SUMMER ROUNDTABLE

Challenges at the Northernmost Border:
Regional Series Focus: the Bering Straits Region

FOLLOW-UP REPORT
Virtual Conference
Monday, August 24, 2020
Thank you to our special guests:
Lt. General David Krumm, Honorable James P. DeHart and General Kenneth Wilsbach

Alaska photos by Megan Alvanna-Stimpfle
Thank you to our Alaska Congressional Delegation:
U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski, U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan and U.S. Congressman Don Young

Alaska photos by Megan Alvanna-Stimpfle
## Table of Contents

### AGENDA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome &amp; Invocation</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major General Randy “Church” Kee</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will Mayo</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ana Hoffman</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overview</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julie Kitka</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaska Congressional Delegation</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Congressman Don Young</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Guest</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Kenneth S. Wilsbach</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Changing Strategic Situation in the Arctic</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rodger Baker</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern American Dynamics</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honorable James P. DeHart</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alaskan Dynamics</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lt. General David Krumm</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regional Dynamics & Priorities

Megan Alvanna-Stimpfle
Robert Tokeinna, Jr.
Blanche Garnie
Gail Schubert
Melanie Bahnke

Final Comments

Major General Randy “Church” Kee
Julie Kitka

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Videos

General Wilsbach and Discussion
Alaska Congressional Delegation
Rodger Baker, Stratfor
Honorable James P. DeHart
Lt. General David Krumm
Bering Straits Dynamics and Priorities

Presentations

Rodger Baker, Stratfor
Lt. General David Krumm

Further Reading: Submitted by Megan Alvanna-Stimpfle

Native Nation Building in the Arctic: Infrastructure Investment

Briefing materials from the Virtual Conference held on August 24, 2020 can be found at:
www.nativefederation.org/military-partnerships/
Welcome & Invocation
Will Mayo, Co-Chair, AFN

Overview
Julie Kitka, President, AFN

Alaska Congressional Delegation
U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski
U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan
U.S. Congressman Don Young

Special Guest
General Kenneth S. Wilsbach, Commander, U.S. Pacific Air Forces; Commander Air Component Command, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, Hawaii
Introducted by Lt. General David Krumm
Program Moderator: Randy “Church” Kee, Major General, USAF (ret); Executive Director, Arctic Domain Awareness Center of Excellence, University of Alaska, Anchorage

Changing Strategic Situation in the Arctic
Rodger Baker, Sr. Vice-President of Strategic Analysis, STRATFOR

North American Dynamics
Honorable James P. DeHart, U.S. Coordinator for the Arctic Region, Office of the U.S. Coordination for the Arctic Region, U.S. Department of State
Alaskan Dynamics


Regional Dynamics & Priorities

Gail Schubert, President and CEO, Bering Straits Native Corporation
Melanie Bahnke, President and CEO, Kawerak

PANEL: INNOVATIVE MODEL FOR WATER AND SANITATION

Moderator: Megan Alvanna-Stimpfle, on behalf of Kawerak
Frances Ozenna, Tribal Coordinator, Native Village of Diomede
Robert Tokeinna Jr., Vice Chairman, Wales Native Corporation
Blanche Okboak-Garnie, Mayor, City of Teller

Final Comments — Adjourn by 11:00 AM

Randy “Church” Kee, Major General, USAF (ret), Executive Director, Arctic Domain Awareness Center of Excellence
Julie Kitka, President, AFN
Welcome & Invocation

MAJOR GENERAL RANDY “CHURCH” KEE
Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. This is Church Kee with the Alaska Domain Awareness Center supporting President Julie Kitka, Alaska Federation of Natives for the Challenges at the Northernmost Border, a Regional Series Focus on the Bering Straits Region.

We are honored to have the gift of your time to join us this morning.

MAJOR GENERAL RANDY “CHURCH” KEE
Well, good morning to you all. We'd like to give you the floor to provide a welcome and invocation, and I also welcome Ana Hoffman to join us as well.

So Will, let me give you the floor, sir, and then if you’d like to pass the mic over to Ana as well, but sir, you have the floor.

WILL MAYO
Well, thank you very much, and I just want to welcome everyone to the call, and we're looking forward to the discussion today very much, and so I will go ahead and start us out with an invocation and then I’ll turn it over to Ana. So please join me, and pray in your own way.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for this beautiful, wonderful day, for another opportunity to serve people to be a part of this great nation, this great state to join with leaders whom you have placed in positions of authority to be a blessing to the population that you have called us to serve. We ask that you would give us your wisdom today and guide us in our discussions to address the real needs that we experience on the grounds here in Alaska. So Father, we commit ourselves to this discussion and ask for your presence and your blessing, and I pray that in Jesus’ name. Amen.

WILL MAYO
Thank you very much. Ana?

ANA HOFFMAN
Quyana, Will. Good morning, everyone. Thank you for participating in this discussion this morning, I haven't been on a plane since the beginning of March, and this opportunity this morning, I feel like I’m traveling to the Bering Straits area, I’m looking forward to hearing about the challenges and the solutions coming from the region, and it will inspire the rest of the state as we listen. Quyana. Good morning.

MAJOR GENERAL RANDY “CHURCH” KEE
Thank you so very much for that, Will and Ana. We are grateful for that invocation and reflections.

I’ll turn the floor over to President of Alaska Federation of Natives Julie Kitka for an overview and reflections. Julie.
Good morning, everyone, and a big welcome to our congressional delegation, Congressman Young, Senator Murkowski, Senator Sullivan. Welcome to our Lt. Governor Kevin Meyer.

We’ll go ahead and get started. This is the first in our regional series and a big thank you to the community for the Bering Straits region, Gail Schubert, Bering Straits Native Corporation, and Melanie Bahnke, Kawerak. And welcome General Wilsbach and General Krumm and others.

Thank you very much. We did have a remarkable series of distinguished speakers for today. We do have all three members of the Alaskan congressional delegation online right now, so we’d like to get a chance to have Senator Murkowski, Senator Sullivan, and Congressman Young. If it’s okay with the congressional delegation, we’ll go in that sequence.

Congressman Young has a flight to catch, so if we get too tight, we may move it up, but now let’s go ahead and go as we had published.

First I’d like to give the floor to Senator Murkowski.

Good morning, everybody.

Good morning and good afternoon to you there. Actually, just coming up afternoon. So thank you for coming to join us. We respectfully call for your reflection, Senator.

Thank you, and I will be brief. I’m here in Alaska, so it is morning for me. And respecting the Congressman’s flight schedule, I will be brief and appreciative in my introduction this morning.

I want to thank AFN for what they’re doing, not only with the Alaska series, but now getting a little more granular with the regional folks, because I think we recognize that in different parts of our state we are seeing different clearly our lead-off Bering Straits is a very, very key focus.

I want to give a particular welcome this morning in recognizing the participation of General Wilsbach. He has proven himself to not only be a great military leader but a friend to Alaska and the relationship that he developed with us in Alaska I think is important as he carries that forward as the commander of the U.S. Pacific Air Force. So it’s good to have him on the call this morning, as well as General Krumm in his new role here in Alaska. And also recognizing that we have
Rear Admiral Bell with the Coast Guard with us. It is imperative that when we talk about these relationships with our Alaska Native communities, the impact on the Arctic, that our military partners be present, and they clearly are in force.

I also want to recognize and welcome a new face, and that is Jim DeHart, who is now the U.S. coordinator for the Arctic region within the State Department. I had an opportunity to speak with Mr. DeHart last week and share some of my perspectives on the Arctic and again welcome the designation within the State Department as that lead person on Arctic issues.

And we talked about the role of the military. We talked about the defense perspective in the Arctic. And I encouraged him and suggested that what he would see led by AFN would be an extraordinary partnership, a partnership that has yielded benefits and has really helped to advance the conversation in ways that are constructive and really very, very all-encompassing.

I had an opportunity a couple days ago to visit with the leaders in the Bering Straits region, Melanie Bahnke, Gail Schubert, many of the others that gave me the update as to what is happening in the region most relative to COVID. It was instructive. It was important. It was also somewhat discouraging to hear that some of the social statistics that we knew would be visited upon us at a time when we go into isolation would bear out, and I’m sure you will hear on the call earlier or later this afternoon that what we have seen with the increase in sexual assaults, homelessness still is a big issue, and the suicide rate doubling.

When you think about the statistics that we know and we have lived with in not only this region, in so many parts of the country — of Alaska, so much of it comes back to basic need, basic necessity, overcrowding, lack of sanitation. So when we talk about response to COVID, when we talk about how we can ensure that the health disparity that we already know is greater with our Alaska Native people than other populations, we have a great deal to do.

So the focus that we will see today on what we can do better, in a more innovative and a more collaborative and cooperative way when it comes to water and wastewater, the initiatives that have been going on there is so important. But also not just focusing and dwelling on the very, very hard things, but the opportunities that lie ahead. And that’s where the deep water port at Nome, the land conveyance there at Port Clarence, all of this can offer hope and opportunity within the region.

I will conclude my remarks with just, again, a great appreciation for the leadership that has been brought together that these regional focuses now moving forward will allow us to have a spotlight in perhaps a more targeted way. Know that I look forward to being part of the conversation. Thanks so much.

**MAJOR GENERAL RANDY “CHURCH” KEE**

Senator Murkowski, thank you so very much for those reflections. We’re grateful for that really both looking at the challenges and the opportunities and thank you for taking very seriously the challenges and being very much focused on how to take best advantage of the opportunities.

I’d like to now turn the conversation over to U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan. Senator, for your reflection, I see you’re up online here. Sir, we respectfully offer you the floor.
SENATOR DAN SULLIVAN

Well, good morning, everybody. Like Lisa, I’m in Anchorage and it’s great to see everybody. Congratulations again to AFN for another great conference. Julie, Will, Ana, everybody. These are really, really important, really impressive. I’m looking at the agenda today. It’s an incredible agenda.

By the way, I don’t know if General Wilsbach is on yet, but, it’s a good sign for Alaska. You do time here as a three-star, and boom, you pick up your four-star. So congrats to General Wilsbach. We’ve got a friend who understands us, but it’s also a sign that, you know, you spend time in the Alaska command and there’s a strong history, given how important we are strategically, that those three-star generals typically become four-star generals.

So General Krumm, if you’re listening, you know, your future is probably very bright now that you’re taking over these important positions in the Air Force.

And I also want to welcome Ambassador DeHart. I think it’s a great sign that the administration has pointed a senior official solely focused on the Arctic at the State Department. I had a great discussion with him as well.

Lisa highlighted a lot of the challenges. We certainly are focused on those, given the pandemic, but what I really wanted to focus on, particularly given the theme of today’s conference, is the opportunities, because I think they’re very, very significant. It’s an exciting time. Again, I think AFN has done an amazing job of making this connection between the military, our strategic interests as a nation, as a state, and the Alaska Native community.

I never tire of bragging about not just Alaska, more veterans per capita than any state in the country, but Alaska Natives serving at higher rates in the military than any other ethnic group in the country. It’s a special patriotism that makes this kind of bond between our military, our state, and the Alaska Native community very natural but also really important. So it’s exciting.

So let me just touch on a couple of these opportunities that just happened very recently. We passed the National Defense Authorization Act in the Senate. It’s a really strong bill. The House bill is a little different than ours, but we’re in conference right now with them. They attached the Coast Guard bill, which I share that subcommittee in charge of the Coast Guard. So we’re hoping that the NDAA this year can be not just the defense bill but the Coast Guard bill. That would be great for our state. There’s a ton of really good things in both bills for Alaska.

You know, with this NDAA we’ll have gotten to approximately 1.6 billion in military construction in Alaska in the last four years. That’s missile defense, F-35s, Coast Guard infrastructure. That’s really important for the national security of America.

It’s also been really important for jobs. And with all of us working together, how we fix the 8A program and last year’s defense bill, this provides huge economic opportunities for our Alaska Native community. The head of the Army Corps of Engineers in Alaska committed to me that his goal is 90 percent of that 1.6 billion would go to Alaskan contractors, businesses, workers.
So if you haven't met with them yet, we'd be glad to put a meeting together with the head of the Corps. They let the contracts out on these significant military investments that are literally going on in Alaska right now.

Part of the NDAA this year includes the Department of Defense Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies. That’s something Lisa and I and Don worked on. That would be a great kind of centralized point for the entire U.S. military, say the Arctic needs to be studied as a strategic area in Alaska. So that’s in the bill. I know a lot of you cared about that.

A really important one, the Air Force because of General Terrence O'Shaughnessy’s work, increased communications with low earth satellite capability. That’s in the bill. That’s important strategically for Arctic military comms, but that can also be used for commercial communications that can dramatically increase our connectivity, particularly in our rural communities.

Lisa mentioned that we’ve made really big progress on the strategic Arctic port, both in the Environment and Public Works Committee as well as the Armed Services Committee.

The Air Force put out its service-specific strategy for the Arctic. It builds the Department of Defense strategy. If you haven’t taken a look, it’s a really, really long document. Of course it talks about our state throughout the whole document.

I recently had the secretary of the Air Force, Barbara Barrett to Alaska. Lisa and I hosted her. She was up in Alaska about five weeks ago. I had the opportunity to bring her to Utqiagvik and Kotzebue. She was very impressed. We’re trying to get her to make the decision here soon on basing the KC-46, the new air refueling tanker, in Alaska. It’s between us and Guam at this point. I think that we’re likely to get that. I’m hopeful. So that’s another area of exciting opportunities for us.

Finally about 60 days ago the president put out a memo that was to his national security cabinet. Essentially it was entitled “Advancing America’s Strategic Interests in the Arctic and Antarctica,” and it was all about, from the president to his national security team, how do we advance our interests in the Arctic. More icebreakers, which we’re building; more infrastructure, more ports. The cabinet officials got back. They’re working to make final recommendations to the president.

Just in the last couple weeks I’ve talked to the Secretary of State, the National Security Advisor, the president, the Homeland Security Secretary, the Commandant on the Coast Guard, the Secretary of the Navy. The key issue I’ve been able to respond to that memo from the president, you need more icebreakers, we’re finally building them, but you need to put the icebreakers in the Arctic. I think there’s general agreement on this, that they should be home ported in our state.

This is a huge opportunity for Alaska, and because we’re talking about the Bering Strait region, you know, we’ve worked closely with the leadership in that community, whether it’s with regard to transferring lands on Port Clarence and Point Spencer. I think that’s a great opportunity with regard to ports in the military and utilizing that natural deep water port there.

And so there’s just a lot going on. It’s very positive right now for the future, and a lot of it all of you are going to pay a critical role.
One final goal for the region, I want to thank Melanie, Megan Alvanna-Stimpfle, so many other leaders on the issue of water and sewer. The pandemic has highlighted this issue in a huge, stark way. CDC wants people to wash their hands five times a day. You can't do it if you don't have running water.

The good news is, just in May we had a bill pass out of the Environment and Public Works Committee that has another major plus-up for the water and sewer program, 300 million. This was a bill of mine that builds on the bill that we got passed for a whole new water and wastewater grant program for small disadvantaged communities.

So we're going to continue to work on that. I know that leadership of so many of you have played a key role in that area. But we need to close the gap and finally make sure every community has running water and flushable toilets. But there's increasing amount of money and interest come into our state on this issue, and I think we're making good progress on that as well.

MAJOR GENERAL RANDY “CHURCH” KEE
Senator, thank you very much for those reflections. Those are some great opportunities to zero in on some questions with that following Congressman Young's reflections.

