Climate Change in Alaska:
A New Maritime Frontier

2009 AK Forum on the Environment

Presented by RADM Gene Brooks
Commander, USCG District Seventeen
Agenda

• The Changing Arctic Frontier
• Strategic Challenges & Drivers
• 2008/2009 Operations
• The Arctic Conundrum
Summer Sea Ice Retreat

Barrow
Future Maritime Arctic Shipping Routes

Europe to Asia - 40 to 50% Savings

= Chokepoint

Bering Strait

Thule AB

Northern Sea Route

Northwest Passage

Bering Strait

Pacific Ocean

Arctic Ocean

Greenland

North Atlantic Ocean

North America

(http://NASA.GOV)
Maritime Traffic Management

- Establishing ship routing measures
  - Lengthy process, ultimately approved by International Maritime Organization
Expanding Resource Development

- Increased offshore development:
  - Oil companies bid nearly $2.7 billion for Chukchi Sea rights.
  - $1.3 billion plan to tap Point Thomson on North Slope

- Legal issues pending
Seasonal Ore Operations

Red Dog Port - 15 March 08

ore carrier receiving a tender boat offshore
Growing Eco-Tourism

M/S Explorer:
- Antarctica, Nov 2007
- Struck Iceberg (Sank!)
- 154 PAX/Crew Abandon Ship

Ice Station Borneo

C/S Bremen making port call in Barrow, AK
Species Movement North

• Stocks are moving North

• No commercial fishing in Arctic
  – Awaiting NPFMC decision
  – Potential large closed area enforcement challenges

NPFMC – North Pacific Fishery Management Council
Threatened and Endangered Species

- Marine Mammal Protection Act - prohibits harassment, injuring, or killing
- Most populations are healthy.
- Legal issues pending in 9th Circuit Court of Appeals

Polar Bear  
Bowhead whale  
Seals  
Walrus
AK Native & Tribal Engagement

- AK has 229 of the 562 Federally Recognized Native Tribes
- EO 13175 – Mandates Tribal Consultation
- 13 Native Regional & 200 Village Corporations
- Protection of subsistence lifestyle - AK Eskimo Whaling Commission, Eskimo Walrus Commission, Nanuk Commission
Operational Challenges

- High Latitudes
- Severe Weather
- Great Distances
- Remote locations

Locations:
- Barrow
- Nome
- St. Paul
- Attu
- Dutch Harbor
- Cold Bay
- Cordova
- Kodiak
- Juneau
- Ketchikan

Maritime Boundary Line
The CG has 143 years of Arctic Service

- Ice breaking
- Ice patrol
- Loran
- Marine mammal protection
- Bering Sea Patrols
- World War II
- Overland Expedition
- Exploration
- Marine Safety

USRC Bear
Arctic Changes Drive Coast Guard Mission Expansion North

All Coast Guard missions in Southern Alaska must be expanded to Northern Alaska.
Arctic Ops Summer ‘08

- Arctic Domain Awareness
- Cutter Operations
- Tailored Force Package Deployment
- Community Engagement
- SAR Exercise
Salliq: Lessons Learned

• Infrastructure Insufficient

• Lack of effective communication

• Small boats/short range helos ineffective

• Require icebreakers or ice hardened vessels with embarked helos

• Input from indigenous people imperative
Pending Operations

- CGC Polar Sea in Bering/Chukchi Sea
- Cutter Arctic deployments
- ADA flights
- Waterways Analysis
The Arctic Conundrum

Development

Environment

People
US Arctic Policy Goals

- Meet national & homeland security needs
- Protect the Arctic environment & conserve its biological resources
- Ensure that natural resource management & economic development in the region is environmentally sustainable
- Strengthen institutions for cooperation among the 8 Arctic nations
- Involve indigenous communities in decisions that affect them
- Enhance scientific monitoring and research
Questions?