



2 February 2021

Memorandum from Alaska Civilian Armed Services Team (ACAST)

Subject: ACAST Annual Report, Calendar Year 2020

Greetings from the Alaska Civilian Armed Services Team (ACAST). ACAST is a volunteer/pro-bono advisory activity, and participants serve as appointed by the Governor of the State of Alaska. ACAST was established by Administrative Order 291, under State of Alaska Governor Bill Walker. The Purpose and Duties of ACAST is to “provide strategic and actionable recommendations to the Governor in the form of task-specific briefings and reports informed by strategic planning documents, and recommend appropriate strategies for direct, ongoing civil-military collaboration, to:

1. Maintain and increase Alaska’s military capacity and capability in both the active component and guard and reserve forces; and
2. Acquire future missions, infrastructure, and recurring military exercises in Alaska for military forces based inside and outside of the state.”¹

In accordance with the Administrative Order, ACAST seeks to meet on a quarterly basis and provides an Annual Report. After establishment in Summer of 2018, ACAST members worked to develop and promulgate a report, submitted to Governor Walker who in turn, provided to Governor Dunleavy in early December 2018.

Following the transition activities between administrations, ACAST reinitiated activities in Winter 2020, and throughout Calendar Year 2020 has regained momentum as an advisory body. ACAST Co-Chairs extend their appreciation to State of Alaska Commissioner for the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs, Maj Gen Torrance Saxe, Alaska National Guard in restarting coordination activities for ACAST in late 2019. Following an initial coordination meeting on 19 February 2020, ACAST conducted Quarterly meetings on 1 April, 24 June, 9 October and 3 December 2020. Each of these meetings achieved quorum and advanced important discussions and actionable follow-up and follow through. Each meeting was provided an agenda and summary of discussions. These are appended as Annexes to this report.

In meeting the purpose of Administrative Order 291 in Calendar Year 2020, in addition to the quarterly meetings, ACAST Co-chairs have delivered three coordinated memorandums of recommendations to the DMVA Commissioner for onward movement considerations to the Office of the Governor. A fourth memorandum is in development and should be completed before 30 December 2020. These memorandums include:

¹ <https://gov.alaska.gov/admin-orders/administrative-order-no-291/>



1. Overall memorandum of recommendations for Military Investments in Alaska. This memorandum included supporting summary analysis for each recommendation and prioritized recommendations based on the expert insights of the assigned ACAST team. A prior version delivered on 29 July 2020 was updated and resubmitted on 18 November 2020.
2. Recommendations with supporting analysis in replacing Eisenhower era KC-135 aircraft assigned to the Alaska Air National Guard with longer range and modern KC-46 “Pegasus” air refueling aircraft. A completed memorandum was provided to DMVA Commissioner on 18 November 2020.
3. Recommendations with supporting analysis in relocating Headquarters U.S. Space Command from interim location at Colorado Springs Colorado to Anchorage Alaska. A completed memorandum was provided to DMVA Commissioner on 18 November 2020.
4. Recommendation memorandum to support/advocate for completion of the Long-Range Discrimination Radar (LRDR) at Clear Air Force Station Alaska. Due to technical challenges (as highlighted in a June 2020 Government Accounting Office (GAO) report) and construction/installation delays in response to Coronavirus 2019 (COVID19) health protection concerns, the project is estimated to be a year late in completing. As requested by the Commissioner, DMVA, ACAST provided a memorandum of advocacy and support to complete the project without further delay following the successful inoculation of the workforce with the new COVID 19 immunizations.

Each completed memorandum is provided as an Annex to this report. While these memorandums serve as useful consolidation and synthesis of ACAST deliberations in Calendar Year 2020, it will be important for the team to gain feedback to learn if there is a more useful manner in which the team can deliver ACAST advice and recommendations from the State of Alaska DMVA and/or the Office of the Governor.