First of all, congratulations to you for the work you have done in getting the construction moving forward for the state and for all the work the congressional delegation studies, the criticality of Arctic and Alaskan Communications, the aspects of a strategic Arctic port, the KC-46, getting the funding for the fifth-generation fighters. Without having refueling capabilities, those fighters are just too range-limited in places like the Arctic. That's really important for us.

And, of course, obviously, the effort on the POTUS memo, moving that forward to highlight the issues and focus on the Arctic but also keeping perspective and then the aspect of getting fresh running water into all the communities across Arctic Alaska is a health concern and certainly your efforts to advance that is critical and greatly appreciated.

SENATOR DAN SULLIVAN
Thank you.

MAJOR GENERAL RANDY “CHURCH” KEE
Thank you, sir. It's actually outstanding in every quadrant here.

I'd like to give a moment here to go to Congressman Young for your reflections. We had a running start earlier, and I wanted to thank the Congressman.

Congressman for all Alaska, Congressman Don Young, sir, I'd like to respectfully give you the floor for your reflections. And sir, you have the floor.

CONGRESSMAN DON YOUNG
I want to thank you and thank Julie and thank everybody. I'm not going to thank anybody else, because the two Senators did all the thanking. We're involved with this a long time in the Bering Straits and what we can do for the Bering Straits. And I sat and listened to this. I felt sort of like the
wheel dog in a sled team. I listened to the leaders out there talking, but I’m the one that turns the sled. And I hope everybody remembers that. I’m the one who makes it go in the right direction.

So I’m not going to take up your time. I had a whole list of things I was going to say earlier on, and my good Senators, they copied my script, and so they presented my positions, and I agree with what they’ve said. It’s a team effort. Remember, I’m the one that turns the sled. So with that, I fall back to you.

MAJOR GENERAL RANDY “CHURCH” KEE
Congressman, thank you. That wheel dog perspective is greatly appreciated with this crew. So thank you for providing that.

Let me go to General Krumm to offer any reflections and introduce his boss, General Kenneth Wilsbach. General Krumm, I’d like to give you the floor to welcome your boss and then get some of your reflections before we go to the Q and A.

LT. GENERAL DAVID KRUMM
Thank you, Church, General Kee. I have the honor and perhaps the awkwardness of introducing my boss, and so I would just tell you General Wilsbach is the Commander of the Pacific Air Forces Air Component Commander for U.S. Indo-Pacific Command. He’s also the executive director of the Pacific Air Forces Operations staff down in Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii.

As you know, Pacific Air Force is responsible for Air Force activities that cover more than half the globe. And all of you have probably already read his incredibly impressive biography, but I would just draw your attention to how much time General Wilsbach has spent in this region of the world. Almost half his assignments have been here in the Pacific Air Forces or in Indo-Pac Comm itself, including two command positions here.

Unfortunately, he has produced very large shoes for successive commanders to fill, which I’m trying to do now. But General Wilsbach has been and is the leader with vast tactical, operational, and strategic knowledge of this area of responsibility, and I will tell you there’s probably no other DOD member that can come closer in that regard.

I can also tell you all the amazing professional accomplishments and experiences aren’t his best qualities, and why I’m wading in the tricky waters of praising your boss, I’ve known General Wilsbach now for over 27 years, and, quite honestly, I don’t know a better person than him. He is truly a servant leader who takes care of his people first. And as you can see, that is reflected in the three separate tribal names he received from the Alaska Native community while he was up here, and I think that is a true testament of how we and everyone else sees him.

Sir, the floor is yours.
Well, thanks, Kooler. It's good to see everybody. I sure wish I was there in Alaska with everybody. I sure do miss it. It's good to see all the friends online.

I'd like to really start off thanking Julie, Will and Ana for putting this conference together and inviting me to be a part of it. I wish I could be there in person for sure.

You know, a few years ago when I was the Commander up there in General Krumm's position, we had an event and we invited Julie and some of our colleagues from AFN to come out to an event that we were hosting, and I think Julie came trepidatiously, and then it just sparked a friendship.

And Julie and I are in contact — well, it averages out to once a day, but many of the texts come in — if you get a text from Julie, you know multiples come in at one time, and I love that. So our friendship has stayed intact even though I've been in Korea and now am in Hawaii. So I'm extremely thankful for the opportunity.

But the partnership between the military and AFN really started because of Julie's vision, and I am so thankful for that. As we all know who have lived and served in Alaska, partnerships and collaboration are actually key to success.

Kooler, thank you so much for the kind introduction, and I'll just tell all the people in Alaska that it's no accident that General Krumm is there. He is the right guy for Alaska right now, and as he said, we've known each other for a long time and I have great confidence in his abilities to lead our forces there in Alaska and also to partner with the AFN.

I'd also like to thank Senator Murkowski and Senator Sullivan as well as Congressman Young. Such kind words. I also want to thank you for your support of the military. Not all of my colleagues get the support that the Alaska military get from their congressional delegations, and it doesn't go unnoticed, and it's greatly appreciated. So we just thank you so much for your interest, your support, and your kindness to all the military serving in Alaska.

Of course, I don't want to miss Darlene Gates from Exxon. It's good to hear that you're there.

What I thought I might do is just give you a little bit of my perspective as PACAF commander and what we're thinking about. It's no surprise to this group, but the United States is an Arctic nation because of Alaska, and we often have to remind people of that. I think the average citizen in the United States often doesn't know that, or forgets, and so I do spend some time reminding people.

Because of the situation in the world today, a lot has to do with climate change and advanced technology, but there's more activity in the Arctic, and there are some countries that tend to impose their will inside the Arctic, and we're concerned about that from a national security standpoint, and especially we want to make sure that all of the Indo-Pacific is free and open, to include the Arctic.
We have I guess you can call it a cute way of discussing the Pacific Air Force's area of responsibility. We say it's from Hollywood to Bollywood and from polar bears to penguins. So it's kind of a cute way to realize how much of the globe we're responsible for. The Arctic is huge and the Indo-Pacific AOR is massive, but when you look at that area of responsibility and you look at it in the context of a national defense strategy, four of the five challenges in that national defense strategy are in this area of responsibility.

So we look very closely at the PRC, as well as Russia, North Korea, and then of course violent extremism. So in the Arctic, the Arctic really is one area where a few of them are trying to compete. So in addition to that, the area of responsibility is prone to national disasters, such as typhoons, hurricanes, and earthquakes and the like. Our forces are responsible for being able to respond with humanitarian assistance and disaster response in the age of COVID, which we recently had a small-scale example of this, which is no small feat to be able to deploy forces and to keep them healthy as they go.

So as we look at the Arctic, though — and this is why I insisted on being a part of this conference when my staff brought it to me, is because it's got to be a whole government approach and it really goes beyond the government and organizations like AFN, because you can't just get it done with the military, you can't just get it done with the State Department, and so on and so forth. It really takes all of us to be able to achieve our goals.

Of course, the Congress and our leadership in Washington has given us the tools to be able to respond militarily, but the partnership, especially with AFN in Alaska is so important and I go back to what was a vision of Julie Kitka's a few years ago really has started to pan out, and I'm so excited to continue more of that.

But a couple of things on Russia and the People's Republic of China. It stands to reason that Russia would have an interest in the Arctic because a good portion of their northern border is in the Arctic, and so that would make sense that they would be interested in the Arctic. I caution people to look at what Russia has been doing in the Arctic, and they've been opening up a number of bases that have been closed and they've been militarizing their northern flanks, and so I would ask people to keep a close eye on Russia.

Why are they doing that? The Arctic has been a peaceful place. We want to keep it that way. We want it to be open and peaceful and so I say watch Russia.

The PRC is not truly an Arctic nation, although they profess to be one. They're certainly interested in the trade routes and I am sure they're interested in natural resources, particularly oil and gas and protein. So we see in the Pacific the way China has dealt with the South China Sea and the East China Sea and not necessarily following international law with regard to new territories that they have taken up.

So our concern there in watching the PRC is that they might apply that same tactic, technique, and procedure in the Arctic, and so we're keeping a close eye on them as well as they look toward the Arctic.
Lastly, I will just close real quickly and say thank you again for allowing me to be a part of the meeting. It’s an honor to be here. It’s so good to see my friends, and I want to thank General Krumm again for his leadership there in Alaska as well as in Hawaii and Guam.

I just want to, again, thank everyone for the relationship that you have with the U.S. military that serves in Alaska, because together we can accomplish many great things. Thank you.

MAJOR GENERAL RANDY “CHURCH” KEE
General, thank you very much. We’ll go to any reflections from President Kitka before we see if we can get some Q and A to both the congressional delegation as well as yourself for the time we have remaining.

President Kitka, your reflections then.

JULIE KITKA
Thank you, Church. I want to express our appreciation to General Wilsbach for participating. Many of you know we started the Alaska Days in DC roundtables to advance our discussions and engagement. We’re very grateful for his leadership, as well as General Tom Bussiere, General Terrence O’Shaughnessy and General David Krumm.

I think we’re continuing to make progress in our understanding of what is going on, where our common challenges are and where our common interests are. I really want to congratulate you on your new position but also welcome you back into these dialogues as well.

I’ll turn it over to any questions for our delegation or for General Wilsbach.

MAJOR GENERAL RANDY “CHURCH” KEE
President Kitka, thank you. First of all, I’d now like to open the floor for questions. Again, for folks online, if you want to send it via chat or if you want to sit and raise your hand. If you send me a chat, I’ll cue it to the appropriate person. Or if you want to raise your hand, I’ll zero in on you.

Go ahead, please.

So usually the toughest one is the first one getting out the door. We’ll try one more time here. I do have one cued up for our delegation. The person would like to see if anybody would like to answer — or provide a question to either delegation or General Wilsbach.

CONGRESSMAN YOUNG
I have to go. I said that earlier in the program. I do apologize. You’ve got two great Senators, but I am leaving. So I do appreciate it. I’ll see you in Alaska.

MAJOR GENERAL RANDY “CHURCH” KEE
Congressman, thank you for your time, sir.

CONGRESSMAN YOUNG
You got it. Take care.
MAJOR GENERAL RANDY “CHURCH” KEE
Go ahead, please.

GAIL SCHUBERT
I have just a question and comment for General Wilsbach.

General, it’s great to see the fourth star. It’s certainly well deserved, and congratulations on that.

In terms of your comment about China establishing a presence in the Arctic, are there any other locations that we should be aware of where they have maybe either developed infrastructure for indigenous populations that they then have maybe taken control of because of nonpayment of the loans and other costs associated with that? I’m just wondering where — where we should be maybe keeping our eyes on in terms of China’s incursion into the Arctic.

GENERAL KENNETH WILSBACH
Yeah. Hey, Gail, it’s great to see you, and thanks for the question.

So as I talk to other military leaders around the Indo-Pacific, one of the things that is a common theme is, hey, we want to be partners with you rather than China. Of course, China is a very powerful country. They have great influence all over the world. But the countries that I’ve talked to often have buyer’s remorse of working with China, because it seems like a good deal at the beginning and then it turns out not such a good deal in the end.

Certainly China is attempting — well, their writings are such that they want to try to regain their greatness from the past and they feel like they’ve been in about a hundred year period of embarrassment, or a downturn. They used to be, you know, a super power many years ago and they want to return to that. So their national strategy has them all over the world, not just in the Indo-Pacific, not just in and around their country, but they’re in Europe, they’re in the Middle East, and so on and so forth.

So what I’m hearing from other nations that have dealt with them is that they want to be partnered with us because their dealings with the People’s Republic of China have gone sour after they’ve already made agreements with them, and that’s the same thing that we’re seeing in the military, especially from our intelligence partners, of kind of the way China does business is it gets you in the door and then perhaps later on the situation changes or the rules change and then it’s not such a good deal for those that make it. So that’s kind of what we’re seeing. I hope that answers your question.

SENATOR LISA MURKOWSKI
Say, Church. This is Lisa. Can I weigh in for just a moment on this?

MAJOR GENERAL RANDY “CHURCH” KEE
Senator, please. You’ve got the floor.

SENATOR LISA MURKOWSKI
Thank you. Not necessarily from a military perspective, but from the perspective of China’s interest in whether it is transportation corridor or access to minerals, the involvement that I have
as an Arctic parliamentarian sharing legislative agendas with the colleagues from the other Arctic nations, the level of interest that we have seen from China in places like Iceland, that has been going on for years now, whether it is science-based projects, partnering with regards to eyes on the sky, as they say, it is more of a planetarian type of a view, but the question is, is it more than just following the atmospheric incidents off of Iceland or is it more than that?

What we know is that China has a toehold there now. We’ve seen the interest in Greenland, with Greenland coming in and offering to be helpful when it relates to extension of runways in Greenland. More recently, in the Canadian Arctic with a mineral operation that might not be as lucrative as a business proposition, but what it allows them is access to a transportation corridor up there.

So again, I think we recognize that China is one to watch when it comes to activities within the Arctic, whether it is, again, minerals, transportation, science-based, they are not being shy about their interest in the Arctic. So we follow it very closely. You have been at so many of the same Arctic conferences that I have, and I think we see, again, stepped-up and heightened interest from the Chinese in all things Arctic right now.

**SENATOR DAN SULLIVAN**

So Church, I thought I’d just add one final issue, if it’s okay, and General Wilsbach, congrats again on the four-star. It’s awesome.

But when you’re doing your own advocacy — and I hope Admiral Bell is on the call, or will be — I think one thing that we need to make sure we’re doing together — and our military is pretty good at this, but no offense to our military thinkers, and I’m talking about the Coast Guard too — can be a little myopic in kind of how they plan.

You know, the great power competition, as we’re calling it, with China is really highlighted in the national defense strategy, national security strategy. It’s very bipartisan. Most people agree that, post-911, we had to focus on threats to America posed by violent extremist organizations like al-Qaeda that were trying to get weapons of mass destruction. We’ve still got to keep an eye on that, but the reorientation now in our national security and national defense is the return of great power competition, with China as our pacing threat.

This is going to be with us for the next 50 to 100 years. So we have to have a different mindset. So one of the things as it talks about the Arctic, that’s a huge area where great power competition — Russia, China, the United States — is happening and it’s going to increase.

So when the president put this memo out recently on, hey, where should we put icebreakers and what kind of infrastructure do we need to protect our strategic interests in the Arctic, a very good question, very good memo. What I’ve been worried about is that sometimes our military thinks very much in budget terms, the next 12 months, the next 24 months.

Let me give you just one example. The reason I made all those phone calls that I just mentioned to the cabinet members on this memo, I’m worried — and I love our Coast Guard. I share the subcommittee in charge of the Coast Guard.
But there’s a sense that, while the two current icebreakers, one of which is broken, are both based in Seattle. So the Coast Guard is kind of thinking, so we should put all the other icebreakers in Seattle. That’s kind of their bureaucratic thinking. Because we have maintainers there, we already have a base that deals with icebreakers.

What I’ve been telling everybody I speak to — and General Wilsbach, I’m glad you’re on the line listening to this — the president didn’t ask in his memo what and where we should put this that makes sense from a budget standpoint for the next 12 months. The notion that we would put all these new icebreakers in Seattle to me is strategically absurd, and yet, that’s gaining traction because that’s where they currently are. That’s 2,000 miles away from the Arctic.

