In Support of USNORTHCOM
ALCOM Arctic Senior Leader Summit 2021
Exercise Crisis Decision Support

A presentation by

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ALCOM ASLS21 Tabletop Exercise

Via three varied scenarios of Arctic region security and defense challenges, the ASLS21 tabletop exercise will support senior military leader orientation and understanding of the complexities of assessing, characterizing, and responding to Arctic crises.

Due to the integrated nature of Canada and U.S. Arctic oriented commands, that include active-duty service member exchange programs, ASLS21 Exercise program will include participation of Canadian military members.
1. In Brief: A commercial 747 aircraft enroute from Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport to Frankfurt International Airport Germany experiences maintenance failure approximately 400 nautical miles northeast of Utqiagvik Alaska and conducts an emergency landing on the polar ice pack. Upon landing the aircraft breaks apart, with many serious injuries, but remarkably few deaths. While the ice around the aircraft appears solid, there are many open leads in the vicinity. An approaching polar storm is concerning. Time is of the essence to locate the aircraft and to save the survivors.

Exercise participants should consider the potential for coordination with Russia and Canada as part of the response (which is in accordance with the Arctic Council’s Search and Rescue agreement) and leverage what all of the Arctic nations through the Arctic Coast Guard Forum (ACGF) have considered. For the exercise, suppose that a Russian icebreaker with helicopters on board could reach the crash site sooner than anyone else, how would such assistance be coordinated?

2. Possible courses of action for overall response (as starting suggestions).
   - COA 1: Recommend to National Authorities to conduct emergency measures to rescue survivors on all possible speed as a U.S. military lead initiative. Review and activate/implement existing (Arctic suitable) large scale SAR plans from USCG, USNORTHCOM or other organizations. Request support from signature nations in accordance with Arctic Council Search and Rescue (SAR) Agreement.
   - COA 2: Recommend to National Authorities that due to risk of rescue with little to no assets nearby U.S. military is better postured to support another national led approach that may have more suitable assets much closer to effect a response.

3. Range of needed decisions/actions (as starting suggestions).
   - Conducting reconnaissance of crash site
   - Determine suitable/acceptable risk approach in rescue: Ice breaker with Helicopters, Submarine, Aircraft, other (such as a surface rescue)?
   - If supporting another national led response, how best to communicate, coordinate, support?
   - How best to coordinate/support response, if Russian or Chinese military is best suited to effect initial response.
   - Request support from signature nations in accordance with Arctic Council Search and Rescue (SAR) Agreement.
   - Establishing U.S. Federal Response and associated Command and Control, designated supported and supporting organizations.
   - Activate supporting logistics for on-scene support.
   - Airdrop of emergency supplies and pararescue to stabilize survivors.
   - Effecting withdrawal of survivors to safe location to stabilize.
   - Establishing nearest shoreside recovery site to stabilize survivors.
   - Plans and implement movement of survivors from recovery site to onward definitive care.

4. Decision management: Tracking of decisions made
1. **In Brief:** Utqiagvik and Browerville (combined population of approximately 5,500), and Wainwright (population of approx. 600) and smaller villages in between face significant damage as the result of a severe late fall storm with hurricane force winds, saturating rains, and a record-breaking coastal storm surge, which collapse water, power, and telecommunication systems and compromise sanitation systems, flooding food cellars and damaging homes, many to the point of creating unsafe living conditions. Right on the heels of the storm, a rapid cold front descends from the polar region, adding to humanitarian crisis. The size of the humanitarian crisis requires a large-scale response. Exercise participants should consider what is the overall DSCA requirement?

   • Crisis action measures such as providing temporary housing/shelter, medical food, etc.?  
   • Air and sealift evacuation due to the severity of the damage? If the decision is to stabilize and recover on-site, what logistics support is needed and what sequence is needed to effect recovery?

2. **Possible courses of action for overall response (as starting suggestions):**
   - COA 1: IAW National Response Framework, support a State of Alaska Led response, supported/led by National Guard appointed Dual Status Commander IAW Governor of Alaska and North Slope Borough (NSB) Mayor coordination to implement associated emergency plans from NSB and State of Alaska Emergency Managers
   - COA 2: Support alternative courses of action for response derived/agreed by National and State Authorities

3. **Range of needed decisions/actions (as starting suggestions):**
   - Conducting reconnaissance of disaster site. Consider a gender analysis of affected community.*
   - Implementing supporting plans and measures (logistics, supply, medical and more) as directed/coordinated by designated authorities. Ensuring responder gender diversity to meet needs of affected population.*
   - IAW supported authorities, determine the scope of response...what is needed and how urgent, and what are the priorities for the response? (divided by vulnerable population - consider collecting Sex and Age Disaggregated Data (SADD) - to prioritize the response?*
   - Characterize the response: Is principal driver to stabilize, clothe, feed and shelter to enable refurbish/rebuild or evacuate to an alternative location, or a combination?
   - Determine and implement temporary shelter logistics packages to support homeless. (With appropriate safeguards for displaced women and children).* What is most immediate available and how suitable?
   - Determining health Implement medical response measures to support urgent and emergent health concerns.
   - Determine and responding to food needs for disaster victims (for example, did floods destroy food caches/underground storage?).
   - Determining if airlift of victims is needed and where to relocate?
   - Conducting airdrop of emergency supplies and pararescue to stabilize survivors if runway is unusable.

