

SJR

20

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ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



SENATE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Senate Joint Resolution 20: Relocation of the 18th F-16 Squadron Sponsor Statement

“Relating to Eielson Air Force Base and the strategic importance of retaining the 18th F-16 Aggressor Squadron in the Fairbanks North Star Borough.”

The United States Air Force recently released a proposed plan to reallocate military assets due to impending budget cuts. As part of an effort to reduce costs and achieve \$8.7 billion in savings in FY13, the United States Air Force has recommended the relocation of the 18th F-16 Aggressor Squadron from Eielson Air Force Base to Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson.

This move will have drastic impact on the Fairbanks economy and will reduce the operational capabilities at Eielson, making it vulnerable in future base realignment and closure rounds. The benefits and strategic importance of Eielson Air Force Base now and into the future far outweigh the negligible savings achieved by the transfer of the squadron.

Eielson is at the forefront of protecting the United States interests in the Pacific Theater and serves a critical function in reinforcing the region. It helps to secure important oil infrastructure, including the Trans-Alaska Pipeline System, which supplies a significant portion of the nation’s energy needs. Eielson AFB also has access to the largest joint air and land training range in the United States with minimal air space congestion and is well-suited to perform operations for unmanned vehicles and live fire exercises.

The Alaska Legislature must vigorously defend Alaska military assets for the protection of our state and nation.

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."



FACT SHEET

U.S. Air Force Fact Sheet

EIELSON FACTS AND FIGURES

The Base

Eielson Air Force Base occupies 63,195 acres southeast of Fairbanks, Alaska. The runway is oriented north to south and is 14,507 feet long. It was extended to its present length in the 1950s to accommodate B-36 aircraft, and is the second longest runway in North America.

Population

About 2,500 military people work at Eielson, which includes more than 340 Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard servicemembers. The base has approximately 930 houses and 387 dormitory rooms for the more than 2,000 military and family members who live on base. An additional 1,100 active duty, Reserve and Guard servicemembers and their families live off-base. More than 500 retirees from all branches of the military reside in the area.

Rounding out the total military-related population are about 480 civilian employees.

Economic Impact

The total payroll for active duty military employees is about \$132 million. The base spent more than \$79 million for construction, services and procurement of materials, equipment and supplies in fiscal year 2011. More than 1,800 jobs were created valued at approximately \$41 million.

Organizations

The 354th Fighter Wing mission is to prepare U.S. and allied aviation forces for combat, to deploy Airmen in support of global operations, and to enable the staging of forces to promote U.S. interests in the Asia-Pacific region. The 354 FW is the host unit at Eielson Air Force Base, Alaska and is assigned to 11th Air Force, headquartered at Elmendorf AFB, Alaska.

Eleventh Air Force falls under Pacific Air Forces, headquartered at Hickam AFB, Hawaii. The 354th Fighter Wing is divided into four groups and 10 wing staff agencies. The groups are Operations, Maintenance, Mission Support and Medical. The wing commander's staff agencies include the Historian, Protocol, Chaplain, Staff Judge Advocate, Safety, Finance, Manpower, Command Post, Military Equal Opportunity and Public Affairs.

Associate Units

· 168th Air Refueling Wing, Alaska Air National Guard, is the primary workhorse tanker unit for the Arctic Region and Pacific Rim, annually transferring more than 17 million pounds of fuel in flight to predominantly active-duty aircraft on operational missions. The wing's strategic location provides an invaluable rapid response capability for emergency and contingency situations, as well as enhancing the Air Force's total force global reach.

· The 353rd Combat Training Squadron is responsible for sponsoring training and experimentation in Alaska. In this capacity the squadron hosts Pacific Air Force's Red Flag - Alaska, Alaska Command's Northern Edge, and Pacific Command's Cooperative Thunder exercises. The 353rd has a detachment at Elmendorf Air Force Base. Beyond Red Flag - Alaska, the 353rd hosts an increasingly broad number of combat training events on the Pacific-Alaska Range Complex.

· Detachment 1, 66th Training Squadron, provides Arctic survival training to members of all branches of the military and the other uniformed services. The "Cool School" graduates about 650 students per year. Instructors at the Air Education and Training Command-

assigned unit also provide ground search and rescue capability on and around Eielson.

- Detachment 1, 210th Rescue Squadron, Alaska Air National Guard, provides maintenance and operations support for up to two HH-60G Pave Hawk rescue helicopters deployed to Eielson from Kulis Air National Guard Base in Anchorage. These aircraft provide alert rescue coverage for Eielson aircraft and logistics support for interior Alaska military ranges. The detachment is also assigned by 11th Air Force to provide search-and-rescue for both military and civil aviators north of the Alaska Range.

- Detachment 632, Air Force Office of Special Investigations provides professional investigative service for felony level criminal activity and counterintelligence matters to commanders of all Air Force activities. AFOSI Detachment 632 provides specialized investigative services for USAF and DoD resources located in the northern half of the State of Alaska.