The thing that the military — and we need to be pressing them on, particularly the Coast Guard — is the question isn’t what makes sense from your budget perspective in the next 24 months. It’s what makes sense strategically for the next 50 to 100 years. You need to lift up your vision and look out, and that’s what we need to press all of the military we deal with.

Don’t think about your budget for the next 24 months on where these icebreakers should be. What makes sense for the next 50 to 100 years, and the only answer is to put them in our state. So that’s what we need to press upon. I love our military, but sometimes they can be very bureaucratic looking down at their feet as opposed to looking strategically at what makes sense.

There’s no doubt that putting these assets in our state is the best and only way to protect America’s strategic interests in the Arctic.

So Admiral Bell, I hope you’re listening. I’ve talked to the Commandant about this. I’ve talked to everyone about this, and I think it’s the critical issue that we all need to advocate for.

MAJOR GENERAL RANDY “CHURCH” KEE
Okay. Thank you. You highlighted that strategies drive plans and plans drive budgets, not the other way around. So thank you for that reflection.

I’m not sure if Admiral Bell is on the line, but we’ll do a follow-up with him and make sure the words are passed to Admiral Bell and the planning team at the headquarters. So we’ll make sure those reflections are provided out, and we thank you for that.

I’d like to ask, if we could, is there any further questions on this particular aspect? I think this is really a core issue thinking about all of the global strategic players that are affecting the Arctic region, but specifically zeroing in, the impacts that those nations have in the Bering Straits region.

Are there either questions or points of reflection you’d like to provide to Senator Murkowski, Senator Sullivan, or General Wilsbach? Questions or thoughts? The floor and the mics are open.

DARLENE GATES
Church, it’s Darlene. Can you hear me?

MAJOR GENERAL RANDY “CHURCH” KEE
Yes. I’ve got you loud and clear. Please go ahead, Darlene.
Okay. So for those that don’t know me, I play sometimes three roles: one as an Honorary Colonel in the Royal Canadian Air Force, one as a president of ExxonMobil Alaska, and then I love to throw my third one is a mom who is thinking about the future for her three boys.

To my Alaskan delegation and the General, a question for you is, I’ve just recently finished reading an article from Russia, and the title of it is called Russia Doubles Down on its Arctic Oil and Gas Agenda, and so it says here, to maintain its position globally, Moscow is putting all its cards into development of the Arctic.

So one of the questions that I have is — again, I always reflect on this, and I throw my Canadian hat on, I throw my U.S. hat on, and I look at globally what’s happening, and Senator Sullivan, I’m with you. It’s about strategy for me. I’m always looking about 10 to 15 years out and saying, what are the steps that we need to do today to be where we want to be in the future? And so that’s always what’s on my mind.

So then I read an article about Russia and I bring it back home, and I say for us in Alaska, for us as Americans, and I’ll throw my Canadian hat on, too, why is it that Russia is strategically putting so much focus on development of the Arctic but we struggle so much on both the U.S. and the Canadian side? Do you have any perspective or views on that that you can share? What do we need to do differently together to push in this space, or do you feel this is not an important space for us? I’m okay with either answer. I just want to throw that out and ask for the dialogue.

Thank you, Darlene, for the great question as always. My goodness. That’s a home-run question.

General Wilsbach, we’d like to give the floor to you first and then we’d like to go to Senator Murkowski and Senator Sullivan for their reflections. General Wilsbach, are you still with us?

So as I touched on in my remarks, it makes sense that Russia would be interested in the Arctic, given their broad border on the Arctic region, and they frankly need the commerce to help their economy. So it makes sense that they would be interested. There’s great resources in the Arctic that they can take advantage of, and then with the melting sea ice, the transit routes have really been cut short.

So what used to leave northern Russia and have to go all the way around the western side of Europe, now they can go east and get into Asia fairly quickly, much quicker and cheaper, so there’s some profit margins to be had there.

So what my concern is, is the militarization of their northern bases. Many different scores of bases that used to be closed are now reopening, and they’re moving forces into the Arctic, and so that’s why I say, hey, let’s keep a close eye on Russia, because the Arctic has been peaceful to this point. Our national interest would have it stay that way.
I just want to make sure that Russia isn’t pulling out an East China Sea or South China Sea play now that they’ve seen PRC execute in that part of the world in the Arctic and start taking over areas of the Arctic that has not or never have belonged to Russia. And we see that with their claims in the Arctic, and so far the claims have resulted in dialogue and talk, and that’s good, but if it results in force, then we actually will take issue with that. Over.

MAJOR GENERAL RANDY “CHURCH” KEE
Copy on that, General.

Senator Murkowski.

SENATOR LISA MURKOWSKI
Thank you, and Darlene, thank you for the question. I think what you’re seeing from Russia is they are viewing their energy resources as an opportunity, an opportunity to not only boost their economy — as the General has mentioned, they need these revenues — but I think they also see this as this is how they will remain a world player, is through their own energy dominance and a recognition that, with the opportunities that they have in the Arctic, the opening opportunities that they have to be able to move over the top, whether it is oil or whether it’s natural gas, they are seizing it.

They’re not sitting back and saying, the world is going in a different direction or we don’t think that we can advance our resources as quickly. They have made considerable investments at the expense of their people, I might add, but they have bet on this as their significant opportunity.

When you think about what has happened particularly with the LNG coming out of Yamal, the shipments along the Northern Sea Route now have been dramatically increasing. We’ve seen 2019 volumes have more than tripled since 2017, and that is with the LNG coming out of Yamal.

I think we would all recognize that global LNG markets are pretty uncertain right now. They might not see that growth going forward in the near term, but for the longer term this may be the new normal. So they are banking on the fact that the world will continue to need oil, the world will continue to need and want natural gas, liquefied natural gas, and they’re moving on it.

They look right across the Bering Straits there to what is happening in Alaska, and while we’ve seen some very good news recently about the exploration in the NPR-A and our opportunities to develop within the 1002, we’re still lagging. We’re still lagging in Alaska. We’re lagging in the Arctic. And I think Russia views this as their opportunity to step it up and to lead.

I have long maintained that if we’re going to ensure that there is a level of environmental consideration that goes on with Arctic development, The United States should be leading that. We should be setting the standard. We know that we can do it.

Darlene, Exxon’s operations up there at Point Thompson over the years have demonstrated just that, our operations on the North Slope for decades now. But we can and should be doing more and until we do so, I think you’re going to see Russia filling in that gap. You’re going to see them leading, and I think it is almost inexcusable that we’re sitting back and watching. We know that we can do better
environmentally. We know that we've got the resource. I think our challenge has been more on the political side.

**MAJOR GENERAL RANDY “CHURCH” KEE**
Senator Murkowski, thank you.

Senator Sullivan.

**SENATOR DAN SULLIVAN**
I’ll just add, to General Wilsbach’s point, you know, Putin has been very clear about what he’s doing up there. He says that with the increasing commercial shipping, that they want the Arctic to be the new Suez Canal, that they will dominate, and that’s what he’s said publicly.

To Darlene’s question on energy. I think it's a very challenging task, to be honest, because, it’s hard to get a voice, but we need to continue to educate our fellow Americans, fellow Alaskans on the importance of responsibly developing our resources.

We have the highest standards in the world. The Russians pretty much don't have standards, in my view, and if you're going to need energy, you should get it from the place that has the highest standards, and yet, we have a movement now to keep it in the ground, or whatever you're calling it, in our nation. The only thing that does is it empowers countries like Russia.

There was a really good editorial from the Boston Globe about a year ago, huge editorial saying that the state senate of Massachusetts wouldn't allow for any natural gas to come across Massachusetts in a pipeline from places in Pennsylvania. So what ended up happening? They ended up importing LNG from Russia to power Massachusetts’ power generation. I mean, you can’t think of something more ill-informed for our country and our own citizens than that.

There was news just recently, of course, on the Record of Decision on ANWR. Of course. Most of the national media panned it. What none of them wrote about was that what we put in — and Lisa did a great job as chairman of the energy and natural resources committee — we put in a provision in there that the final development, if we developed ANWR, the final surface footprint could not exceed 2,000 acres. Think about that. ANWR is the size of South Carolina. 2,000 acres is smaller than the Fairbanks airport. That's how environmentally responsible we are. The Russians aren't like that at all.

I will tell you one final thing. It’s a meeting I had that I’ll never forget. I was in a meeting with John McCain and a very senior Russian dissident. Putin tried to kill him the way he tries to kill all their dissidents, and I asked him, I said, what’s the biggest thing the United States can do to undermine the Putin regime, push back on them? And he said, the number one thing America can do to really undermine Putin long-term is to responsibly produce more American energy. That’s it. Number one thing.

So we need to just educate our fellow Americans on this, because, to Darlene's point, I think we have all the arguments. It’s just hard to break through sometime on this.
MAJOR GENERAL RANDY “CHURCH” KEE
All right. Thank you. General Wilsbach, Senator Murkowski, and Senator Sullivan, all those reflections are critical. I’m glad this is being recorded so we capture that and get this out to folks to hear the powerful remarks right there itself.

Megan, I respectfully give you the floor.

MEGAN ALVANNA-STIMPFLE
Hi. Thank you, General Church. I really appreciate this dialogue and starting on Russia and China and the role in the Arctic. I think it’s relevant, it’s timely, and one of the main principles going forward to recognize is that to govern the future of the Arctic, we really need to promote strong democracy, strong democratic institutions, and what does that look like? That looks like strong democracies in our communities, our tribal governments, our city governments, our Native corporations which are all democratic institutions.

We can lead by example in the Arctic through democracy, and I’m really glad to see Darlene online. You have such a big imprint and record in Canada. That’s something that unites us from Greenland, where they’re nation-building, Inuit nation-building, to Canada where they govern their lands and waters, to Alaska where we’re really focusing on community-building and nation-building at our local levels.

So our U.S. coordinator, it’s wonderful to have you. We want to let you know our government-to-government relationship starts with our U.S. Constitution. It’s defined by U.S. Supreme Court case law and congressional statutes. So we have a long government-to-government relationship in the United States and a strong foundation to build strong democracy in the Arctic. And that’s all I wanted to share at this moment. Thank you for the discussion.

MAJOR GENERAL RANDY “CHURCH” KEE
Thank you very much, Megan. Great reflection and we appreciate that.

I’d like to now go to General Wilsbach for closing remarks from your vantage point, sir.

GENERAL KENNETH WILSBACH
All right. I was just waving my flag, because I loved that comment about democracy, and as you know, our military people swear to defend the Constitution of the United States, and we’re so proud to be able to do that for the rest of the citizens of our country.

Thank you again for allowing me to be a part of this. It’s so great to see everybody, even if it’s online. Thanks again to Senator Sullivan and Senator Murkowski, and Congressman Young for their support.

And mostly I’d like to thank Julie and her leadership for developing the relationship between the military and Alaska Natives. It’s very strong. It’s going to keep going. Thank you very much.
MAJOR GENERAL RANDY “CHURCH” KEE
General Wilsbach, thank you. So good to see you again, sir.

Congratulations on your fourth star and for taking command of the Pacific Air Forces. What a great moment for our Air Force and for our nation.

Senator Murkowski, now I’ll give you the floor for any following reflections you’d like to provide as we bring the session of this roundtable to a close. Senator.

SENIOR LISA MURKOWSKI
Thank you again for the opportunity to be part of the conversation. I think that the dialogue this morning is just a reminder of where we sit, when you think about some of the conversations that we have when we are focused with our Alaska Native communities, basic need issues.

I mentioned housing in my opening comments and the need for additional housing, basic infrastructure. The fact that we’re able to be communicating by Zoom this morning is wonderful, but we know that in far too many of our communities we lack basic connectivity. So when you lack that, you’re going to be hindered in your opportunities for education or health care or the like.

But we’re able to take that conversation far beyond just basic need to how and where Alaska sits in relation to the rest of the world, not only the rest of the Arctic world, but the world at large and a recognition as to the role that we play when it comes to a defense perspective, when it comes to an energy perspective, when it comes to really the key role that we can play when it comes to research and understanding our oceans, the impact of climate change.

You can extrapolate what we see in the Arctic and through some of the innovation and the technologies that we are putting in play in Alaska and in Arctic environment, you can move that around the rest of the world, and so dialogues like this that are led by AFN in partnership with whether it’s the military perspective and lens or other avenues, I think we recognize the key global position that we play, and I think sometimes we end up viewing ourselves as kind of the end of the road instead of what I prefer to see it, which is we’re the center of the planet, literally, in so many different ways. So again, this reminder in this way of the unique contributions that Alaska can play is significant.

So thank you for making sure that the conversations are broader and that we are building off the partnerships that have gone before us. So thank you for the opportunity to be part of a really strong Monday morning. It’s good for us all. So thank you.

MAJOR GENERAL RANDY “CHURCH” KEE
Outstanding, Senator. Thank you for that. That’s simply outstanding.

Senator Sullivan, sir, I give you the floor for any sort of concluding reflections you’d like to provide. Sir, you have the floor.

SENIOR DAN SULLIVAN
Well, thanks, Church. Let me just begin by commenting on Megan’s comment. Always insightful, what she is saying, and I think if you kind if push out her focus on democracies, one of the things
that I’ve talked quite a lot about, particularly as it relates to China and Russia and speeches and other things, is with this great power competition, we have many advantages.

One of them is that we’re an ally-rich nation and our adversaries, like Russia and China, are ally-poor, and not a lot of countries wanting to join the Russia and China team. You know, maybe North Korea. So a big part of what General Wilsbach does out in the Asia Pacific is to deepen our alliances with other countries and expand them, and those alliances almost always relate to other democratic nations.

I had a good chat just a couple of days ago with Secretary Pompeo and encouraged them to really push this idea in alliance of democracies, and they are looking at it globally to be able to push back on these authoritarian regimes that we’re in competition with.

I think if you look at the Cold War with the Soviet Union, one of the real reasons we were able to prevail over the years is that President Reagan — really all presidents highlighted the issue of our democratic values, and most people, whether you live in China, Russia, America, is rural communities, are attracted to that notion. They want to be able to be heard and have liberty and freedom, and that’s in China as much as it is in Russia, and it’s a huge comparative advantage for us, and we need to press it.

So Megan, good on you for another great insightful comment that really relates to the strategic level too.

I’ll just end by saying, like I began, we have challenges. There’s no doubt. But we also have opportunities. And I’m very much a glass half full guy, right? Of course, you know, we’ve gotta get through these difficult times, but the good news is we’re no longer just talking.

One of the things that drives me crazy is that when we have — whether it’s water and sewer or, you know, icebreakers, that we study an issue to death and never take action. Now we’re taking action on ports, on icebreakers, on water and sewer, on rebuilding our military. These aren’t things that are being talked about. They’re things that are being done. And working with all of you, we’re going to continue to do it.

So I again want to applaud AFN for putting this important conference together and the Bering Straits region for the critical role you’re going to play in so many of these important strategic issues for Alaska and America.

**MAJOR GENERAL RANDY “CHURCH” KEE**

Senator Sullivan, thank you for that. This session is just outstanding between General Wilsbach’s reflections and both Senator Murkowski, and Senator Sullivan. I thank you for your leadership here. It’s simply outstanding and for really covering the map from the global geostrategic construct is simply invaluable.

I’d like to give the floor at this point to AFN President Julie Kitka for any reflections on this particular portion of this conference. Julie, you’ve got the floor.
**JULIE KITKA**

Thank you, Church.

