely decrease the desirability of assignments to Alaska. The AMHS service cuts are affecting USCG and community members, she said.

[1:59:25 PM](#)

CAPTAIN RIVERA extended thanks for the support and advocacy for the USCG. She asked for communication to continue and encouraged committee members to visit their closest USCG unit. She said USCG members will be happy to provide a ride and show what they do every single day. She said having all military services

attend the JASC meeting is great. Each service has different attributes and capabilities, but together the services bring great strength to Alaska.

CO-CHAIR REVAK asked her to submit her information filled comments to his office. He said providing a summary would allow committee members to review her data in depth.

He extended congratulations for her upcoming promotion to the grade of Rear Admiral. He asked if that was correct.

CAPTAIN RIVERA answered yes.

REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX asked if the USCG intends to have most of its people stationed at Kodiak live on the base.

CAPTAIN RIVERA answered it was not the desire of USCG to have 100 percent of the people live on base, the family housing project was due to an increase in people coming from new USCG assets. A USCG study identified an increase of personnel requirements due to an airframe change from the C-130J to the C-130H and bringing in two more OPCs to Kodiak.

REPRESENTATIVE LEDOUX remarked that the relationship in Kodiak between the base and the town is seamless, and she is concerned with the new on-base housing if everyone starts living on the base.

[2:02:16 PM](#)

CAPTAIN RIVERA agreed Kodiak is one place where the USCG could be at risk of isolating its people. Kodiak is a place where USCG personnel are completely involved in the community. She noted she has done two tours in Kodiak and the integration between the USCG and the community is one of the things that she loves about Kodiak. She said the USGC considers upcoming asset upgrades in Kodiak, but the goal is not to have 100 percent of personnel living on base. Nothing is changing, but the community relationship with Kodiak is one of those things USCG must always think about and work on.

MR. ANGAPAK thanked the USCG for their recent participation in the search and rescue of four children. He asked if the USCG plans to expand into areas where they are not physically present.

[2:04:37 PM](#)

CAPTAIN RIVERA replied the search and rescue case was a combination of work between the USCG, Alaska State Troopers, and the Alaska National Guard. The children were missing for over a day and ranged in ages between 2-14. The children had taken care of each other amazingly well and the way the search turned out was a blessing.

CAPTAIN RIVERA said one of the ways the USGC provides seasonal services to western and northern Alaska is through missions like Operation Arctic Shield. For the near future, that is how the USCG plans to continue providing its services to the region. As the seasons of activity expands in the Arctic, the USCG needs to address how to potentially expand its service.

[2:06:35 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR REVAK expressed appreciation for the USCG presence in Alaska, especially for its search and rescue activities. He said JASC and the legislature looks forward to working with the USCG to seek out how to help their men and women do a great job every day.

[2:07:09 PM](#)

At ease.

[2:11:16 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR REVAK reconvened the meeting and announced that Major General Saxe, DMVA Commissioner and Adjutant General of the Alaska National Guard, would provide an overview.

[2:11:39 PM](#)

MAJOR GENERAL TORRENCE SAXE, Adjutant General, Alaska National Guard; Commissioner, Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, said he could not ask for a better support team and introduced his staff members: Command Chief Master Sergeant Hinkley, Command Senior Enlisted Leader, Alaska National Guard; and Chief Warrant Officer Tucker, Aide-de-camp to the Adjutant General, Alaska National Guard.

[2:11:45 PM](#)

COMMAND CHIEF MASTER SERGEANT WINFIELD S. HINKLEY JR., Command Senior Enlisted Leader, Alaska National Guard, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Alaska, provided introductory remarks.

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE stated that each time he takes a new command he always poses the fundamental question of whether people or mission is more important. He said the lower ranked personnel

tend to say people are more important while senior personnel tend to say the mission is more important. He said his more nuanced response is that there are times when the mission unquestionably takes precedence, but creating a culture within the Alaska National Guard of putting the people first is important to him as a commander as well as everybody in a command position.

[2:12:59 PM](#)

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE said the Alaska National Guard is the only portion of the DOD that has a very distinct state and federal role. The Alaska National Guard is completely out of the strategic realm for a big military event and into the operational. He noted that when he first came to the military, he worked with reservists drafted in Vietnam who never deployed, but that is not the case now. Many individuals in the guard have deployed upwards of 15 times. He said he wants a seamless active duty relationship with the US Army and US Air Force that acts as one team and one fight.

