

U.S. Rep. Gallagher, colleagues: Launch Arctic Security Initiative Act

Posted on Thursday, Jun 24, 2021

>> WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Reps. Mike Gallagher (R-WI) and Elaine Luria (D-VA, alongside Sens. Dan Sullivan (R-AK) and Angus King (I-ME), today introduced the Arctic Security Initiative Act of 2021, legislation requiring the Department of Defense (DOD) to conduct a security assessment of the Arctic region and establish an Arctic Security Initiative (ASI) with a five-year plan to fully resource the DOD and individual service-specific strategies for the Arctic that have been released over the past several years. U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) would lead the independent assessment in coordination with U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) and U.S. European Command (USEUCOM).

“The Arctic is an increasingly vital hinge that connects Europe to the Indo-Pacific,” said Rep. Gallagher. “More than ever, the U.S. needs a comprehensive plan to combat increased Russian and Chinese aggression in the region. This begins with ensuring we have the logistics, infrastructure, and force posture we need to defend our interests in the High North. I’m proud to introduce this critical legislation to make groundbreaking investments in America’s Arctic presence.”

“The Arctic is where the future of military conflict and free trade will be decided. We need to better understand the resources needed to compete with Russia and China in this theater,” Congresswoman Luria said. “The Arctic Security Initiative recognizes we cannot continue to ignore the critical importance of the arctic and the need for American leadership.”

“Following the direction of a provision I secured in the Fiscal Year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act, the Pentagon released a sequence of serious, detailed strategies to protect our nation’s interests in the Arctic,” said Sen. Sullivan. “Now, the task before us is ensuring these strategies are fully resourced and implemented to maintain a favorable balance of power in the region, to defend the northern approaches to the American homeland, and to guard against China and Russia’s aims to disrupt the international rules-based order in the Arctic. Our new Arctic

Security Initiative will identify the resources and activities needed to fulfill America's role as an Arctic nation and, ultimately, lead to a more robust security posture in America's Arctic—in Alaska.”

“The shifting strategic and environmental landscape in the Arctic marks an historic moment for U.S. leadership in the region – this means full awareness of the potential opportunities and threats in the far north,” said Sen. King, co-chair of the U.S. Senate Arctic Caucus. “As the world awakens to the fact that we are entering a new era of Arctic competition and cooperation, it is imperative we develop our presence there to match the moment, and pursue responsible policies that strengthen U.S. capabilities and resources in the region.”

The ASI would be focused on four areas:

- 1) Readiness: Modernizing forces and enhancing dedicated presence in the Arctic, as well as Arctic operations in support of other theaters.
 - 2) Sustainment: Improving and hardening logistics, infrastructure, and prepositioning war materials.
 - 3) Training and Doctrine: Establishing dedicated wargames and exercises in support of Arctic operations.
 - 4) Multilateralism: Enhancing Arctic cooperation with America's allies and partners.
- The Fiscal Year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) included a provision requiring the secretary of defense and the service secretaries to submit a plan on how they will implement the DOD's 2019 Arctic Strategy to defend the homeland, preserve freedom of the seas, and develop Arctic infrastructure and capabilities. Below is a timeline of the release of the service-specific Arctic strategies.

- In March, the U.S. Army released its [first-ever Arctic strategy](#).
- In January, the Department of Homeland Security released its [first-ever Arctic strategy](#).
- Also in January, the U.S. Navy released its Arctic strategy document, titled “[A Blue Arctic](#).” The strategy states that naval forces must expand their role in Alaska—and the greater Arctic region—through the pursuit of three main objectives: maintaining enhanced presence, strengthening cooperative relationships, and building a more capable Arctic naval force.
- In July of 2020, the U.S. Air Force released the first service-specific [strategy document](#), which Sen. Sullivan called the “most robust U.S. Arctic strategy document to date.” The strategy lays out an expansion of the competitive space in the Arctic under four lines of effort: vigilance in all domains, projecting power through a combat-credible force, cooperation with allies & partners, and preparation for Arctic operations. Importantly, the strategy also emphasizes

continued work and collaboration with Alaska Native communities.

- In June of 2019, the DOD released its [Arctic strategy document](#).
- In April of 2019, the U.S. Coast Guard released its “[Arctic Strategic Outlook](#).”