I want to thank Megan for raising the idea of democracy and democracy in our institutions in our communities. There’s an awful lot that the Native community can contribute to the national security in our country as well as to showcase really positive elements of our democracy, and I’ll use a couple of examples.

For example, the U.S. has got a new consulate now in Greenland. Why could we not have an Alaska Native leader as a senior diplomat over in Greenland to showcase how the United States deals with indigenous people in the United States, and in particular, Alaska, for great people-to-people exchanges?

Another area in General Wilsbach’s theater is with the Compact of Free Association Nations. Alaska Natives and Native Americans have been breaking historic records in their compacting of our health system and the BIA and other ways, getting greater value for resources, streamlining and being very innovative. That’s another example that could be showcased with the Compact of Free Association Nations as positive ways the United States deals with indigenous people. So it gets you beyond talking about good things with the United States. Just showing what the United States actually does.

And so we’re very excited for later on in the call today with Bering Straits to talk about some of the innovation that they’ve got going on because their ideas on water and sanitation are not your normal, ordinary, run-of-the-mill give us money and do all this stuff. They’ve got some real innovative ideas. So we welcome that.

**MAJOR GENERAL RANDY “CHURCH” KEE**

President Kitka, thank you. Outstanding reflection here and really just really dovetails with what Megan had provided.

To our distinguished Senate guests, we say thank you for the chance to hear these thoughts. I think strategically what Gail had offered, with Darlene and Megan, and then finally what President Kitka had offered are all four very tangible aspects of strategic deliberation that results in onward actions. So thank you, President, for that.

And I’d like to, as we bring this particular session to a close, we’d like to give folks a chance for a three- to five-minute break. We’ll go ahead and give a full five minutes here because we’re a gracious lot.
Changing Strategic Situation in the Arctic

MAJOR GENERAL RANDY “CHURCH” KEE
This is Church Kee welcoming folks back on behalf of President Julie Kitka and the Alaska Federation of Natives for the Challenges at the Northernmost Border: Regional Series Focus on the Bering Straits Region. We're just glad for the gift of your time coming back.

The last session General Wilsbach and our Senators from the great state of Alaska as well as our congressmen for all of Alaska did a superb job of really speaking to the strategic context of where we're at in this current day and time in the Arctic region.

Before we go to President Kitka or for any opening reflections from Mr. Baker, I'd like to just encourage people to take a look at preread of materials, they also work very well as a post-read of materials. The article section Port Clarence, The Ten Big Ideas, my good friends Walter Burek, and Becka Pincas; A Sustainable Northern Development: The Case of an Arctic Development; and then, of course, the preread materials from Cora. I would encourage everyone to take a look at those. That reading is just a real great set of reflections and it really helps give you the great context of not only the Arctic region, but specifically also looking at aspects of the Bering.

We welcome back our guests that are with us, our distinguished visitors, which at this point include, from this great state of Alaska, Lieutenant Governor Kevin Meyer. Sir, thank you for being here.

General Retired Howard Chandler (ret.) USAF; Major General Pete Andrysiak, U.S. Army Alaska; Admiral Steve Barrick from U.S. Navy; and, of course, Dr. John Farrell of the U.S. Arctic Research Commission is a distinguished guest, and, of course, all the Alaska Native leadership from across this great state, thank you for the gift of your time participating in this event. We're really personally and profoundly grateful for this gift of your time. We also thank Senator Sullivan, Senator Murkowski, and Congressman Young for their chance to help set the stage and then for continuing on as they have the time to provide to us.

I'd like to now turn the floor over to President Kitka for any opening reflections. She introduces our good friend Mr. Rodger Baker.

Julie, you've got the floor.

JULIE KITKA
Thank you, Church, especially for the Honorable Jim DeHart, since you're new to your role and joining us in this dialogue. This is an ongoing series of dialogues we've been having between the Alaska Federation of Natives as well as with the U.S. military in Alaska or that have jurisdiction over areas that are very important to us and affecting us, but it also includes the industry with Darlene Gates from ExxonMobil. Generally we have Scott Jepsen and Joe Marushack from ConocoPhillips and others on that. And then the last couple times we've also had the communications industry with SpaceX, OneWeb, NASA, GCI and others.
So this is a growing dialogue among different sectors, all having a single focus as far as what’s going on now in the Arctic in Alaska; what can we anticipate; where’s our common areas that we can work together, what are the common challenges that we have to pay attention to, and so I want to welcome you to these dialogues.

Mr. Rodger Baker from STRATFOR, who will be coming up next, is an integral part of our dialogue because he helps frame the broader picture and shares observations that we might not be even thinking of or aware of. So I want to welcome Rodger to this dialogue. Thank you.

RODGER BAKER
All right. Thank you. We can pull up the slides.

What I want to do is we’ve talked a lot about the broader strategic dynamics of the Arctic both in previous sessions and this morning. So I really want to just touch on six points, ways of framing the picture. All of these overlap with each other, of course, all the time.

That’s good. Next slide. And — next slide. Okay.

So I want to talk a little bit about some of the changes over the last year on governance and issues of climate, routes, resources, competition, and then looking at the broader context.

So let’s go to the next slide.

You know, when we think about Arctic governance, there’s the question of the role of the Native populations, and one of the things that’s always striking in looking at the Arctic, when you look at the population density is, of course, it’s a very thinly populated part of the world. That’s pushed governance out of the Arctic and pushed it into capitals and economic activity — economic capitals in other parts of the world. We see an attempt in the Arctic or a greater role of the Arctic in having its own say in governance, but it really has been pushed out because of where the population sits.

Next year Russia will take over as the chair of the Arctic Council, and as we’ve heard this morning also, that there is an increased militarization of the Arctic — both on the Russian side and, quite frankly, on the U.S. side looking at the strategic dynamic of the Arctic and the strategic competition with Russia and China. The Europeans are starting to frame the Arctic in strategic terms as well.

That gets us to a shift in focus and the big question of, where does the strategic Arctic dialogue take place? So the Arctic Council doesn’t touch on the military aspects. It’s supposed to touch on the economic and the governance aspects, but not on that military security component of it. But I think that as Russia comes in, that’s going to be an interesting and important piece that we’re going to be watching, does that expand.

There’s another aspect of this — you can move to the next slide — that I think is really important, and that is the Russian FSB. It started to come out with comments warning that foreign powers
and NGOs are starting to exploit indigenous populations in Russia with the intent to reshape concepts of territoriality and to draw the indigenous into ways to undermine Russian resource acquisition, undermine Russian investment in infrastructure, and basically utilize those Native communities as a tool against Russian plans and Russian ideas.

Whether the FSB is just thinking of this is being a little crazy or whether there’s really things going on, it does raise the issue, because some of the things that we’ve talked about are the Chinese reaching out into the Native communities in North America and trying to create connections there, and what do those connections do in terms of governance inside the United States, inside Canada, inside Greenland, and beyond.

So this issue of the crossover between the increasing role of the indigenous communities, the Native communities, and the perception that they are either an exploitable community by foreign powers or being exploited by foreign powers I think is going to be coming more and more to the fore, and that’s going to be a really important thing to be watching as you look at ideas of infrastructure development.

The Chinese attempt to purchase the gold mine in Nunavut, in Canada, right? This is one of those questions that goes there. Issues in Alaska about should Chinese money be included in funding infrastructure if it’s very hard to get U.S. money, this is an issue that many of the Pacific Island nations have run up against the same problems where there aren’t necessarily the resources coming from the Australians or the Americans or the New Zealanders. So they’re turning to the Chinese. Then that goes in and the Chinese start working with different ethnic communities or indigenous communities within the island nations to be able to shape the political dynamic there. So I think on governance, that’s an important thing to start to think about.

Let’s move on to the next slide.

And we can talk a little bit about climate. Obviously everybody is well aware in climate that the Arctic is the fastest changing part of the globe in regards to heat and changes. There’s that new report out now that claims the Arctic may be ice free by 2035 now.

The changes are real. The exact pace is always going to be adjusting as new information comes through. New studies are being carried out. But clearly changes are happening within the Arctic.

Russia — to monitor this, is about to launch a new climate satellite. The Chinese have actually launched a new climate and Arctic satellite. It’s called something like Ice Dragon or Ice Path Finder.
And the Chinese have actually started testing that to guide their ships through the Northern Sea Route by using remote sensing and AI algorithms to be able to predict changes in adjustments and move their ships with minimal interaction with the Russians. A faster-paced opening of the ice, particularly along the Russian coastline, really does give the Chinese the opportunity to start to bypass Russia. And that’s ultimately the Chinese goal.

Russia wants to make the NSR a key strategic transit route but under Russian control with Russian icebreakers and with Russian guidance and with Russian regulations. So Russia is putting in a recommendation now to stop all heavy fuel/oil-powered ships moving through the Arctic. While the Russians are pushing for the nuclear icebreakers, is what they’re building. They want to define the rules of the road for going through the Russian Arctic, and the Chinese are looking at trying to find ways to bypass that and move further north.

You can go to the next slide.

So that’s going to be really important. The other piece is looking at the changes already this year. So the first shipments of LNG from Russia to the Asia Pacific shipped almost a month early this year. Several of the transits through the NSR this year have not needed icebreakers to be part of that. So those are some of the aspects.

The final piece really comes to looking at that intersection of climate and environmental issues. Everybody’s aware of the Norilsk Nickel spill earlier this year in regards to the big diesel spill that they had. They blamed it on changes in permafrost. The Russian government has recently come out and blamed it just on poor maintenance and said, don’t worry, permafrost is not going to destroy all of our infrastructure in the Arctic.

But we know that changes in permafrost are having an impact. Not everything was built to withstand a much greater melt cycle and a much deeper melt than we’ve seen in the past. And you can add in poor maintenance and probably poor construction at the beginning. But that’s going to be a challenge across the Arctic. Certainly the Russian Arctic is melting faster. As you look at the ice melt, it’s staying closer to the Greenland-Canadian space. But this change in permafrost is going to be there.

And those environmental aspects are driving an acceleration of banks deciding not to fund Arctic projects, particularly Arctic oil and gas. Some of the key banks are also looking at any Arctic infrastructure that would support oil and gas. That goes to that challenge, I think, that was asked in the Q and A earlier. The Russians have an Arctic strategy that’s governed and shaped by the government.

In the United States a lot of oil and gas and energy and economic development is in the private industry, not in government top down, and funding and availability of funding for that is starting to be restricted, and that’s going to be something to be paying attention to moving forward looking at the Arctic.
In talking about routes, the NSR. You know, NSR has seen an increase in transit in the first half of this year, and the Russians intend to significantly improve that through a massive amount of additional infrastructure. They’re looking to build permanent deepwater ports up in the Arctic space. They’re adding rail links further in.

**The Russians are incentivizing movement to the Arctic.** So they’re now giving free land for five years if you’re willing to use it in the Russian Arctic to try to populate the space. One of the big risks of an NSR route is, without needing anything in between, those routes are really for the long-haul traffic and they largely bypass Russia. Russia might only get money on the transit fees. If the Chinese are able to move that transit further north and out of the Russian area, the Russians get nothing.

While they certainly are — 90 percent of their natural gas, 10 percent of their royal comes out of the Arctic, it really is only about the Russians moving their resources out and they’re not able to capitalize on developing that. This is a Russia that’s never really had a sea front. It’s a Russia that’s never had a maritime frontier.

Unfortunately for the Russians, this is a maritime frontier with almost no population, which makes it very, very hard to develop as a true maritime frontier. So the Russians are really pushing money up there.

**The Chinese are much more interested, of course, in adding the Arctic as the key part of the belt and road initiative.** Snow Dragon 2 is now up running research in the Arctic route, and again, these are research trips but they are also about finding ways to bypass Russian control of the NSR and to allow the Chinese to move beyond that.
The Chinese have been working on seabed mapping. There’s been the newest batch of seabed mapping has come out on the Arctic doing a much better job than in the past, and one thing that we’ve seen is that where the Russians do seabed mapping, their submarines often follow. So we’re keeping an eye out to see Chinese submarines being able to move in there.

And then next slide.

The final piece, I think, when we think about routes is to think about communications. Communications are a key part of our trade today, the ability to move through. The survey ship Professor Logachev has now started to do the mapping along the NSR, and it’s looking where they want to put the Arctic connect cable that’s between Finland and Russia now. The connect cable would run from Finland to Japan and it would be a cable to be able to shorten the movement of information along those routes.

These Arctic routes significantly speed up information flows and allow Arctic spaces to start being key hubs for information trade as well as economic trade. The faster you can go, the less lag that you have in those spaces, the more they can become centers of financial hubs and allow them to accelerate. **So we want to keep an eye on those key cable routes and the mapping that’s going on, and finally, the satellites that connect in with that.**

So Russia has a plan for another four Arctic-designated satellites that are going to be all for Arctic communications that they’re watching, and clearly at these conferences we’ve been talking a lot about the domestic U.S. satellite pushing the international satellite push up into the Arctic.

We can jump onto the next slide.

Resources are what everybody talks about within the Arctic. **It was good to hear not only people talking about oil and gas but also talking about protein.** That’s a key aspect of resources that’s important for Alaskan life, but it’s also a major part of what the Chinese are doing internationally.

**If everybody has heard of the worries about the massive Chinese fishing fleet sitting just outside the EEZ surrounding the Galapagos Islands, the Chinese are pulling in somewhere around 50 percent plus of global fish take and they continue to expand that.** Many of the Chinese fleets operate in ways that are against the law.

Two years ago or so, Chinese fleet was caught in the North Pacific using nets that were illegal, pulling up salmon. The Chinese have moved particularly into the northern waters of Japan and
Russia, and the Chinese fleets are increasing their operations within those spaces as well and likely eyeing clearly the potential Arctic resources.

While the Chinese are saying they’re not going to go right now, many of the Chinese fishing fleets operate semi outside the guidance of the government, even if it’s with the protection of the government.

As for natural gas and oil, the Russians are trying to expand offshore oil and onshore oil as well as natural gas. Natural gas has been the big key and their ability to push LNG has expanded three or four times. They’re looking to double their position in global LNG markets within the next five years. They’ve started pushing oil.

Their first Arctic oil shipment by ship has already gone to China this year. They’ve just signed a GV with Shell to start exploring oil and gas on the Guangdong Peninsula, which is just opposite Yamal. So real big push to expand all of that.

The Chinese also have two rigs this year in the Kara Sea doing Arctic Ocean exploration. Usually they have one rig. This year it’s two. The Russians have, I think, one or two rigs operating within that space as well. So there’s no intent to slow this down.

And finally, the Russians are putting in additional port infrastructure. They want to double the ability of Archangel to be able to handle oil shipments, and they’re looking to put in trans-shipment points at each end of the Russian side of the NSR so that they’re able to move things more and then use other ships outside of the NSR. That allows more types of ships to be able to move that oil, keep the ice-hardened ships within the NSR, transfer it to the oil terminals on the outside, and then they’ll move the oil and gas from those outside terminals so that they can expand the pace and scope of their energy sales outside.

Let’s go to the next slide.

Competition. This is what we’ve talked about a lot this morning in regards to the strategic competition. Europe clearly has started to wake up to the Arctic. We’ve seen an increase in European participation in multilateral Arctic operations. We’ve seen the Norwegians work to restructure their defense plan to the heavy emphasis on the Arctic, obviously.