In accordance with the existing Administrative Order, ACAST provides the below 2020 Report of Recommendations of feasible, suitable and acceptable initiatives that, if implemented, would advance the posture, capability, resiliency, morale and community connectedness of U.S. military forces stationed in Alaska. These recommendations would assist U.S. forces ability to better defend U.S. National Interests in Alaska, and surrounding regions, while also addressing key issues affecting the health and well-being of U.S. military forces and their dependents.

Accordingly, the ACAST provides the following points and supporting discussions as the 2020 Report of Recommendations.

1. Comprehensive analysis for development of an Arctic deep-water port.
2. Federal capital investment for multi-year planning and funding for the Alaska Marine Highway system.
3. Advocacy for KC-46 augmentation to existing KC135s at Eielson AFB.
4. Improve professional licensure portability and quality education opportunities for school-age military dependents.
5. Chartering a study on a suitable replacement for Alaska National Guard HH60 Blackhawk helicopters with CV-22 Osprey tilt rotor aircraft.



6. Summary study and advocacy to support re-establishing an enduring U.S. Navy presence in the Aleutians. A summary study provides needed analysis for advocacy to the Secretary of the U.S. Navy to re-establish enduring U.S. Navy presence with dedicated facilities in the Aleutians.
7. Mission and installation enhancements to the Ground-Based Interceptor (GBI) units at Ft Greely Alaska based on the mission importance to U.S. defense.

Discussion:

Comprehensive analysis for development of a U.S. Arctic deep water ports.

The National Defense Authorization Act over the past several years has directed Department of Defense Studies for deep water Arctic ports. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) recently announced port expansions for the port of Nome that advances the possibility of a U.S. deep water port. Complementing the Port of Nome aspects is a “port complex construct” involving both the Port of Nome and safe harborage associated with Port Clarence. The Bering Straits Native Corporation owns the site of the former U.S. Coast Guard LORAN station at Port Clarence, a natural deep-water harbor near the villages of Teller and Brevig Mission. It is seeking potential customers, including traffic from the development of a nearby flake graphite mine, the Graphite Creek prospect owned by the mining company, Graphite One. Other local governments such as the Northwest Arctic Borough have expressed interest in other sites such as Cape Blossom. As this point, there remains no official designation and insignificant funds are yet appropriated to realize a truly capable U.S. Arctic deepwater port. Meanwhile, the security dynamics of the U.S. Extended Economic Zones (EEZ) of the Bering, Chukchi and Beaufort Sea regions continue to witness rising traffic, that challenges the waterways management and enforcement of U.S. statutes and regulations for the 17th District of the U.S. Coast Guard. Establishing strategic U.S. Arctic deepwater ports would provide suitable basing, administration and logistics to project power to better secure the U.S. Arctic EEZ. ACAST is appreciative of the USACE announcement and strongly believes the need to move forward with planning and investments to secure deepwater ports critically needed for defending the maritime approaches to the across the homeland of the U.S. Arctic region.

Further, the August 2020 mishap aboard the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Healy, highlights the challenges of the long lines of communications from the Healy’s homeport in Seattle to the U.S. Arctic region. Establishing a home port closer to the Arctic with full depot level repair capability is a considerable, and in fact, a quite massive investment in heavy infrastructure, base development, family quarters and more, particularly since no corresponding commercial infrastructure yet exists in Alaska. In the long term, there is great value in establishing such facilities in Alaska, and in particular, in the Arctic. A future construct oriented to a joint civil-government development of Alaskan ports—may prove a wise and forward-thinking investment. However, until such a facility could be established, it is wise in maintaining future Polar Security Cutter (PSC) home ports in Seattle, leveraging existing commercial investments, that reduce the cost to the U.S. taxpayer. However, there should be consideration and deliberation in either developing or enhancing existing infrastructure in Alaska to serve an expeditionary/intermediary function providing logistical and affordable level of repair function for PSC Arctic operations. Locating one or more Polar Security Cutter expeditionary support facilities at locations such as the existing facilities at Seward, Kodiak or



a refurbished location at Dutch Harbor in the Aleutians or alongside future developments at a deep-water port in Nome, can possibly provide the USCG PSC's (and other USCG plus U.S. Navy vessels) an important third option between repair at sea or return to home port in Seattle. With the understanding that establishing and sustaining deepwater ports in the Arctic region capable to support U.S. Coast Guard and U.S. Navy vessels requires strategic choices such as designation of geographically suitable locations, access to and from established maritime transportation routes and ports, engineering and infrastructure analysis, a comprehensive port analysis is likely a requirement to enable and justify capital investments, particularly, in order to secure needed federal funding.

