



Testimony of
The Honorable Don Young
Before the
House Armed Services Committee
FY 2019 National Defense Authorization Act Member Request Day

Chairman Thornberry, Ranking Member Smith, and distinguished colleagues on the House Armed Services Committee, thank you for holding this hearing, and for giving me the opportunity to testify as the lone Representative for the State of Alaska. Though I am not a member of the Armed Services Committee, I am proud to represent the most strategic state in our country, with the largest number of service members and veterans per capita in the nation. I appreciate your consideration of the following provisions for inclusion in the Fiscal Year 2019 National Defense Authorization Act. I will keep my remarks today brief, and my staff will be happy to follow up with you to provide additional information on all of these issues, if needed.

Enlisted Pilots

Pilot shortage and retention has reached a critical mass, the current trend could greatly impact our national security. If we look to history we can see that this is not the first pilot shortage we have had, and in the past Congress took action to help alleviate the issue; their answer was Public Law 99. That law authorized an enlisted pilot training program. This program was highly successful and produced fighter aces, General officers, and aviation legends, such as General Chuck Yeager. Additionally, the Air Force is facing a shortage of Remotely Piloted Vehicle pilots, I believe that enlisted pilots can also help to alleviate this shortage. Considering the Air Force has graduated its first class of enlisted RPV pilots and has selected its candidates for a second class of RQ-4 pilots with a goal of 100 enlisted RQ-4 pilots by 2020, it is safe to assume that the Air Force has confidence in enlisted pilots.

I ask for two Air Force studies, (1) a report on the cost and benefit of fully opening up the RPV pilot career field to all enlisted personnel upon enlistment, and (2) a report on the cost, benefit, and feasibility of authorizing enlisted pilots on all aircraft platforms. I believe it would also be helpful if the studies examined the question of whether the primary problem is officer retention or pilot retention.

Resident Energy Conservation Program (RECP)

RECP has been instituted around DoD for the purpose of awarding energy savings/efficiency. This derived from a 1998 OSD policy which established a policy for the payment of utilities in Public-Private Venture Housing to encourage



energy efficiency in privatized housing. However, RECP serves no purpose for bases which produce their own power, such as Eielson AFB.

Implementing RECP at bases which create more energy than they use serves no purpose as any energy savings is pointless because it does not save any money. Moreover, it can be extra burdensome on the service members and their families. Eielson AFB for example, has some of the most extreme environments in the world, including temperatures that stay well below zero for months. Essentially, with implementation, many troops and their families will pay above their Basic Allowance for Housing entitlement or try to conserve energy in this harsh environment, which is dangerous and unfair to families.

This is why I am asking the Committee to include language that would exempt military installations that produce more electricity than they consume from the Resident Energy Conservation Program.

Security Force Assistance Brigade (SFABs)

SFABs were designed by the United States Army to train, advise, and assist our allied and partner nations. Currently, the Army has stood up two of these Brigades in North Carolina and Georgia, with plans to establish six brigades all together. Given the National Defense Strategy's call to expand our Indo-Pacific alliances and partnerships and DoD's shift to the Asia-Pacific region to deal with developing threats and expansionism from countries like Russia and China, it should be the goal of Congress to ensure we are doing everything to combat this threat.

This is why I ask for a Sense of Congress that any new SFABs be established such that the SFAB would support the National Defense Strategy, which calls for an expansion of our Indo-Pacific alliances and partnerships; and any new SFAB's home station should be located on an installation that is conducive to operations in the Pacific.

Military Mountaineer Badge

I request that the Committee authorize federal approval the Basic Military Mountaineer Badge, commonly known as the Rams Head Device for graduates of the Basic Military Mountaineering Course.

The badge has existed since the 1950's when it was worn by the Cadre at the U.S. Army Mountain and Cold Weather Training Command at Fort Carson, Colorado and Camp Hale, Colorado, but has yet to receive federal approval. Approval of this badge would not only mean that the Army recognizes the importance of the training that BMMC graduates receive, but also means that the



Army recognizes the historical significance of the badge. Additionally, given our current and future threats developing in mountainous and Arctic regions around the globe, it is safe to say that institutions teaching these courses, such as those at the Northern Warfare Training Center in Alaska, must grow. This badge would help that process by raising the status and importance of the training.

U.S. FAA Licensed Spaceports

U.S. FAA licensed spaceports have been identified as valuable components in the national security launch framework, and should be utilized for appropriate missions to support U.S. strategic goals. These spaceports provide numerous advantages, for example, the Pacific Spaceport Complex (PSCA) located in Kodiak, Alaska, is the nation's highest latitude full service spaceport, and was designed specifically to provide optimal support for space launches to polar and high inclination orbits, including circular and highly elliptical Molniya and Tundra orbits. PSCA provides an alternative launch site to Vandenberg AFB that reduces U.S. vulnerability to a natural or man-made event that shuts down launch access to polar orbits for small payloads. Given the importance of access to space for national security I ask that the following report language be included:

The importance and use of U.S. FAA licensed spaceports

The committee recognizes the unique importance of U.S. FAA licensed spaceports and when appropriate, encourages the use of such spaceports and launch and range complexes for mid-to-low inclination orbits or polar high-inclination orbits in support of national security space priorities. The committee recognizes that these federally-licensed, non-federally owned launch facilities, including the Pacific Spaceport Complex-Alaska (PSCA) and the Mid Atlantic Regional Spaceport (MARS), are available to meet the requirements for the national security space program from the Department of Defense (DOD), Air Force Space Command, Operationally Responsive Space Office, and Missile Defense Agency (MDA).

The PSCA has supported numerous launches for Air Force Space Command including specific national security launches. It remains the only commercial polar launch range available in the United States, and supports a number of MDA missions. The Mid Atlantic Regional Spaceport (MARS) at Wallops Island, Virginia provides medium-class and small-class launch capabilities for the Department. It has launched numerous missions for DOD with its agency partners, Air Force Space Command, ORS, and MDA. MARS provides assured/responsive access to mid-to-low inclination orbits for payloads up to 14,000 lbs.



The committee believes that these facilities can be used, when appropriate, to support the national security space program.

Background Investigations

P.L. 108-458, The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Act, required that all security clearance background investigations and determinations completed by an authorized investigative agency or authorized adjudicative agency shall be accepted by all agencies and that all security clearance background investigations initiated by an authorized investigative agency shall be transferable to any other authorized investigative agency. However, a December 2017 GAO report found that full implementation has yet to happen.

While it is understood that there are a variety of reasons why full implementation has yet to occur, I think we can all agree that this process has dragged on way too long. Estimates have shown that the use of reciprocity could eliminate up to one-third of the backlog. Additionally, the clearance backlog has affected the backbone of the American economy - small business. I have heard from companies which operate under SBA programs that the clearance backlog has adversely affected their ability to function in the federal contracting realm. Therefore, I request a provision which mandates that federal agencies apply and respect reciprocity as was directed by PL 108-459 in an expedited manner.

Chairman Thornberry, Ranking Member Smith, and members of the Armed Services Committee, I again thank you for giving me this opportunity. I encourage all of you, and your staff, to come to Alaska to see firsthand all that we offer the Department of Defense. A strong defense presence in Alaska is not only vital to the state, but also vital to our national security.