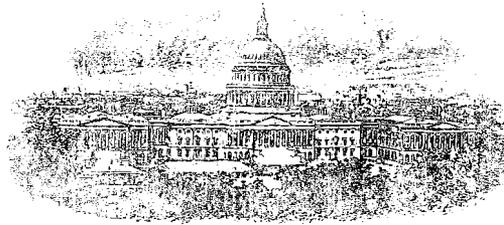


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CONGRESSMAN FOR ALL ALASKA

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## The Base Realignment and Closure Commission, Alaska Regional Hearing Fairbanks, Alaska

Statement of The Honorable Donald Young  
June 15, 2005

Commissioners: If there is one message I want to get across today, it is that the Department of Defense has a history of doing what is proposed in this current BRAC process - undervaluing Alaska - and a history of seeing the error of its ways.

From Alaska's first discovery, through WWII, the Cold War, and now today, U.S. armed forces have come in waves to Alaska. And after each wave, the military has tried to save money by leaving, but has always had to return. Alaska is too vital, too centrally located, too significant to be anything but fully garrisoned and utilized. This tendency to arrive and then withdraw was perhaps just tolerable in the past, but in the future we will not have the luxury of leisurely response times to fix mistakes.

With the purchase of Alaska in 1867, the War Department dispatched ships and men to the new territory, mostly to Southeast. The expense of maintaining these posts quickly became too much for the government, and they soon closed. The Army had to return, however, with the Gold Rush, but again withdrew, this time until WWII. The Japanese attack on the Aleutians surprised all but the most foresightful strategic thinkers. There was a massive, hurried - and therefore overly expensive - build up.

After the war, the military scaled back its presence in Alaska, only to be forced to recommit when the realities of the Cold War became clear. Today's Eielson AFB started as 26 Mile Field (because it was 26 miles south of Fairbanks), a bad weather alternate base for Russian lend-lease flights. In 1945, 26 Mile Field was placed into caretaker status, similar to what is proposed today. But the Soviet threat necessitated well-placed bomber bases, and Alaska was chosen. This led to the re-activation of 26 Mile field, an expansion of its runway (to 14,000 feet) and a renaming as Eielson Air Base.

## BRAC Statement 2-2-2-2-2

Again, during the earlier BRAC rounds, the Pentagon misjudged the value of Alaska bases. Ft. Greely was closed in the 1995 round. But its superior global position meant it was reactivated and now houses interceptors as the core of a national ballistic missile defense system. The central location of Alaska, at the top of the world, means the geometry of interception is best here. But the geography of Alaska is supportive for more than just missiles.

The future holds a shift in the world's strategic map. The Fulda Gap and NATO/Warsaw Pact fault line was dethroned 15 years ago. Since then, the Middle East and the Pacific Rim have competed for prominence. Although we are now involved in the Middle East, and will remain so for awhile, the Pacific Rim is where the future lies. The world's six largest militaries are in it, as well as half the world's surface and more than half the world's economy. Most everyone agrees that the premier rival to American military dominance will come, very soon, from China. North Korea remains a desperate, heavily armed, power. Focusing our military assets in this area is the wisest choice. And Alaska is the best place to do that.

Alaska's strategic importance was first recognized by Secretary Seward in the purchase of Alaska from Russia, and was underscored by Medal of Honor winner and father of the US Air Force, Gen. Billy Mitchell. He has a famous quote, that I am sure you'll hear many times today, but it bears repeating, so I'll use it again now: "I believe that, in the future, whoever holds Alaska will hold the world... I think it is the most important strategic place in the world."

Fairbanks is 700 miles closer to Seoul than Honolulu. It is a thousand miles closer to Beijing. Eielson's massive runway can support up to 20 loaded C-17s and C-5s. Deploying from Eielson, these aircraft would be offloading their troops and cargo in Korea in less than 8 hours, and in Southwest Asia in under 11 ½ hours. Fighter aircraft from here can deploy to the battle in even less time. Moreover, perhaps the biggest constraint today is the availability of air refueling assets, and planes at Eielson can deploy using fewer air refuelings than Lower 48 fighters. The access to training areas, and the Stryker Brigade based just up the road at Ft. Wainwright, are also tremendous assets that would not be best utilized on a temporary, short term, "summer only" basis.

In the future, the U.S. will not have time to leisurely build up forces, or construct new bases like in the past. The speed of modern war means we will not have the time to fix old mistakes. We need to act now to keep Eielson open, equipped, and active.

I thank you for time and consideration of this matter, and I hope your time here has increased your knowledge of the importance of Eielson Air Base.

**STATEMENT OF SENATOR DANIEL K. INOUE  
ARLEIGH BURKE AWARD  
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TONIGHT I WANT TO TALK ABOUT ONE OF THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT'S RECOMMENDATIONS THAT I BELIEVE FAILS TO MEET THIS MOST IMPORTANT CRITERION.

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SINCE THAT TIME THE MILITARY INFRASTRUCTURE IN ALASKA HAS BEEN DRAMATICALLY REDUCED.

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TODAY, THE FOCUS OF OUR MILITARY FORCES AND THAT OF ITS LEADERS IS ON SOUTHWEST ASIA, AND JUSTIFIABLY SO. THE WARS IN IRAQ AND AFGHANSITAN HAVE DRAWN OUR MILITARY FORCES FROM ALL OVER THE UNITED STATES TO SERVE IN THOSE CONFLICTS. IN MY HOME STATE OF HAWAII THE MARINES AT KANEOHE, THE SOLDIERS AT SCHOFIELD BARRACKS AND THE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD AND RESERVE FORCES HAVE ALL BEEN DEPLOYED TO IRAQ OR AFGHANISTAN, IN SOME CASES TO BOTH COUNTRIES.

