2005 BRAC COMMISSION REGIONAL HEARING

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 15, 2005

THE CARLSON CENTER

FAIRBANKS, ALASKA

ALASKA REGIONAL HEARING

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Reported by: Carol A. McCue, RMR

A P P E A R A N C E S

COMMISSIONERS:

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi, Chairman

The Honorable James H. Bilbray, Commissioner

The Honorable Philip E. Coyle, III, Commissioner

The Honorable James V. Hansen, Commissioner

Ms. Rumu Sarkar, Designated Federal Officer

Mr. Frank Cirillo, Director, Review and Analysis

WITNESSES:

The Honorable Ted Stevens, U.S. Senator

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski, U.S. Senator

The Honorable Frank Murkowski, Governor, State of Alaska

The Honorable Gary Wilken, Alaska State Senator

General Patrick Gamble, U.S. Air Force (Retired)

Major General Mark Hamilton, U.S. Army (Retired)

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(Hearing proceedings commenced

1:00 p.m., June 15, 2005.)

MR. DODSON: Good afternoon. I'm Jim Dodson, chairman of the BRAC Task Force. We were formed by the appointment of Governor Murkowski and Mayor Jim Whitaker, the Mayor of the Fairbanks North Star Borough. Thank you for being here today.

Like those of us who have worked on this project, your being here shows the BRAC Commissioners that you are deeply concerned about your community and about Eielson Air Force Base and its impact on our community and its strategic value to our nation.

Today we are here to present our testimony to the BRAC Commissioners and their staff. They have a tough job to do, and we want to help them.

We need to remember that the decision to realign Eielson was not made by them, it was made by the Department of Defense. They are here to hear our testimony. They are sitting here as jurors to hear a case put forth by the -- by the Department of Defense. Our testimony, we hope, will help convince them that the Department of Defense has made a mistake by selecting Eielson for realignment.

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(Applause.)

MR. DODSON: We owe them our respect for the job that they are doing, and we owe them our thanks for the service they are doing for their country. They have very little time to do a very difficult job. Please treat them with respect, treat them -- treat them with the dignity that their office deserves.

To be fair to all communities that are facing this similar crisis as Fairbanks and Eielson Air Force Base, the Commission has established some ground rules, and we must adhere to them.

One of their rules is that we have only two hours to make our presentation. As a result, there is no time for public comment. Governor Murkowski and Mayor Whitaker have formed a large group of Alaskans to put together public testimony. That testimony reflects, by far, the overwhelming opinion of Alaskans on how they feel about Eielson Air Force Base and the current realignment proposal.

If you have brought written testimony, we have a table in the back that you may put it on. The Commission prefers to receive their testimony electronically. And if you can, please E-mail it to the Commission. If you cannot, we will see that the Commission gets your testimony.

If you plan to submit testimony, and you have

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not yet written it, the Commission's E-mail address is in our website, which is saveeielson.com. So please visit that, get the website, and send in your testimony.

Community support is critical, but our case, to save Eielson, must be built on convincing arguments that are centered around the eight criteria established by Congress that the BRAC Commission must adhere to in their deliberative process. We believe that the DOD has overlooked or improperly applied the information in their recommendations to the Commission. Today, it is our intent to prove that.

Since time is so short, we ask the audience not to interrupt the proceedings with reactions to the information presented. In other words, please do not show your appreciation with applause. At the end, we will have time for applause.

Also, please turn off your cell phones. Please, take out your cell phones right now and assure that they are off.

Also, please remain as quiet as possible during the proceedings so that we can assure that the Commissioners can hear all the very important testimony that we are about to present.

By your being here, the Commission knows of

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your support for your community, your support for Eielson, and your support for our nation.

Thank you. And now, I would like to present the Eielson High School Junior ROTC, and Amanda McDonald to sing the National Anthem.

(Presentation of Colors.)

(National Anthem and Pledge of Allegiance.)

PASTOR MURRAY RICHMOND: Commissioners, as I was thinking about what to pray today, the word "service" came to my mind on more than one occasion. The military is clearly here to serve us. And I hope that as you see the people around that you see how much we appreciate that service in this community.

You are also here to serve this nation, and we are praying for you, as you make some very difficult decisions.

And we as Fairbanksans are here and people as the North Star Borough to serve the military, to show our appreciation for them, to help them out in ways that we can, so we know how important their job is. And I hope today that you see this.

Let us join together and turn to our Higher Power. Commissioners, Governor, Senators, President, let us turn to God.

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(Invocation given.)

OPENING STATEMENT OF PHILIP E. COYLE, III, COMMISSIONER, DEFENSE BASE CLOSURE & REALIGNMENT COMMISSION

COMMISSIONER COYLE: Thank you, Pastor Richmond.

And I want to thank members of the Alaska delegation, the Governor, all of you for coming here today. I know you all have incredibly busy schedules with many other important things. I want to thank all of you in the audience for coming here today also.

I'm Philip Coyle, one of the BRAC Commissioners, and I'm going to be the chairperson for this, our first regional hearing of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission.

I'm also pleased to be joined by my fellow Commissioners: Our Chairman, Anthony Principi, who is well-known for his work for our veterans as Secretary of Veterans Affairs Department; Congressman James Bilbray, who served for the State of Nevada many years in the U.S. Congress; and Congressman Hansen, who served for 20 years, I think it was, in the U.S. House of Representatives, who are also here, all of them, for today's session.

As our Chairman, Mr. Principi, observed in our

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first hearings in early May in Washington, every dollar consumed in redundant, unnecessary, obsolete, inappropriately designed or located infrastructure is a dollar not available to provide the training that might save a Marine's life, the purchase of munitions to win a soldier's fire fight in battle, or to fund advances to ensure military dominance in battle by our Air Force or Navy.

The Congress entrusts our Armed Forces with vast, but not unlimited, resources. We have a responsibility to our nation and to the men and women who bring the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps to life to demand the best possible use of limited resources.

Congress recognized this fact when it authorized the Department of Defense to prepare a proposal to realign or close domestic bases. However, that authorization was not a blank check. The members of this Commission accept the challenge and necessity of providing an independent, fair, and equitable assessment and evaluation of the Department of Defense proposals and the data and technology used to develop those proposals.

We've committed to Congress, to the President, and to you, the American people, that our deliberations

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and decisions will be open and transparent, and that our decisions will be based on the criteria set forth in the statute.

We continue to examine the proposed recommendations set forth by the Secretary of Defense on May 13th, and measure them against the criteria for military value set forth in law, especially the need for surge manning and for Homeland Security.

But be assured, we are not conducting this review as an exercise in sterile cost accounting. This Commission is committed to conducting a clear-eyed -- a reality check that we know will not only shape our military capabilities for decades to come, but will also have profound effects on our communities and on the people who bring our communities and our military capabilities to life.

We also committed that our deliberations and decisions would be devoid of any politics and that the people in communities affected by BRAC proposals would have, through our site visits and public hearings, a chance to provide us with direct input on the substance of the proposals and the methodology and assumptions behind them.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the thousands of involved citizens who have already

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contacted the Commission and shared with us their thoughts, concerns, and suggestions about the Base Closure and Realignment proposals.

Unfortunately, the volume of correspondence we've received makes it impossible for us to respond directly to each and every one of you in the short time in which the Commission must complete its mission, but we want you all to know the public inputs we receive are appreciated, are taken into consideration as part of our review process.

And while everyone in this room will not have an opportunity to speak, every piece of correspondence received by the Commission will be made part of our permanent public record, as appropriate.

Today, we will hear testimony from the State of Alaska. The State's elected delegation has been allotted a block of time determined by the overall impact of the Department of Defense closure and realignment recommendation on this state.

The delegation members have worked closely with their communities to develop agendas that I'm certain will provide information and insight that will make up a valuable part of our review.

We would greatly appreciate it if you would adhere to your time limits. Every voice today is

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important.

Now, I'd like to ask that our witnesses for the State of Alaska, if you would please stand for the administration of the oath required by the Base Closure and Realignment Statute.

The oath will be administered by Rumu Sarkar, the Commission's designated Federal Officer.

MS. SARKAR: Senators, Governor, other members of the panel, would you please raise your right hand for me.

(The witnesses were sworn.)

COMMISSIONER COYLE: Thank you.

And Governor Murkowski, I believe you're going to lead off.

GOVERNOR MURKOWSKI: Mr. Chairman, would you like us at the table or desk?

COMMISSIONER COYLE: Whichever is more convenient for you.

GOVERNOR MURKOWSKI: First of all -- the mic doesn't work.

COMMISSIONER COYLE: I think maybe you have to push the little bar down below. I'm not sure if your mic is like ours.

GOVERNOR MURKOWSKI: Secondly, the mic works.

(Laughter.)

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TESTIMONY OF HON. FRANK MURKOWSKI, GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

GOVERNOR MURKOWSKI: Commissioner Principi, Commissioner Bilbray, Commissioner Coyle, and Commissioner Hansen, welcome to Alaska.

I also want to give a very warm welcome to the professional staff who is with the BRAC Commission because I can appreciate the tremendous responsibility they have to coordinate the abundance of information and put it in a usable form for your Commission to make the difficult decisions that are ahead.

In case you don't know it, this is a hockey arena, and people from Fairbanks come here to watch the conflict associated with hard-nosed hockey. Well, obviously, by the crowd that you see before you, there's a great deal of enthusiasm here.

And the fact that they are not able to communicate as openly as they would at a hockey game is understandable, but I can assure you, I speak for the thousands of red-shirted, red-blooded Alaskans who are here today because they are very concerned about a decision that you folks are going to have to make.

I also want to recognize our Senior Senator, Senator Stevens, Senator Murkowski, State Senator Wilken, President Hamilton, General Gamble, and we very

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much appreciate all of you being with us today.

This is a very historic moment. First of all, from the standpoint of the BRAC Commission, this is your first effort before the difficult task that's been presented in making a very objective, professional decision on what's in the national interest of our country, namely, our national security.

Much of the nation is watching what happens here today. And we here in Fairbanks, Alaska, are very concerned about the process and the time element associated with your responsibility. And we hope through this process you can enlighten us a little bit on some of the complexities that you're faced with so that perhaps we can help you, as well as understand the difficult circumstances that you're faced with and the responsibility that you have.

Now, you're here today to learn why we Alaskans firmly believe that the Department of Defense erred when they selected Eielson Air Force Base for base realignment and forced reduction, and additionally, how this conclusion may devastate the economy, the local economy of this area, and put our American security at risk.

Now, based on the testimony that you are about to receive, we believe you will have little choice but

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to conclude that the proposed change to Eielson status is not -- and I emphasize, is not -- in the security interests and that the claimed cost savings simply do not exist.

Now, Mr. Jim Dodson who opened this, I'm very pleased that I selected him to coordinate the state's effort. General Craig Campbell of the Alaska National Guard has done an extraordinary job, along with Fairbanks North Star Borough Mayor Jim Whitaker, Fairbanks City Mayor Steve Thompson, North Pole Mayor Jeff Jacobsen, and their team.

They have worked to prepare this presentation to show you that Alaska's strategic and training value to our nation's defense is second to none. This presentation will accurately demonstrate the strategic value of Eielson Air Force Base, and counter much of the misinformation from the Department of Defense.

Upon a close examination of the data, you'll find that the proposed change in Eielson's status does not even meet the Defense Department's own criteria, which clearly states that the national security interests of our nation must not be jeopardized. Accordingly, the Eielson base recommendations, in our opinion, must simply be rejected.

Alaska's strategic importance to the defense

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of the nation has long been recognized. During World War II, Alaska was the only U.S. territory successfully invaded and held by the Japanese forces. The occupation of Attu and Kiska and on the far end of the Aleutian Chain led to the construction of the Alcan Highway, the lifeline to Alaska.

Following World War II, Alaska played a strategic role in the Cold War, helping to defend the Continental U.S. from the threat of Soviet strategy, and -- excuse me, Soviet strategic forces that could and did carry nuclear weapons. Well, I think we would all agree we still live in a very unstable world with constantly emerging threats from North Korea and other unstable regions.