There’s a greater attention to cooperative behavior, particularly among NATO and the United States, for Arctic activity. It’s not quite where it should be yet, but rather than go-it-alone strategies or each country defining their own strategy, there is this recognition that this needs to be a unified operation, and that’s going to be very important for shaping that, but it also means that it involves a lot of non-Arctic nations in that security, and that may give the Chinese the sense that they have the right to be a non-Arctic nation in security dynamics there as well.
There is increased cooperation in energy economics exploration between Russia and Korea and Japan. The question of Japan’s role in Arctic security is going to be one that’s very interesting. They have an interesting map they’re working with of a figure eight route of global trade coming out of Japan that uses the Arctic routes as well as using non-Arctic routes for trade, and their security role is going to be really important in that.

Canada has the first of their six Arctic offshore patrol ships. So we’re seeing that. We’re seeing the U.S. finally put money down for reassessing the Arctic, running a little late behind, quite frankly, many of its allies and certainly its competitors within that region.

Two other points are really quick. One, we need to be aware of is that the Chinese and the Russians are not always in lock-step and they are not a cooperative defense grouping in the Arctic. Again, as you can see from the Chinese trying to bypass the Russians in Arctic routes, there’s a lot of tension. There was the arrest earlier this year of the Russian academic in the Arctic Institute for supposedly selling sub sea acoustic information to the Chinese.

There is a lot of competition in that security dynamic between the Russians and the Chinese in the Arctic space, and a lot of the work the Chinese are doing in Europe makes the Russians a little bit nervous as well, since it’s bypassing them, and we’ve seen in that broad security dynamic, for example, the Chinese are now selling armed drones into Serbia. That’s a traditional Russian sale area. The Chinese are looking to sell into other key places that are in the traditional Russian sphere of influence as a direct competitor to Russian defense, security, and dynamics.

The final piece is the increased expected use of unmanned vehicles and unmanned systems within the Arctic. So the Russians announced earlier this month that they had intercepted a global hawk over the Chukchi Sea. The Russians have said that they’re going to be shifting a lot of their traditional helicopter usage in the Arctic to heavy drones. We can anticipate a lot more aerial surveillance done by unmanned vehicles. There is a great need for increased aerial surveillance, particularly as the amount of ships moving through the Arctic region has increased substantially.

Let’s go to the next slide.

I want to talk a little bit about here, then, perceptions and context. This is the map people normally see. They’re really used to this map.

Go to the next slide and I want to show you the map that the Chinese use. This is the map that the Chinese have been really pushing for thinking about the world. And there are two or three variations on this map.

There’s also a vertical version of this map. And there’s another one where, quite frankly, you basically center both of the poles as the centerpieces of that map.

But one of the things that this shows is it’s a redefinition of how to think about where the Arctic is. On that first map, the Arctic is off the map, right? Here they’re being dragons. Go backwards one.
You know, those are the spaces where the Arctic is not a connection. The Arctic is something at the ends of the world.

**But if you go now to this Chinese map again, the Arctic is central to the world. It’s right there in the center.** It becomes the place where the two great continents connect, where North America and Eurasia connect to each other. It’s not something off in the distance. It’s not something that’s inaccessible. It’s not something that’s unusable.

The Chinese see the Arctic and the Antarctic as key transit routes for the future. They see it as key resource areas. They see it as key places to rewrite the rules of global governance with a strong Chinese voice within that.

And the final slide I’d like to go to is just the thought of North America, and we’ve raised this before. **The United States does not think of itself as an Arctic nation. It thinks of itself as a two- and possibly three-ocean nation. But it’s really a four-ocean nation, and our maps don’t help us with that.** This is not a great version of the map, but at least it starts to say, look, there are four frontiers.

**There are four maritime frontiers to the United States, each critical to how the United States looks at its global trade and therefore, how it looks at its global security.** The entire push around the Gulf Coast, a lot of the Spanish-American War, a lot of the Monroe Doctrine was all about securing the mouth of the Mississippi and the transit routes for key U.S. goods out of the heartland of the U.S. internationally.

The Atlantic Coast obviously has been the prime focus of the United States since before it was the United States, and Atlantic trade up until about the 1980s was the dominant component of global trade, but it no longer is. Pacific trade now exceeds trans-Atlantic trade. That Pacific coast is absolutely critical. The Panama Canal is a key piece of that for the United States.

But this Arctic component with the connectivity between the Arctic component and the Pacific component is well known in the U.S. military. Arctic command is very interested in being part of three different combatant commands there with North America, with Europe, and with the Pacific, but it’s not very well recognized in the Lower 48, and I think that that’s a critical component that’s still going to have to go forward if the U.S. is going to rally behind three competing frontier concepts that are going on right now, one of which, if you think about it, is the frontier concept of space, one
of it is the frontier concept of the exploration of the seas, and one of it is the frontier concept of the Arctic.

All of those are thought of as frontiers. And how does one prioritize in the Lower 48? You know, space is getting all the attention, but the Arctic is not being seen as having that same connectivity.

And I think we’ll leave it there. Thank you.

MAJOR GENERAL RANDY “CHURCH” KEE
Rodger, thank you for that. As always, when you bring a strategic perspective and you come away with some pretty remarkable conclusions. Outstanding.
Thank you. I just want to thank Rodger for his overview and presentation and all the insights, and I want to welcome the Honorable Jim DeHart to this meeting and given that we’re pushing on the time, I’ll go ahead and turn it over to you right now. Thank you for joining us.

Thank you very much, President Kitka.

Mr. DeHart, sir, you have the floor.

Church, thank you very much.

Well, President Kitka, Julie, thank you so much for the invitation from AFN. It’s really great to be here.

I want to acknowledge also Senator Murkowski, Senator Sullivan, and Congressman Young, acknowledge all the great work that they do for the people of Alaska and involvement in the wider region every day.

So this is my fifth week in the job, and so I think this is just a great opportunity for me to get the Alaskan perspective in particular at an early stage in our effort here.

The Alaskan voice is critical, because what happens in the Arctic happens to you, and so it’s very important that we hear from you. I’m mostly here to listen today, and I’ve really been interested so far by the conversation and presentations that have taken place.

I do want to take a few minutes to tell you a little bit about our new effort and how we in the State Department are looking at the region, and I would report, first of all, that we’re a new office in the building, and so we have a new little suite with bare walls, and so we set out in search of some good maps to put on the walls, and I said, we really need to get a good, big map of the state of Alaska, and that turned out to be a little bit difficult because in the State Department we normally produce maps of foreign countries. So this was a little bit challenging, and, you know, on a certain level, that’s logical. We’re focused overseas.

But I think when we look at the Arctic, we have to have the state of Alaska at least on our mental map, because, as Julie said in last year’s roundtable, Alaska is not just a warehouse of natural resources, it’s a strategic location. And from our perspective, I would add, Alaska has to be a key partner in our efforts in the Arctic region. And I would say, in fact, that I think Alaskans deserve credit for helping to elevate the attention to the Arctic region that you see now at very senior levels of our government.
Senator Sullivan made reference to the memorandum that came out of the White House reflecting our president’s decision in June that we need to have a capable fleet of icebreakers, and others have mentioned the opening of our new consulate in Greenland, a very important event. I would add also our secretary, Secretary Pompeo, visited Copenhagen about five weeks ago, and included in his engagements there, meetings with the ministers of Greenland and the Faroe Islands. So the Arctic was really taking a central spot in the secretary’s visit.

I would propose that this attention that you see now is going to be enduring. It’s not going to go away. I think there’s no looking back at this at this point. People across the board recognize the importance of the region. And the reasons are clear enough. The dramatic environmental changes that are taking place across the region that have a dramatic and often very negative impact on local communities and invite new activities and new players into the region.

And then we have a challenging geopolitical situation, as others have mentioned, I think two pretty distinct challenges in Russia and China. Russia being an Arctic nation with a long Arctic coastline and a good portion of the Arctic population militarizing, building its capabilities, running more complex exercises, and also very interested economically.

I’m happy to hear the attention that China has gotten in this discussion so far, and I fully agree with the way that Senator Murkowski, Senator Sullivan have laid out this challenge and the reality of China’s involvement. We look at their record in other parts of the world, in parts of the developing world where they have put forward sort of a no-strings-attached approach and have not observed the standards of governance on investment, have not observed labor provisions, have not been attentive to the environment.

When you look at their approach to fisheries and other activities, their approach to infrastructure, which can have a dual use, their approach to scientific research, which we believe is not solely for the purpose of science, but can potentially have military applications as well. And China and Russia showing some cooperation in places like Yamal, developing the LNG there with China playing the key role in shipping.

So when we look at these challenges, what we want to do is continue to work toward a peaceful region, an Arctic region where cooperation is very strong among nations, among communities in the region, sustainable economic development, and uphold the rules and the high standards that ought to be the norm in the region.

And we’re working really in about three areas at the moment here at the State Department. First, we’re looking to maximize our work through the Arctic Council. We think this is a great forum. It preserves U.S. interests, it’s productive and it produces very positive cooperation. So we’re attached to the Arctic Council and we want to make full use of it, and part of what that means is managing the upcoming Russian chairmanship and cooperating where we can with Russia and certainly ensuring that no damage is done to the council.

Second, since we can’t discuss hard security in the Arctic Council, we have to make sure that we have the dialogues that we need with our close friends and allies in the region where we need to and in the formats that are productive, going back to Senator Sullivan’s observation that we need our close allies and we’re always stronger when we work together with our allies.
Third, we need to be actively engaged with communities across the region, and I would say in particular indigenous communities, and here I think your communities in Alaska have such a role to play. We need to ensure that anybody who comes into the region, China in particular, now is observing the high standards and that the activities they undertake there contribute to support of communities to the best interests of communities and to the United States.

So I think, you know, Alaska really cuts across all of these three areas that I’ve mentioned. I love the point that Megan made that it’s so valuable to have strong democratic institutions at the local level. I just want to amplify that point because it’s so important.

I think, looking at these three areas, our work through the Arctic Council, Alaskan indigenous communities are well represented among the permanent participants in the council, and that’s very important. When we talk about security, Alaska, the capabilities that we have, the command, it’s very important, and as we look to partner with communities across the entire region, the role of Alaska, it’s congressional delegation, and the local communities.

So as General Wilsbach said, it takes all of us to achieve our goals. I can commit to you that we are determined to work with the people and the communities in Alaska. I look forward to doing that. I appreciate, again, very much the chance to participate here and especially to listen in. So thank you again for including us here from the State Department.

MAJOR GENERAL RANDY “CHURCH” KEE
Mr. DeHart, thank you so very much, sir, for those reflections, and welcome to your new role. Thank you for making this strategic context so very clear to us and we really appreciate the service you’re providing to the nation and provided service and in advancing a peaceful opening of the Arctic.

I’d like to say we would like to hold questions for you, along with General Krumm and Rodger following after General Krumm’s remarks, if you have the time to stay on the line with us, sir. Thank you for the strategic reflections in that context.
**JULIE KITKA**
I want to welcome General David Krumm to these discussions and thank you for your participation and all the great contributions on our roundtable that we had on rapid change; what's happened on the COVID; telecommunications; oil industry; and your continued partnership. Because of time restraints, I'd just go ahead and turn it over to you. Thank you.

**MAJOR GENERAL RANDY “CHURCH” KEE**
Thank you, President Kitka.

General Krumm, sir.

**LT. GENERAL DAVID KRUMM**
Thank you, sir. Good morning, everyone. Julie, thank you and to AFN for hosting this event, to everyone that's participating and attending. It's certainly my privilege to join the entire Alaska congressional delegation and General Wilsbach, Mr. DeHart, Lieutenant Governor Meyer and everyone else who far exceeds me in importance as we discuss some of the security concerns related to Alaska and America’s Arctic, as we like to call it.

But before I begin, I think it’s really, really critical to just recognize what we believe is the central tenet of any discussion in Alaska, and that is, of course, incredibly powerful force that really governs this region. It shapes the landscape and I don’t think can be overcome, and, of course, I’m talking about Madam President, Julie Kitka, whom even the forces of nature acknowledges supreme.

Julie, you have been a tireless advocate for AFN, for Alaska Natives, Alaska and your country, and once again, with the exception of this one, the cast of speakers that you have is quite impressive, and I think, once again, a 9.2 earthquake’s got nothing on you and what you can do for this.

You know, I’d really like to begin with highlighting and reminding us of why it’s so important in some of the larger geopolitical concerns that we have here in this region, and once again, I’ve learned a valuable lesson that if you think you have something unique and interesting about Alaskan Arctic, incredibly knowledgeable and well-spoken people talk all about what you have decided to talk about. So I hope you don’t mind, but I will once again cover some of the grounds and maybe give you a little bit more detail and a little bit different perspective as we go forward.

Jeff, I don’t know if we can push the first slide that I have.

But, you know, to paraphrase the old real estate ads, it’s all about location, location, location. You know, homeland defense is our number one priority, and the threats facing our
nation are absolutely not hypothetical, and I think it’s important to understand that our competitors’ races are now global.

When you look at where the Arctic is — and I know some of you will remind me that Anchorage is not technically inside the Arctic, but we’ll call it that for now. The longer range capabilities, the diminishing sea ice, the access to the Arctic has changed the Arctic from kind of a sanctuary that we enjoyed to an avenue of approach that we must recognize and we must be ready to assert our claims and defend there.

Furthermore, I think when you look at this picture, what you can see is that others claim the right to regulate Arctic waters and access the authority that they’re permitted under international law and they are slowly expanding their military presence as well, and we’ll get to that.

All of these things that we talk about today is informed by the DOD, the service components strategy on the Arctic. And once again, Senator Sullivan talked about the military and our perspective. What we really want here is a secure and stable region where our interests and our allies’ interests are safeguarded, our homelands protected, and we work on some of these challenges together that we can.

Jeff, if you can push the next slide.

I stole this slide from Senator Sullivan’s office, and I think it paints a really good perspective. You know, we talked about it earlier, how much they rely on the Arctic. Currently the Arctic and the resources that they get out of the Arctic accounts for about 25 percent of their exports in GDP, a phenomenally important aspect of their economy, and for the last ten years, Russia has increased its capacity up in the Arctic and heavily invested in a forward presence near the Arctic center in trying to protect its access to natural resources.

Now, while the numbers can fluctuate based upon reporting, you can safely say that the Russians are reopening about 50 different former Soviet military posts, and that’s 14 air bases, 10 radar stations, 20 border outposts, and 10 emergency rescue stations, many of which are used for both fuel, military, and civilian purposes.

As discussed, Russia has 46 icebreakers now and an additional 11 under construction and four more planned and going upwards of 65 icebreakers, including 13 of what we call the heavy-duty icebreakers by 2035. Our count today is currently at two, with hopefully plans to build some more. Now, while I acknowledge that the Russian actions to build up the military capacity on its own soil isn’t provocative in and of itself, these actions allow them to sustain and augment their presence and to secure their national interests. Now, I’d just recognize that if the Russians have made competing claims — and they have — any country that disputes the international organizations or the authority of international organizations and they make a unilateral decision to enforce claims or to
begin harvesting resources, it is, quite frankly, just easier to do when you already have a presence in the regions.

I think in some ways the Russians have looked to Chinese actions in the South China Sea as a model, and General Wilsbach talked a little bit about this, but back in 2009, China began a campaign to enforce its claims that aren't recognized by anyone else, including the international body, when it submitted a new map to the United Nations showing the infamous nine-dash line. It’s a series of boundary lines in the South China Sea that he claims is disputed Chinese territory — or undisputed Chinese territory.

