

9 October 2020



## Alaska Civilian-Armed Services Team (ACAST) Meeting Summary 24 June 2020

The below is a written summary of the ACAST meeting held on 24 June 2020, via Cisco WebEx Teleconference. Note, details are included in the Cisco meeting recording sent via email.

### **Attendees included:**

Co-Chairs Bill Popp, Randy "Church" Kee, VADM (Ret) Barrett, Maj Gen Saxe, Tim Jones, Carl Uchtyl, and John Whiddon,

### **Unable to join:**

Joshua Church, Douglas Goodwin

### **Additional participants included:**

DMVA Stanley Wright

### **Discussions.**

Meeting was called to order by ACAST Co-Chair, Bill Popp.

- Brief review of the associated read ahead and noted that both the agenda and read ahead are informal working papers and intended only to facilitate discussions of ACAST. Unless so reflected the contents of working papers do not reflect any particular member of ACAST or any particular organization or entity associated of ACAST participants.
- Also noted was that ACAST remains a volunteer pro-bono advisory activity, and participants serve as appointed by the Governor of the State of Alaska in accordance with the Administrative Order 291 establishing ACAST by then State of Alaska Governor, Bill Walker.
- Reference order: <https://gov.alaska.gov/admin-orders/administrative-order-no-291/>

### Conducted Order of Business:

- 1) Briefly reviewed last actions of ACAST 2020 Meeting #1 (see prior summary) on 1 April 2020. Motioned for approval of 1 April 2020 Meeting, seconded and put to a vote. Motioned carried with no dissent.
- 2) Reviewed order of business for ACAST 2020 Meeting #2, motioned for approval, seconded and put to a vote. Motioned carried with no dissent.



- 3) Conducted a roundtable on draft memo for ACAST advocacy to Governor Dunleavy's review, concurrence and onward approval to the Alaska Congressional Delegation, in accordance with existing Administrative Order.
- a) Final version of paper is provided as Annex to this report.
  - b) Principal items of discussion:
    - i) Alaska Marine Highway is a critical need for U.S. military forces stationed in Alaska, particularly U.S. Coast Guard in Southeast and South-Central Alaska. Federal appropriations are critical to recapitalize the system for port infrastructure and conveyance platforms.
    - ii) Stable and multiyear Federal funding for the Marine Highway is a critical need to make smart investments in recapitalizing the system. Accompanying U.S. Federal planning and policy that relates restoring/revitalizing the Alaska Marine Highway is in the national interest.
    - iii) Improving Port infrastructure associated with the Alaska Marine Highway is as critical as revitalizing/modernizing the vessels.
    - iv) A functioning Alaska Marine Highway system is in the national interest and a failing/failed Marine Highway system poses a security risk in an era of rising competition among great powers and rising concerns of illicit activities that threaten domestic security across Alaska's coastal regions.
    - v) The Aleutian Islands region are considered particularly vulnerable and most in need of a functioning marine highway system due to the challenges of weather and the increasingly unreliable aspects of commercial air services.
    - vi) Recent U.S. Navy and U.S. Marine Corps exercises in the Aleutians illustrate the security dimension of the region. Queries should be considered to the Department of the Navy in understanding the Department's intentions/designs for future maritime activities in the Gulf of Alaska, Aleutians and Bering Sea regions.
    - vii) Maintaining the long-term viability of the Ground Based Interceptors at Ft Greely Alaska is critical for national defense. Sustained efforts in advancing readiness, and capabilities of existing interceptors, associated command & control systems and launch infrastructure remains a funding commitment of the Department of the Air Force. Is there enough being accomplished/spotlighted to ensure such long-term viability?
    - viii) The value the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex (JPARC) is significantly important to military readiness and proficiency for U.S. Air Force, Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard aircrews and weapon system teams. What are the Department's plans to maintain this capability in terms of range instrumentation modernization? Are there enough U.S. Federal resources planned and programmed to maintain long-term viability?
    - ix) The establishment of U.S. Space Force is going to have significant implications for Alaska. Clear Air Force Station, Eareckson Air Station, North Warning System radars, and associated infrastructure and forces will likely transition from the U.S. Air Force to the U.S. Space Force. Based on the importance of Space Force to



Alaska and Alaska for the overall national defense, Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson is a superb site location for U.S. Space Command, a Functional Unified/Combat Command for the operational control of U.S. military space assets.

