

Eielson's Strategic Importance: Overview

Conservative estimates say that the Arctic Ocean will be ice-free in the summer within 20 years. This will provide a quick shipping lane between the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans. "We have to prepare for the world coming to the Arctic," said Rear Adm. Gene Brooks, commander of the Coast Guard's Alaska district. Up to 25% of the world's undiscovered oil and gas is in Arctic Ocean area.

Our wide-open spaces, including the Joint Alaska-Pacific Range Complex, offer an unmatched military training environment. Our varied climate prepares soldiers and airmen to operate anywhere in the world.

About 13 percent of the state economy depends on the military, with the impact more strongly felt near larger installations.

Close proximity to North Korea, Pakistan, Iran, and China – all nuclear powers.

General Hamilton:

- "Alaska, sitting at the top of the world, is within nine air hours of 95% of the industrial world."
- "Eielson's 90,000 acres and Ft. Wainwright's 1.6 million acres represent the best joint training spaces available to U.S. forces."
- Eielson has 63,000 square miles of training airspace, the largest overland instrumented training range in the world.

General Gamble:

"There are only two deployment routes from North America to Eastern and Central Asia. The first is through Alaska, and the second is through Hawaii and Guam. Of these two, the Alaska route is 1800 miles shorter, which translates into a one-day advantage receiving combat aircraft from the West Coast and a two-day advantage from the East Coast."

- Eielson supports NORAD and the Ground Based Missile Defense System: "Every day for more than 20 years, at least on KC-135 has been on short-notice alert in support of interceptors protecting the sovereign airspace."
- "Only one military base in the state has a runway long enough for all-weather tanker operations."
- Eielson secures the TransAlaska Pipeline.
- "Any Pacific Theater war plan would fully involve Eielson in an air bridge role."

- "...as we understand it, in all prior BRAC rounds, Eielson was 'categorically excluded' in recognition of its critical function in reinforcing the Pacific and defending Alaska."
- Few environmental constraints (noise, pollution, etc) compared to other bases.
- "Eielson's fuel system is another great base asset. It is completely self-contained. The crude comes right off the North Slope, it's refined in the neighboring North Pole, and it's piped directly to Eielson."
- "...failing to consider the consequence of diminished Air Force jet fuel production required to meet the demand of a wartime surge; and two, by moving aircraft from the largest unrestricted airspace in the U.S. to encroached airspace."
- "Eielson provides the infrastructure to air refuel the President's support aircraft when he moves through the Pacific."
- "Eielson supports a multi-million dollar network of seismic sensors which detect underground nuclear tests."
- Eielson has huge field storage capacity, large capacity parking ramp, and a long runway (8th longest runway in the United States.)
- Eielson is a self-contained base, making it very secure to terrorist attack: "Eielson's heat and electricity come from its own power plant burning locally mined coal, and Eielson has an entirely self-contained water supply and water treatment facility on base."