He noted that the Alaska National Guard continues to build an unabated relationship with Mongolia, something that is important to him professionally. He noted that he will be in Mongolia in May 2020.

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE directed attention to photos that illustrate the Alaska National Guard's involvement with a recent earthquake and floods in Galena. He said he wants people to understand that the Alaska National Guard is, "here for all of Alaska."

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE said slide 4 illustrates where the Alaska Army National Guard (AKARNG) operates. They have 24/7 missions at Fort Greely with, "the 300 protecting the 300 million." AKARNG has Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA) Platforms in JBER and other places as well. They continue to expand with the desire to recruit where ever possible.

[2:14:52 PM](#)

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE commended AKARNG supervisors and leadership for being number one in the nation for recruiting and retention. He said there is a correlation between deployments and retention, and younger individuals coming into AKARNG want to deploy for training purposes.

He noted that AKARNG upgraded and expanded its capacity with larger CH-47 Chinook helicopters. AKARNG is excited about what the helicopters bring to Alaska in all aspects.

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE said slide 6 illustrates the 297th Military Police Company (297th MP CO) operating in Kuwait. All portions of AKARNG are deploying in larger numbers.

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE said AKANG is also incredibly operational with 24/7 missions. He noted that he will address what the 168th Wing brings to the fight with the KC-135 tanker and some future initiatives as well.

He explained that Clear Air Force Station (Clear AFS) is a tiny installation with an incredible amount of resources that includes long range discrimination radar (LRDR) that connects with current radar at Fort Greely and a spotter-sniper relationship that is run mostly by AKANG. AKANG has active duty members at Clear AFS, but that is not a typical mission for guardsmen.

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE said the 176th Wing is an incredibly operational wing at JBER. The wing upgrading to the C-130J aircraft with total C-17 aircraft integration is becoming the model on how to do things going forward and establishing an operational bent within the guard and air defense as well. It is another 24/7 mission.

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He said AKANG cannot say enough about their active duty partners. AKANG is happy with its aircraft upgrade from the C-130H to the HC-130J model. AKANG has increasing maintenance issues with the C-130H, but the maintainers are doing a great job. Like AKARNG, 2019 was the busiest year for AKANG with 385 deployed personnel.

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE said AKANG is impressed with everything that the USCG is doing; they are incredible partners. AKANG just completed over 2,000 rescues. He commended the 212th Rescue Squadron (212RQS) – 176th Wing and the 211th Rescue Squadron (211RSQ) – 176th Wing for what they do, 24/7, ready to go.

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE stated that the Alaska National Guard placed an emphasis on the Alaska State Defense Force (ASDF) over the past 12 months and their numbers have doubled in the past 12 to 18 months. ASDF is a good force enabler where members are always going to be state militia and will never activate out of state or deploy without extreme exception.

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE noted that an ASDF couple went to Puerto Rico a few years ago to work on water purification, communication, and cyber-related activity. He highlighted that ASDF personnel have full-time civilian jobs with expertise skills that the Alaska National Guard tries to capitalize on. ASDF recruitment numbers are up because the Alaska National Guard is going out and talking to people where they are at.

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE explained that he included the Red Cross in slide 9 because they are providing equipment and supplies for deployment to ASDF places in advance of need.

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MAJOR GENERAL SAXE said the Alaska Naval Militia (AKNM) is a small but mighty force. He noted that more state guardsmen and state militia deployed in 2019 than any time since 1994. He said he wants to emphasize deployment to make sure the entire team is getting out to protect Alaska. AKNM is 60 strong with USN and USMC reservists. Many people do not know AKNM, but the Alaska National Guard wants to make sure AKNM gets out and protects Alaska.

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE turned to slide 11 and explained that the Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA), along with a representative from the Office of Veterans Affairs (OVA), goes out to rural locations to talk to veterans. For example, DMVA assisted a couple regarding a housing entitlement issue. Getting out so that veterans can talk to an actual human being is important. The goal of DMVA is to provide help to every single veteran that needs help.

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE said DMVA thanks all veterans, but Vietnam veterans are of particular interest to the department. The Vietnam veteran is a demographic that the department wants to be very sure to get onto right away.