There's little question that the retention of Eielson in full operational status is critically important for the rapid response of the U.S. Armed Forces into these regions. Eielson is crucial for the defense that U.S. civilian and military facilities, as well as for the important joint operations with Alaska-based forces, particularly its neighboring military installation, Ft. Wainwright, here in Fairbanks.

In close proximity to Fairbanks, less than 100 miles, is the Missile Defense System at Ft. Greely,

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the nation's first. The ICBM, the early warning station at Clear, Alaska, and the 176th Infantry Brigade located at Ft. Wainwright is part of the Army's rapid deployment force.

Now, Alaska's oil production and pipeline transportation infrastructure demands special protection. Alaska has been producing roughly 20 percent of our nation's crude oil and holds a high portion of our nation's gas reserves.

About 1 million barrels per day of crude oil is produced from Alaska's North Slope, and the pipeline delivering that oil goes right through Eielson Air Force Base's backyard.

And in the near future, there will be an equally vulnerable pipeline built to deliver much needed Alaska natural gas to the Lower 48, up to 6.5 billion cubic feet a day. This project is estimated to cost about $20 billion. It would be the largest construction project ever undertaken in North America, and will be absolutely vital to our nation's energy security.

Alaska's assets are America's assets. They are invulnerable and invaluable. Recall that during the Iraq-Iran War, the U.S. put its Navy in harm's way to protect Kuwaiti oil and Kuwaiti oil tankers. Oil

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and gas produced in Alaska should be given no less protection.

Without exception, our resources, our unique location, our vast land mass, and available airspace offer our military exceptional training opportunity in wartime effectiveness. Coupled with these elements is the fact that Eielson has some of the newest and best housing in the Air Force, and that's a fact.

The 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review states, and I quote: The quality of life in the military is critical to retaining a service member and his or her family. Well, Mr. Chairman, Alaska has the highest reenlistment rate and extension requests in the entire nation. We also have the highest percentage of military personnel choosing to retire and remain in Alaska.

Alaska has provided the Air Force the largest airspace and range complex for training in the entire United States. Here in Alaska, our military forces are respected and made to feel welcome each and every day of the year. The sincerity of our support is evident at the local gas station, the grocery store, the Post Office, and the coffee shop, and of course, gentlemen, by those that you see here today that have come out to welcome you and show your support, well, it simply

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speaks for itself.

The patriotic support by Alaskans for our military should come as no surprise. Alaska has the highest percentage of veterans in the nation. One out of six Alaskans over the age of 18 has served in the military, 45 percent above the national average.

Alaska offers strength and personnel, strategic location, and readiness training capabilities second to none. These valuable resources must not be left unprotected.

The importance, Mr. Chairman, and members of the BRAC Committee, the importance of this historic hearing can not be overstated. In your hands rests the security of our nation, our state, and the community of Fairbanks.

So we Alaskans are here today to share our story, but the best man to tell that story is Alaska's Senior Senator, Senator Ted Stevens.

(Applause.)

TESTIMONY OF THE HON. TED STEVENS, U.S. SENATOR FOR THE STATE OF ALASKA

SENATOR STEVENS: Gentlemen, I, too, join in welcoming you and thanking you and your staff for making this long trip.

Before I start, I'd ask your consent to place

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in the record after Senator Murkowski speaks the letter and statement of our Congressman, Don Young. It's a very interesting letter. For instance, it points out that today's Eielson Air Force Base started as 26 Mile Field because it was 26 miles south of Fairbanks. It was a bad weather alternate base for Russian land-lease deals during World War II.

Now, during my over 36 years in the Senate and my service as Chairman and ranking member of the Senate Appropriations Committee and Subcommittee on Defense, I've been committed to following our Constitutional mandate to provide for the common defense. This commitment began in World War II when I flew in the China-Burma-India theater. Only a few of us who served in that war remain in public service.

Americans should not be slaves to our history, but the lessons our generation learned at great price are not being heeded in this recommendation.

On December 7th, 1941, the United States was not prepared for war. It took nearly two years to build up our forces. One of our major challenges was the lack of preparation to defend our nation. No place in the United States suffered more than Hawaii and Alaska.

I brought each of you a copy of the Thousand

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Mile War. It tells the story of the role of Alaska in winning World War II.

When I went to China, I flew to Miami, then to Natal, Brazil, then to Ascension Island in the Mid-Atlantic, then across Africa, into India, through Burma, and over the hump into China.

Today Alaska's forces could deploy in one day to anywhere in the North Pacific, the Korean Peninsula, the land masses adjacent to China's -- and land masses adjacent to the China Sea. These same forces could also reinforce units in Northern Europe quicker than forces than anywhere else in the United States.

In my view, the recommendation to realign Eielson Air Force Base and maintain only a warm status here ignores the important lessons we learned during World War II. Those lessons were incorporated in to form primary criteria developed for the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure process by the Congress. It is incomprehensible to me how the recommendation that Eielson should be realigned and converted to a warm status could be -- could be derived from and be consistent with those criteria.

This recommendation completely ignores analysis of mission capabilities and readiness. It also ignores our state's vital strategic advantage for

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current and future missions, total force mobilization, and operational readiness.

The Department's past assessment of Alaska's locations are contained in a presentation entitled, The Strategic Importance of Alaska. You're supposed to have a slide shown somewhere there, but maybe not.

If you have seen that slide, you will see DOD's own presentation highlights the ease with which Alaska-based units will reach anywhere in the Northern Hemisphere. Alaska is, in fact, the center of the Northern Hemisphere, and equidistant from all theaters. This strategic advantage is not available anywhere else in the United States, and our nation cannot afford to lose it.

Many respected leaders have highlighted this -- this advantage, beginning with General Billy Mitchell. I do believe that you've seen that.

Please review also the commercial air cargo refueling station and sorting operations here in Alaska. More air cargo lands in Alaska daily than in any other state, which confirms the strategic and logistical advantages of our state.

In addition, the ready supply of all aviation fuels from the North Pole Refinery, less than six miles from Eielson, assures its readiness.

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In addition, consider the strategic value and synergy of having land and air base forces co-located as we do in this Fairbanks area. The Army's Ft. Wainwright is 26 miles from the Eielson Air Force Base.

Ft. Wainwright is the home, as you know, of the 176th Stryker Brigade Combat Team. The joint mobilization facility at Eielson prepares Ft. Wainwright's Army forces to deploy rapidly. Their deployment is here at this -- at Eielson.

Throughout the year, the Air Force and Army conduct joint training throughout Alaska and prepare and test the principles of joint and coalition warfare.

The total force to support operations is another major criterion of the BRAC recommendation. The proposal to realign Eielson ignores the judgment of respected leaders like former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Colin Powell who said, after visiting Eielson and Wainwright, this was the best joint training anywhere.

DOD's recommendations to convert Eielson to warm status will defeat jointness in our state by taking all of the aircraft out of this Interior Alaska area and eliminating all Close Air Support aircraft, exactly the capabilities we are employing today in Iraq

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and Afghanistan.

It seems inconsistent that at the same time the Army's presence is increasing, the Air Force is recommendation -- is recommending a reduction of force. The Eielson warm base concept appears to give the convenience of training future pilots and crews greater prominence than the four primary base criteria, as I read them.

Now, exercise training is important, but not at the expense of ignoring completely the defense of our homeland, the defense of the National Defense Site at Ft. Greely, and the defense of Alaska coastline, which is greater than all the rest of the coastline of the United States.

Eielson provides the military capabilities for encountering future threats to our national security. It also provides training opportunities for cold weather operations. There is no better training than keeping a fighter squadron operational during an arctic winter. These are conditions which our forces could face in Korea, other parts of Asia, and major parts of the Northern Hemisphere.

Eielson is one of the very few domestic Air Force Bases that can directly project forces for military operations. North Korea, for example, remains

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a major threat to U.S. interests.

In April, the director of Defense Intelligence Agency reported the North Koreans may be able to arm a missile with a nuclear warhead. On May 1st, North Korea test fired a missile into the Sea of Japan. Many are now concerned that North Korea may be getting ready to test a nuclear bomb.

In light of these developments, Eielson's strategic location and capabilities prepare us to respond expeditiously to protect our nation.

Our state has unique geopolitical advantages, and Eielson is a vital part of the overall U.S. total force. Eielson units can deploy to Korea with greater speed, they can deploy to Bosnia faster than any -- any unit station, Langley Air Force Base, or anywhere in the United States.

While our attention is now fixed in the Middle East, threats from Asia increasingly require our attention. Six of the world's largest military forces are a nation. Today, North Korea has more than 900,000 soldiers in its Army, with two-thirds assumed to be stationed within 50 kilometers of the DMZ. North Korea has another 150,000 sailors and airmen and an estimated 10,000 artillery pieces aimed at Seoul, Korea.

The Department of Defense now plans to reduce

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our forces out of the Korean Peninsula. It is clearly critical, both militarily and strategically, that we keep forward-based Air Force units at Eielson, train to fight together with the Army forces at Ft. Wainwright, to avert and respond to crises in that region of the Korean Peninsula.

One of the primary missions of the administration of Eielson is to reinforce those units at the base. The A-10s serve as the backup for a potential conflict in the Peninsula and apply Close Air Support for the Army and Marine Corps ground forces.

If you sully the plans to reduce U.S. forces in Korea, the requirement for an active, ready total force here becomes more and more apparent. Our nation's goal is to prepare a total force to fight 21st Century conflicts. This BRAC recommendation ill-serves our long-range objectives.

The Air Force agrees Eielson is of high military value. They also agree our ranges with similar battle conditions are irreplaceable. So I can only ask this question: What is this recommendation predicated on?

According to the Air Force, the decision was driven by a desire to create right-sized squadrons, which include 24 aircraft. But one of the two

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squadrons that would be right sized is actually a new unit, and as proposed, it would actually be smaller than units already here in Eielson. So why move these to create a new one that's smaller?

The BRAC recommendation adversely affects Northern Alaska's current and future mission capabilities, impairs our operational readiness, and can justify it -- again, I'm repeating myself -- only by ignoring the BRAC criteria.

Since this is inconsistent with our long-term military strategy, I originally believed this recommendation was driven by a cost-cutting imperative rather than overall military requirements. But after meeting with them, not only did the Air Force Base Closure Executive Group specifically deny cost was involved in this Eielson recommendation, there are problems with the cost estimates they cite.

First, experience tells us the Pentagon cost estimators tend to overestimate the cost of doing business in Alaska when it serves their purposes. For instance, here they have overestimated the savings from moving permanent active duty flying missions from Eielson, while at the same time maintaining the installation in a warm status. There is no such thing as a warm facility in midwinter Alaska.

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(Laughter.)

SENATOR STEVENS: A facility is either operational or it's not.

(Applause.)

SENATOR STEVENS: It's either operational or it's not.

The Department of Defense has tried this warm basing before. They did it at Adak and at Greely. I urge you to review those past actions, which led to rapid deterioration of infrastructure at both places.

The Pentagon's analysis does not include a realistic cost of maintaining Eielson in warm status, as compared to fully utilizing the base for the key missions of air defense, Close Air Support, and joint training operations with the Army.

At this time, this base, as you've probably seen, has the best -- best housing anywhere, and we have made substantial investments in new Eielson facilities.

The Air Force will bear most of the cost of maintaining the base without realizing the benefits of its operational capability.

Currently, the 354th uses the airspace in this region as often as possible. They fly unless temperatures reach 40 below, and then they keep their

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aircraft grounded.

If this recommendation is implemented, we will lose the only home wing in the area. Instead of using this airspace for 320 days each year, training would take place, as I'm informed, only 12 weeks of the year. For more than 75 percent of the year, this airspace would be unused and the electronics that serve the active ground troops would be underutilized.

Further, lack of use could put the airspace in jeopardy. In the Lower 48, the unwritten rule is use it or lose it. The FAA wants to use -- if the FAA wants to use this airspace and the Air Force is using it for only 12 weeks a year, there would be significant pressure to open it up for other uses.

The Air Force will also incur enormous additional costs by removing the tactical units from Alaska, placing them in locations in the South 48, where they probably will have to redeploy back here at great expense if the buildup continues in Asia.

Past experience has shown us that deploying aircraft -- aircraft from the Lower 48 to Alaska, training cost -- training only is costly. And funding has frequently been diverted to higher priority requirements within the Air Force, and those -- quite often, those maneuvers are cancelled.