- x) KC-46 Air Refueling aircraft are critical to replace aging KC-135 Air National Guard aircraft at Eielson AFB.
- xi) F-35 Aircraft at Eielson AFB should gain an Air National Guard Associate Unit, in order to gain suitable aircraft utilization and extend the combat proficiency of these new 5<sup>th</sup> generation multirole fighters.
- xii) Port of Alaska (Anchorage) is a critical military port, serving Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, as well as onward bases served by the rail/road belt into Interior Alaska. Not enough is yet being accomplished to recapitalize this critical port by Department of Defense or other U.S. Federal departments/agencies.
- xiii) Arctic climate change/warming is affecting military infrastructure in Alaska, such as coastal North Warning System sites through coastal erosion and thawing permafrost. What engineering studies or other measures should be considered to address the effects of warming temperatures?
- xiv) State of Alaska is well suited for more U.S. space, with existing capabilities at the Kodiak Space Port and Poker Flat Launch range.
- xv) Alaska National Guard has assigned space officers, to include the State of Alaska Adjutant General.
- xvi) Inputs were made to address draft memorandum, direction for small edits associated with the above discussion and direction to Co-Chair Kee to add a section advocating Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson as a suitable location to site HQ U.S. Space Command. Once added, Co-Chair Kee would e-coordinate memo with participating ACAST members and provide to DMVA Commissioner. Task was closed on 29 July 2020.

Note: The above items of discussions are suitably incorporated into the memorandum provided to Commissioner, State of Alaska Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (please see Annex at the end of the report).

- 4) Additional items of discussion not directly associated with the above draft memorandum
  - a) Military spouse State of Alaska licensing. Question, can State of Alaska learn from other state's examples? State of Utah was listed as a possible example as a template.
    - i) State of Alaska licensing is unfortunately contributing to unemployment of military spouses and is a problem fixed through policy, regulation and/or statutory adjustment.
    - ii) Upcoming State of Alaska Legislative season is a suitable venue to introduce proposed legislation to address this problem/concern.
  - b) ACAST Turnover. Approximately 40% of ACAST members conclude their service at the end of 2020. What measures should DMVA take to address this looming loss of experience on the committee?



- 5) Conducted discussions on remaining Calendar Year 2020 (to serve as a potential template) and beyond.
  - a) ACAST will plan to conduct quarterly meetings to provide an opportunity to offer insights into needs and perspectives oriented to the U.S. military in Alaska across the ACAST team that reflect the local/regional views. Each quarterly meeting will provide a summary report to transmit to the Commissioner, DMVA in order to allow the Commissioner to onward provide to these updates to State of Alaska Chief of Staff, and onward to the State of Alaska Governor.
  - b) During quarterly meetings, ACAST will seek to gain insights from Commissioner, DMVA on issues of concern to the Alaska National Guard and other military or veteran-related concerns in order to provide advice and/or other actions that are allowable per the ACAST administrative order.
  - c) ACAST will seek to provide an annual meeting report that summarizes needs, perspectives and recommendations to provide to the State of Alaska Governor.
- 6) ACAST received a series insights and reflections from the MVA Commissioner and Adjutant General of the Alaska National Guard. Most of these reflections were captured in the discussions associated with item #3 and #4 as discussed previously.
- 7) Established tentative date for next meeting (planning late September 2020).
- 8) Meeting chair provided recap discussion and gained closing reflections from ACAST participants.
- 9) Meeting chair requested motion to conclude meeting, which was received, seconded, and voted with no dissent. Meeting was adjourned.

End of Report.

+++++

## Annex



*Date 29 July 2020*

Alaska Civilian Armed Services Team (ACAST)

Memorandum of Recommendations

In support of Military Investments in Alaska

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



*ACAST...Actionable recommendations to improve the Defense and Security Landscape in Alaska.*

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."<sup>1</sup>

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, with the most recent meeting accomplished on 24 June 2020. The current co-chairs will lead ACAST activities until December 2020.

In accordance with the existing Administrative Order, ACAST's 2018 Report of Recommendations remains an enduring list 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 effecting the health and well-being of U.S. military forces and their dependents.

As the highest of near-term priorities these recommendations, the ACAST Team provides the following points and supporting discussions for Congressional, Department of Defense and Department of Transportation review and approval considerations.

These are:

1. Basing studies to station USAF KC-46 air refueling aircraft in Alaska.
2. Continued planning and development of an Arctic deepwater port.
3. Multi-year planning and funding for the Alaska Marine Highway system.