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He said the Alaska National Guard holds the Alaska Military Youth Academy (AMYA) near and dear. An AMYA graduation is something that makes one proud to see where kids were and where they are going in a short amount of time. He said he is glad that the Alaska National Guard is becoming more involved with AMYA graduates' direction, physical training, instruction, and becoming good mentors.

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE turned to slide 14, Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. He said he received a text

about a tsunami after the recent earthquake in Anchorage but his area was not affected. He said the Alaska National Guard will work alerting people when there are true emergencies.

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MAJOR GENERAL SAXE addressed slide 15, Way Ahead, regarding the future for rural operations, and slide 16, Our Area of Responsibility. He said the area of responsibility on the federal level is Alaska Command (ALCOM) and on the state level is the Alaska National Guard. It is a responsibility that he takes very seriously.

He remarked that the Alaska National Guard is too focused on Anchorage and Fairbanks. He said his goal is to get back into the portions of the state where the Alaska National Guard has not been in a while, something that will solve a lot of issues regarding recruiting, retention, and buy-in all over Alaska.

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE said rural operations is something that the Alaska National Guard has already started via operational capacity expansion in six or seven spoke-and-wheel hubs throughout Alaska. The hubs have long airfields that the Alaska National Guard can quickly get to with its aircraft.

He said along with what is going on with the Red Cross, the Alaska National Guard wants to make sure supplies get to locations now. Should there be threats to Alaska, the hub locations have community buildings that are also used for recruiting and retention. The Alaska National Guard is seeing evidence that getting out to rural communities results in youths wanting to come into the military or guard. The Alaska National Guard intends to cover the entire state and avoid introducing itself during a crisis.

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE called attention to Senior Master Sergeant Lucy Nagle, Rural Operations Program Manager/Tribal Liaison, Alaska National Guard who is from Bethel and is the point of contact for the entire state for rural operations. He said he cannot say enough good things about what she is doing. The Alaska National Guard continues to recruit well by getting out, meeting people, and following up on leads.

2:26:05 PM

He said slide 18 provides a visual of when the Alaska National Guard needs to deliver food and medicine supplies.

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE referenced Innovation and Future Missions and said the Alaska National Guard wants to make sure it understands Arctic requirements via a version of forward deployment in rural operations. The Alaska National Guard wants to make sure its pilots, crews, and army are familiar with the Arctic area and more importantly, the local community is familiar with the area.

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE detailed that the Alaska National Guard is going forward with cyber security for AKARNG and AKANG, a main emphasis point for the state.

He explained that future initiatives include potentially partnering with active duty mainly in Interior Alaska; integrating KC-46 aircraft into the force; being ready for a possible active duty partnership with the F-35 fighters coming to EAFB; and assuming any active duty role that Clear AFS requires.

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE said Alaska is one of eight states that will have a Space National Guard. The United States Space Force will be located at Clear AFS. The Alaska National Guard will have AKARNG, AKANG, and the Space National Guard.

[2:28:31 PM](#)

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE turned to slide 21 and emphasized that he has no tolerance for any toxic leadership or bullies and no tolerance for sexual assault or harassment. He said the bottom-line indicator of an unhealthy unit is a culture where people are telling inappropriate jokes. It is an indicator for potential harassment and or assault. The Alaska National Guard wants to stop jokes and "empowerment." He explained that he likes the word "empowerment," but the word is incomplete in the military. He said he has an expectation that people are going to take charge and move out.

MASTER SERGEANT HINKLEY explained that as a senior enlisted leader, he is General Saxe's advisor on health, moral, welfare, and training of the force. He said, "Our guardsmen are our citizens."

He detailed that 60 percent of the Alaska National Guard force is at drill-status for one weekend a month, two weeks out of the year. Most of the time they are employed inside of communities, so the Alaska National Guard partners and builds leaders within the communities right from the beginning. Some members are part of the Alaska National Guard unit from when they enlist to when they retire. Guard members do not want to leave Alaska because

they are proud and vested participants which permeates throughout the families, businesses, and the workforce.

MASTER SERGEANT HINKLEY noted examples of successful Alaska National Guard members: Private Erickson from Nome and Airman Henry from Fairbanks. He said both individuals have taken advantage of their education and training to carry forward with their military organizational values inside communities.

MASTER SERGEANT HINKLEY said the Alaska National Guard takes care of its members. There is zero tolerance for toxic leadership and sexual assault within their own households and within their organization.