China has done a lot of work in that area and the outposts that developed in a sustained presence in the South China Sea that have given the Chinese the ability to fish, build/form exploratory research for resources like oil and natural gas, and a staging area for military forces that can really enforce their illegal claims, and it's proving very difficult for the national community because they have that sustained presence.

And Jeff, if you’ll build the slide one more.

Despite that, China is not an Arctic nation, as General Wilsbach told you about it, it has given itself the moniker “A Near Arctic Nation,” and it really sees the region as important to its long-term economic security interests. That little green ship is the Xuelong 2, and that’s the current location as of yesterday, Chinese research vessel that is up in and about the Arctic region and it’s been doing research now for several weeks.

When I look at all this and I consider the changed nature of the geopolitical conditions in the Arctic maritime and airspace, it makes Alaska a geographical region important for us and that our nation must invest in. And if you look on the map that again was provided by Senator Sullivan's office, you’ll see the three major locations that we have as far as basing, a combination Army and Air Force in Alaska and then Air Force into Greenland.

Because of the close proximity to the northern border region, I think that the U.S. has got to continue to demonstrate its commitment to intercept and thwart any air threats to our region by being able to project aircraft quickly. We are doing that. The Air Force is committed to putting in two more operational aircraft squadrons up in Eielson Air Force Base. When we do that, we'll have the largest collection of operational fifth-generation aircraft in the Air Force up here in Alaska.

And as you look at that map, we know that the Bering Straits will eventually link the Pacific economies. We saw that from Rodger’s presentation, but those North Atlantic use both the Northern Sea Route and the Northwest Passage. In some cases we anticipate commercial shippers could save up to 40 percent in transportation costs.
So we recognize the importance of maritime, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has identified the port in Nome as a top consideration and strategic port. It’s a critical transportation hub for Western Alaska and the Arctic, and that geostrategic importance cannot be overlooked. I think it will be a benefit both for the military and also commercial, but more so for our nation in general.

But I would ask, as we talk about the potential prospects of a deepwater port in Nome, we again look at this map and you see the port capabilities that the Russians have built up. And I would caution us not to focus just on a singular location, but that we should be looking at multiple locations as we go forward.

Jeff, if you would advance to the next slide.

From my commander’s approach here in Alaska, I know that — and recommended that we invest in those capabilities and improve our ability to detect, deter, and if necessary defeat threats that may use the Arctic region as an avenue of approach to the homeland. I think we do this by maintaining visual awareness to the Arctic with our protection, cooperation, and preparations as well.

We talked a little bit about some of the military things we were doing, and the 2021 NDAA, or the National Defense Authorization Act, we have over 8.15 billion in military construction funding. 193 million of that is specifically for Alaska projects. There’s $48 million for Arctic communication capabilities. I’m excited about those capabilities.

You heard Senator Sullivan talk a little bit about them earlier, but what we really see is, when we look at what we do here in the Arctic, communications is key on that, and this is an area where we can really partner with both commercial and military aspects, what we call dual use. So those sorts of communication satellites will prove beneficial for both us and for Alaska in general, in particular in some of the remote areas, to include some of the Alaska Native populations.

Something — maybe one of the few things no other previous speakers talked about is I’m also very concerned about accurate weather forecasting. I think it’s very critical in a state as broad in its geographical and geophysical complexities in Alaska, and the abrupt changing climate conditions really have given me the viewpoint that accurate weather forecasting is going to be very, very important. The density of weather coverage for us is about 40 percent lower than it is in the Lower 48, and I am really looking for solutions to help us with that.

Other things that we’re doing are partnerships. We have a great ally in Canada. We have a cooperative — it’s still a complicated relationship regarding the Arctic. If you remember, Rodger’s slide about interest, you actually would have noticed there’s a small sliver of what I’ll call negotiations between the United States and Canada over a region in the Arctic that we are still working out, but we are well aligned together in heightening the advancement of our security interests and pursuit of responsible stewardship.
I would tell you that, when we talk about partnerships, we don’t just talk about countries, we talk about our partnerships with everyone. I think one of the most important ones is with the Alaska Native community who have been in this region since time began and then understand the unique dynamics and challenges of the Arctic environment.

We continue to work with the Alaska Native community, in particular on exercises and projects on things that we can do better. We are and have been working very closely with them on a number of efforts, including during COVID, trying to provide over 87,000 medical items that we have with the existing mutual aid agreement. We are looking for ways to expand those partnerships as well.

I will tell you that I have about 14 other pages, but it has been more than adequately covered by the other speakers, but I would close by saying, we recognize the importance of Alaska and the Arctic region to our way of life. I think that understanding that a presence, a continuing presence and ability to safeguard our natural resources and our way of life is important as we talk about the Arctic. So I’ll close with that. Thanks.

MAJOR GENERAL RANDY “CHURCH” KEE
General, thank you very much. Very well stated. That really helped to set the strategic context of the Alaska dynamics as the entry point into the U.S. interests in the Arctic region. Your command of the knowledge seems to me you’ve been in the chair a lot longer than just a few months at this point. You really have this figured out.

We have a chance for just a couple questions here before we go to the last section of this roundtable for the day, and we’ll have questions if folks would like to ask to any of our distinguished speakers here between Mr. Baker, Mr. DeHart, or General Krumm. So the floor is open for any questions anyone would like to pose or any reflections anyone would like to pose towards the speakers.

JULIE KITKA
Church, this is Julie. I just wanted to say I really wanted to make sure that we heard from Bering Straits, Kawerak, and our communities because I think that will generate some questions after they do their presentation. We are so proud to have them participating. They have innovative ideas and proposals. So I’m just anxious to hear from them.
MAJOR GENERAL RANDY “CHURCH” KEE

Great. So I think I’m going to use that as the clue I needed to say so for Mr. Baker, Mr. DeHart, and General Krumm, please stay with us as we go to the next series of speakers to kick this off, and then we'll bring questions in at the end here.

We have Megan Alvanna-Stimpfle here that is going to take us through this next section, and she'll of course be bringing in Gail Schubert and Melanie Bahnke. Gail of course is the President and CEO of Bering Straits Native Corporation and Melanie of course President and CEO of Kawerak.

So at this point I’d like to give the floor to Megan for her reflections and then for her guiding us through this next discussion on regional dynamics and priorities. Megan, ma’am, you've got the floor.

MEGAN ALVANNA-STIMPFLE

Hi. Good morning. Thank you.

You know, the old verbiage, you are what you eat, and so I wanted to make sure that all of you had very real awareness of how we eat, what we eat, where we live, because it's all tied together. Right now is the busiest time of year. Everyone is catching and drying fish.

If you'll remember on the maps, the many maps that you've seen this morning, one of the largest red salmon runs in the North Pacific goes right through Port Clarence and right up Imuruk Basin into the Pilgrim River. It's called the Pilgrim River red run.

Here hanging are Pilgrim River reds. They're delicious. The whole community of Nome loves to go fishing there. Brevig, Teller catch fish right there where they're coming in from the ocean. So we have prime fishing locations.

Next to that is red king crab. It’s really delicious. My cousins usually just bring it right to our kitchen floor and, boom, we cook the best food on earth. What's covered a little bit is beluga muktuk. You’ll recognize that Bering Strait has one of the largest migrations of marine mammals in the world. Bowhead whales, walrus, seals, belugas. So we are in a resource-rich location, and a lot of our communities live by the cycle of the seasons putting away food.

The bottom left is seal oil with dried seal meat and blubber. It’s really, really good, really, really healthy. We have the best foods on earth. They're macronutrient rich, and dense. The bottom right is the dried salmon, what it looks like when it's dry. Bowhead whale muktuk, and then greens. We gather a lot of greens through the spring and the summer and then preserve them in seal oil.

Seal oil is the main preservative for all of our foods, and it's very healthy for you. Lots of omega 3s. If you think we have really young-looking skin, it's because we eat the best food on earth.
If you take a look at the fridge on the bottom right, that’s my sister’s freezer. You’ll notice she doesn’t have any processed foods. She has no frozen chicken, no frozen beef. This is all food caught locally. Caribou, reindeer, greens, berries. My mom calls it fast food. We really live by the cycle of the seasons because it takes a lot of work to collect and harvest and store all of this food.

Next slide. This map came from the Arctic Council indigenous people’s secretariat, and these are the indigenous place names of the Arctic. Our languages — because frankly, what everyone should understand is The Arctic is indigenous. It is indigenous since time immemorial. And we’re still alive. We’re still here. The next generation is learning our languages. We’re raising our children based on our values.

We have strong Native nations in our tribal governments and our tribal organizations and our village corporations and regional corporations. The Arctic is a Native place, and we hope you’ll begin to know us and love us, because we believe in the future of peace in the Arctic, of our shared prosperity and that it’s many of our relatives that are on the other side of the Russian Far East.

You know, I was raised during the era of the Cold War and melting ice current, and one of the experiences we had was landing in Russia, in the Russian Far East. And it was all Siberian Yup’ik relatives that were reunited after 40 years of a closed border. The way you could tell is that the border was never going to separate these families again, and now that we’re all connected on Facebook, on Twitter, we know what people are doing and how families are, because we hear from them, and we really want to make sure those connections stay alive, because people matter. The people matter to us.

Please keep going to the next slide.

Something I think is important to understand about the Bering Strait region is it’s a huge confluence of cultures and dialects. I’m the daughter of a Native linguist, so this is actually a diagram my mom has created. There’s the Yup’ik dialect, which has Central Yup’ik and St. Lawrence Yup’ik, which is the same language as in the Russian Far East. There’s our mainland Qawiaraq dialect, which you’ll see the communities of Unalakleet, Shaktoolik, Golovin, White Mountain speak Unaliq. Then the communities of Koyukuk, and enter there, it’s actually the Malimiut dialect from the Northwest Arctic. People from the Northwest Arctic migrated down to the Bering Strait and made those communities.

And then we have our islands, King Island and Diomede, which are unique dialects. Oogoamugaruna. I’m a King Islander, which is all the way on the right. And we’re hoping you’ll hear today from Frances Ozenna from Diomede, our neighboring island.

So here is a picture of the Bering Straits. Today we’re going to really focus on our unserved communities. We have six communities in the Bering Strait without access to water and sewer. That includes Shishmaref on the top there, Diomede, Gambell. About 40 percent of homes in Gambell are without water and sewer. Teller, Wales, and then down in the lower-hand right, Stebbins. Stebbins and Shismaref each have about 600 people without water and sewer.

So something you should know about Stebbins is they went into this pandemic with a water shortage. They were only allowed to shower once a week when an entire world was being encouraged
to wash their hands every day. So we're experiencing water security issues that are third world. We have so much opportunity before us that we want you to believe in how we want to address sanitation through Native nation-building.

There's a $277 million sanitation need in the Bering Straits region. 370 homes without access to potable water, 451 homes without access to water and sewer. So again, I mention our unserved communities. There are six: Gambell, Diomede, Wales, Shismaref, Stebbins, and Teller.

The CDC has just issued its recent data on the coronavirus risks to Alaska Native and American Indian population, and our death rate is 3.5 times higher than non-Hispanic white people. That means we're experiencing a death rate higher than the general population in the Lower 48. For the issues of historical trauma — and this is what the CDC quotes — “Historical trauma, persistent racial inequality, limited access to running water, and household size.”

So we — at this moment — and the reason why my voice is a little shaky is that our leaders, our communities, we're fighting for our lives right now because of lack of access to clean water. So I think it’s been a very stressful time. We've had daily tribal leader calls, getting our governments ready, getting everyone ready, but it's something that is severely hampered when we can't access clean water. When the last H1N1 pandemic occurred, the death rate was four times higher than the general population, and that was before the same issues. So that was a decade ago.

Things that we do know, the CDC has said, is that babies in communities without adequate sanitation are 11 times more likely to be hospitalized for respiratory infections and five times more likely to be hospitalized for skin infections.

So this is a public health crisis. This is a silent crisis because they’re able to build cities in China faster than we can address water and sewer in the United States, and that’s something we really want to move forward with.

One thing you wonder what is historical trauma and systemic racism. We've had a hundred years’ experience of it in the United States, and this is why, when you get to Native nation-building, this is so important. 1901 the city of Nome was founded. 20,000 got to Nome for gold. It was one of the most racist environments, wild west history.

1918, 1919 flu pandemic. 82 percent of the death rate during that pandemic was Alaska Native in Alaska. Two thirds of the deaths occurred in our region.

We have the federal law called Indian Reorganization Act (IRA), which established and continued our government-to-government relationship.

The 1940s was still a really tough environment for our communities. Signs were “No Dogs, No Natives.” So this is real. The century of trauma is real.

Statehood came along. If you’ll remember that our maps of our Native languages and our Native locations. Now our land ownership is carved up. It's carved up our resources. It regulates our way of life. We have to either be on state land or federal land to figure out which rules to follow and
living our way of life. So that’s something that remains unaddressed, is Native management of the resources of supporting our way of life.

By the 1960s, 1970s representatives of the Catholic church committed grave sexual abuse scandals. Entire generations in some of our southern communities were assaulted. That means every living child in a community, and some of our communities were assaulted. They’re adults today. They’re governing our tribes and our cities today. So I hope — I’m only sharing this so that you understand these abuses have occurred in our lifetime and we’re still overcoming them and becoming strong from them.

Then as you’ll learn more later, ANILCA and ANCSA, which has given us the modern definition of our tribes, our cities, and our corporations today. These are very strong institutions. 40 years into ANCSA and nation-building through Indian Self-Determination. So we’re coming from a position of strength after a century of trauma. That’s what historical trauma and systemic racism is. I want you to know what that definition is because when we rewrite the regulatory landscape of the Arctic, it must be firmly based in advancing Indian Self-Determination.

We have a 1.7 billion dollar sanitation need in Alaska. For a lot of our projects that are going on in the Lower 48 for a lot of our projects that are going on in our communities, they’re actually fabricated and constructed in Anchorage. So funding Alaska sanitation need provides jobs in Anchorage and jobs in the Lower 48. This can be an American boom in jobs and construction addressing sanitation needs.

We’ve identified the regulations that are prohibiting funds that Congress appropriate to our unserved communities. The delegation, you have that. So we’re thankful for all of your work, Senator Murkowski, and Senator Sullivan. He’s been a relentless leader.

The last premise I want to leave you with, and this is something Melanie Bahnke will really help wrap up, is our vision for improving investment in housing, water, sewer, roads, marine, port and harbor and community facilities through doing coordinated infrastructure development and engineering planning together so that we can reduce the cost of construction and improve construction timelines in our planning.

If we can advance a sanitation system built on tribal strength with our technical, managerial, and financial governance capabilities that we provide to our communities, we can save the State of Alaska administrative burden costs through tribal advancement.

The last premise is really supporting culturally relevant training and operations support. We have to have an education system, an employment system that really supports the identity and our languages and our strength of who we are. We need to build on our tribal organizations.

So with that, I’m going to just share this video with you and then we’re going to kick over to Robert, who is standing up next.

ROBERT TOKEINNA, JR.
Okay. My name is Robert Tokeinna, Junior, and I live in the community of Wales, which is 100 nautical miles North of the hub city of Nome where we have a population of about 150.
Today I come to you as a community member and a concerned citizen of Wales. I do wear multiple hats, but I want to address the water and sewer portion of my community.