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The Air Force cannot have it both ways. It claims cost savings by moth balling much of this base, which mostly reduces the base operating costs. At the same time, this analysis does not account for the costs associated with shutting down the base, such as environmental cleanup, community assistance.

Just as with Adak and Greely, the supposed savings will not materialize, and this proposal, in my judgment, the Air Force will permanently disable a core strategic facility by nonuse.

In addition to inaccurate cost estimates, there's also the broader problem the way costs is conceptualized in this recommendation. With Eielson, the DOD defined costs in narrow terms. The question they asked was, what does it cost to operate units at this installation? With all due respect, that's the wrong perspective. Asking only how much is spent to operate from Eielson fails to balance the operational costs under their approach with the funds required to sustain the base for future operations.

As you review these recommendations, in my view, additional questions must be considered, and I urge you to consider them.

What is the cost of the -- cost of the total force if Eielson is not operational?

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What is the cost of leaving Alaska more vulnerable to attack and reducing our rapid force protection capabilities to Asia, the Pacific, and Eastern Europe?

What opportunities for realistic live fire and joint training will be lost by the realignment of Eielson? Opportunities not available anywhere else under the United States flag.

The last question deserves great attention. This, the largest, most sophisticated joint training area with live fire available to the U.S. military, why should half of this great partnership of forces be removed from Alaska?

And if Eielson functions only 12 weeks a year, how long will the Army maintain full deployment at Ft. Wainwright with no partner to train with?

The answers to those questions have disturbing implications for our Homeland Security and national defense efforts, and the Air Force seems to have shortchanged both.

We need to modernize our forces. We need the F-22 and the joint side fighters, but to defend our nation, our Air Force must be able to protect forces and protect the homeland. This recommendation suggests that the Air Force is only focused on training for a

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future force projection.

Our state is within the Alaska NORAD region providing aerospace warnings and aerospace control. For more than 40 years, the North American Air Space Defense Command has shielded North America from aerospace attack. Alaska NORAD is a vital part of this system. It provides the capability to protect, validate, and warn of any aircraft or cruise missile in the region that could threaten the whole nation. This proposal before you would provide only 18 fighter aircraft anchors to defend the system and our entire state along with it.

Keep in mind, as I know your briefings have explained, Alaska is one-fifth the total of the United States land mass, but I bet you don't know it's larger than Spain, France, Germany, and Italy combined.

You have been briefed on the Ground Based Missile Defense Program at Ft. Greely. Already six interceptors are in place there, and ten more should be operational by the end of the year.

Over the past five years, between 2002 fiscal year and fiscal year 2005, financial investment at Ft. Greely's missile infrastructure totaled $1.06 billion. Ground missile defense tests there has formed 25 million. 635 million has been released to fund the

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operational ground missile defense at Ft. Greely, including the Allan Army/Air Force field improvements.

Ft. Greely is the only missile defense system operational today. Its strategic value of the ground missile defense system makes it an attractive target for our enemies. Under the Pentagon's fact proposal, our capability to defend the Interior of Alaska deteriorates. This ground missile defense would be vulnerable to conventional attack.

Our aircraft at Eielson has been the first line of defense against threats to Ft. Greely, Alaska NORAD, our coastline, and the TransAlaska Pipeline established there, and that includes the Port of Valdez.

I doubt the cost estimate savings of converting Eielson to warm status can be substantiated. Cost savings must be balanced with increased risk to our nation and the military investments here. From this perspective, DOD's estimate savings do not adequately testify to this recommendation.

As chairman of the Defense Appropriations and Subcommittee, I do not argue with the goals of this BRAC round. We do need to modernize our forces. I have disagreed with the timing of this BRAC round because the Quadrennial Defense Review and Global

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Repositioning Plan are still in process and have not been distributed to Congress and to our American people. We can and must save on operation and maintenance costs, but closures and realignment must be consistent with our current and future defense requirements and the criteria Congress has established. This recommendation fails that test.

It's my hope that after hearing the testimony presented today and meeting with personnel, military personnel, you will deny the Defense Department recommendation to change Eielson to warm status.

Let me be clear. I strongly object to this recommendation for strategic reasons, not only on the basis of the impact on our local community and our economy. The potential threat against our nation by North Korea, China, and rogue states has not diminished. In fact, many of the Department of Defense assessments place greater importance on this threat in the decade ahead.

That was reflected in the letter of my colleague and good friend, Senator Dan Inouye, recently sent to you, Chairman Principi.

In this letter, Dan said this, and I quote: As I have reviewed the Defense Department recommendation on closing bases, in general, I believe

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they recognize the importance of the Pacific. That is why the Eielson decision is so puzzling. Eielson is the closest base to North Korea. Its A-10s are designed to attack the war that might erupt on that Peninsula. Its F-16s could rapidly deploy to Korea in the event of a crisis.

The North Koreans are well aware of these facts. They see the forces in Alaska that are poised to defend South Korea. By removing these aircraft, coupled with the reduction in forces on the Peninsula, I fear we could be sending Kim Jong-il the wrong message.

I share in Senator Inouye's fears. In my view, this recommendation is a grave mistake, which will seriously disrupt our diplomatic efforts to preserve peace in the Pacific region.

The BRAC process will adversely affect many communities, and Alaskans are not seeking special exemption. We know we must do what is best and what is in the best interests of our nation, but this recommendation is inconsistent with the criteria laid out by the Congress. It lessens our ability to provide for the common defense.

On behalf of all Alaskans, and I think all Americans, I again ask you to reject this Department's

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recommendation for a warm base at Eielson and maintain adequate aircraft to assure the validity of Alaska's dual mission for total force protection in the event of a crisis in Asia or in Northern Europe.

Thank you, gentlemen. I will be followed by Senator Lisa Murkowski.

(Applause.)

COMMISSIONER COYLE: Thank you, Senator Stevens.

TESTIMONY OF THE HON. LISA MURKOWSKI, U.S. SENATOR OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

SENATOR MURKOWSKI: Chairman Principi, members of the BRAC Commission. I extend a very warm Alaska welcome to you. You are in the golden heart of Alaska. They may be wearing red today, but the hearts are gold here.

In my capacity representing Alaska in the Senate along with Senator Stevens, I have the privilege of chairing the Subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I also serve on the Energy and Natural Resources, which has jurisdiction over U.S. energy and strategic minerals policy. And each of these interests resides in the forefront of my mind as I appear before you today to express my very grave concerns about the

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proposed realignment of Eielson Air Force Base.

Under this proposed realignment, Eielson Air Force Base would surrender its position as one of our most strategically located forward military installations, a position that it's held since 1940s.

Approximately 3,000 active duty military members and 4,000 or more dependents would be relocated from Fairbanks. It has been judged one of the top small towns in America in a national study.

I've said it on the Senate floor, I'll say it again, Fairbanks and North Pole are communities in which the support for the military is second to none.

The people who would leave Eielson under this proposed realignment will be moved to locations in the Lower 48 with more diversified economies and, quite possibly, higher costs of living.

For example, the proposed realignment would cause Eielson to surrender its F-16 aircraft and the people who support this mission to Nellis Air Force Base in Las Vegas, a base which is located at the front door of the fastest growing metropolis in the nation.

Just last Sunday, the Las Vegas Review Journal reported that it's more expensive to live in Las Vegas and Southern Nevada than it is in the western cities of Denver, Salt Lake City, Phoenix. Its gasoline, its

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utilities, its health care, real estate, these are a few of the essential items that have seen dramatic price increases in the past several years. Seniors there who live on fixed incomes have been knocked out of financial security and into severe distress.

Our service members, particularly those in the enlisted ranks, also live on fixed incomes. In spite of our efforts in Congress to improve the salaries, the benefits, and housing opportunities for our service members, we continue to hear concerns that our military families must rely on the federal safety net programs to survive. This is particularly true in high growth, high cost urban areas. So does it really make sense to uproot the people from Eielson to live there?

Now, under this proposed realignment, Eielson would also surrender its A-10 aircraft bases to bases in Georgia and Louisiana, costing the Army Stryker Brigade at Ft. Wainwright the opportunity to jointly train with the war-fighting partners in the Air Force.

Now, while Eielson Air Force Base would maintain its valuable airspace and ranges, airspace and ranges that the Air Force regards as amongst the most valuable in the entire world, they would be used by only visiting aircraft. And that's subject to the availability of training funds.

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It's ironic to me that the Air Force would transform Elmendorf Air Force Base into the second operational location for the elite F-22 fighter and at the same time move the challenger aircraft, which is so useful in the training exercises, to distant out-of-state bases.

Now, I'm told that the F-22 is so good that it takes three to four challenger aircraft just to make the things interesting. And yet, the current proposal sends the F-15s from Elmendorf, as well as the F-16s and A-10s out of Alaska. Perhaps these very same aircraft will periodically return to Alaska for exercises, subject, again, to the availability of training funds. So doesn't it just make more sense to keep them here?

The strategic importance of Alaska to our nation's defense and to our responsibilities in the world is the reason that we maintain an Alaska Command.

Now, I know that yesterday you were briefed by the head of the Alaska Command. The Joint Chiefs of Staff does not maintain a Georgia Command, a Louisiana Command, or a Nevada Command, it maintains the Alaska Command because Alaska is America's frontier, and Alaska basing is vital to the protection of America's interests in the Pacific.

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Concerns about our military posture in the Pacific are rising in prominence. Secretary Rumsfeld recently expressed concern about the conventional military buildup in China. The Secretary wondered why China continues to pursue sophisticated weaponry from around the world, even though China faces no credible military threat.

Just yesterday, back in Washington, the Foreign Relations Committee concluded -- or conducted hearings again about the threat from Alaska's close neighbor, that of North Korea.

Now, I'm one Senator who believes that the current BRAC round should be postponed until the Quadrennial Defense Review is completed. Only then will we be able to evaluate whether the realignment and closure recommendations strike the right balance between addressing the conventional threats, as well as those sorts of asymmetric threats that we awakened to on September 11th.

But if we are to move forward at this current breakneck speed, it is incumbent upon each of you, as members of the BRAC Commission, to get this decision right. That's the trust that the public has placed in you.

And sometimes it's darned hard to distinguish

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between fighting the last war and fighting the next one. And it's evident to me that in planning for the future, we must not lose sight of regimes that have challenged us in the past. We all know the saying, those who ignore history are doomed to repeat it.

We simply cannot fall into the trap of letting our guard down in the Pacific. Maintaining the fighting capacity of Eielson Air Force Base is as critical now as it has been for the past 60 years.

The Defense Department's recommendation with respect to Eielson Air Force Base acknowledges the high military value of keeping this base open. And it's not just because of the airspace and the training ranges. It's also Eielson's strategic location as a base for military engagement, particularly in the Pacific theater.

And we cannot forget that Alaska's bases are important for reasons other than their proximity to Asia and Northern Europe. Alaska is America's storehouse for energy and for strategic minerals. Nearly 65 percent of total U.S. zinc production comes from Alaska. We also host large deposits of coal, iron, copper, and gold.

Alaska's future as America's energy storehouse is as promising today as it was in 1977 when

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construction was completed on the 800-mile TransAlaska Pipeline. Currently, this pipeline is moving about 17 percent of total U.S. crude oil production.

The Alaska Congressional Delegation firmly believes that energy development in places like the ANWR coastal plain and the National Petroleum Reserve are significant components of Alaska's and the nation's energy future. These reserves will keep the pipeline working for years to come.

Given American's reliance on Alaska's crude oil resources, the TransAlaska Pipeline must be protected as a crucial part of our national security infrastructure.

We also expect the pipeline soon to be constructed to carry Alaska's 35 trillion cubic feet of natural gas to market. These 35 trillion cubic feet are the energy equivalent of about 6 billion barrels of oil. As exploration and development continues, we will likely find that Alaska's natural gas reserves are much larger than what we have already identified. These pipelines will also need to be protected.

A disruption in Alaska's energy pipeline is a disruption to America's economic security, and thus, our national security. We need a strong military presence to protect our strategic energy and mineral

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resources from the threats that we can apprehend, but more importantly, from the threats that have yet to be prophesied in Tom Clancy novels.