- Detachment 460, Air Force Technical Applications Center operates and maintains the largest and northernmost seismic network in the United States Atomic Energy Detection System, as well as the sole field backup operations center for detection and analysis of foreign nuclear weapons tests. In addition, the detachment operates and maintains a network of gaseous and particulate air sampling units to detect airborne signatures of nuclear events.

(Current as of February 2012)

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Murkowski, Begich Fighting F-16 Aggressor Squadron Move from Eielson to Elmendorf, 4 C-130 Retirements at Elmendorf

Lawmakers to Introduce Legislation Monday That Would Prohibit Action

Senators Murkowski and Begich today issued a united set of statements opposing the Department of Defense's plans to relocate the F-16 Aggressor squadron from Eielson Air Force Base to Elmendorf Air Force Base and retire four C-130 transport aircraft at Elmendorf – as part of a nationwide Pentagon budget reduction strategy.

When the Senate returns to session on Monday, Murkowski and Begich will introduce legislation that would prohibit the Air Force from making these moves.

Senator Lisa Murkowski:

"While I am gratified the Air Force plans to keep the F-16 aggressor squadron in Alaska, I believe its rightful home is Eielson Air Force Base – at the gateway to the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex (JPARC). Today's announcement is identical to the BRAC proposal the Air Force advanced in 2005, when the Fairbanks community conclusively proved to the independent Base Realignment and Closure Commission that the Air Force would not achieve any savings by attempting to maintain a warm base in a cold place.

"Yet the Air Force suggests that today's action will result in a cost savings in Fiscal Year 2015. I no more believe that they will be able to achieve that cost savings in 2015 than they could in 2005. I'm going to do everything in my power to change the Air Force's plan.

"I am also concerned about the Air Force's plan to retire four C-130 transports at Elmendorf, with an anticipated loss of 120 active duty positions. The C-130 plays a crucial role in disaster relief missions. Coming on the heels of an earlier announcement that the Army National Guard will retire the remaining C-23 Sherpa. I need to be convinced that this action leaves the Air Force and Guard with sufficient assets to respond to a catastrophic earthquake or other natural disaster requiring immediately available airlift capacity."

Senator Mark Begich:

"Relocating the 18th Aggressor Squadron from Eielson to JBER is an unacceptable proposal. I will not support the Air Force's attempt to circumvent the law and the formal BRAC process by trying to piecemeal one of the most strategic installations in the country. As Alaska's only member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, I will fight this action every step of the way. A decision to relocate the F-16s from Eielson was already rejected in 2005, when the independent BRAC Commission overturned the Air Force's recommendation, recognizing Eielson has the best airspace and range complexes and the estimated costs savings were inaccurate. Nothing has changed since 2005. Eielson Air Force Base is critical to the defense of the United States.

"The Air Force also plans to retire 4 C-130Hs stationed at JBER. It is unfortunate this will result in the loss of the active duty personnel in the integrated unit that fly these planes. However, I am pleased Air Guardsmen of the 144th Airlift Squadron will retain eight C-130s and the manpower to continue to provide important lift capability in defense of our

nation and in support of our state. As members of our community, these Guardsmen will continue to make us proud in Alaska."

Kendra Kloster

Subject: FW: Murkowski, Begich File Legislation Prohibiting F-16 Move
Attachments: 12.02.06.F16.Legislation.pdf



For Immediate Release
Monday, February 6, 2012

Murkowski, Begich File Legislation Prohibiting F-16 Move

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Senators Murkowski and Begich today introduced legislation (*attached*) in the U.S. Senate that would expressly bar the United States Air Force from planning or executing the relocation of F-16s from Eielson Air Force Base to Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson – and requires that just as many, if not more, F-16s are based at Eielson this September.

Alaska’s entire Congressional Delegation will be sitting down with U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff General Norton Schwartz on Thursday, to further discuss the Air Force’s plan and question the reasoning.

The Senators issued the following statements after filing the bill:

Senator Lisa Murkowski:

“This is déjà vu all over again, reminding me of the Air Force’s BRAC proposal for Eielson in 2005. Back then, Alaskans made the case that the Air Force wouldn’t achieve any savings by attempting a move. 7 years later, I remain unconvinced that moving existing units from one part of Alaska to another is an efficient or effective way of cost-cutting. I want the Air Force to show me its math.”

Senator Mark Begich:

“Moving F-16s from Eielson Air Force base to Anchorage will neither save money nor make our military stronger. If military leaders try to end-run the formal base-closing process with this piecemeal approach, I will do whatever I can through my position on the Senate Armed Services Committee to stop it. I’ll work with community leaders to demonstrate this is not the right decision and keeping these fighter jets at Eielson makes strategic and economic sense. If we have to stop it through legislation, that’s what we’ll do.”

