



U.S. military, Sullivan share interest in reopening Adak naval base

KUCB | By **Maggie Nelson**

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Adak's military base has been closed since 1997. Only about 50 people live on the island, which is about 1,200 air miles from Anchorage.

A key U.S. military commander told state and federal officials last month that he would be interested in expanding military access on Adak Island in the western Aleutians.

The word came during a Senate Armed Services Committee hearing on Feb. 13, after Sen. Dan Sullivan pressed federal officials to strengthen military presence in Alaska.

"President Trump himself commented recently that we need to increase military investments in Alaska as Russia and China make more menacing moves in the region," he said.

Sullivan told Gen. Gregory Guillot, head of the North American Aerospace Defense Command, that reopening the naval base in Adak — the westernmost city in the nation — could help bolster the country's defense against growing foreign threats.

"These incursions are going to increase," Sullivan said. "This is America, our northern border, and yet the infrastructure we have for the young men and women who are doing these dangerous intercept missions, both at sea and in the air, they need more infrastructure for their safety and for our rapid response."

Guillot, who also heads the military's Northern Command, agreed. He said he would support Adak for air and maritime access, as well as increasing military infrastructure investments across Alaska.

City Manager Breck Craig said the island has a lot of enticing infrastructure, including what was left behind by the military.

“In that respect, it has a lot of advantages because you're not going to have to rebuild buildings,” Craig said. “You're going to have to remodel a lot of buildings, but you're not going to have to start from scratch. We also have a really nice airport. We've got two 7,200-plus-foot runways, and we're serviced by (Alaska Airlines) 737 jets out of Anchorage twice a week.”

Over the past few years, the U.S. military has intercepted several joint forces between Russia and Chinese military vessels and aircraft in the region. In 2023, Navy warships were [dispatched to the Aleutians](#) after the military encountered a joint patrol of nearly a dozen military ships from the two foreign powers.

Department of Defense officials have [said](#) that China is working closely with Russia to be recognized as an Arctic power. On top of that, officials have said that climate change is increasing the chances of competitive activity in the region.

Craig said the community would welcome the return of a military presence. Not only could it bolster economic activity, but he said it could reassure locals of their safety as foreign military presence increases in the Arctic.

“From what I hear from folks, there is definitely a concern about the increased attention that Adak is receiving from our adversaries in Asia,” Craig said. “And the need for the country and the state to probably increase their presence on the island, just to deter any unwelcome activities.”

This isn't the first time the military has expressed interest in reopening the Aleutian naval base. Sullivan has been pushing for a stronger military presence in the area for years.

During the February hearing, Sullivan also received the military's endorsement of his [Iron Dome Act](#), which would reinforce the U.S. homeland missile defense system.

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