Eielson Air Force Base ranks among the domestic bases with the highest military value. At this critical juncture in our nation's history, we can ill-afford to surrender Eielson's high military value to save a few dollars -- dollars that may or may not actually be saved as we try to crystal ball the challenges of the next 20 years. When it comes to our national security, surrender is not an option.

I join with the rest of my colleagues here today, those here that have joined you, and thousands across the State of Alaska to implore you to keep Eielson working for America.

With that, I ask Senator Gary Wilken to join us. Thank you.

(Applause.)

COMMISSIONER COYLE: Thank you, Senator Murkowski.

TESTIMONY OF THE HON. GARY WILKEN, ALASKA STATE SENATOR

STATE SENATOR WILKEN: Thank you, Senator Murkowski. And good afternoon to you all.

Chairman Principi, members of the BRAC Commission, a special welcome to each of you from the

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communities of Fairbanks and North Pole, Alaska.

Commissioners, thank you for doing what you do. It can't be easy to be here. This is the first of many hearings in many communities over the next few months as you work -- and it will be work -- through this process.

Many messages you will hear will be similar. That is, a change in the mission of the local military installation will have a devastating effect on the economy.

Well, our message is exactly that, and I'm sure that's no surprise to any of you. However, I suggest our message is not as simple as others' will be. Our message to you is flavored by uniqueness, a uniqueness created by geography, a uniqueness created by isolation, and a uniqueness created, as you will hear later, by strategic location.

My comments this afternoon are shaped by my background. First as a Fairbanks resident, father, grandfather of over 50 years, my dad came to Alaska in 1951 to work in a laundry to support Ladd Airfield, now Ft. Wainwright.

Secondly, as a small businessman who has done business with Eielson Air Force Base every day that the Commissary has been open for the last 28 years.

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As an elected representative, I serve in the State Senate chair of the Legislature's Joint Armed Services Committee while I serve my constituents, many of whom are employed because Eielson is an active base, actively protecting America.

And fourth, as a member of the Air Force family. My daughter Allison is married to Captain Cam Curry, recently stationed to Eielson and an A-10 "hog-driver" with the 74th Fighter Squadron -- the Flying Tigers, Senator Stevens -- currently deployed for the second time to fight the War on Terror in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Commissioners, I respectfully ask, look where you are. You're 160 miles south of the Arctic Circle. Flying into Eielson, you certainly noticed the absence of any urban settlements for a thousand miles. You had to be impressed by a sense of isolation. Unarguably, Alaska is isolated from the Lower 48, and therefore, so is the economy of the Interior of Alaska isolated from other economies.

As such, we are uniquely self-contained. And therein lies a major difference in our message that you will hear in no other message from any other community, and I ask you to provide your utmost consideration of this concept and suggestion of isolation.

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Our Interior economy is unique. Our work force came here to support the military. Again, Alaska, as Governor Murkowski has reminded us, is the only state that has been occupied by a hostile foreign force. The military came in response, built bases, and we, just like my father, came to support their mission.

Chairman Principi, Commission members, we are not a community built around the base, we are a base that built the community.

As you know, the Secretary of Defense directed the individual services to apply eight criteria to basing decisions. Criteria Number 6 in the focus of my remarks today is intended to consider, quote, The economic impact on existing communities in the vicinity of military installations.

The Interior of Alaska is a fragile frontier economy, and its hallmark is that we are very much self-contained. Even we forget that within a hundred miles of this building there are no more than 100,000 residents.

We provide our own work force in support of Eielson, and it's no surprise that Eielson is a vital economic anchor, a necessity to the livelihood and health of the Interior as we support the U.S. military with strategic national security.

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The Department of Defense loss estimate of direct employment at 8.6 percent is but only a brief glance at the real traumatic impact that realignment of Eielson creates. No question. 8.6 percent in this small isolated community like ours will be devastating.

I won't burden you with statistics today, those will be supplied in our follow-on report to you, but allow me to provide just a flavor of our concerns.

The Institute of Social and Economic Research, a "think tank," if you will, at the University of Alaska Anchorage, conducted an independent analysis of Eielson's realignment. The Institute strongly suggests that the Department of Defense analysis is seriously flawed in at least four areas.

One, job loss projections, direct and indirect, are very much understated.

Two, the method of measuring large impacts in small regions has incorrectly applied assumptions.

Three, there has been a failure to recognize cumulative regional impacts of previous rounds of base closures in Alaska.

And four, obsolete data has been used to reach impact conclusions.

Again, you'll have this data in our report that follows this presentation, and I ask that you

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analyze the Institute's assumptions, concerns, and conclusions very carefully.

I suggested earlier that the Interior Alaska economy is fragile. Let me give you some examples.

Our climate means a high proportion of our jobs are seasonal. A lot gets done here in the summer before the rush to finish by when the snow flies in October.

Our demographics and seasonality dictate that those employed in job sectors are much different than the national average, and surprisingly, pay in some sectors is less than 50 percent of the national average. The steady, nominally paid military and civil service jobs at Eielson are a part of the bedrock of our payroll.

Our school system is an excellent example of the symbiotic and fragile relationship between the military and civilian sectors. In Alaska, our school districts own and operate the military schools, and Federal Impact Aid monies are vital in leveraging additional state and local tax monies.

The cost of educating those 1300 military students, of course, goes away mainly at the expense of losing teachers and staff and closing three schools, but the district will be challenged to spread remaining

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fixed costs across remaining assets.

We are not diverse, Commissioners. Let me repeat, we are not diverse. Compared with the rest of the country, we have very few industrial employers. Hard rock mining and, of course, petroleum are our largest private sector anchors, and tourism and construction add employment, but they are very seasonal.

The almost 3,000 jobs lost at Eielson because of realignment can't just be absorbed somewhere else in Fairbanks, or in North Pole. The jobs will simply, and yes, drastically just disappear. The fabric of Fairbanks woven with the citizenship and contributions of our military will become a little threadbare because 3,000 of them will no longer be here.

Commissioners, I must remind you, there are no alternative economic uses of the Eielson complex that would offset the loss of jobs and income due to realignment. None.

Some have joked that we would be able to hold three simultaneous drag races. Well, that may be an attempt to find silver linings. I find nothing funny in such dark, albeit relevant humor.

So let me summarize this important point. The economic impact will be devastating and this small

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community will take a generation to recover. We are unique because of our isolation with no new industry moving in to fill the vacuum created by realignment job loss. Our work force would, by necessity, migrate far away to new opportunities.

We know this to be true. Many here remember the crash of oil prices in the mid '80s and the calamity that that brought to our region and our state.

Commissioners, remember, we're not a community built around a base, we are a base that built a community. Realign Eielson, and you've realigned the community that, when needed for war, can no longer sustain Eielson. Yes, our economy suffers, but it only follows that our national security is jeopardized.

I suggested above a very real notion of job migration away from a military mission to other employment. In my final remarks, let me talk about a different kind of migration, a migration of industrial capacity.

Today Alaskan North Slope crude oil is refined here in Interior Alaska by two refineries. Of their total production, Eielson Air Force Base consumes 22 million gallons of jet fuel supplied by a uniquely dedicated 8-inch pipeline connected directly to the base. That production approaches a third of the

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refining capacity of the Alaska Native-owned local refinery in North Pole.

In a June letter to Senator Stevens, included in your packets, Petro Star Refinery emphasizes that the loss of the Eielson fuel market would have a severe impact not only on the Interior economy, but the impact would reach far beyond just us.

The loss of the Eielson market will force a migration of refined products to other markets, primarily the cargo up in Anchorage, currently growing at a robust 5 to 7 percent per year.

Over the years that follow Eielson realignment, the owners of the refinery will continue to seek their sweet spot in their business plan, and thus, compensate for the loss of military JP-8 jet fuel with the production of a different product, J-A commercial jet fuel.

The loss of industrial capacity, that is, military jet fuel production at this local refinery, would mean that in the event of war, in the event of national crisis, our nation would have -- our nation would have lost a critical and stable supply of fuel that cannot be readily reestablished. You cannot get it back to Eielson on short notice. It's going to be already sold to Fed Ex, UPS, the civilian reserve air

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fleet, a part of the same supply chain for the same war. To fight a war, our war planners will have to rob from Peter to pay Paul.

That's the result of a migration of industrial capacity away from military support caused by realignment. To diminish that supply, that availability of a primary war-fighting asset, fuel, is to erode, weaken, and maybe even destroy a major abutment supporting the Pacific Air Bridge to war.

Thank you again for being here. I'm privileged to address you, and the people of Fairbanks and North Pole are honored to be your first stop as you begin your daunting task.

We appreciate your commitment to America, and thank you for visiting Alaska's premier -- America's premier strategic military hub and the economy and culture that makes it all possible.

We are proud of America's gateway to the Pacific, remaining ever productive and vigilant. In time of peace and in time of war, with Eielson fully operational, Alaska and America will stand ready.

I would now like to introduce for our main presentation Retired General Pat Gamble, United States Air Force, and General Mark Hamilton, United States Army. Thank you.

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(Applause.)

COMMISSIONER COYLE: Thank you, Senator Wilken.

TESTIMONY BY GENERAL PATRICK GAMBLE, RET.

AND

MAJOR GENERAL MARK HAMILTON, RET.

GENERAL GAMBLE: Mr. Chairman, and members, I am Pat Gamble. By way of introduction, I'm here because I commanded a fighter wing in Korea; I commanded a combat support wing in Okinawa, Japan; I commanded ADCOMM and the 11th Air Force here in Alaska; I was the director of Air and Space Operations for the Air Force; and then I came back and commanded all aerospace forces in the Pacific.

I stand here today not only as a retired Air Force commander and planner in this subject area, but also as an Alaskan, a concerned Alaskan.

Your task is not an enviable one. We all understand and appreciate the nature of the risks in our world that has evolved in its complexity, and we clearly understand and agree that our nation's Armed Forces need to transition appropriately to confront the new array.

Transformation involves technology, force structure, infrastructure, timing, experimentation.

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It's a complex business.

Our Air Force has made its recommendations regarding force structure, training, and infrastructure to you for Alaska. You are here to validate their decision using very specific criteria and metrics, and we very much appreciate the opportunity that you have given us to offer our own views.

We will tell you here today that by examining the very same Congressional criteria contained in the law, we think our Air Force, despite its good intentions, got it very wrong. If we can convince you of that same degree of doubt, then, as we understand it, you are obliged to reconsider Eielson's future.

We will show that the quantitative analysis performed by the Air Force does not support the BRAC criteria. The Air Force cost analysis does not fully account for all costs, and it greatly overstates savings.

It grievously misses the mark by separating the local economic impact from the future ability of the economy to sustain the installation in a warm status. These are show stoppers that we will further develop for you.

Let me turn to Mark Hamilton to introduce the geographic factors that make Eielson a critical

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facility in peace and war, and to talk its role in joint readiness training.

Mark.

GENERAL HAMILTON: Mr. Chairman, you already got quite a bit of geography, but let me show you a couple of graphics that provide some perspective.

You already know that Eielson's in Alaska. We are now showing you that Alaska's not off the coast of California. As a matter of fact, here's how it looks in comparison with the U.S., and if you just look at the raw land mass, you would expect that if we were down in the Lower 48, we would have 15 or 20 bases in that space.

It seems ironic to me that the military ponders the downgrading of the importance of facilities in Alaska, while the global commercial interests have recognized this long ago, that Alaska, sitting at the top of the world, is within nine air hours of 95 percent of the industrialized world. That's why, of course, that Anchorage has become the largest air cargo hub in the world.

Now, 400 miles north of this hub lies the 63,000 square miles of Eielson's range complex, the largest overland instrumented training range in the world.

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General Heckman, in his sworn testimony to you on May 17th, described Eielson's ranges as superb airspace, magnificent training areas. I agree. But, of course, then he gave me a plan that utilizes these ranges only 12 weeks per year.

Eielson's 90,000 acres and Ft. Wainwright's 1.6 million acres represent the best joint training spaces available to U.S. Forces. And that's permanent training space, not temporary, as reported in the Air Force's document. It's been permanent since 1997.

Eielson's A-10 and F-16 squadrons, along with the Army, use this airspace every day, every month, all year, even during the Cope Thunder exercises. And you know that right now the 18th Fighter Squadron is hosting Cooperative Cope Thunder, 05-02, have got 13 nations, 50 aircraft, and 1200 foreign military personnel involved in that exercise.

