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THE WORD FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS THE QUOTE FOR THE NEXT COUPLE DAYS ABOUT

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THIS WEEK'S POLL IS:

**Regarding your 2011 taxes,
due April 17th 2012, will you:**

- ☐ do them yourself?
- ☐ pay to have a robot do them?
- ☐ pay a human to do them?
- ☐ None of the above: it's MY money!

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Interior Alaska's Eielson Air Force Base closure: what's really going on?

by T. PHILLIPS on FEBRUARY 19, 2012

It's easy to get lost in the controversy...



Twenty-one F-16s (one of which is pictured above over Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska) are really being transferred from Eielson Air Force Base? After reading the major articles about the move and spending roughly 25 years in the Fairbanks area, I have compiled a report, along with my own thoughts, to clear up the confusion.

First, let's look at what we have been told (mostly from Alaska news sources):

Twenty-one F-16s may move from Eielson Air Force Base by summer 2013, followed by any associated personnel by the end of the year.

Nineteen of the F-16s would be relocated to Elmendorf Air Force Base in Anchorage. 1600 jobs would be cut with only 600 moving to Anchorage. The Pentagon would save \$35 million over five years, according to authorities.

Air Force Lt. Gen. Hoog says that the National Guard's refueling unit would continue operation at the base even if the F-16s are relocated (the base would not close).

According to Hoog, "If you mapped out everyone who touches (the F-16s), you'd be looking at about 900 folks." So far, it is uncertain how many of the 1,800 active-duty personnel would leave the Fairbanks area. There are 2.1 to 2.3 family members for every active duty airman stationed at Eielson, according to Hoog, and let's not forget about the numerous civilian jobs that would also diminish.

Senators Lisa Murkowski and Mark Begich, as well as Borough Mayor Luke Hopkins, met on Saturday (2/18) with General Norton Schwartz (Chief of Staff to the U.S. Air Force) regarding the proposed move.

Fairbanks International

Airport, AK

Last Updated on Mar 31 2012, 1:53 pm

AKDT

Weather by NOAA

Current Conditions: Partly Cloudy

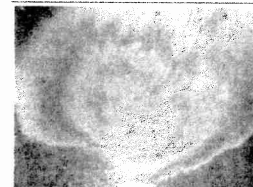


Temp: 26°F
Wind: North at 0mph
Humidity: 75%

Dewpoint: 19.0°F

Your 5-Day Forecast at a Glance

THE PHOTO OF THE WEEK



Pretty like a Mushroom Cloud

Past Photos of the Week

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Both Hoog and Schwartz said an analyst will arrive in March to investigate the logistics of the move and the future of the base.

Mayor Hopkins and Governor Sean Parnell have both proposed spending state money to investigate the financial figures that would result from the move.

Some government spending has been put on hold (\$45 million for the Eielson dorm project) while some spending continues (\$14.8 million for a railroad upgrade to haul fuel to Eielson).

Ted Stevens is dead and can't protect Alaska from military spending cuts in Washington.

There are only a few months left for politicians to convince the Pentagon not to go through with the move.

Now let's think about what we have been told:

Alaskan politicians say that there is no better training place for the F-16s than the Interior. Shouldn't that decision be left to leading military strategy experts instead of bureaucrats?

The real reason there is such a fuss: THE AMOUNT OF MONEY LOST BY BUSINESSES IN INTERIOR ALASKA WILL BE MASSIVE. MONEY, MONEY, MONEY! MONEY TO LOSE and MONEY TO SPEND TO TRY NOT TO LOSE MORE MONEY!

Lisa Murkowski states that in rural areas of Alaska, military spending is responsible for 38% of the economy.

According to Wes Madden, the departure of even 1,500 people would drastically influence the housing market in a negative way. Oh no, the housing market would be hurt. The rental prices are already through the roof (and have been for awhile), even in west Fairbanks!

According to one Interior resident, *"A lot would change – fewer assaults, less traffic, smaller population, fewer Republicans – it would be horrible."*

While the above human is being a bit sarcastic, there is no doubt that a number of aspects of society could see a positive benefit from the closure of the base. I cannot help but fantasize about the crumbling of the east Fairbanks chain stores that might occur (they were not around for most of my life). Maybe some local businesses would actually benefit!

To summarize:

The military is interested in transferring some very expensive military technology Outside and to another location in the state. This change would majorly hurt the economy of Interior Alaska, resulting in businesses closing and housing prices plummeting. The population would decline along with crime and traffic.

Is the extra money for the economy really worth the negative impact the base has on society? Remember military fans, plenty of Ft. Wainwright troops will be returning in the next few months...

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