Multi-year U.S. federal funding of the Alaska Marine Highway System.

Since publishing the November 2018 ACAST Report, the Alaska marine highway system has experienced further degradation in equipment, and additional funding challenges, putting this vital link connecting Alaskan coastal communities more at risk. The system provides a vital line of communication and transportation enhancing U.S. maritime homeland security and defense posture. A failing marine highway system sends a signal of fading maritime resolve to U.S. adversaries who may question the nations' will and ability to support its remote Alaskan coastal regions and people.

The marine highway system provides much more than a vital link for coastal Alaskans to transportation and goods, and in particular, U.S. Coast Guard members and their families depend on it for moving to and from the eleven Alaska Coast Guard installations that are their duty stations, including our nation's largest Coast Guard base, U.S. Coast Guard Air Station Kodiak. Without a dependable ferry schedule, published well in advance, U.S. Coast guard families cannot plan their moves to and from these postings. Similar to U.S. Federally subsidized air and rail transportation, U.S. federal subsidizing the Alaska marine highway system is in the U.S. national interest.

While the State of Alaska has been expected to support day to day operations and maintenance, there is simply not enough State of Alaska provided funding to support vessel and infrastructure recapitalization. As such, multi-year U.S. Federal funding is needed to provide replacement vessels and refurbish port facilities. In order to realize such capital investment of U.S. Federal funding, it is essential to inform and secure Alaska Congressional Delegation support for advocating capital improvement needs for the Alaska Marine Highway System.

Advocacy for KC-46 augmentation to existing KC135s at Eielson AFB.

As a cross-functional and multidiscipline team of leaders, ACAST respectfully advocates the U.S. Air Force augment the existing KC135 "Stratotanker" Air Refueling aircraft at the 168th Air Refueling Wing, Alaska Air National Guard Eielson AFB, Alaska with KC-46 "Pegasus" Air Refueling aircraft. In light of rising Great Power Competition in the Arctic, U.S. force posture in Alaska is ever more critical to preserve and defend U.S. national interests, which includes the U.S. Homeland. The Russian Federation military continues to test U.S. and Canadian resolve in approaching U.S. and Canadian Air Defense Identification Zones (ADIZ) via Long Range Aviation conducted by Russian strategic (such as the Tupolev Tu-95 "Bear") bomber aircraft.

The U.S. Air Force 5th Generation F-22 aircraft assigned to 11th Air Force and under command of the Alaska NORAD Region of the Canada-U.S. North American Aerospace Defense Command continue to



respond to these tests, are critically reliant on KC-135 aircraft assigned to the Alaska Air National Guard. The need to augment these aircraft with KC-46 “Pegasus” air refueling aircraft to provide 11th Air Force fighters additionally needed refuelers to allow increased force capability to intercept these and other threats to the homeland to better protect U.S. citizens who call Alaska home, is overdue. In sum, it is the respectful recommendation of ACAST there are insufficient numbers of air refueling aircraft to service the largest concentration of U.S. Air Force 5th generation fighters on the planet.

The State of Alaska ACAST understand the competition for allocating KC-46 aircraft in the Pacific region is keen. However, Alaska is geographically aligned simultaneously close to Europe (via polar routes) and the Asia Pacific region. The understood alternatives to stationing KC-46 aircraft in the Pacific region are Hickam AFB Hawaii and Anderson AFB Guam. Based on the benefits of the high latitudes (and corresponding shorter distances in great circle navigation, stationing KC-46 at Eielson AFB provides greater flexibility to support challenges across eastern Asia more readily than KC-46 aircraft stationed at Hickam AFB Hawaii. Meanwhile, stationing KC-46 aircraft at Anderson AFB Guam separates air refueling aircraft from any nearby co-located permanently stationed fighter aircraft...necessitating staging/deploying the aircraft to an alternate location to provide needed escort of the range limited fighters over the vast distances of the Pacific.