The Stryker Brigade at Ft. Wainwright, the new Airborne Brigade at Ft. Richardson, along with the 3rd Air Support Operations Squadron, ASOS, train with Eielson's fighters on those ranges. The 3rd ASOS is actually embedded in the Stryker Brigade. Their only mission is Close Air Support.

Let me tell you, completely aside from Cope Thunder, when I was stationed in Alaska as Division

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Artillery Commander with the 6th Infantry Division, our ongoing training events were witnessed by the Chief of Staff in the Army, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and I'll tell you the truth, they didn't come up here to see us, they had to stop off here for a crew rest or refueling and simply took the advantage.

I can tell you that as those four-star generals came out and watched our normal operations, their first question was always the same: Is this safe? Because they've only seen in their careers the kind of orchestrated curriculum-based training that we see at the training bases you're more familiar with.

Our answer was very simple: It's absolutely safe. We do this every day, every week, all year.

We're talking about the razor's edge, trained and ready forces. The important point here is Cope Thunder ranges used by the A-10s and F-16s from Eielson give us daily training, daily joint training, in diverse terrain and in diverse weather. The Army plan -- the Air Force plan to relocate aircraft from Eielson would eliminate joint training opportunities.

Now, the Air Force is proposing in its realignment a new concept for operating Cope Thunder. They argue that this type of exercise can be done

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without a home wing needed to provide the infrastructure and logistical support for such a complex operation. I suggest that this concept has significant risks. The Cope Thunder exercise has never been executed without a home base wing.

The Air Force has indicated they want to more fully utilize the ranges at Eielson for additional Cope Thunder exercises. Please look carefully at the history. In 13 years, the Air Force has only managed to do four exercises, five times. And now, apparently, they are going to improve that to six exercises a year with no additional costs indicated.

Whether informal Cope Thunder exercises or smaller training sequences, the greatest contribution is the ongoing year-round training conducted by Eielson.

Keep in mind that the current costs of Cope Thunder are artificially low because historically, 25 percent to 50 percent of the participating aircraft have been based in Alaska. They are our wings. Eielson's ranges will be left significantly underutilized. 12 weeks a year versus 52.

Part of the BRAC criteria said we want to reduce infrastructure while improving the value of the retained portfolio. I don't understand how you do that

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leaving it idle for 40 weeks a year.

Training in this environment adds military value. That's why military value is in the BRAC criteria.

Eielson hopes -- hosts the Air Force Arctic Survival School. Why? Because it's offering diverse climate experience. The Army recognizes the military value and hosts the Army Cold Region Research Laboratory and the Cold Regions Test Center. The Army coined the term "Arctic tough." If you train here, you can fight anywhere.

Mr. Chairman, the Eielson realignment has such negative impacts on joint training and readiness through a diversity of climate and terrain areas that it substantially deviates from the BRAC final selection Criteria One and Two.

Pat.

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.

Each route has to support a huge

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tanker/airlift air bridge. One bridge is not enough to handle the requisite volume, and relying on only one subjects combat plans to seasonal weather risks if one or the other route is taken out. We need two routes, ready to go, on short notice.

If Eielson is not immediately ready at a time of need, we are accepting a single point of failure, a lesson with its roots all the way back to December 1941. And as far as our combat wings get delayed, quote, only, unquote, one or two days into the fight, with our one-bomb, one-target technology, which is getting better and better, that's well over 120 targets not killed for each day that the 354th Wing is delayed getting to the fight, targets that on those same days are, instead, killing us.

As Mark said, it takes nine hours' flying time from Alaska to 95 percent of the industrialized world. The fact is, I can get fighters to our NATO partner bases in Eastern Europe faster than I can get them there from Langley Air Force Base in Virginia.

There is an additional advantage that accrues to Eielson that must be thoughtfully evaluated, and that is the day-to-day strategic mission that it also hosts.

Eielson supports NORAD. And every day of the

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year for more than 20 years, at least one 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 the all-weather tanker operations required to support the air sovereignty no-notice scrambles, or Combat Air Patrols.

Eielson provides the infrastructure to air refuel the President's support aircraft when he moves through the Pacific. While he's in position, Eielson maintains aircraft on alert to ensure his ability to move immediately, should that become necessary. When he returns, Eielson aircraft again air refuel his support aircraft on their way back to the nation's capitol.

Eielson supports the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, a cornerstone of U.S. nuclear deterrence, evident in two ways.

First, Eielson infrastructure supports the COBRA BALL, a reconnaissance aircraft and its supporting tankers. Eielson is the only military airfield in Alaska that can support the mission requirements of these aircraft. We fully expect that some day the airborne laser basing scheme will also value Eielson's unique location and infrastructure for

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the same reasons.

Eielson supports a multi-million dollar network of seismic sensors which detect underground nuclear tests. This data is used to determine the location of the test and its magnitude.

As I previously noted, anytime contingencies in the Pacific occur that requires significant airlift, Eielson is expected to stand up an air bridge. Eielson's huge field storage capacity, large capacity parking ramp, and long runway, the eighth longest runway in the United States, are critical components of this northern air bridge route.

Again, Eielson is the only military base in the State of Alaska that can round out the full logistic support needed for this special mission. Elmendorf cannot assume that load by itself. It is also needed to share the load with Eielson.

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 neighboring North Pole, and it's piped directly to Eielson.

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

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treatment facility on base.

That infrastructure is all, unquestionably, of military value, but not if its potential is stifled and the base is unable to respond quickly in a crisis. Readiness to respond to a short-notice attack in Korea is not a combat imperative supported by the notion of warm storage.

Mark.

GENERAL HAMILTON: Think about what General Gamble just said. If you wanted to design a base secure from terrorism, from this new asymmetric threat, you'd probably be willing to give up some of the efficiencies of outsourcing for the purpose of additional security. At Eielson, you already have such a 21st Century base, completely self-contained. This is military value that the Air Force never considered.

Pat mentioned the role of Eielson protecting high value assets. Let me talk about a couple of them.

The Department of Homeland Security has identified numerous facilities important to national security. One of these already mentioned, Ground Based Missile Defense System. This initial missile defense system is the nation's first and last line of defense and must be secured.

We must also secure the TransAlaska Pipeline.

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The pipeline carries over a million barrels a day at 17 percent of the domestic oil production. 17 percent of domestic oil production, 19 percent of domestic oil reserves, 19 percent of domestic national gas reserves, and 12 percent of national coal reserves all lie within 300 miles of Eielson. And these facilities depend to some degree on Eielson for their security.

A world class joint training facility with truly diverse climate and terrain, self-contained base, secure oil supply that fights in war, protects America's borders and peace, strategic asset on the top of the world in American hands. You can't have more military value than that.

Pat.

GENERAL GAMBLE: Commissioners, we will get down to cases now.

The Air Force formulated 16 principles in guiding its recommendations. From these 16, 5 were defined as imperative -- quote, unquote, imperative. Let me list them and comment.

The first imperative was ensure unimpeded access to polar and equatorial earth orbits. Interior Alaska allows 12 to 14 interrogations of polar orbit satellites, versus 2 in the Lower 48.

Eielson provides infrastructure and location

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that will secure and ensure that electronic access.

Number two, preserve land-based strategic deterrent infrastructure as outlined by the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty.

Eielson supports COBRA BALL, as I mentioned, and it maintains the seismic sensing network.

Number three, ensure continuity of operations by maintaining airfield capabilities within the National Command Region in Washington D.C. To support the President of the United States Special Airlift Missions and foreign dignitary visits.

While we are a long way from Washington D.C., but as I mentioned, Eielson supports all these missions during the President's travel in this hemisphere.

Number four, provide air sovereignty basing to meet the site protection and the response time criteria stipulated by USNORTHCOM and USPACOM. Eielson supports 24/7 air sovereignty alert. And Eielson provides USNORTHCOM, who is responsible for homeland defense, a variety of instant military responses over the familiar terrain of Alaska's strategic reserves.

And finally, number five, the number five imperative is support Global Response by U.S. forces by keeping sufficient sovereign U.S. mobility bases along deployment routes to potential crisis areas.

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Eielson-based aircraft would be the first to fight in any Pacific conflict. The joint mobility complex at Eielson would need to go from warm to fully operational overnight under any contingency requiring a quick response from the Stryker Brigade and the 3rd ASOS.

Any Pacific theater war plan would fully involve Eielson in an air bridge role. Today peacetime access to the Pacific routinely involves tankers based here and associated heavy airlift. We clearly support Global Response.

Eielson provides infrastructure to support all five principles the Air Force BRAC methodology defined as, quote, imperative, unquote. The Air Force recommendations were reported to have been screened to ensure that they, quote, conform to the Air Force principles, did not violate any Air Force imperatives, improved military capability and efficiency, and were consistent with sound military judgment, unquote.

I'm sorry, I can't see it. Of the remaining 11 basic principles, 8 of them comprise the definition of Eielson's three functions: War fighting, world class training, and readiness to conduct strategic missions; that is, missions that require support around the clock to be able to go on a moment's notice where

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failure is not an option.

In fact, as we understand it, in all prior BRAC rounds, actually, Eielson was, quote, categorically excluded, unquote, in recognition of its critical function in reinforcing the Pacific and defending Alaska.

We had to ask, has the world become a safer place? Some would argue, yes, in the sense that the traditional Cold War rapid large-scale response has become a thing of the past.

As a former commander of Air Forces in the Pacific, I can tell you that's simply not true here. As long as a half million of North Korea's forces sit on the border as they do, there is danger.

Some would suggest that maybe I'm retired and I'm out of date. Well, perhaps. I think better again to go ask the Commander of U.S. Forces Korea who is responsible for blunting the fury of a surprise attack and then winning the ensuing war.

The Air Force did not correctly apply the BRAC criteria to the Pacific theater war-fighting readiness commands. Whatever savings BRAC may seek to achieve, it must not jeopardize our ability to fight and win across a spectrum of conflict.

Mr. Chairman, the Air Force recommendations

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substantially deviates from the BRAC final selection Criteria Number Three.

GENERAL HAMILTON: The Base Realignment and Closure process was designed to divest unnecessary infrastructure, while improving the overall effectiveness of the Air Force and the military value of retained infrastructure. Unfortunately, the Air Force analysis of military capability, the costs and savings, economic and environmental impacts is flawed. It did not achieve these objectives.

There are things you can measure and there are things you can count, but you can't measure everything that counts.

The Air Force prides itself on the number of metrics it used in this analysis. They used dozens of Mission Capability Indices, or MCIs, but unfortunately, there was significant problems in the MCI ratings used.

I asked myself, how did the Air Force get this so wrong? My answer is, the Air Force fooled themselves with definitions. It was their worst mistake.

They had a wonderful plan. Establish your key attributes, determine the metrics, gather those metrics in an unclassified database, be absolutely transparent. It was a good plan. But here's what happened. Having

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accurately and adequately defined the key attributes, they had problems with the metrics.

So the key attribute of climate diversity, as an example, absolutely essential if you're going to have a capabilities-based force designed to fly in a global environment.

What's the metric? The metric is how many days do you have 3,000 foot ceiling and 3 mile visibility? I want you to think about that. That is specifically a definition of climate consistency.

How does it happen? Well, those conditions are exactly what you want in a training base environment, so that units that have deployed to that training base don't have exercises called off on account of weather. But it's been disguised as a war-fighting element.

Climate diversity. How about 140 degree annual temperature change? When your metric fails to measure the attribute, you have failed to consider that attribute.

How about terrain diversity? Same birthright, a needed attribute for global war fighting. Ready for the metric? Airfield elevation. What? No mountains and streams and rivers and lakes and tundra and forest and glaciers? Nope. Airfield elevation. Boy, you

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know, I don't know. Density altitude considerations that affect peacetime training? I guess.

When your metric fails to measure the attribute, you have failed to consider that attribute.

These two attributes that I just mentioned to you are so important, they were specifically added in BRAC guidance since 1995. The Air Force didn't consider them, and you have to.

Insight to fighting an asymmetric threat is not going to come from the Potomac, it's going to come from pilots and privates who live and train and work year around in diverse weather and terrain.

