Role of Alaska in the New (Arctic) Great Power Competition

Mr. Shannon Jenkins
The Arctic is a competitive space
- Largely considered a “strategic buffer” since the end of the Cold War.
- China & Russia declared the Arctic a priority.
- Arctic Council observer States nearly double the number of member States.
- Allies and partnerships critical to prevailing / maintaining cooperative & sustainable Arctic.

Rising great power competition in all domains.
- Growing competition for influence / resources.
- Challenges to Rules Based Order.
- Maritime domain, like all global commons, presents opportunity for exploitation.

Changes / Increased activity drives up risk
- Subsistence locations and timeframes
- Energy, mineral, fisheries, & other commercial exploration / extraction.
- Navigable Arctic will ultimately have dramatic impacts on the flow of maritime commerce.
- Travel & tourism industry latest surge.

Increased demand for U.S. governance and leadership in the Arctic.
Perceptions of Alaska
U.S. Coast Guard in Alaska

- **Operational Presence / Influence**
  - Icebreakers – National Assets / Mobile Infrastructure
  - OPC / FRC / C-130J Infrastructure Improvements
  - Task Forces

- **Strategic Presence / Governance / Engagement**
  - 2019 Arctic Strategic Outlook
  - Arctic Coast Guard Forum
  - International Maritime Organization
    - Polar Code
    - Vessel Traffic Management in Bering Strait
  - Alaskan Arctic Coast Port Access Route Study

- **Leadership Engagement**
Background
Defining “The Arctic”

Drivers of Strategic Change & National Security Interests

Dramatic changes in the Arctic environment.
- Ice-diminished waters.
- Thawing Permafrost.
- Weather Extremes.
- Coastal Erosion.
- Shifts in Activity.

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- Preserving Peace through Strength.
- Unique opportunities for leadership through cooperation on best maritime governance practices.

Characterized by near term volatility, but driven by enduring trends.
F/V Island Enterprise Medivac (12-14 Sept 2019)

- Stroke Victim 770nm west of AIRSTA Kodiak
- No radio communications or fuel at St. Paul island
- C130 refueled H60 2x during storm.
- Total flight time = 26 hours, 4 flight crews, 1 life saved
- Equivalent to rescuing person in DC with helicopter from Miami.
A broad portfolio of interconnected, holistic governance interests *influenced by* presence.
Emergent Environmental Threats to National Security and DHS Operations in the U.S. Arctic