In sum, stationing KC-46 aircraft at Eielson AFB in lieu of either Hickam AFB Hawaii or Anderson AFB Guam provides the U.S. Air Force the ability to “swing” between theaters...supporting U.S. Northern Command & NORAD and U.S. Indo-Pacific Command...while providing “at the ready” air refueling to support the “no-fail” mission of NORAD and Alaska NORAD region.

As the Arctic region continues to witness rising activities between great power nations, to include substantial increases in military operations of the Russian Federation, the need to project capable aircraft to defend the approaches to U.S. sovereign territory is significant and accelerating. Without the ability to force extend tactical-range fighters to America’s Arctic frontier in substantial numbers, the U.S. Air Force may be forced to yield the initiative of U.S. Arctic approaches to America’s Arctic competitors.

As KC-46 aircraft are well suited to active/air reserve component (ARC) associations for aircrew and maintenance, establishing these aircraft at Eielson AFB alongside Alaska Air National Guard provides an opportunity to establish a KC-46 Active/ARC association to glean more use from these invaluable aircraft to force extend the capabilities of the Alaskan-based 5th generation fighters. ACAST recommends the State of Alaska consult with the Alaska Congressional Delegation to discuss this matter with current and any incoming Department of the Air Force leadership in early 2021. In addition to Department leaders, ACAST recommends discussing this matter with Headquarters Air Mobility Command at Scott Air Force Base Illinois and the National Guard Bureau in Washington, D.C.

Improve professional licensure portability and quality education opportunities for school-age military dependents

The Alaska Department of Military and Veterans’ Affairs has engaged with broader state agency partners on a number of different fronts to address the military licensing situation. The current Law



- All professional licensing boards in Alaska have the option to issue an expedited, temporary, 180-day license for military spouses. This law has been in place since 2011; it is unclear if all boards and military spouses know this option is available. The State of Alaska offers more than 100 different licenses. Most are issued by the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development's (DCCED) Division of Business, Corporations, and Professional Licensing. However, others are issued by the Departments of Health and Social Services, Labor, and Education and Early Development. Discussions are ongoing at the cabinet level on how best to move forward on military spouse license reciprocity and other related issues. More information on licensing provisions for members of the military and their spouses is available here:

<https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/cbpl/ProfessionalLicensing/MilitaryLicensing.aspx>

Compacts. The State Defense Liaison Office from the Department of Defense (DoD) is tracking and assisting nationally on four licensing compacts between states. Those four licensing compacts have acceptances across a number of states and are seen to be some of the licensed occupations, besides education, that have higher participation from military spouses: eNLC (Nursing) - 31 member states; PT COMPACT (Physical Therapy) - 21 member states; PsyPact (Psychology) - 7 member states; and REPLICA (EMT, paramedic) - 14 member states. Alaska currently does not participate in any of these compacts.

Current and Past State Legislation has yet to resolve licensure for military spouses. Past legislative efforts sought to require an annual report from the DCCED on how many temporary licenses were issued to military spouses each year by license type and an interstate medical licensure compact for physicians.

Recognizing Alaska has a strong temporary licensing law, the ACAST strongly advises the State of Alaska to take steps so as not to be seen as lagging behind other states in easing the difficulty of the frequent moves required by a military career for military spouses with professional certifications. Alaska's economy will further benefit from being able to better utilize all available skilled workers. Accordingly, ACAST Co-chairs and members are willing to support engagement in coordination Commissioner, DMVA with the Alaska State Legislature in the pending 2021 legislature season to advocate on this matter.

Charter study for consideration to replace Alaska Air National Guard (ANG) HH-60s with CV-22s.