[2:32:15 PM](#)

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE said Team Alaska is everybody - active duty, guard reserve, and civilians as well. He noted that the Alaska National Guard is conducting its annual exercise in Bethel for the first time. Members from AKARNG, AKANG, and civilian partners will participate in the exercise.

He concluded the presentation stating that "This we'll defend" is the very best mission statement that the Alaska National Guard could have.

CO-CHAIR REVAK expressed appreciation for his presence at the meeting, in the state, and all that he does. He said he is overwhelmed by all that the Alaska National Guard does in the state.

He noted that the Alaska National Guard has a large Title 10 component at any given time, from "the 300 guarding the 300 million" at Fort Greely, to the search and rescue scope of operations within the entire state. He pointed out that the Alaska National Guard created the Arctic sustainment packages, and the legislature presented an accommodation for their 2,000th rescue. He said everyone appreciates all that the Alaska National Guard does, from working with communities through the innovative readiness training program, helping construct things in communities, health care, all the way to the Space National Guard.

CO-CHAIR REVAK asked him to talk about the Title 10 component of the Alaska National Guard and how it relates in scope of operation to other states.

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MAJOR GENERAL SAXE replied the Alaska National Guard has more Title 10 than other states. That becomes a recruiting and retention tool where a lot of people want to come to Alaska to work full-time. The National Guard is typically part-time, but the Alaska National Guard is more operational than just about any state due to its strategic locale and large military presence with 24/7 missions. The Alaska National Guard has continuity with members having the same job for a long time. For example, some maintainers have been fixing the same aircraft for 30 years and that provides incredible depth.

REPRESENTATIVE SPOHNHOLZ said she was surprised to hear about maintaining aircraft that are 10 years older than she is and the focus on cyber security. She asked him to illuminate on what the Alaska National Guard is doing on the issue of cyber security.

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE replied the Alaska National Guard has a robust cyber security plan going forward. AKANG has com units at EAFB and JBER for transforming communication and cyber that looks proactively at threats, but more importantly, Title 32 or state-status provides the ability to thwart cyber threats. If a network goes down, depending on the network, the State of Alaska would be able to go in and help, and AKARNG has a civil support team to do the same. For individuals in Homeland Security, they are on the civilian side working with the Office of Information Technology (OIT) to bring networks back up.

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REPRESENTATIVE SPOHNHOLZ remarked that cyber security is the frontier that Alaska needs to be spending a lot more time on because it represents a vulnerability from attacks that can come from anywhere.

REPRESENTATIVE SPOHNHOLZ expressed appreciation for his sustained leadership to create a healthy workplace climate because it's a commitment that helps to lift everybody. She said true transformation takes place through a sustained, long term commitment to a subject that can only be effective as personnel are able to be. Efficacy depends on enabling people that maybe were victims of inappropriate workplace behavior in the past as well as those who maybe did not understand that their behavior was inappropriate.

CO-CHAIR TARR asked if the State funds all ASDF and AKNM activities.

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE answered yes; there are no federal funds when ASDF and AKNM fight fires because that is all State active duty. However, it is federal funds when AKNM is in Title 10.

MR. ANGAPAK remarked that during the glory days of the Alaska National Guard, every male child in rural Alaska could not wait to be 18 so they could enlist. He said Major General Saxe has been actively involved with the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) conventions for recruiting young men and women, but he does not know if rural Alaska will ever get back to those glory days. He asked how their recruitment of young men and women in rural Alaska is coming along.

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MAJOR GENERAL SAXE answered that recruiting is getting better via the Rural Operations Initiative by getting out and showing a presence. However, recruitment findings indicate that having operational equipment on site in rural Alaska creates interest from young people. The main reason people join the military is if a family member is in the military, like a family business. The "glory days" had a lot of people in the military and people saw that day after day. He said he has funding for rural Alaska recruits, but the magic number for a self-sustaining program in a rural hub-city location requires 12-15 people, which leads to fulltime people. The Alaska National Guard truly wants to expand recruiting to all places in Alaska.

He noted that the Alaska National Guard will restart its milk-run program to assist with recruitment. Personnel will be picked up on occasion in rural hub-city locations to drill in Anchorage or Fairbanks. The primary emphasis is to ultimately have people drill where they are. He said he hears repeatedly that part of the reason why people do not want to join at various rural locations is due to not getting to drill at those locations because there are not enough people. The Alaska National Guard has openings, is recruiting, and rural locations only require 12 people.