Key mission infrastructure method. Fuel storage capacity. Well, at least in this one they measured it in gallons.

You've got 100 points, 100 points for having 2.5 million gallons. Eielson gets no additional points for having 30 million gallons of storage. But, you know, 2.5 million sounds like a lot. What is it? It's about 100 KC-135s full.

So that particular amount of storage could be exhausted with 50 planes flying twice a day in 24 hours. I suppose 2.5 million sounded like a lot. It's certainly as much as you'd ever need on a training base. Just seems to me you ought to get more points

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for also being a war-fighting place.

When your metric fails to measure the attribute, you have failed to consider that attribute.

And there's more. Many more. And I won't cover them all. Well, maybe one more.

Another of Eielson's current missions, tankers, was also poorly considered in the MCIs. The Air Force BRAC team actually considered increasing the Eielson National Guard tanker squadron to an acceptable size, moving it from 8 to 12, which makes a lot of operational sense, but they said that the base could not support 4 additional aircraft. This is absolutely preposterous. They said there were land constraints.

(Laughter.)

GENERAL HAMILTON: The parking ramp today will hold 20 KC-135s each, with Type III fuel hydrants. To suggest that Eielson has land constraints demonstrates a complete and total unfamiliarity with the base.

When your metric fails to measure the attribute, you have failed to consider that attribute.

In sending A-10s and F-16s to Moody and Nellis respectively would not have made much sense unless it could be demonstrated significant savings. So after four iterations, suddenly the Air Force fell prey to an accounting system that wouldn't have passed muster with

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anyone but Enron.

(Laughter.)

GENERAL HAMILTON: They were told they could save the salaries of every active duty person they moved from Eielson, even though they were not going to leave the service. And that they could count these savings for 20 years.

Suddenly, they have 20 times 166 million, doesn't start for three years, I move it out to 17 with a 3 percent annual discount, $2.78 billion, sounded like a price they could not resist.

Commissioners, it would be very little net savings. Airmen will either serve in other units where they will still be paid by the Air Force, or they will complete their service obligation and leave in normal fashion as they would have done anyway.

Just as a simple excursion with the COBRA data, if you just required the Air Force to buy back, pay for the soldiers or the sailor -- airmen they are moving, and made them account for this new category I've called eliminated personnel, their savings would be reduced from 229 million to about 27 million. But it gets better.

Accounting Rule Number 2 says if you transfer a wing that has retiring planes, there will be no

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expense involved. That's interesting math. $2.78 billion for nothing, and I don't have to close another base. It was just too good to be true. As it turns out, it's just too good to be real. Missing reality by a factor of nine is interesting math.

Mr. Chairman, warm base won't work, not in the way the Air Force thinks it will. They didn't complete their analysis. They told us that. Their warm base will be full of frozen assets.

As you know, the supporting documentation was released just a few days ago. But we got this recommendation and shared it with four senior engineers with significant experience in Arctic engineering. And we are submitting their report with our testimony.

What we know at this point is that it isn't even close. They don't know the cost of a warm base in a cold place.

The Air Force claims to have analyzed economic impact on the surrounding community, but in the short time that we've had the data, and as Senator Wilken mentioned, our University of Alaska's Institute For Social and Economic Research has found significant holes, which we will share with you later.

As you know, the eighth selection criteria is the environmental impact of the proposed actions,

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including the costs related to potential environmental restoration, waste management, and environmental compliance activities.

The recommended action at Eielson is not consistent with mitigating environmental impact as both Nellis and Moody Air Force Base face substantial environmental issues. Nellis and Moody are operationally limited by land use, noise, threatened and endangered species, and wetlands.

Nellis is also operationally limited by air quality considerations, and Moody is limited because of tribal considerations. These limitations come at a cost, which the Air Force conservatively estimates at $2.4 million in one-time environmental costs, and another 3.7 million for air emission offsets. Commissioners, I don't believe they can do the study for that kind of money.

It's our understanding that in prior rounds, the movement of aircraft to non-attainment areas was not even contemplated by the Air Force. Clark County, which encompasses Las Vegas and Nellis Air Force Base, is currently struggling to mitigate the adverse quality effects of explosive growth. The region is currently designated as non-attainment for carbon monoxide, PM10, and the 8-hour ozone standard, three of the six

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pollutants regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency.

Mr. Chairman, I can't tell you that the Air Force didn't consider this. They said they did. I just can't figure out how they determined they could move a wing from a place without environmental constraints to a place with no constraints at little or no cost.

GENERAL GAMBLE: One of the real problems with this whole Air Force calculus as we see it is that it completely divorces the base from the wing.

The Air Force methodology purposely evaluated each of its 154 bases without regard to their current mission. This is a reasonable and effective way to measure one CONUS training base against another, but Eielson is not a CONUS base.

And it's not just a training base, as we've said. Taking this BRAC action to remove the 354th Wing is like sending the carrier out to sea, but keeping the carrier air wing back in California to save money. The Navy would never consider it and neither should we.

The Commission is empowered to make changes to BRAC recommendations if it finds the Secretary of Defense, quote, deviated substantially from the four-structure plan and final criteria, unquote.

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We submit to you today that this is exactly what happened in the case of the 354th Wing at Eielson. I submit that the Air Force decision regarding Eielson is markedly inconsistent with an objective military value analysis, and can be shown to deviate substantially on all eight criteria.

I would, therefore, briefly like to recall each of the eight criteria and summarize the basis we believe the Commission has for determining that there is no -- that there is substantial deviation.

Criterion 1: Our conclusion is that the Secretary deviated substantially from Criterion 1 by grossly undervaluing the loss of joint training opportunities and the resulting loss of combat capability, particularly as it reflects the 3rd ASOS and the U.S. Army in Alaska; and secondly, by grossly undervaluing Eielson's strategic importance by attributing military value only to peacetime training metrics without connecting them to combat readiness, particularly in the Korean theater.

Criterion 2: Our conclusion is the Secretary deviated substantially from Criterion 2 by failing to adequately assess military value. Geo-location is fundamental to the definition of military value, and it was not adequately considered.

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And second, disregarding the unique benefits of climate and terrain diversity here in Alaska during the scoring process. The terrain and the climate of Interior Alaska are more significant and more diverse than most, if not all, other candidates evaluated during BRAC. Failure to properly value climate and terrain clearly deviates from Criteria 2.

Criteria 3: Our conclusion is that the Secretary deviated substantially from Criterion 3. They failed to consider the advantage of response time to potential conflict hot spots and failed to score strategic location properly in quantifying military value.

Criterion 4: The Secretary deviated substantially from Criterion 4 by first failing to consider the resultant costs of attempting to support Cope Thunder without a host wing; and secondly, miscalculating the all-in costs to support warm basing of a singularly important air bridge base here in Alaska at the requisite readiness level.

Criterion 5: The Secretary deviated substantially from Criterion 5 by taking credit for military payroll savings at Eielson for all relocated military members, and significantly underestimating the warm base costs of base operating support in a cold

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climate; and finally, failing to estimate time and costs associated with practicing what it really takes to do rapid reconstitution of warm facilities as part of the scoring criteria in the category of savings offsets.

Criterion 6: We find the Secretary deviated substantially from Criterion 6 by failing to consider the shock factor in the education system in the frontier economy, and by failing to account for the loss in responsiveness that results from locally refined jet fuel no longer being readily available.

The expected business reaction of the local refinery transitioning to new products and customers creates the unintended consequence of jeopardizing Eielson's air bridge refueling potential during a short-notice contingency.

Criterion 7: We found the Secretary also deviated substantially by 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 the 354th Wing aircraft from the largest unrestricted airspace in the U.S. to encroached airspace.

And finally, Criterion 8: The Secretary deviated from Criterion 8 by failing to consider the

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outcome of an expanded environmental impact study, and an obligatory MOA -- that's the Military Operating Area, or airspace -- an obligatory MOA review that's called for while routine flying is altered significantly; and second, by moving aircraft from an environmentally unconstrained installation to an installation with mounting operational constraints.

Mark.

GENERAL HAMILTON: I ask myself again, how did the Air Force get this so wrong? I think it boils down to this.

First, they had a problem with perspective. Fully understanding the size and the geo-location of Alaska. Understanding the extent of our diverse climate and terrain. The value of our national strategic resources. The value of the immense joint training opportunities. The cost of a warm base in a cold place. The loss of a strategically important refinement capacity. The impact on a frontier economy. Perhaps worse of all, a full understanding of their own concept of a capabilities-based force, which I'll mention in a moment.

The Air Force plan that supposedly protects all of these assets, with ultimately a single wing in the promise of F-22s. That, Commissioners, is a wing

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and a prayer. The F-22s are so far down the production line we haven't even mined the titanium we're going to build them out of.

To get perspective, you need a year encyclopedic understanding of Alaska. The textbooks won't let you get it right. Every day people look in USA Today which shows us, again, as a miniature island off of California.

Now, let me talk about that capabilities-based force. It's a wonderful strategy. It is a compelling and useful construct, if you fully understand capability.

Capability must embrace trained joint forces that provide the battlefield effect. It must include the right basing, not CONUS retrenchment. We tried that already and we got the Korean War.

Capability must include long and orchestrated engagements with Pacific allies. As you saw today, there are more than a dozen nations on that ramp at Eielson, and I'll tell you, they are not here because they got an E-mail from Nellis or a fax from Moody.

Secretary Rumsfeld agrees. In his speech to the Institute For International Strategic Studies, referring to the tsunami event of last year, he said, years of bilateral and multi-lateral meetings and

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cooperative operations made possible this swift team response.

He added, these long relationships among nations, the nations of the Pacific, led many in this hemisphere to pledge support for America in the events following the attacks of 9/11. He added, I am confident that our long friendships will continue to unite us against the common threats ahead.

I agree with Secretary Rumsfeld.

Exercises like Cooperative Cope Thunder have immense military value. They are here because of 15 years of bilateral meetings, of CPXs, and smaller combined training. Pull back from that engagement and you have weakened, even threatened critical war-fighting capability.

Look for just a moment at the Quadrennial Defense Review mentioned by Senator Murkowski. I'm familiar with these. I was the joint action officer on the first one.

Former Air Force Secretary James Roche mentioned in his QDR guidance, and both of these points were reiterated by Secretary Rumsfeld in his prepared remarks to this Commission.

First is, we need to expand our contributions to the joint fight. This priority underscores the

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rationale behind our integration efforts. We're all on the joint team. Our future is closely tied to the future of our land forces.

He adds, it is important that our land forces continue to see us demonstrate our obvious commitment to air-to-ground support.

You can't do that by moving A-10s and F-16s from a place that has a Stryker Brigade and an Airborne Brigade and daily opportunities to train together.

We have at Eielson the best joint training facility in the world. Properly utilized, Alaska's Interior region will continue to set the standard for joint training. Take apart this powerful tool, however, and the pieces will be less than the sum of her parts.

It's simply counterintuitive to take apart a premier joint training facility, the best in the world, in order to reassemble the parts at lesser, more restricted locations.

Once the Air Force squadrons leave Alaska, under the current DOD recommendation, there will be no air-to-ground aircraft in the entire state. This leaves two Army brigades, Stryker and Airborne, brigades that are specifically designed to be dependent on Close Air Support, uncovered and untrained.

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Secretary Rumsfeld told you in his remarks that the recommendations are so intertwined that you've got to be careful not to unravel them. But the recommendations do unravel the Army plan for jointness in Alaska.

I think the Secretary has had it about right on capability forces, right-sized units make sense in attaining economic efficiency, but that doesn't define capability.

Commissioners, you cannot fight an asymmetric threat with symmetry. And that's what their plan ends up with. Same size units in the same terrain with the same climate.

Secretary Roche adds another QDR piece of importance. Protect our airmen. The threat of terrorism is real, it is persistent, and it is aimed on us. We cannot let down our guard. Every airman must be a sensor, and we must, at all times, ensure our bases and facilities are hard targets.

Airmen are our sensors, our first line of defense in combatting an asymmetric threat. Gentlemen, you don't outsource your first line of defense. You want a hard target? How about a self-contained base.

Finally, the perspective on military value, they say it's rooted in war fighting, but they ended up

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with something that was all about training. They really did have the right attributes, they just measured wrong.

