

BASE VISIT REPORT

Kulis AGS, AK

June 14, 2005

LEAD COMMISSIONER:

Mr. Principi

ACCOMPANYING COMMISSIONERS:

Mr. Bilbray
Mr. Coyle
Mr. Hansen

COMMISSION STAFF:

Frank Cirillo, Director, Review and Analysis
Ken Small, Lead, Air Force Team, Review and Analysis
Craig Hall, Senior Analyst, Review and Analysis
Rumu Sakar, Associate General Counsel

LIST OF ATTENDEES:

Maj Gen Craig Campbell, Alaska ANG TAG
Col Tony Hart, commander, 176th Wing, ANG
Col Joe Torres, Chief of Staff, Alaskan Air Command

U.S. Senate staff:

Mr. George Lowe, Senator Stevens Staff
Mr. Bob Walsh, Senator Murkowski Staff

BASE'S PRESENT MISSION:

- 176th Wing of the Alaska Air National Guard operating C-130H, HC-130N, and HH-60 aircraft

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE RECOMMENDATION:

- Close Kulis Air Guard Station (AGS), AK. Relocate the 176th Wing (ANG) and associated aircraft (eight C-130Hs, three HC-130Ns, and five HH-60s) and Expeditionary Combat Support (ECS) to Elmendorf Air Force Base, AK.

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE JUSTIFICATION:

- This recommendation distributes C-130, HC-130 and HH-60 aircraft from Kulis AGS (110) to Elmendorf Air Force Base (51), which has a higher military value.
- Moving these aircraft to Elmendorf Air Force Base consolidates two installations in the same city, reduces infrastructure, creates an active/ARC association, and retains the skilled, highly trained ANG personnel from Kulis AGS.
- Moves C-130 aircraft to a location where a larger, more effective squadron size is possible while also retaining the skilled and highly trained ANG members from Kulis AGS. At Elmendorf, there will be an active duty association on 12 ANG C-130 aircraft.
- Elmendorf Air Force Base will be realigned to become a joint base with Fort Richardson and, will have consolidated installation management functions and will have aircraft and personnel from Kulis AGS.

MAIN FACILITIES REVIEWED:

Commissioners toured Kulis AGS briefly by car including:

- Maintenance facilities
- Hangars
- Flight line
- Aircraft corrosion control facility
- POL station
- Wing Headquarters
- CE building

KEY ISSUES IDENTIFIED

- The DOD recommendation claims personnel savings with the move of Kulis to Elmendorf. There may be some personnel reduction associated with the move but probably not the level suggested. Some efficiencies will be gained in medical, security, transportation areas.
- The specifics of the ANG/Active association to be created at Elmendorf with C-130 units have yet to be determined. Air Staff is working the details of this.
 - Kulis/Elmendorf will represent a “reverse” association with guard in command.
 - There are some questions as to what additional resources will come with additional aircraft (Elmendorf will gain active C-130s).
 - There are some good and bad examples of Active/Guard associations. The Warner-Robins example is viewed unfavorably, but it worked in Burlington, VT and the concept was endorsed by the Air Force
 - From ANG perspective, the details of the association need to ensure “unity of command” between Active/Guard assets.
- The cost for replacement of facilities now at Kulis to be built at Elmendorf may be understated. Facilities to be gained at Elmendorf may be of lower quality than have currently at Kulis. This will depend on the site survey at Elmendorf associated with Kulis’ move. It is not known whether ANG or Active component will fund the Wings MILCON requirements at Elmendorf. \$55 million was spent on MILCOM at Kulis in last 10 years. Kulis’ replacement cost is \$167M. There are 40-50 years of use left in building at Kulis, but there is

no more land to build on at Kulis. Can not accommodate nay more aircraft at Kulis. Also, Para-rescue training complex and security need improvements.

- There should be little impact on the Wings state mission as long as they are given sufficnet priority at Elmendorf. The Wing would like to take much of its equipment, e.g. snow removal, to ensure they can perform state mission. It is unknown how much they will be allowed to take with them to Elmendorf.
- Kulis now provides some fire/crash support to Anchorage IAP. This would need to be replaced (personnel trained), if Kulis were to close.

INSTALLATION CONCERNS RAISED

- Specifics of C-130 unit Active/guard association
- Adequacy of facilities for the Wing if it moves to Elmendorf.

COMMUNITY CONCERNS RAISED:

None

REQUESTS FOR STAFF AS A RESULT OF VISIT:

None