MR. ANGAPAK thanked him for his straight forward answer and encouraged him to continue his efforts. He said the Alaska National Guard showing its presence in rural Alaska is important.

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CO-CHAIR REVAK thanked Major General Saxe for his insight.

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At ease.

[2:43:49 PM](#)

CO-CHAIR REVAK called the meeting back to order. He asked Major General Saxe to introduce the final presenter.

MAJOR GENERAL SAXE announced that the final presenter is Mr. Jason Suslavich. He said he has known him for quite a while and he has incredible knowledge and detail level. He added that Mr. Suslavich toured the 168th Wing at EAFB five years ago.

[2:44:10 PM](#)

JASON SUSLAVICH, Director of National Security Policy and Senior Advisor, Office of U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan, Washington, D.C., said every time he brings colleagues from the U.S. Senate to Alaska, he shows off the military in Alaska, especially the Alaska National Guard. He said he repeatedly hears his colleagues say that they wish their National Guards were like the Alaska National Guard. It's an important testament to their recruitment, retention, and national service in Alaska.

He said he was honored to talk to committee about the critical role that Alaska plays in national defense. He issued the disclaimer that while he was appearing on behalf of U.S. Senator Sullivan, he included some new material that may or may not align 100 percent with the senator's views.

MR. SUSLAVICH explained that he would address the evolution of the DOD Arctic strategy, the emerging great power competition in the Arctic, and the future opportunities and challenges of an open and accessible Arctic and how that could affect infrastructure and investment in Alaska, including six areas of priority for Senator Sullivan. He said it's basically why the Arctic matters to legislators and their constituents, and how this committee and the Alaska State Legislature can assist with advocacy efforts.

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MR. SUSLAVICH commenced with his presentation entitled, Arctic Security. He referenced the slide, Department of Defense Arctic Strategy and noted that he has been with Senator Sullivan since his election to Congress.

He noted that early going was a little tough on Arctic issues, especially with DOD. The 2013 Arctic Strategy Report initially addressed Arctic issues in a 13-page report that mostly

contained pictures and maps, mentioned climate change 5 times, and mentioned Russia only once in a footnote.

MR. SUSLAVICH said Senator Sullivan was able to push DOD to write the 2016 Arctic Strategy. He shared a story about a meeting with the then chair of the Senate Arms Services Committee, Senator McCain, to illustrate the effort it took to get that second Arctic strategy report in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA).

MR. SUSLAVICH detailed that the 2016 Arctic Strategy was a great first step that resulted in DOD getting the message on the Arctic. The strategy mentioned Russia 25 times, included focus on freedom of navigation in the Arctic, defending the homeland, deterrence, and alliances. The strategy was more serious with robust military strategy, but it lacked the means for executing the strategy.

He explained that the 2019 Arctic Strategy was a more robust 19-page report that focused on building Arctic awareness, enhancing Arctic operations, and strengthening the rules-based order in the Arctic. However, the strategy continued to lack the means, infrastructure, and presence operations needed to secure and safeguard the Arctic and Alaska. He noted that another Arctic Strategy report will come out in 2022.

MR. SUSLAVICH said his topic would address the emerging great power competition in the Arctic.

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MR. SUSLAVICH advised that the White House released the National Security Strategy in 2017 and the National Defense Strategy in 2018. The two documents addressed the return to a great power competition with Russia and China, and how the United States would not have the Russia or China that they want to see.

He said the strategy lays out that China is the pacing threat to the United States in the Arctic over the next 50 years. China came out with its own Arctic strategy a couple of years ago called, "The Polar Silk Road," because of their interest in the resources, transit opportunities, and participation in Arctic governance. Importantly they called themselves a near-Arctic state, despite the fact that there is no such thing as a near-Arctic state. Only Arctic states have the right to participate in governance of the Arctic region.