And when your metric fails to measure the attribute, you have failed to consider that attribute.

I actually feel sorry for them. It's hard to check on this process. You can check and say they got the right attribute, that's great, and the action officer reports that they have got hundreds of pieces of metrics on that. It sounds good. Nobody's going to say, well, what are the metrics? At least they didn't.

Finally, how the Air Force got this so wrong, I believe that late in the game they were distracted because of time and these accounting measures I've mentioned before.

Mr. Chairman, we have significant concerns on the accounting of this BRAC round. We had the opportunity to ask Mr. Fred Pease, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Basing and Infrastructure, about that data. He said, and I quote, What you have in BRAC is a kind of interesting math. Indeed.

Through the fourth iteration of this BRAC process, the Air Force had Eielson in the keeper pile. They got called in and said you don't have enough

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savings. Two years into the process, it was very difficult for them to go back in the non-keeper pile and do the kinds of homework necessary to eliminate another base.

So they took their accounting rules and took the easy way out and began to look for realignment among the units in the keeper pile. Having painted themselves into somewhat of a corner, their only choice was to invent a concept that sounds a lot like moth balling, but they called it warm basing. Can't do a warm base in a cold place.

Additionally, all the costs of operating Cope Thunder in its present form or with an increased schedule were completely ignored. The tankers and airlifters moving all participants up here six times a year weren't accounted for. More interesting math.

The perspective that using Eielson's magnificent training airspace and joint opportunities would be better utilized by six Cope Thunders taking a total of 12 weeks, versus allowing the F-16s and A-10s to train jointly for 52 weeks is inexplicable.

I sat at a meeting with General Heckman where he proudly proclaimed that the 12-member base closure executive group was unanimous on every recommendation. There were no dissenting votes. They didn't deliberate

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deliberately.

No one brought up Eielson's war-fighting attributes, but they were unanimous. Nobody said that moving two squadrons out would affect jointness, but they were unanimous. No one knew what a warm base was, but they were unanimous. No one said training for 12 weeks isn't as good as training for 52. No one understood the frontier economy. Nobody said Cope Thunder's never been without a host wing. Nobody knew our area's been permanent since 1997. And nobody knew we had parking already for 20 tankers, but they were unanimous.

Mr. Commissioner, you've said clearly that this Commission will not be a rubber stamp. I can't tell you how glad I am to hear those words, Mr. Chairman, because the Air Force plan should be called the Firestone plan. It has rubber written all over it.

(Applause.)

GENERAL HAMILTON: It strikes me that there can't be any other nation on earth where the military would issue a recommendation that would be subsequently reviewed by a panel of committed, respected, and independent observers, who could then evaluate the recommendations by hearing from the affected

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communities themselves.

You, sirs, are the embodiment of the democracy our Armed Forces protect.

Mr. Chairman, members of this Commission, you have the opportunity to correct the Air Force errors by overturning their recommendation, and we ask you to do your duty.

Senator Stevens.

(Applause.)

CLOSING STATEMENT BY THE HONORABLE TED STEVENS

SENATOR STEVENS: Commissioners -- Commissioners, my mind goes back to the time when Alaska Air -- Alaska Command was disestablished, and I feared we would lose the source of good commanders we had.

I went to the President at the time and urged that that not take place, and they agreed that they would establish an Alaska task force, at which there would be -- at the top of which would be, always be a three-star Air Force general.

My reasoning to them at the time was don't make Alaska into a Siberia. We are not Siberia. We are part of the United States. And we deserve the best of the bite.

(Applause.)

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SENATOR STEVENS: We deserve the best of the bite as military commanders. You've just heard from two of those former commanders.

(Applause.)

SENATOR STEVENS: I only have a few minutes, but I do go back also to the time when I was a new Senator, and former military commanders in Alaska, particularly those from World War II, came to me as a unit and they asked one thing of me. And that was to maintain the defensive force lost. Their leader was General Raymond "Bunky" Breeves (phonetic). And he said, don't be caught again without adequate force protection.

Now, those of us who served in World War II vowed never to allow our country to be caught unprepared again. I think what you've heard today from us is we are part of that preparation.

As I prepared my earlier remarks that I made, Senator Inouye received, last night, the Arley Burke Award. He gave a forceful speech at the time, and I was very surprised that his main subject was Eielson. I brought that speech with me today. I urge you to read it.

I want to assure you, first, I did not ask him to write it, I did not collaborate with him, and I did

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not write it. But there's no question of what he means and what he says.

I come to you today as those commanders came to me over 30 years ago. I ask you to ensure that our country's prepared to fight, and as the generals have said, to win the battles of the 21st Century.

Reducing Eielson to a warm base would be a mistake, and we urge you to reject it.

I thank you again for coming to hear, to be with us today, for your attention to our remarks.

And at this time, I would ask if you have any questions you would like to address to any one of our presenters?

COMMISSIONER COYLE: Thank you, Senator Stevens, and thank you all. General Gamble, General Hamilton, thank you all for your presentations.

I have a couple of questions, and I think maybe some of the other Commissioners do also.

With respect to warm basing, many, many years ago I had a firsthand experience trying to do warm basing here in Alaska, and saw what can happen if facilities are not protected in the wintertime.

And when we were visiting at the base earlier this morning, we asked if anybody from the Pentagon had called up the base and said, hey, we're thinking about

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this warm basing concept, what do you think of it, how much could we save, and so forth, and apparently nobody ever did ask that -- that question.

General Gamble or General Hamilton, have you folks looked at what might be saved, if anything, through this warm basing concept?

GENERAL HAMILTON: I think our methodology was to try to better assess what it would actually take if you wanted to do a warm base. It seems like the fair -- fair way to do it.

We had four senior engineers with extensive experience in the Arctic. We talked to the active duty folks who are in charge of keeping the base together as it is now, fully operational.

What we know from the data we can get -- because I guess it's kind of unfair to say the Air Force never asked. They had, again, kind of a questionnaire, and it's that same metrics problem. The things they asked for didn't answer the questions, it didn't allow them to do a complete assessment of it. We know this.

We know that their initial assessment is -- is low. It's just very, very low as to what it actually would cost to run this. But until we get the rest of their data and really work it through, which we will

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provide to you, it would be -- it would be irresponsible for me to give you any numbers of how far they are off.

COMMISSIONER COYLE: You mentioned several MCIs where you thought -- have you discussed others that you're going to be providing to the Commission or only the ones you've discussed?

GENERAL HAMILTON: No, sir. I thought you were getting pretty tired of me as it was, I left off the others, but we will give them to you.

COMMISSIONER COYLE: Thank you. You said towards the end of your testimony that -- that something changed through the -- through the fourth iteration of the realignment plan. And that the Air Force began fixating on finding savings.

Does it appear to you that -- does it appear to you that in effect, the Air Force was given a bogey, a cost-savings target as a cost-saving exercise, not as a base efficiency -- not as a base realignment and efficiency process, but simply as a budget-cutting exercise, does it appear to you that the Air Force was given a bogey, and that Eielson sort of got its fair share, so to speak?

GENERAL HAMILTON: Commissioner, that would be a supposition on my part. I don't know that. It does

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seem to me that we -- we can learn a lot from the fact that through February of this year, they are talking about adding aircraft to Eielson. We're firmly in the keeper pile.

Then about that time they had a meeting, and about that time they come out with these accounting rules, which I admit, I somewhat ridiculed, but they -- those were the ways to gather those huge amounts of savings.

Here's the key, I think. Without having to go back and make a case for another base that you could take down completely and close it, it was just easier to look for what I believe to be artificial savings by realigning those already in the keeper pile. I think this was very poor. And what you end up with is a situation where, in point of fact, you have two bases open instead of one.

And even if you call it a warm base, somewhere over here there were other bases that if the Air Force had had time, they might have been able to go back and add to that pile, but from February of this year, they had to do something very quick. That's my assessment.

COMMISSIONER COYLE: Okay. Thank you very much.

Chairman Principi, do you have a question?

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CHAIRMAN PRINCIPI: I do. And I thank you, Mr. Chairman. I thank our witnesses for their excellent testimony. I think we've certainly learned a lot.

I want to focus my first question on the strategic value of Alaska, and Eielson in particular. But I want to follow up on the Hearing Chairman's question with regard to your testimony on page 26, which I find, if accurate, very troubling, that indeed, it would appear that what you're saying is that there was a bogey, that military value was totally disregarded, and they were directed to come up with savings.

I don't believe we know that for a fact yet. If you do, I'd appreciate knowing how you have that information with regard to this fourth iteration.

So General Hamilton, can you shed some insight on that?

GENERAL HAMILTON: Yes. And I did just note it would be supposition for me. I don't know that they have that bogey. I do know what their briefing slides show the fourth iteration to have considered.

You understand we don't have deliberative minutes. And I also understand why we don't have deliberative minutes.

That is my explanation of how you can find

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such a dramatic change since February and why you could see otherwise reasonable people accepting some remarkable accounting principles.

GENERAL GAMBLE: Mr. Chairman, if I could add another perspective on -- on that answer.

I worked in the front office of Chief of Staff of the Air Force in 1990, 1991 and watched the '91 BRAC come together from that perspective. I attended all the briefings to the chief, and then saw the beginnings of '93 start to come up, so I'm very familiar with the process.

Much like a physics experiment, what we're seeing here are the telltale tracks of what really went on. You weren't in the room, but you can see the evidence of what probably occurred by some very obvious telltale tracks.

BRAC is built by the programmers. The programmers are a special group of guys on the air staff in the Pentagon that look out into the Air Force future, that right size the units in terms of the force structure, the bases, installations, and then match them up, and then make sure that the budget that we think we're going to get can come down over that program and fund it all.

And if there's loose ends out there, the

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programmer's job is to go back to the chief and tell him, we have taken care of the loose ends and we packaged it so that it works.

Now, that process does not include going into the field and asking the field commanders. It doesn't ask the field commanders from a operational perspective, what does this impact, how does it impact your mission.

So when we see the data that Mark was talking about and watch the data change, our supposition is very strongly that the programmers were programming real hard. And they want to get it right for the chief because the chief has got a deliver order that he's got to make. So we are looking at the telltale signs.

CHAIRMAN PRINCIPI: All right. That's certainly information that we need to receive and to analyze so that we can come up with our own conclusion.

Go back to the strategic issue that you spoke, all of you spoke so eloquently about, the importance of Alaska to our national security and importance of Eielson.

I don't think anyone would deny that the threat to our nation has changed rather dramatically in the aftermath of the Cold War. It would have been a wise man or woman indeed that would have predicted the

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War on Terror, Iraq and Afghanistan, on September 10th, 2001, or the war in Korea on July -- June 1st of 1950.

With that in mind, I would like to ask you whether our national security could be met, the projection of air power, with -- with Eielson being in a warm status, and 18 F-15s at Elmendorf, bedding two new squadrons with the latest and finest aircraft, the FA-22, 12 C-130s, would that not suffice in meeting our national security, projecting air power for the nation?

GENERAL HAMILTON: Well, first of all, I'd say we would need that person to predict a couple of things. First of all would be if, in fact, the FA-22 is ever going to be here. So it would be, where we sit, on the production line. I think that would be an issue.

The other thing, though, that I -- that I hear in your question that I think we really need to worry about, kind of referring back to the iron majors that do this kind of work, do you realize, for them, they've never known any war but the kinds that we have now where timing doesn't count. Initial configuration doesn't count. Where very long-term buildups, building political alliances, and all the other issues, which, in our old hat -- you know, so old generals like us, they keep saying, you're trying to fight the last war. I

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think they are trying to fight last war, the only war they've ever known.

When the world points to the need to be able to address the threats that would be called conventional threats much more nearly, for those time to get aircraft in theater, becomes vitally important, where half a day makes a difference, where the right configurations make a difference.

You can have all of the aircraft in the world to move Army forces. If those forces, like a Stryker Brigade and an Airborne Brigade, have not trained every day with the Air Force, they are not going to be trained. You're going to deploy a whole bunch of people who are going to take a real long time and a lot of casualties learning how to fight.

Jointness is not just co-location, it is co-location with the ability to train. It happens here every day.