Alaska's vast size makes response to remote Search and Rescue (SAR) cases highly complicated, often times requiring HH-60s to be joined by HC-130 air refueling aircraft from Anchorage basing to the SAR case and return. Meanwhile, due to the extreme environment, minutes count. A few too many minutes long in the response can turn a rescue of for live humans into a recovery of human remains. In comparison to HH60s, USAF CV-22s have nearly double the range of a HH-60 and fly nearly twice the speed, creating a game changing capability in support of Alaska ANG's lifesaving mission.

While ACAST presents very strong advocacy for such a study, the ACAST would caution such a study serving to down-scope platforms, which could be catastrophic in a mass casualty event (such as disaster response to an earthquake or Tsunami). In sum, fewer platforms limit options for



commanders in crisis response. A summary vs a comprehensive study on risk and benefit is likely warranted, and ACAST recommends the State of Alaska consult with the Alaska Congressional Delegation to discuss this matter with current and any incoming Department of the Air Force leadership in early 2021.

Summary study and advocacy to support re-establishing an enduring U.S. Navy presence in the Aleutians.

A summary study provides needed analysis for advocacy to the Secretary of the U.S. Navy to re-establish enduring U.S. Navy presence with dedicated facilities in the Aleutians. Nations across the east Asia are advancing and increasing the tempo in which they are projecting maritime forces through the Bering, Chukchi Seas and into the Arctic Ocean in accordance with their national interests. This includes the People's Republic of China. ACAST is highly appreciative of recent Aleutian activities and exercises from U.S. Navy forces, which highlight the need to increase the need to transition basing from an expeditionary to a permanently manned basis. Refurbishing and expanding logistics facilities at Adak would provide needed capability to support U.S. Navy forces responding to crisis and deterrence missions in both the Northern Pacific and the Bering Sea.

As a maritime anchor in the Western North Pacific and the gateway to the Arctic, re-establishing enduring U.S. Navy presence in the Aleutians would serve as a deterrent and demonstrate resolve U.S. interests will be protected and defended. As current Department of the U.S. Navy leadership have stated in public forums the Navy's completion of an Arctic Strategy is expected soon, ACAST recommends chartering a summary study by the State of Alaska and onward consulting with the Alaska Congressional Delegation to discuss this matter with current and any incoming Department of Navy leadership in early 2021.

Mission and installation enhancements on the Ground-Based Interceptor (GBI), based on the mission importance to U.S. defense.

The GBI force at Ft. Greely Alaska is the U.S. protection from a rogue missile attack. The mission reliability of the GBI's should be among the highest priorities for the Department of Defense. Ft. Greely remains an austere location, challenged by extreme cold and extensive winters. Mission and installation enhancements to the GBI force at Ft. Greely to improve human and machine performance and resiliency under Arctic operating conditions is in the national interest and should be a national priority. In addition to the GBI's themselves, installation enhancements to ensure readiness of launch and support capabilities is warranted. If/as needed to justify the appropriations, a summary study should be considered to describe shortfall, proposed solution and appropriate costs, prioritized by the on-scene commander, responsible for mission assurance.

The State of Alaska ACAST understand there are no easy solutions to the above set of recommendations. Advancing each one requires analyzing vulnerabilities, risks, costs and competing priorities. However, the regret factors associated with not advancing on these recommendations, should one or more scenario develop that urgently highlight the need...should be given the highest possible consideration in deciding to seek the needed authorizations and appropriations.



Conclusion

The year 2020 was a substantial year of transition for ACAST. Overall, the team has now achieved needed meeting frequency and is accomplishing the stated administrative order to provide “strategic and actionable recommendations to the Governor (via the Commissioner of DMVA) in the form of task-specific reports informed by strategic planning documents and recommend appropriate strategies.” With a series of renewals of members ACAST wishes to thank the DMVA Commissioner in his patience and guidance, which has resulted in new momentum for this advisory body.

Respectfully presented.

Annexes follow: ACAST CY 2020 Meeting Agendas & Summaries

Respectfully presented.

v/r


RANDY KEE, Maj Gen, USAF (Ret)
ACAST Co-Chair
Executive Director,
Arctic Domain Awareness Center
University of Alaska



BILL POPP
ACAST Co-Chair
President and CEO
Anchorage Economic Development
Corporation