MR. SUSLAVICH directed attention to the graphic illustrating Russia's Arctic build-up. He said he would argue that Russia is the largest current threat the United States has in the Arctic. Russia has 16 deep-water ports, 14 operational airfields, a new Arctic command, and nearly 50 icebreakers, some of which are nuclear powered. He explained that according to the Council on Foreign Relations, the reason for Russia's activities in the Arctic is because 90 percent of their gas reserves are in the Arctic and 20 percent of their current GDP comes from the region. He said he is not saying Russia is going to invade Alaska, but General O'Shaughnessy, commander of USNORTHCOM, had this to say about Russia and China in the Arctic region:

It has become clear that the defense of the homeland depends on our ability to detect and defeat threats operating both in the Arctic and passing through the Arctic. Russia's fielding of advanced, long-range cruise missiles, capable of flying through the northern approaches and striking targets in the United States and Canada, has emerged as the dominant military threat in the Arctic. Meanwhile, China has declared that it is not content to remain a mere observer in the Arctic and has taken action to normalize its naval and commercial presence in the region in order to increase its access to lucrative resources and shipping routes. I view the Arctic as the frontline of defense for the United States and Canada.

MR. SUSLAVICH said he's thankful that the media has caught on to this narrative in the past few years.

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MR. SUSLAVICH displayed a slide of news clips from major publications talking about activity in the Arctic. He said Senator Sullivan likes to point these out at committee meetings because if the media is getting it, the American people are also getting that message.

He said there are a lot of issues and threats, but Congress is helping to lead the way on the Arctic. From FY2017 to FY2019, the NDAA included dozens of things related to the Arctic, including strategic Arctic port, new icebreakers, naval Arctic capability studies and strategies, and a focus on Arctic search and rescue. Congress is pushing DOD to take the Arctic region much more seriously.

MR. SUSLAVICH said the last part of his presentation will focus on the future of the Arctic and why it matters to Alaska. He

said he believes it is about education, presence, and infrastructure.

MR. SUSLAVICH addressed Arctic education, noting that U.S. Senators Sullivan and Murkowski ask every DOD nominee to visit Alaska and see what the state means to the U.S. military. Present and former senior leader visits with Senator Sullivan include Secretary of Defense Mattis; Secretary of Defense Esper; General Milley, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Air Force Secretary Wilson; General Goldfein, Chief of Staff of the Air Force; General Berger, Commandant of the Marine Corps; Richard Spencer, former Secretary of the Navy. He said the reason for bringing the senior leaders to Alaska is that the state sells itself. Senior leaders get on the ground after their 10-hour flights and they understand how important and how strategic Alaska is.

MR. SUSLAVICH said Arctic education matters because it leads to increased presence. Notable examples includes retaining the 425th Brigade Special Troops Battalion (BSTB), the only airborne brigade in the Arctic and the Indo-Pacific at JBER; bringing the F-35 fighter to EAFB; USMC conducting exercises in Seward and Adak in 2019; increasing focus on modernizing JPARC; improving Red Flag Alaska; and upgrading the 18th Aggressor Squadron at EAFB.

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MR. SUSLAVICH directed attention to the slide that illustrates Alaska's strategic location. He said General Billy Mitchell once stated, "Whoever holds Alaska will hold the world." Also, an op-ed in Defense News cowritten by Secretary Wilson and General Goldfein stated the following:

The Arctic has become even more important to the nation, both a northern approach to the United States as well as critical location for projecting American power; its geostrategic significance is difficult to overstate.

MR. SUSLAVICH said there is a strong education effort, but the Arctic also needs investment in infrastructure. He noted that Congress is working on this as well.

MR. SUSLAVICH addressed the slide, Navy Times: "Worst Orders Ever?"—Pentagon Plans Arctic Ports. He said the slide shows that the Arctic education effort is breaking through. An article in the Navy Times referenced Senator Sullivan's provision on a

strategic Arctic port as well as the reopening of Adak. If retired admirals see fit to author an article criticizing a provision, that means they fear it, that means it has a chance of surviving in the bill, and that means the Arctic is starting to get into the national narrative.

[2:58:00 PM](#)

MR. SUSLAVICH referenced the slide, Strategic Importance of the Arctic. He noted that the slide quoted former Secretary of the Navy, Richard Spencer, on the need for a strategic Arctic port. The slide illustrates a comparison between the distances from the Port of Anchorage to the Arctic Circle: 1,500 nautical miles, and from Florida to Maine: 1,200 nautical miles. DOD has 10 strategic ports along the eastern coast. He remarked that a senator or congressman from Florida would never accept a single port in Maine to cover their shoreline, and that is why Senator Sullivan is passionate about pushing on the lack of strategic ports between Anchorage and the Arctic.