Since the completion and submission of the ACAST November 2018 report, several key factors have arisen that present new complications to the security and defense challenges impacting the safety and well-being of U.S. citizens and U.S. national interests in Alaska and the surrounding region. Accordingly, additional factors warrant attention:

These are:

- Conduct a charter study on a suitable replacement for Alaska National Guard HH60 Blackhawk helicopters with CV-22 Osprey tilt rotor aircraft.
- Re-establish enduring U.S. Navy presence with dedicated facilities in the Aleutians.
- Mission and installation enhancements to the Ground-Based Interceptor (GBI), based on the mission importance to U.S. defense.

---

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



- Advocacy to the Secretary of the U.S. Air Force, for establishing U.S. Space Command (A functional Unified Command for the U.S. Military) at Anchorage Alaska.

Discussion:

*KC-46 replacements to KC135s.* 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 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 (Tupolev Tu-95 “Bear”) bomber aircraft. The U.S. Air Force 5<sup>th</sup> Generation F-22 aircraft assigned to 11<sup>th</sup> 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 Eisenhower era (1950s) KC-135 aircraft assigned to the Alaska Air National Guard. The need to upgrade these aircraft to longer range and modern KC-46 “Pegasus” aircraft to provide 11<sup>th</sup> Air Force fighters extended range to intercept these and other threats to the homeland to better protect U.S. citizens who call Alaska home, is overdue.

*U.S. Arctic deepwater 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. deepwater port. However, no official designation has yet to be established and insignificant funds to realize a truly capable U.S. Arctic deepwater port have been secured. 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 17<sup>th</sup> 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.

*Multi-year funding of the Alaska Marine Highway System.* Since publishing the November 2018 ACAST Report, the Alaska marine highway system has witnessed further degradation in equipment, and additional funding challenges, putting this vital link to secure Alaskan coastlines at grave risk. The system provides a strategically vital line of communication and transportation directly affecting U.S. security and defense posture. A weakened and failing marine highway sends a signal of fading resolve to U.S. adversaries that may be emboldened and test the nations’ ability to support remote Alaskan coastal regions. 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 is expected to support day to day operations and maintenance, there is simply not enough 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.

*Charter study for consideration to replace Alaska Air National Guard 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, to which the state lives in constant anxiety of the next large scale event).

*Re-establish an enduring U.S. Navy presence 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. Re- 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.

*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.

*Advocacy to the Secretary of the U.S. Air Force, for establishing U.S. Space Command (A functional Unified Command for the U.S. Military) at Anchorage Alaska.* The Secretary of the U.S. Air Force, supported by the Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for installations, environment and energy, will make a final decision in "early 2021" (according to multiple press releases) in a basing decision for U.S. Space Command (USSPACECOM). This new, functional unified command of the U.S. military will be led by a 4-star flag/general officer and be comprised of approximately 1,400 military and civilian personnel, plus supporting industry. There are three minimum criteria that any location must meet:

- The location must be within one of the 150 largest metropolitan statistical areas in the U.S., based on 2019 population estimates from the Census Bureau. (Anchorage is #69)<sup>2</sup>
- The location must be within 25 miles or less of a military base. (Anchorage is home of Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, headquarters to Alaska Command, 11<sup>th</sup> Air Force, Alaska NORAD Region, U.S. Army Alaska, and Alaska National Guard Joint HQ)
- The location must have a livability index score of at least 50 points out of 100, based on statistics kept by AARP's Public Policy Institute. (Anchorage scores a total score of 50.)<sup>3</sup>

South Central Alaska is home to Alaska Aerospace Corporation, with business offices in Anchorage and space launch operations at the Kodiak Pacific Spaceport Complex, a state-of-the-industry spaceport on Kodiak Island.<sup>4</sup> USSPACECOM, a unified command, will provide combatant command for all operational space forces assigned to the military services, which will include the newly approved U.S. Space Force. Alaska is home to a number of installations and capabilities that can transition to U.S. Space Force in an organized, trained and equipped function, which include assets located at Eareckson Air Force Station (AFS) on Shemya Island, Clear AFS and Ft Greely and other remote sites. Based on alignment of operational assets, a location in the higher latitudes that are

---

<sup>2</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_United\\_States\\_cities\\_by\\_population](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_United_States_cities_by_population)

<sup>3</sup> <https://livabilityindex.aarp.org/search#Anchorage+AK+USA>

<sup>4</sup> <https://akaerospace.com/>



associated with space defense mission, presence of a premier commercial launch facility and location decision parameters that meet or exceed existing criteria, Anchorage and Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson is exceedingly suitable to serve as the host of USSPACECOM.

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.

Respectfully presented.

*V/r, Randy "Church" Kee*

*Bill Popp*

RANDY KEE, Maj Gen, USAF (Ret)  
ACAST Co-Chair

BILL POPP  
ACAST Co-Chair