###

S 2073 IS

112th CONGRESS

2d Session

S. 2073

To prohibit the permanent relocation of F-16 aircraft assigned to Eielson Air Force Base.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES**February 6, 2012**

Ms. MURKOWSKI (for herself and Mr. BEGICH) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Armed Services

A BILL

To prohibit the permanent relocation of F-16 aircraft assigned to Eielson Air Force Base.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. PROHIBITION ON RELOCATION OF F-16 AIRCRAFT.

The Secretary of the Air Force--

(1) may not plan or execute the permanent relocation of any F-16 aircraft assigned to Eielson Air Force Base as of the date of the enactment of this Act; and

(2) shall ensure that the number of F-16 aircraft assigned to Eielson Air Force Base as of September 30, 2012, equals or exceeds the number of F-16 aircraft assigned to Eielson Air Force Base as of October 1, 2011.

END

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Sen. Begich questions F-16 move

by Jeff Richardson/jrichardson@newsminer.com

02.28.12 - 11:19 pm

FAIRBANKS — Sen. Mark Begich questioned the legality of the Air Force's plan to relocate its F-16 squadron from Eielson Air Force Base during a hearing Tuesday, asking Defense Secretary Leon Panetta whether such a move needed to be part of a formal process.

The Alaska Democrat spoke to Panetta during a Senate Budget Committee hearing on the Department of Defense budget request and said such significant moves are typically part of the Base Realignment and Closure Commission process — known informally as BRAC — that is used to shift assets throughout the military.

On Feb. 3, the Air Force announced plans to move the 21-plane squadron from Eielson to Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson by mid-2013, part of a proposed nationwide realignment that would affect 60 installations in 35 states.

Begich asked Panetta why such a major move wasn't part of the BRAC process. Eielson was targeted for closure in 2005 by the Defense Department but was deemed too strategically valuable to abandon by that year's BRAC members. The commission allowed only the partial downsizing of Eielson.

"That's the same debate we had with the BRAC, the exact same debate," Begich said. "We're not doing a BRAC now — we're just (relocating the squadron)."

The departure of the F-16 squadron would significantly alter the makeup of Eielson. Nearly half of the 3,100 military and civilian jobs at the base will be transferred to the Anchorage area if the move takes place.

Begich said he's received little explanation from the Air Force about why moving the F-16s makes strategic or economic sense. He said the move is especially mystifying in light of the Air Force's stated goal of boosting its role in the Asia-Pacific region.

"I don't get this, to be very frank with you, that it's almost like they picked a location ... but they're now starting the analysis," Begich said to Panetta.

Panetta recommended Begich talk to the Air Force to get more details about the process. When Begich said he hadn't received a satisfactory response from Air Force leaders, Panetta said he would get back to him with the information.

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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!

Vote View Results

CATEGORIES:

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- Food
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- Science
- Strange Humans

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- The 6th & final installment of the Banned 'Doonesbury' series...
- Why did the News-Miner Censor 'Doonesbury'?
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- March 28th WORD FOR THE NEXT FEW DAYS – harbinger -

Man survives for months in snowed-in car

Alaska's Aleutian Islands Volcano Could Erupt, Scientists Say

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

If you are interested in submitting news, photos, or information regarding Fairbanks, Alaska, or the universe, send your articles to: articles@fairbanksirl.com

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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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FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2012 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Bill Version SJR20
 Fiscal Note Number 1
 (S) Publish Date 4/2/2012

Identifier (file name) _____ Dept. Affected _____
 Title SJR 20 Relocation of 18th F-16 Squadron Appropriation _____
 Allocation _____
 Sponsor Senate State Affairs Committee
 Requester (S) State Affairs OMB Component Number _____

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

	FY13 Appropriation Requested	Included in Governor's FY13 Request	Out-Year Cost Estimates				
			FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18
OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY13	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18
Personal Services							
Travel							
Services							
Commodities							
Capital Outlay							
Grants, Benefits							
Miscellaneous							
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

FUND SOURCE		(Thousands of Dollars)					
1002	Federal Receipts						
1003	GF Match						
1004	GF						
1005	GF/Prgm (DGF)						
1037	GF/MH (UGF)						
1178	temp code (UGF)						
TOTAL		0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

POSITIONS							
Full-time							
Part-time							
Temporary							

CHANGE IN REVENUES							
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Estimated **SUPPLEMENTAL (FY12) operating costs** _____ (separate supplemental appropriation required)
 (discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

Estimated **CAPITAL (FY13) costs** _____ (separate capital appropriation required)
 (discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

Why this fiscal note differs from previous version (if initial version, please note as such)

Prepared by (s) State Affairs
 Division _____
 Approved by /s/ Senator Wielechowski, Chair

Phone 465-2435
 Date/Time 4/2/12 12:00 AM
 Date 4/2/2012

FISCAL NOTE

**STATE OF ALASKA
2012 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

BILL NO. SJR20

Analysis