Coordinating and providing follow-on logistics to support response and recovery.

* = Input provided by USNORTHCOM J5 Deputy POLAD

4. **Decision management:** Tracking of decisions made

| Tabletop Exercise Move 2: Defense support of civil authorities for a large-scale humanitarian assistance mission. | **Exercise Scenario:** *Arctic coast storm surge crisis.* |
1. In Brief: A non-Arctic nation with extensive Arctic interests and global ambitions establishes a persistent presence near the U.S. EEZ boundary approximately 200 NM northwest of Utqiagvik Alaska, arriving at their location in late summer. Several vessels presenting the same national flag are reported at this location, in which the respective national media is reporting as a “science expedition.” Imagery is obtained with one of the vessels displaying deck-mounted medium caliber weapons, and there are unverified reports the flotilla may be equipped with anti-ship missiles and ship-launched unmanned aerial vehicles.

Additional imagery suggests one or more of the vessels may either be fishing or collecting marine life and conducting scientific research, with the position of the vessels drifting into U.S. EEZ waters periodically by as much as several miles before relocating outside of the U.S. EEZ.

The flotilla continues operating in a manner designed to disguise the true nature of their operations, and several vessels may be operating as either warships, government vessels, or as private research vessels. Some evidence suggests several vessels may be operating in support of a “mothership” that is maintaining a position just over 200NM from U.S. shoreline, with the smaller vessels illegally fishing/collecting marine life inside the US EEZ and then offloading their catch to the “mothership.”

An unarmed U.S. Coast Guard Polar Security Cutter, exercising in the Chukchi Sea as part of the USCG annual Arctic Shield exercise, proceeds to approach the flotilla to hail the vessel and transmit a warning that research and fishing in U.S. EEZ waters by foreign flag vessels is not permitted.

Upon the Cutter’s approach to the flotilla, the armed foreign flag vessel sends a warning message to the USCG Cutter to not continue the approach to the vessel. Cutter attempts to communicate with the flotilla via standard marine radio protocols are ineffective, receiving only garbled and unintelligible transmissions from the flotilla.

Wishing to prevent escalation, the USCG Polar Security Cutter withdraws to a safe distance to monitor the flotilla, which following the incident repositions just outside of 200 nautical miles from shore, while maintaining a provocatively close proximity to the U.S. EEZ.

National command authorities are asking for options to ensure U.S. sovereign jurisdiction can be maintained over U.S. EEZ waters while avoiding escalation and loss of life if practical.

Exercise participants should consider: What are feasible, suitable and acceptable measures to de-escalate what appears to be a provocative behavior by a non-Arctic nation, testing U.S. resolve near America’s EEZ. It is not clear if these measures are conducted in a coordinate manner or in isolation. Could these provocations be in response from friction between the U.S./U.S. Allies in another region outside of the Arctic? What should U.S. actions be if actions become more aggressive and threatening? What military measures could be taken to reduce the potential for conflict, yet respond with strength? What do U.S. Allies (in particular Canada who shares interest in the nearby Beaufort Sea recommend?
2. Possible courses of action for overall response (as starting suggestions).

- COA 1: Recommend measures to de-escalate scenario, such as monitor flotilla, while U.S. seeks diplomatic actions to address grievances.

- COA 2: Recommend measures to enforce U.S. jurisdiction in accordance of UNCLOS (noting that U.S. is not a signature authority) to remind the national flotilla their violations of U.S. waters will not be tolerated. These measures may include show of presence flights by USAF tactical fighter aircraft or other measures to enforce U.S. sovereignty.

3. Range of needed decisions/actions (as starting suggestions).

- Conducting and continuing reconnaissance of location to verify vessels at fine scale.

- Requesting measures/means to characterize what is being placed in the water vs what may be taken out of the water.

- Assessing if other vessels/aircraft from other non-friendly nations are converging in the operating area.

- Assessing if additional measures are being taken against U.S. and Allies in other regions/ mediums as a distraction.

- Determining Command and Control and overall response measures. Establishing supported and supporting relationships for the crisis response.

- Determining suitable monitoring measures that reduce risk of escalation if COA 1 is selected.

- Determining suitable measures to enforce U.S. jurisdiction, that may involve some measures of escalation if COA 2 is selected.

- Determining engagement criteria if hostile action is encountered by U.S. and allied forces in the region.

- Assessing measures to protect national territorial waters and coast lines if escalation occurs.

4. Decision management: Tracking of decisions made
Ready for Questions & Discussion

...Thank you for your feedback!