Before me, we were going to have Frances Ozenna touch up on the administration portion of water and sewer, what it takes in a community. She has a good background of administering and looking at a dollar value. But today I will address pretty much on manual labor portion where we manually take in and out our water.

I usually take anywhere from 10 to 15 buckets, five-gallon buckets with lids, to the water site and I fill them up, collect the water, put them in a cart, take them down the road about a mile away, fill them up, bring them back, and by that time, it’s time to bring them in, take them out of the cart, bring them in the house, and then by that time it’s put into another bucket, into a 30-gallon container where I store it.

My concern is that we all know with this COVID-19 pandemic we are encouraged to wash our hands and sing happy birthday twice, and if you do that here in Wales, you’ll be using nearly 26 gallons of water, which would equate to five gallons of those five-gallon buckets.

Then we’re encouraged to sanitize each — using water to sanitize the home to wash our clothes and to wash our dishes and anything like that. My concern is that the local facilities here are — we do have a facility which is called a washateria where everybody does their laundry, and take a roughly a five-minute shower for five dollars.

Waiting in line, each household having one or two loads, you might get in on the Sunday. Usually that’s when everybody does their laundry, and you’ll be waiting anywhere from two to three hours just to get one load done.

Myself, I haul my water out. I bring it back in. I take it out.

With the human waste we have something called a honey bucket, and that’s the vision of the previous governors has been wanting to put the honey bucket in a museum, but living here in Wales with still using a honey bucket, not having the luxury of turning on a faucet and having running water, and that’s a concern for not only myself but my family, my kids, my kids’ kids, and anybody thereafter.

It takes time out of my lifestyle to get off work, go get the water, project how much water we’re going to drink and how much water will be used to sanitize the house, the dishes, my clothes, myself, and so — and they just increased at the city level to haul the waste away, which is $50 a month. You basically take your honey bucket out of the containment unit, tie it up, and then you haul it out to what you call a honey bucket bin. The honey bucket bin gets filled. You have a city person who is skilled in labored into it that they go in and collect these bins.

It’s about two-mile trip from town. So — and not only are they bringing it across the road, but next to homes but they actually have to make a two-mile trip out of town to dump and dispose the waste. Every now and then the liquids aren’t really contained into the bin and so it slops around and actually spills on the roads, and so they do try to put in lime to break down whatever waste has been
spilled on the road. But that’s the living situation I have to live in is with disposing, hauling, and bringing in my waste and also water.

I feel that — as a community, I feel that we should have the ability to turn on the faucet, fill our containers in the home, and also be able to flush our waste down the toilet. It is not very sanitary, let alone healthy to have any type of storage unit where you are hauling your waste and hauling your own water.

But I choose to be optimistic, and I say this, that anybody that has water and sewer forgets where the freshwater is, but that’s my opinion. I think there’s five, six facilities in town with water and sewer, which would be the school, the clinic, the teachers’ quarters, the washateria. I feel that every community member should be able to have access to pressurized water and disposal of sewer. I would really like to see in the immediate future or before I die to see water and sewer in Wales.

And Megan, I think that’s to the best of my ability, that’s my opinion and my take on water and sewer in Wales.

MEGAN ALVANNA-STIMPFLE

Thank you, Robert, for sharing with us. It’s really appreciated hearing your voice and that we were able to connect with you this morning from Wales.

He’s calling in from the clinic, because the clinic has a supported telecommunications line. Otherwise, telecommunications is one of our largest challenges.

BLANCHE GARNIE

Hi, Megan. Blanche. I’m on the phone. But I have GCI cell phone service and it’s not that great here.

I’m in Teller, or Igalunjniagvik, means a place to fish. That was the indigenous name. But most people know it as Teller, even the residents. He (Teller) was a politician who traveled up here.

We have a low population. We don’t have a lot of people. Years ago in the gold rush days there was 20,000 people, and most of our people came from upriver, but we were constantly traveling people. We didn’t stay in one place. We had a subsistence lifestyle, and just from regulation from the government we are trying to learn how to live year-round in one place without leaving the school, only going to camp when we can in the summer and live here year-round without water and sewer, where it’s not sanitary to live in one place without it. We wouldn’t live like this if it wasn’t for the regulations that we’re on where you have a lot of hunting regulations, fishing regulations, and we’re not taken care of. Our basic human needs are not me, and when you say Alaska is America’s Arctic, that is true. All of our resources, everything that’s been extracted has funded the military and everything, water and sewer systems around the nation. It hasn’t funded anything here. We’re treated less than human and we don’t even have a voice because we have a sparse, low population because of past pandemics, and there’s another one going on now.

I wouldn’t wish for any other population to become as sparse as ours and to have no more voice, but it’s possible. I think we still deserve a voice, and having a presence in the Arctic really does affect our lifestyle.
Even just having the Coast Guard here at Port Clarence, it changed the migration of the belugas, walrus, and bearded seal. We have small common seals that come in here, and rarely do we have the bigger sea mammals come in here now. For the last 40 years our people have had to travel very far, and it’s been hard with this pandemic to travel.

Like Melanie said, “We are what we eat.” We’re mainly a fishing community, and in this community we have one economic source that was shut down because we had no water and sewer. We had a fish and meat plant. It had to be shut down.

We have no economic development in our little community because of regulations. We’re so highly regulated and following all these laws and rules, even to where we live year-round, and we’re not taken care of. The amount of money that’s spent on regulating us should also be spent to help take care of us, in a sense, like our roads.

In our community — no other community in this region is miles and miles apart on a road system with state roads that are not taken care of. Some shorter tribal roads, but wintertime they’re closed. We have to go miles to the airport, miles between homes, miles to the school, miles to the store, and miles and miles to the landfill where we dump the honey buckets and trash, but the state doesn’t take care of that.

It’s so horrible trying to drive on the roads that we go through a lot of car parts and tires and four-wheeler parts or have little accidents. Trash bounces out, honey buckets bounce out. Your water spills before you get home when you’re hauling your water, and the state doesn’t employ anybody here on the roads. We have a highway all the way to Nome. They quit employing anybody in Teller where, if we have more jobs here, we would qualify for sustaining a water and sewer system.

But we have limited jobs here, and we would have more jobs if we did have water and sewer and if the state provided the road maintenance, We have the possibility for a natural port here, but we have horrible roads and so much regulation.

We have been a big part of the military. A lot of people join and they can send us to places that are cold where we survived, and when your military does come up here and do practices, sometimes us local people have to go search and rescue them because living here in the Arctic is harsh. We have to save people up here.

We've survived for a long time and we are still here, and I’d like to be treated like a human. I’d like to be treated like an American. I’d like these resources to help pay for some of the structures that the rest of America has, and if you want to aid foreign countries where their basic needs, just from noticing that they have that basic human need and not fund us to make us jump through all these hoops just to try to get funding when the funding — a lot of funding just came from here.

My lifestyle has changed from regulation, and it’s extra hard living here with a distance from the roads and no water and sewer.
MEGAN ALVANNA-STIMPFLE
Thank you, Blanche, for sharing. Were there any last comments you wanted to make? Blanche is also a veteran herself and served in the Navy — correct me if I’m wrong — but she’s the mayor of the community and does so much for the health and well-being of the residents of Teller.

So I just wanted to reiterate the potential reindeer value herd is 18 to 22 million. We have tremendous job wages through our fishery. Last year 2.3 million was paid in wages to local fishermen in our region. So for our communities without water and sewer, it really provides challenge to creating locally place-based jobs and realizing our potential. So we just wanted to reiterate our opportunities through water and sewer.

So with that, I’ll kick off to Gail. This is Eskimo dancing that we can share for the end. We have tremendous joy and caring in our community. We really take care of each other. Everyone shares their food so that no families go hungry, and it’s just a value system that the United States can inform other countries how we live in the Arctic and what are our values.

Gail, I’ll kick over to you.

GAIL SCHUBERT
Thank you. I have several slides.

So I was born and raised in Unalakleet and I’m a direct descendant of a last traditional chief and shaman of Unalakleet.

This is a map of Alaska that showed the traditional lands for tribal groups, and then I also have a map that showed the division of the regional ANCs, and the division largely happened along regional tribal lands, and the division was also into 12 regional ANCs influenced by Sheldon Jackson’s division of Alaska in terms of religious groups in the areas that they all had in terms of their outreach to Alaska Native people.

We have 17 member villages in the Bering Straits Native Corporation. There are three additional villages that are a part of the region, but they opted out of ANCSA, and we have three distinct tribal groups: Central Yup’ik, Siberian Yup’ik, and Inupiat.

ANCSA, I think probably everyone knows, came about because the federal government had to settle the indigenous land claims of Alaska’s Native people in order to facilitate the development of the oil and gas resources on Alaska’s North Slope.

We are strategically located, and for those of you that have seen the map of the two Diomedes, there’s only three miles that separate the two Diomedes. One is Russian-owned and the other is American. Little Diomede is on the U.S. side. So our region really is in a critical location in the Arctic, and we essentially serve as the gateway to the Arctic.

I share the concerns that General Wilsbach raised about China establishing a presence in the Arctic. Russia of course already has its presence with the remilitarization and reopening of at least 16 bases that they had shuttered during the Cold War.
Port Clarence is something that we recently received title to under ANCSA. We are very, very thankful to the congressional delegation for all of their work on it. Port Clarence was used early on as a trading location and as an area for celebrations, and Port Clarence, as most of you know, is a natural deepwater harbor.

We really look forward to doing what we can in meeting the needs of the Arctic and anything that we can do to help in that arena we are open to and looking at. And so that closes my presentation.

MEGAN ALVANNA-STIMPFLE
And so we’ll hear from Melanie Bahnke next. Melanie, are you online?

MELANIE BAHNKE
Thank you everybody who is participating in our virtual meeting today. It’s exciting to have so many people with such great titles and ranks, authorities and responsibilities for three hours to hear from us about our opportunities and challenges in the Arctic.

I’m Melanie Bahnke. I’m from one of our smaller villages in our region, Savoonga on St. Lawrence Island, and when I got to meet with President Obama a few years ago, I told him I’m from a place where you really can see Russia from your house. I can say that with a straight face.

We’ve been here for 10,000 years plus and we’re going to be here for another 10,000 years plus. The reason that the U.S. can claim an Arctic presence is because of Alaska, and this is our home. Kawerak, the organization that I’m the president of, is a tribal consortium. Our 20 tribal governments pooled their resources and created one service-providing entity 47 years ago. We’ve been a good steward of federal and state and private foundation funding providing services. We’re capable. We’ve got proven results.

We do have several challenges in our region that are still unaddressed and we want to be a partner in solving those challenges.

When it comes to challenges, you heard from Robert and Blanche about what it’s like to be living in a community without water and sewer. Some of the other challenges that we shared with Senator Murkowski on a call a couple of days ago is that our suicide rate has doubled during this COVID time and we’re starting to see spikes in COVID.

The Anchorage Daily News, our statewide paper, just last week published an article about how Alaska Natives and Native Americans are statistically disproportionately being affected by COVID. And it’s just a stain on our nation’s history that in 1918 — Megan shared the information about the death rate among Alaska Natives from the 1918 flu, and here we are 102 years later and we’re threatened by a repeat of that scenario.

One of the basic needs to prevent that from happening is sanitation, water and sewer. My board of directors has prioritized water and sewer and housing for my advocacy work. Kawerak doesn’t actually provide water and sewer system construction or the delivery of the services, but we’re advocating for it.
Some of the beauty of our culture Megan shared. We live a subsistence lifestyle. We're highly dependent on the land and the sea and even the air, because we have migratory birds that travel through, for our survival. This provides a real strategic opportunity for the U.S. in terms of us being present here. We’re the eyes and ears on the ground. We’re very close to Russia. We see what’s happening. We see what boats that are going through our seas. So our presence is a big opportunity for the U.S.

Also, reindeer, fishing, all the ships that are crossing, going through the Arctic and our presence here. Gail mentioned Port Clarence as an opportunity. We’re the choke point for the Bering Strait. All travel going through the Bering Strait, we’re the choke point basically for that.

One of the things that Kawerak is going to be pursuing here in the next few years, you’re going to see a massive amount of construction happening in our region very quickly. We’re partnering with our health corporation and our tribal health care system and going to be building roads and including some water and sewer projects, and then we have some facilities that are going to be going up.

We’re pursuing this new method of delivering projects that the Federal Highway Administration is touting as the best and most innovative way to deliver projects. So you bundle your projects and you put them out to bid as one big package, and you’re including the designer and the contractor in from the very beginning. Normally you would design bid build. You’ve got a designer, they design something, you put it out to bid and then your builder comes in and bids it.

We’re having them work together from the onset and we’re going to be, like I said, bundling about — the first phase is about $40 million in projects, but over the long haul we anticipate about $298 million in projects.

I know we’re running short on time. I wanted to share that with you that another opportunity is with telecommunication. The FCC’s allowing tribes to claim two and a half gigahertz license for free, and so we intend to improve communication in our region.

But like Robert said, it’s 2020 and we’re still on honey buckets. The explanation typically provided to us is that there’s a lack of funding. I’ve never seen so much funding going out to communities, to individuals as I — we all haven’t seen this amount of spending going on with the COVID. He also mentioned that teachers in our villages, teacher housing, they have water and sewer, but our local residents do not.

This was in this week’s paper. It’s backwards. But it says “House Authorizes $491 Million for a Port of Nome Project”, and Megan shared that our water and sewer needs are 271 million. So this explanation of lack of funding really rings hollow. We need to start calling it what it is. When you’ve got our nation’s first people still living in third world conditions and yet we’re sending all this humanitarian aid to other countries, this is systemic racism and it’s a stain on our nation’s history, and we need to change that history going forward. We can’t repeat this.

The U.S. cannot expect to dominate the Arctic without investing in infrastructure in the Arctic, and that includes infrastructure for our people, not just ports. We need to have the basic
infrastructure in our communities, in our Native homes. The U.S. has a trust responsibility to Alaska Natives and Native Americans.

I really want to especially thank our new person to the team, Mr. DeHart, Jim DeHart, as a special representative for the Arctic. I’ve read about you. I’ve read your biography. It's very impressive. I welcome you to come up and see firsthand the beauty of our home. Our homeland is in the Arctic, our seas, and the beauty of our people.

I hope that those of you with some bit of authority are able to take from what you’ve heard from us today and not forget about us after this meeting is over. We're here, we're going to be here. This is our legacy, our people sometimes say, why don't you just leave, why don't you just move? Well, imagine if all of the people in France moved? So French people can move away from France and they can still go back to their countries. This is our country. This is our people. We can't just all up and leave to urban areas, and I really hope that you take that to heart.

I want to thank my co-presenters for sharing about our region and for those of you who are taking the time to listen to the opportunities, our strengths, our challenges, and our needs. Thank you.

MEGAN ALVANNA-STIMPFL
Thank you. Back over to you, Mr. Church. Thank you for the opportunity to hear from us.
Final Comments

MAJOR GENERAL RANDY “CHURCH” KEE
Megan, thank you so very much. Please accept sincerest thanks to Robert, to Blanche, to Gail, Melanie, and Megan for your coordination of those presentations. They’re strategically important, and I look at it as we can’t really address the higher order issues of addressing challenges or taking until we get the basics, fundamentals of life addressed, and I think those reflections — I can’t say it with any more sincerity but to address how serious these are, but ultimately for us, I know we have the right people on the conversation and to hear and listen to this and really take these thoughts of this council wisely presented to cue up our actions.

