

CONCLUSION OF MORNING
BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will proceed to executive session to resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The legislative clerk read the nomination of Robert J. Luck, of Florida, to be United States Circuit Judge for the Eleventh Circuit.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska is recognized.

TED STEVENS ARCTIC CENTER FOR SECURITY
STUDIES

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, it was several weeks ago—actually, October 23—that here in the Senate we had the opportunity to recognize a friend of so many of us; a mentor, certainly, to me; and a leader in Alaska. We recognized the life and contributions of Senator Ted Stevens.

The Alaska congressional delegation was able to join with members of the Stevens family, many of his friends, his congressional colleagues, and a lot of former staff. We were able to unveil a portrait of Senator Stevens that had been commissioned for him as the President pro tempore of the Senate. It was a lovely ceremony and a great occasion, and now his portrait hangs back in the hall, behind where the Presiding Officer is sitting.

It was a great occasion to be remembering the contributions of Ted Stevens. He represented my State from 1968 to 2009. He was the longest serving Republican Senator in Senate history at the time that he left office.

He left office with considerable policy legacies. Those in the fishing industry remember the work he did with Senator Magnuson in creating the Magnuson-Stevens Act, which really has become the framework for our sustainable fisheries. It is something we continue to look to. He also worked in sports with the creation of the U.S. Paralympics. We remember his encouragement and all that he did with women and girls in sports regarding title IX.

We all know his background and his history. He was a pilot in World War II. Certainly, here in the Senate, he was a staunch advocate for our veterans and for all of our military. He worked hand in glove with his Senate brother and friend, Senator Daniel Inouye, chairing not only the Appropriations Committee itself but also the Subcommittee on Defense Appropriations. In that role, he helped to advance so many of our national priorities.

Today is Ted Stevens' birthday. If he were alive today, he would be 96 years old. Later this evening, there is going

to be a gathering. It is an annual gathering on November 18, when friends of Ted gather to raise a glass to a wonderful man, a strong leader, a great Alaskan, and truly a friend of mine.

I think today Ted Stevens would be smiling at what Senator SULLIVAN, Congressman YOUNG, and I were able to observe this morning.

The three of us—the full Alaska delegation—were in Fort Worth, TX, at the Lockheed Martin plant, and we were able to participate in the signing as we seek to roll off the line the first F-35 that will be based there at Eielson Air Force Base. It will be the first of two squadrons with there being a total complement of 54 F-35s. It was a reminder to all of us of all we have done in the State of Alaska in our focusing on Alaska's geostrategic position, not in the country but in the world.

Ted Stevens clearly recognized that. He was a visionary in so many areas, and he was certainly a visionary when it came to understanding the promise but also the challenge of the Arctic itself and how we were to ensure that in this region. It is a region that is pretty remote and pretty isolated, but it is a region that is prepared and then, with that preparation, is able to protect.

As we think about that role today that Senator Stevens envisioned for Alaska in terms of our role in protecting and defending the country but also our broader, more global role and responsibility, I come to talk about legislation that I have introduced, along with Senator SULLIVAN, to authorize the Department of Defense to create a sixth regional center for security studies that is focused on the Arctic.

I think it is very, very clear to us that the Department of Defense, in particular, is keying in on the challenges that we face in the Arctic. With the growing prominence of the Arctic and global geopolitical and strategic affairs, now is the time to give the Department of Defense the tools as well as the abilities that it needs to foster the research and the dialogue that we think will be critical to our Nation's security.

Let me give a little bit of background in terms of these regional centers. Currently, the Department of Defense has five academic regional centers for security studies. They cover the regions of Europe, the Asia-Pacific, Africa, Near East South Asia, and the Northern Hemisphere. What these centers aim to do is to support defense strategy objectives and policy priorities through a pretty unique academic forum, as well as to foster strong international networks of security leaders.

Just to give a kind of basic comparison of what we are talking about here, in specifics, the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies is actually fully entitled the Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies. It was established in Hawaii back in 1995, but it is a DOD institution that provides a

forum at which current and future military and civilian leaders from the Indo-Pacific gather to address regional and global security issues and enhance security cooperation through programs of executive education, professional exchange, and building relationships of trust and confidence. Currently, over 30 countries send participants to engage, to learn, and to really build those relationships.

The Ted Stevens Arctic Security Studies Center, which is what we seek to name this Arctic center, will be modeled after the Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies. There being the fact that the two of them worked hand in glove for so many years—really, for decades—on these issues of national security and national defense from both the perspective of the far north as well as the Asia-Pacific, it is only fitting that we model the Ted Stevens Arctic Security Studies Center after the Arctic center named after Daniel Inouye.

Senator SCHATZ clearly understands the value of the Asia-Pacific center, and he has joined Senator SULLIVAN and me as a cosponsor of this legislation.

What we are really seeking to do here—the overarching goal of this Arctic security studies center—is to find solutions for the greatest security challenges of the circumpolar Arctic region in order to help promote a greater understanding of the Arctic—we know we have to do more there—as well as to facilitate greater engagement and potential solutions for the many challenges that we know lie ahead.

It is an evolving world up there. Let me tell you that it is an evolving world. As we are seeing the impact from climate changes, as we are seeing ice recede, as we are seeing waterways open up, as we are seeing greater access, as we are seeing greater threats, what are we doing to prepare?

I think it is important to recognize that the proposed center would be additive in nature. It is not looking to take away from any of the other very excellent efforts that support the DOD's mission in the Arctic. What we are seeking to do is to provide additional value while creating new partnerships and supporting critical research. We hope—certainly, it is the intent here—to complement current structures, like the multinational Security Forces Roundtable, led by USEUCOM and the Norwegian Defence Staff. The center will build on the Arctic Coast Guard Forum, wherein, effectively, you have senior leaders from the Coast Guards from all over the Arctic nations gather to discuss defense and security concerns.

Just this last Thursday, I had an opportunity to be part and spoke via videoconference of the importance of this strategic dialogue at the Arctic Symposiums and Arctic Senior Leader Summits, which was held by NORTHCOM and ALCOM.