MR. SUSLAVICH said Senator Sullivan believes that strategic Arctic ports is about surge, infrastructure, creating a place for the USN or USCG to resupply and refuel, oil spill response, and to project forward presence in the Arctic. Senator Sullivan is thinking about a series of ports with locations left up to DOD assessment.

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MR. SUSLAVICH addressed the slide, Priorities. He said Gen. O'Shaughnessy has talked about how the United States sees threats coming into and through the Arctic. The [Distant Early Warning] (DEW) Line system in Canada is Cold War era technology. Russia has made substantial investments in their long-range missile technology since the Cold War and the United States must do the same to its defensive systems.

MR. SUSLAVICH noted that General O'Shaughnessy stated during a recent USNORTHCOM meeting that defensive systems technology is a key area of effort for him. He said he anticipates the upcoming NDAA in FY2021 will address long-range missile technology.

He remarked that focus on the Arctic and how Alaska is important requires bringing more equipment, training, and joint presence operations to the state. He noted that USMC and the USN recently held operations in Alaska. He added that Maj. Gen. Andrysiak previously talked about a replacement for the SUSV, an action with possible funding in FY2023.

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MR. SUSLAVICH said he knows many committee members are interested in the Ted Stevens Arctic Center. Senator Murkowski has a bill addressing the center and Senator Sullivan's job is to get the center into the NDAA this year. The center requires focus on standing up a cadre of knowledge within DOD specifically on Arctic issues. The center is similar to the Dan Inouye Center that is currently in Hawaii.

He thanked Senator Coghill and the Alaska State Legislature for showing support for the Ted Stevens Arctic Center via SR 2. He said resolutions from the legislature mean something, they help Senator Sullivan, Senator Murkowski, and Congressman Young by showing Alaska "circles the wagons" on initiatives that they believe in.

MR. SUSLAVICH said previous presenters addressed JPARC and how amazing the range is. JPARC modernization includes more threat emitters, better aggressors, and USMC training in JPARC. Enhanced USMC training at JPARC is a personal issue for Senator Sullivan.

He noted that Senator Sullivan continues to address how to grow missile defense. Senator Sullivan was instrumental in adding a new missile field to Fort Greely for dealing with the North Korean threat.

MR. SUSLAVICH explained that basing KC-46A aircraft in Alaska is immensely important to Senator Sullivan. The senator speaks to literally every senior DOD leader and many journals on the importance of bringing the KC-46A to Alaska. Fifth-generation F-35 fighters are beginning to arrive in Alaska and the fighters require the KC-46A aircraft. He pointed out that Alaska will be home to over 100-combat-coded, fifth-generation fighters, the most in the world.

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MR. SUSLAVICH said he would like to see more investment in the Arctic. Alaska has received \$1.3 billion to \$1.4 billion for military buildup over the last five years to support the F-35 fighter beddown, homeland missile defense, and a recapitalization of the USCG. However, the United States must reflect more on how important the Arctic is to the country.

He noted that both Secretary Mattis and Secretary Esper have called the Arctic a key strategic terrain. Secretary of State Pompeo said the region has become an arena for great power

competition and the Arctic sea lanes could become the twenty-first century Suez and Panama canals. Senator Sullivan and the rest of the Alaska congressional delegation are committed to ensuring Arctic investment matches the rhetoric.

MR. SUSLAVICH said in addition to the three pillars, Senator Sullivan also likes to talk about Alaska in terms of history pillars, which is: a hub of combat air power, a cornerstone of missile defense, and a strategic platform for expeditionary forces. Senator Sullivan sometimes adds a fourth pillar and that is the Alaska people. He adds that because he understands that whatever the United States invests or does in the Arctic, input must include Alaska's great people, especially Alaska Natives who know the Arctic.

He stated that the Arctic is in Alaskans' DNA and the United States must draw upon Alaskans' generational knowledge to drive the Arctic focus forward, continue education about the Arctic, promote additional presence in the very strategic region, and ultimately fuel the investments that the Arctic region will need for the upcoming decades.

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CO-CHAIR REVAK thanked Mr. Suslavich and noted the committee's appreciation for the work that the Alaska congressional delegation does for the military, its presence, and the appropriations that occur in Alaska. He asked him to relay the committee's gratitude to the federal delegation.

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There being no further business to come before the committee, Co-Chair Revak adjourned the Joint Armed Services Committee meeting at 3:05 p.m.