And I hope whatever we come up with in our brand new world of Global Positioning and Global Response and capabilities-based force that we understand that at the far end, what has to come together is a timely delivered, capable joint force, and stationing is part of it.

CHAIRMAN PRINCIPI: Well, I assume from your

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answer that we cannot do that from Elmendorf, assuming 48 FA-22s, and 18 F-15s, we do not have the ability to respond quickly and in a timely manner to project air power where needed?

GENERAL GAMBLE: Mr. Chairman, there's a lot of threat out in the world that we've got to cover, but there's only one remaining big war plan left. The others have been executed. And that's the plan in Korea.

We've got to cover all the worldwide threats, but we have got one war plan that we've got to be true to, and it's an old-fashioned rock-and-roll war plan with 500,000 guys and 10,000 artillery pieces and an almost bolt-out-of-the-blue capabilities.

Now, for almost 10 years, I sat in positions where all I did was worry about how we were going to handle that fight while we were fighting the Cold War potential in Europe. And when the Cold War went away, I still worried how we were going to handle that fight, and I worried because the ground commander was worried about how he was going to handle the fight.

If we increased forces at Elmendorf and Eielson both above and beyond what we've traditionally had, I still wouldn't be comfortable that we had enough to be able to limit the fallback of the shock of that

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attack and reconstitute, as the plan would suggest we will be able to, with air providing the time to -- for us to recover from the shock and get the air bridge flowing into the theater from both locations, south and north, for that counterattack that will win the war.

I would say we still need more air to be able to recover from an attack like that. So the answer to your question, quite simply, is no, it's not enough.

(Applause.)

GENERAL HAMILTON: Sir, let me try another thought on that that I think is terribly important to understand.

You take away the wings at Eielson and you then have for however long it takes to get the F-22s, even if they are coming, for that period of time, there is no joint training. These -- these forces just don't have any.

You talked about the F & A-22, so I see that the Air Force has been very, very successful. The "A" being attack. With the idea being they can actually help the folks on the ground with Close Air Support. You know, it was the F-22 until they got into trouble for money. Then they decided it'd be the FA-22. That thing's gonna "F," it ain't gonna "A."

(Laughter.)

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CHAIRMAN PRINCIPI: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER HANSEN: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, Chairman Principi, and all the excellent comments from all of you have been really good. I mean, this is excellent testimony today, and I appreciate that.

Also, you know, in my 22 years on the Armed Services Committee, I helped write part of this bill. I also have to say that I worked on it, on the amendments that we made for the 2002. And we suffered through '88, '91, '93 and '95, saved the taxpayers a lot of money.

Were there mistakes? Sure, there was mistakes. I'm sure Senator Stevens didn't list a dozen of them, I could list two dozen of them, but you get down to the idea that it's probably a necessary thing to do. But who -- who gets the pain in it is the problem we get.

And if I may wax a little political here, Senator Murkowski, you mentioned in your testimony that you were opposing this BRAC round until, what, the QDR was completed, and then -- or postponed? Is that -- if I'm reading that correctly.

Let me ask you a political question. I assume that's the John Thune bill that John is so concerned

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about. How many co-sponsors does it have in the Senate, and is there a companion bill in the House?

SENATOR MURKOWSKI: I do not know if the companion -- house, I believe -- 16 co-sponsors.

COMMISSIONER HANSEN: Pardon me, ma'am?

SENATOR MURKOWSKI: 16 co-sponsors in the Senate.

In addition, there was legislation that was filed by Senator Snowe that would also provide for a delay, but not based on the Quadrennial Review.

COMMISSIONER HANSEN: I see. Thank you.

Excuse me for not knowing this, but did Alaska lose anything in the previous rounds? Any bases lost in the previous rounds?

SENATOR STEVENS: When I ran for the Senate, there were 54 bases in Alaska. There's 4 left now.

COMMISSIONER HANSEN: What about the last four rounds, Senator Stevens?

SENATOR STEVENS: We lost Greely and we lost Adak. They were -- they were peripheral. I don't think they were part of the BRAC process, they just happened.

And Greely really deteriorated and was brought back into semi-status.

Sid tells me Adak and Greely were both in

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BRAC, and the result of them was that the warm status failed.

COMMISSIONER HANSEN: What was the impact on Alaska, the losses of those bases?

SENATOR STEVENS: Adak was a dramatic change because that was the farthest western base, and it's a severe loss.

We've tried to maintain them in warm status for several years, and then slowly but surely turned them over to the Native people of the Aleutian Chain. We lost several billion dollars worth of investment out there.

As far as Greely was concerned, we -- we tried to move the forces there into Wainwright, and to have some -- some warm status by sending people from Ft. Wainwright out there. But Pat Gamble, I mean, was part of that.

And you, General, were a part of that, weren't you? Were you involved in that?

GENERAL GAMBLE: I've talked with -- recently with the Mayor of Greely, and he reminded me, as a by-product of another discussion, he mentioned the fact that 1300 families moved from that local area there. It's a town of about 900 now. Before that, it was considerably larger and more active.

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SENATOR STEVENS: We lost King Salmon Air Force Base, and we lost -- that was shut down. That was the fighter -- outreach base from Eielson and -- and Elmendorf. We lost the Navy base some time ago.

COMMISSIONER HANSEN: Was that in Kodiak?

SENATOR STEVENS: Kodiak. But there was a ring of bases around Alaska, the ACW bases in the 1960s, they all went down.

To answer your question, I think we had some reductions in force in Wainwright during that process, but it was -- it was -- it was not shut down.

And at one time, Richardson was on one of the lists, and was deleted by action of the Commission.

COMMISSIONER HANSEN: I appreciate that answer. Let me just ask, if I may -- Governor?

GOVERNOR MURKOWSKI: Let me just add, Adak was a very thriving area in the Aleutian Islands, there was a population of about 6,000. I think there's -- I know there's less than 600 there today.

COMMISSIONER HANSEN: Thank you. Let me just say that your testimony was very compelling. Having been to a lot of bases in previous BRAC rounds, as I recall, I think number six it says, support of the local community. If that's any criteria, boy, you've really got a winner here. I mean, I --

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(Applause.)

SENATOR STEVENS: I was going to say, I don't know of a place in the country which honors its military more than Alaska does.

(Applause.)

COMMISSIONER HANSEN: Well, it's great to see such patriotic people.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

COMMISSIONER COYLE: Commissioner Bilbray tells me he doesn't have a question.

I don't know whether to get close or far away.

I have a question for Senator Stevens.

Earlier today, we asked what the base operating support costs were at Eielson, and I believe the number is something like $34 million a year or something like that.

And if you count up other costs on a sort of average basis, sustain and construction costs and other things, you can come up with a number sort of year in and year out average of about 70 million, maybe a little more. But the Department of Defense projects a cost savings every year of $229 million. And we were trying to understand how you could save more than you were spending.

(Laughter and applause.)

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COMMISSIONER COYLE: And General Gamble and General Hamilton explained that the -- the difference is counting pilots and maintainers and other people who would move with the F-16s and with the A-10s to other bases as savings here, even though they would result in new costs at the places they are going, which aren't -- for which they aren't budgeted.

So the question I wanted to ask you was do you think when the BRAC law was written, do you think that the intent of the Congress was that you would count as savings something that was still going to be going on someplace else?

SENATOR STEVENS: I never heard of this concept of economics before I talked to the group that was --

(Laughter.)

SENATOR STEVENS: -- in the Pentagon who tried to explain to us the savings that would occur by moving people from this base to another.

And it was -- I've got to tell you, we -- when we had that meeting, it was in our classified section of -- of our building, and the information had not yet been released. And I tried -- and Ms. Adkins is here with me and she was there -- we tried to understand that, but I don't understand it at all.

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And I never heard anyone talk about the savings associated with -- with the manpower operation cost -- the operation and maintenance related to manpower costs or to personnel costs at all. We were talking about the costs of maintenance and the cost of really operations of the base themselves -- of itself. And modernization. Many bases have not been modernized as these have been.

My last comment to you would be this. Again, I point out that if you're going to have fighters anywhere that you might want to use anywhere in the Northern Hemisphere, a base here is the same as two bases, one in Seattle and one in Maine because our aircraft here can get anywhere in that Northern Hemisphere faster than any can get from those two places.

It is amazing to me that the joint use concept of this base is to be totally overlooked by the Pentagon.

This base at Eielson saves money by keeping planes here where they can be deployed anywhere in the Northern Hemisphere, as you saw on that map.

I don't understand moving them from here and claiming the savings when it would cost more to operate them from the South 48 in the event of an emergency.

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And at the very, very minimum, they would come back here, as I said, to be deployed to Asia.

COMMISSIONER COYLE: Thank you.

GENERAL GAMBLE: Commissioner Coyle, if I can also comment on your question.

It gets back to the programmers again. And maybe a question that I could offer to you all, as you go through the process, you may want to ask this question yourself to others.

As we read it, they are not allowed to take personnel savings out of this. In other words, when the -- when the airmen are distributed, they need to go from Point A to Point B and it's a zero sum gain. In other words, the Air Force can't solve its spaces problem at the expense of BRAC.

But the programmers are willy. They know the business very well.

So if they -- one of the questions you might want to ask along those lines are, is the Air Force, as it moves a group of people to another location, then within its own program and outside of BRAC, turning around and eliminating spaces someplace else on a one-for-one equivalent basis to solve a head room problem that it may have?

So if it's got to eliminate 10,000 spaces, it

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may, in fact, find a way programmatically to do that, but not within BRAC and the letter of the law. So that might be a question you would want to pursue.

COMMISSIONER COYLE: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN PRINCIPI: General Gamble or General Hamilton, if Eielson stayed open at its current operational state, could it pick up the FOL missions of Galena and/or King Salmon?

GENERAL GAMBLE: You'll get different opinions on this. I'll give you mine because I argued this when I was the commander here.

I would see, in the Air Force program, from an operational perspective, from a commander's perspective, I would see that one of those two certainly would be up for consideration, from an operational perspective.

The argument has always been that you've got a good runway underneath that big, huge airspace, and if somebody in a single-engine jet has a problem, they can put the jet down, they have got a barrier, and it's a safety issue. And we've actually saved a couple of airplanes out there. You save one F-16, you've just paid for the place for several years.

Originally, those forward operating bases were put there because it gave us about 20 more minutes'

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access to an intercept out over the water when the Russians were flying off our coast.

With the F & A-22 coming into Elmendorf at super cruise at Mach 1.75, its ability to get out to the target and get there quick is going to overcome the geographical advantage of being 160 miles closer to the coast.

So it's -- it's a relic of the older days, has some safety implications, but it certainly would be considered in a facility look, I would say yes.

CHAIRMAN PRINCIPI: Both installations, I understand, have commercial applicability? So the runways would stay active, am I correct?

GENERAL GAMBLE: We would hope so because those are first-class runways. Plus, there are some facilities that the communities could use that would continue on. Already are using them, in fact.

CHAIRMAN PRINCIPI: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER COYLE: Well, if there are no further questions, as soon as we have a chance to retire the colors here, this will conclude the Alaska Regional Hearing of the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission.

If there are other questions which the staff generates, we may come back to you with questions for

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the record as much as might be done from a Congressional hearing.

And we'd very much appreciate your support and help from -- from people here in the community who may want to call to our attention a particular fact or information that they think are important between now and as we move forward over the next few weeks.

I want to thank all the witnesses for your testimony today. You've brought us a great deal of thoughtful and valuable information, and I assure you that information will be given careful consideration by the Commission members as we reach our decisions.

I also want to thank all the elected officials and community members who have assisted us during tour base visits and preparation for this hearing. Those visits themselves have been very valuable.

And in particular, I would like to thank Senator Stevens and his staff for their assistance in handling and setting up this fine site, as well as with many other arrangements for our visit.

And finally, I'd like to thank the citizens of the communities represented here today, all of you who have supported the members of our Armed Services for so many years, making them feel welcome here and valued in your local communities. It's that spirit that makes

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America great.

If we could have the Ben Eielson High School ROTC retire the colors.

(Retirement of Colors.)

(Applause.)

COMMISSIONER COYLE: Ladies and gentlemen, the hearing is closed.

(Hearing proceedings adjourned 3:40 p.m., June 15, 2005)

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