So first of all, thank you to each of you for your presentations and your really critically important conversation here.

Let me go to my president — our president for today’s discussions. President Kitka, I know we were a few minutes late on the time. I’d like to kind of get your thoughts as to how much longer we can work to maybe take a few questions before we bring this to a close.

Julie Kitka, I’d like to give you the floor for a moment just to see where we’re at on time from your advantage point.

JULIE KITKA
Church, I think we have no more than five more minutes left before people all have to leave, but I do want to wrap up real quickly on Gail and Melanie and the folks in the Bering Straits proposal. Those are solvable problems. They have an innovative model to stretch the dollars the furthest that they can, and this is a fixable thing that can be done, that can be done very quickly.

It’s also a building block for further economic empowerment in that region, especially the fishery. Especially you’re talking about the competition in the oceans over fish protein. You need to build the infrastructure in our coastal areas in order to allow them to empower, to be able to continue their fishing activities as well.

But my main thing is thank you very much for Melanie and Gail and Megan and everybody for your coherent presentation, your fixable innovative solutions that you’ve put forward, and we look forward to getting those done. Thank you.

MAJOR GENERAL RANDY “CHURCH” KEE
Senator Murkowski, are you with us and is there anything you would like to provide based on these last series of reflections from our colleagues in the Bering Straits region?

SENATOR LISA MURKOWSKI
Church, thank you. I wanted to thank everyone who has just presented from this regional perspective.
Melanie, you mention that the region has saved more money than ever before, that this is unprecedented, and I think we recognize that. I think we also recognize that as we are working on that hard infrastructure, whether it is the ports, making sure that we are meeting basic life and health safety measures cannot be overlooked.

I thank you for not only humanizing it, Megan, for you starting off the presentation by focusing on just the Native foods and the importance of that to diet, sustenance, but also just it is who you are as Native people, so tied to the land, so tied to the sea.

So I just wanted to commend everybody for the presentation and the very specific reality that you have brought through your words and through your pictures.

Know that I’m here to help. And I’m more focused than ever on what we do for our water and wastewater projects. We’ve got to get more resources within the WIN program, but know that we’re working with you on the plan. There is no excuse. There is no reason that in this day and this age you should still be reliant on honey buckets, that you should be waiting for a week for a shower in a community.

So thank you for just a very, very well done presentation. Thanks for letting me hop back on, Church.

MAJOR GENERAL RANDY “CHURCH” KEE
Thank you very much, Senator. We’re grateful for those reflections.

Let me give the floor back to you, President Kitka. I would just, from my vantage point, a final reflection. Grateful for the discussions here today. We can’t strategically address challenges and opportunities until we take care of the basic fundamentals of life, and certainly there’s convergence here, convergence from governance of the federal, state, and local level, and certainly conversion of the industry and it’s addressing solvable problems of basic life and also strategically America’s role in the Arctic through this great state of ours.

President Kitka, I give you the floor for kind of follow-up reflections and then we’ll — I’ll stay on the line to see if we connect with Frances.

President Kitka, you’ve got the floor, ma’am.

JULIE KITKA
Great. Thank you. I want to thank Mr. DeHart for participating in today’s call. I’m looking forward to working with you really closely as you scope out your areas of responsibility. We’re especially very interested in what your plans are for the next month or two. We hope that you will continue to engage with us, and, in fact, you can see by the problems that we have in the Bering Straits region, just getting the communications going sometimes is really difficult. So we hope that there will be a willingness to have some follow-up discussions.

We really appreciate our congressional delegation’s hard work and efforts, and we know that they have many, many challenges trying to balance all the interests and needs. But we really do want to bring to their attention that we think that there’s an innovative proposal here that can be put on
the table of high value both from a human need in our communities but also great ramifications all across the Arctic of what the U.S. is capable of doing.

So on behalf of the Alaska Federation of Natives, I want to thank everybody for participating. Thank you, Church, for facilitating it.

Thank you, General Krumm, for being part of our planning and hosting on this. And we’ll be putting together a report as follow-up on this and looking forward to continue to see where we can find the common issues to work together on. Thank you.

MAJOR GENERAL RANDY “CHURCH” KEE
Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, this concludes today’s discussions. Those who are willing to stay on to see if we get Frances back, you’re welcome to. Otherwise, we wish you a very pleasant day and thanks again for this gift of your time for this conversation. Thank you.
Videos

Videos and Resources from this event are available at www.nativefederation.org/military-partnerships/.

General Wilsbach and Discussion
General Kenneth S. Wilsbach presentation at the “Challenges at the Northernmost Border: Regional Series Focus: the Bering Straits Region.” Followed by discussion from participants.

Alaska Congressional Delegation
Senator Murkowski, Senator Sullivan, and Congressman Don Young presentations at the “Challenges at the Northernmost Border: Regional Series Focus: the Bering Straits Region.” Followed by discussion from participants.

Rodger Baker, Stratfor
Rodger Baker of Stratfor presentation at the “Challenges at the Northernmost Border: Regional Series Focus: the Bering Straits Region.”

Honorable James P. DeHart
Honorable James P. DeHart presentation at the “Challenges at the Northernmost Border: Regional Series Focus: the Bering Straits Region.” Followed by discussion from participants.

Lt. General David Krumm
Lt. General Krumm presentation at the “Challenges at the Northernmost Border: Regional Series Focus: the Bering Straits Region.” Followed by discussion from participants.

Bering Straits Dynamics and Priorities
Bering Straits leaders’ presentation at the “Challenges at the Northernmost Border: Regional Series Focus: the Bering Straits Region.”

Presentations

Rodger Baker, Stratfor

Lt. General David Krumm
Further Reading: Submitted by Megan Alvanna-Stimpfle

Native Nation Building in the Arctic: Infrastructure Investment

The opportunity to advance the principles of democracy in the Arctic begins with strong domestic democratic institutions by supporting of our tribes, tribal organizations, village governments, native corporations, and regional asset management organizations in Native Nation building the Arctic. The United States Constitution, case law, statutes provide definition for the United States relationship with Native nations in the United States. The principals of Indian Self Determination have demonstrated success in well managed tribal governments as well as achieved economies of scale in the delivery of financial, managerial, and technical services to communities.

On July 8, 1970 President Nixon delivered his special message on Indian Affairs to advance the principles of Indian Self Determination, recognizing the human condition of Native people reflected centuries of injustice. In December 1971, the Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement Act gave birth to Native corporations and private land ownership. On January 24, 1983, President Reagan issued his Statement on Indian Policy, under the notion that “responsibilities and resources should be restored to the governments which are closest to the people served” that it not only applied to State and local governments, but federally recognized Indian tribes. Fifty years later, our tribes, tribal organizations and Native corporations remain poised to advance Self-Determination in the areas of infrastructure investment and the coordination of housing, sanitation, surface, and marine transportation facilities.

Tremendous opportunity for community infrastructure investment, local growth and regional export remains in the Bering Strait. Our geographic location to global markets in Asia is our primary strength in increasing fish and reindeer meat exports and supporting local job creation. The need for water and sewer facilities remains the top priority for leaders in the Bering Strait, to support the health of our families in responding to the coronavirus pandemic. Water production is essential the commercial production of fishery and reindeer meat exports that support local job growth.

Bering Strait Region Introduction

The Bering Strait is home to Yupik, Siberian Yupik, and Inupiaq communities that have called the region home for millennia. The region is home to roughly 10,000 residents located in 15 communities. Shishmaref, while threatened by coastal erosion, is home to several of our region’s most distinguished ivory carvers. Stebbins, Wales, Diomede, King Island, Savoonga, Gambell, and Teller continue our centuries old tradition of drumming and dancing, hosting dance festivals throughout the year. One of the largest marine mammal migrations in the world including bowhead whales, walrus, and seals migrate twice a year from the Pacific to the Arctic through the Bering Strait. Our lands, wetlands and rivers are home to migratory birds, salmon species, moose, reindeer and caribou. The spirituality, well-being and health of our families and extended families is directly tied to our ability to hunt and fish. An environment of wealth that has sustained our communities.

• 76% of adults in the Bering Strait region live our way of life of hunting and gathering, sharing and providing for families.
3,760 lbs of Native foods were harvested in 2014 in a report by Kawerak and Oceana. 68% of the harvest was marine mammals, including walrus, bearded, ringed, spotted, and ribbon seals.

Kawerak Inc., is the regional tribal nonprofit consortium to deliver BIA services for the 20 federally recognized tribes of the Bering Strait region. Kawerak employs over 250 people in the Bering Strait region with 55% located in Nome. In Bering Strait region communities, Kawerak employs tribal coordinators who help manage tribal governments, village public safety officers, and head start child programs.

**Sanitation Investment Need**

The Indian Health Care Improvement Act establishes that “it is the interest of the United States and it is the policy of the United States, that all Indian communities and Indian homes, new and existing, be provided with safe and adequate water supply systems and sanitary sewage waste disposal systems as soon as possible (25 USC 1632). Access to sewer and water services is first and foremost a health concern and addressing sanitation deficiencies should be prioritized and understood through the responsibility to the human health of our communities. Access to clean water, and piped sewer services is critical to the health of our Native communities and impacting our children and our elders. Babies in communities without adequate sanitation are 11 times more likely to be hospitalized for respiratory infections and five times more likely to be hospitalized for skin infections.

Currently, sanitation funding is tied to regulatory requirements that are unfit to address the systemic challenges to governance, and multi-jurisdictional ownership assets in rural communities. Regulatory requirements are often irrelevant, as communities face the impacts of colonization and historical trauma.

In September 2019, the Indian Health Service Sanitation Deficiency System reported a $1.7 billion need in Alaska. The Bering Strait region faces a $277.4 million water/sewer needs, according to the Indian Health Service Sanitation Deficiency System. 370 homes remain without potable water and 451 homes lack water and sewer. Five communities remain unconnected to running water and sewer in the Bering Strait: Stebbins, Teller, Wales, Diomede, Shishmaref, and Gambell. Connected communities of Brevig Mission, Savoonga, Gambell, St. Michael, Unalakleet, Shaktoolik, Elim, Golovin, Koyuk, and White Mountain face ongoing operations and maintenance challenges in providing adequate service. Several systems remain in constant threat as water infrastructure remains inadequate to provide service including Gambell, Diomede, and Unalakleet.

**Quick Facts**

- 10,000 people live in the Bering Strait
- The regional population is projected to grow to 11,462 by 2045.
- Workforce: 50% government, 20% education and health services, 10% trade, transportation, and utilities, and 5% manufacturing
- Per capita income averaged $20,952
- Groceries are 131% higher in Nome. Costs even higher in communities.
- 30% of children live below the federal poverty line. The communities of Brevig Mission is at 67%, Wales at 61%, and Gambell at 54%.
• 31% of families in region rely on SNAP benefits for food assistance with the communities of Brevig Mission at 69%, Gambell, 66% in Savoonga, 57% in Wales, 54% in Koyuk and Shishmaref, 52% in St. Michael, and 50% in Stebbins and Teller.

• HUD estimates a shortage of 1,386 homes in the Bering Strait region.

Understanding the sanitation/housing crisis from a statistical standpoint provides insight on the magnitude of need and required investment, yet the gravity of our reality must be understood through the context of our history. The health of our communities is defined by our ability to live our way of life on our lands and waters. Alaska’s early history of the colonization of Alaska Natives people has had intergenerational impacts on the cultural health of entire communities, including disease, language loss and relocation. The increasing regulation of complex state, federal and international jurisdictions has burdened our ability to hunt and fish on our homelands. Alcohol continues to impact our families of the Bering Strait region in debilitating ways. The economic costs to our society are real with increased high school drop outs, the high rate of suicide (four times the national average) and lost productivity. The cornerstone of building a healthy and a strong economy is the ability to live ways of life on our homelands, culturally relevant education and job preparedness programs.

The philosophy of service in the Bering Strait region is grounded in the principal of Native self-determination. Our way of life defines where we live, as we hunt and gather with each season. A family of governments operate in the Bering Strait in support of one another to address sanitation deficiencies and advance public infrastructure development. While city governments operate within State jurisdiction, our residents execute leadership as defined by Native values in cooperation and partnership with tribal governments. Our tribal governments manage the delivery of services provided by regional tribal organizations including technical utility support and administrative support for elected leadership. Our tribes manage the technical services of Norton Sound Health Corporation and the Kawerak Inc.

**CHALLENGES**

Multiple jurisdictions and prohibitive regulations in the delivery of sanitation services continues to be a challenge in ensuing critical deficiencies and unserved communities are prioritized. The following regulatory barriers will help improve services to our unserved communities.

• Remove Indian Health Service Sanitation Deficiency System “Cost Caps”.

• Remove Indian Health Service Sanitation Deficiency System ineligible cost match requirements for Alaska Native villages.

• Remove EPA certified operator requirements for unserved communities

• Eliminate Best Practice Score Requirements

While city governments operate utilities within State jurisdiction and the State only awards State/Federal sanitation funding to cities, our tribal governments manage the delivery of technical services provided by regional tribal organizations including engineering and administrative utility support. With the purpose of empowering community leaders and operators in the management of infrastructure assets, our regional tribal organizations are poised to improve the delivery of financial, managerial, and technical capacity building services.
Native corporations are the land owners in local communities, and often must make land available for public utility development, and provide rights of way. The development and management of community infrastructure projects are often planned independently of each other. Housing investment is managed by Indian housing authorities, road marine infrastructure is managed by the regional tribal BIA non-profit organizations, and the construction of sanitation projects managed by either the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium or the State of Alaska.

**OPPORTUNITIES**
Kawerak Inc. is implementing in partnership with the Federal Highways Administration, Norton Sound Health Corporation and the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium the benefits of the construction management/general contractor (CM/GC) method for the planning and construction of community facilities including housing, water/sewer, roads and ports. CM/GC will reduce the costs of construction and improving construction timelines in our remote communities. Kawerak Inc. continues to improve infrastructure coordination with cities, tribes, and village corporations with the goal of developing “Long Range Infrastructure Plans” to improve the investment and delivery of essential community infrastructure facilities.

- Commercial export operations of regional assets including fish and reindeer require water production. The estimated value of reindeers herds on the Bering Strait totals $18 million to $22 million.

- 2017 - 2020 Norton Sound Seafood Products Ex-vessel Value and Wages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>EX-VEssel VALUE TO FISHERMEN</th>
<th>NSSP SEASONAL WAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2020</td>
<td>$656,057</td>
<td>$834,164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>$3,414,012</td>
<td>$2,356,309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>$6,470,144</td>
<td>$2,594,668</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>$6,569,548</td>
<td>$2,376,783</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTES:**

- Value and Wages through August 17, 2020
- Targeted Fisheries Include: Herring, Chum, Coho, Cod & Halibut
- Red King Crab Fishery Closed
- Low returns of Chum & Coho

2019

- Targeted Fisheries Include: Herring, Chum, Coho, Halibut & Red King Crab
- Ex-vessel value of Red King Crab Fishery: $509,838

2018

- Targeted Fisheries Include: Herring, Chum, Coho, Halibut & Red King Crab
- Ex-vessel value of Red King Crab Fishery: $2,026,026

2017

- Targeted Fisheries Include: Herring, Chum, Coho, Halibut & Red King Crab
- Ex-vessel value of Red King Crab Fishery: $3,040,320