



1 January 2021

Alaska Civilian Armed Services Team (ACAST)

Memorandum of Support/Advocacy for Clear Air Force Station construction program

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

1. Maintain and increase Alaska’s military capacity and capability in both the active component and guard and reserve forces; and
2. Acquire future missions, infrastructure, and recurring military exercises in Alaska for military forces based inside and outside of the state.”¹²

As a cross-functional and multidiscipline team of leaders, ACAST notes that Clear Air Force Station (AFS), located near Anderson, Alaska, is facing challenges in completing construction for mission growth and legacy infrastructure improvements. Clear AFS is a sub-Arctic facility in a remote part of Alaska, accessed by the George Parks Highway south of Fairbanks.

Clear AFS is a key installation, now transitioning from the U.S. Air Force to the U.S. Space Force (USSF) and provides critical architecture for polar-oriented satellite communications, early warning radar in support of U.S. missile defense and contributes to Space Domain Awareness in support of U.S. Northern Command, a geographic Combatant Command for the defense of the U.S. Homeland as well as U.S. Space Command, a functional Combatant Command providing space defense for the United States. Currently, Clear AFS undergoing significant construction to provide a much-needed Long Range Discrimination Radar (LRDR), a \$1.26 Billion dollar project, and new acquisitions in permanent party housing, security forces and civil engineering facilities as well as installation access which meets Department of Defense standards for Force Protection and Anti-terrorism.

Recently Clear AFS achieved full operational capability of the Enhanced Polar System, a \$1.3B program for protected extremely high frequency satellite communications in the North Polar regions as well as upgrades to the legacy Early Warning Radar.³ The new LRDR facility will provide new capability for tracking incoming missiles and is able to distinguish between threatening projectiles and decoys.

Currently the new the LRDR project is lagging completion. According to news reports, Missile Defense Agency, a Combat Support Agency associated with the Office of the Secretary of Defense

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

² ACAST is Co-chaired by Mr. Bill Popp, President and Chief Executive Officer of Anchorage Economic Development Corporation (AEDC) private nonprofit corporation (IRS code 501(c)(6)), operating since 1987 in Anchorage Alaska. Fellow Co-chair is Randy “Church” Kee, Maj Gen, USAF (Ret), Executive Director of the Arctic Domain Awareness Center at the University of Alaska Anchorage.

³ See Clear Air Force Station Handout, U.S. Air Force and U.S. Space Force



suspended work in 2020 largely because of COVID-19 concerns will likely delay fielding of the advanced radar facility by about a year. A June 2020 Government Affairs Office (GAO) highlighted acquisition and testing problems that contributed to the overall delay in fielding the LRDR and noted a cost overrun of approximately \$25 million dollars.⁴

With the pending mass inoculation of COVID 19 immunizations across the U.S., the workforce protection delays affecting LRDR completion will hopefully ameliorate in the new few months. In light how important LRDR is to the U.S. missile defense and an uncertain defense environment as a result of Great Power competition, there is increased risk to the U.S. homeland. Accordingly, ACAST earnestly advocates priority efforts to complete construction and installation of LRDR while seeking to avoid any additional delays.

Through individual endeavors and as an integrated group of defense-minded volunteers, ACAST will endeavor to provide advocacy as useful to assist completion of the LRDR project as quickly as possible.

Respectfully presented.

v/r


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



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

⁴ See <https://www.alaskapublic.org/2020/08/19/pandemic-and-other-problems-delay-missile-defense-system-in-clear/>