WE ALL RECOGNIZE IN THIS DAY AND AGE OUR FORCES CAN BE RAPIDLY DEPLOYED ANYWHERE AROUND THE GLOBE. BUT EVEN SO, THE TIME TO DEPLOY CAN BE DRASTICALLY REDUCED BY MAINTAINING FORCES NEAR TROUBLE SPOTS. AS OTHERS CAN ATTEST TO WITH FAR GREATER KNOWLEDGE THAN I, ALASKA IS CLOSER TO THE POTENTIAL HOT SPOTS IN ASIA THAN ANY BASE IN THE CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES.

ALASKA IS ALSO CLOSER TO THE TROUBLED BALKAN REGION THAN THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF BASES IN THE UNITED STATES.

FOR YEARS, MY FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE SENATOR STEVENS HAS INFORMED NUMEROUS SENIOR OFFICIALS IN THE PENTAGON OF THE REALITIES OF GEOGRAPHY. WHILE IT IS COUNTERINTUITIVE TO THOSE OF US WHO ARE USED TO LOOKING AT A STANDARD FLAT MAP, THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF ALASKA BECOMES IMMEDIATELY APPARENT WHEN ONE LOOKS AT A MAP FROM THE POLAR PERSPECTIVE. ALASKA IS SIMPLY CLOSER TO ASIA AND EASTERN EUROPE. INSIDE THE BELTWAY, PEOPLE TEND TO BE EITHER UNAWARE OF THIS FACT OR SIMPLY CHOOSE TO IGNORE IT. IT IS HARD TO DETERMINE THE LONG TERM STRATEGIC VALUE OF A MILITARY BASE, FOR THE FUTURE IS ALWAYS UNCERTAIN. THE WORLD IS NOT A STATIC ENVIRONMENT. IN THE 1970'S OUR ATTENTION WAS CENTERED ON SOUTH EAST ASIA. IN THE 1980'S IT WAS THE CENTRAL PLAINS OF EUROPE. IN THE 1990'S IT WAS THE TROUBLED BALKANS AND TODAY IT IS SOUTHWEST ASIA. OUR FOCUS CHANGES OVER TIME.

BUT, THE BATTLE IN SOUTH WEST ASIA IS NEARLY COMPLETE. OUR TROOPS ARE NOT ON THEIR WAY HOME, THE MISSION MIGHT NOT YET BE ACCOMPLISHED, BUT THE CHALLENGES WE FACE IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN ARE NOT THOSE WHICH ARE LIKELY TO REQUIRE A HUGE INFLUX OF AMERICA'S MILITARY MIGHT. IN FACT, FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE THERE IS ONLY ONE AREA OF THE WORLD WHICH COULD REQUIRE THE NATION'S AWESOME POWER TO BE BROUGHT TO BEAR, AND THAT IS ASIA.

TODAY IN ASIA WE FACE A BELLIGERENT DICTATOR IN KIM JONG IL. WE KNOW ALL TOO WELL THAT THE NORTH KOREANS ARE IN POSSESSION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND HAVE THOUSANDS OF ARTILLERY PIECES AIMED AT SEOUL. WE ARE AWARE THAT THE NORTH KOREANS HAVE MORE THAN ONE MILLION MEN IN THEIR MILITARY WITH AN ESTIMATED TWO THIRDS POSITIONED NEAR THE BORDER.

WE KNOW THAT ASIA IS AN AREA WITH SIGNIFICANT MILITARY FORCES, THAT SIX OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST ARMIES ARE IN ASIA, INCLUDING CHINA, VIETNAM, INDIA, AND NORTH KOREA.

TERRORISM IS FLOURISHING IN ASIA. TODAY WE FACE CHALLENGES FROM RADICALS SUCH AS ABU SAYEF IN THE PHILIPPINES AND THE JEMAA ISLAMIYA FORCES IN INDONESIA.

BUT OF MOST CONCERN IS THE POTENTIAL ADVERSARY WE COULD FACE IN CHINA, THE ONLY NATION THAT IS LIKELY TO DEVELOP INTO SUPERPOWER STATUS IN THE COMING YEARS. IN A RECENT EDITION OF ATLANTIC MONTHLY, ROBERT KAPLAN LAID OUT ONE OF THE REASONS WHY WE MUST REMAIN VIGILANT IN ASIA.

QUOTING FROM THE FIRST SENTENCE OF THAT ARTICLE KAPLAN WRITES, "THE MIDDLE EAST IS JUST A BLIP. THE AMERICAN MILITARY CONTEST WITH CHINA IN THE PACIFIC WILL DEFINE THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY. AND CHINA WILL BE A MORE FORMIDABLE ADVERSARY THAN RUSSIA EVER WAS."

MR. KAPLAN GOES ON TO ARGUE THAT THE AWESOME POTENTIAL OF CHINA WILL PRESENT THE GREATEST POSSIBLE THREAT TO PEACE AND STABILITY IN ASIA.

HE POINTS OUT THAT WE HAVE NO NATO IN ASIA AS WE HAD TO MATCH THE SOVIET UNION; THAT THE UNITED STATES IS VIRTUALLY ON ITS OWN IN THIS REGION. HE NOTES THAT OUR COUNTERWEIGHT TO CHINESE EXPANSION RESTS ON THE FORCES OF THE PACIFIC COMMAND.

I WOULD SUBMIT TO YOU THAT THE ARTICLE BY MR. KAPLAN SHOULD MAKE US ALL STOP AND CONSIDER THIS ISSUE VERY CAREFULLY.

THE COUNTERWEIGHT THAT THE AUTHOR DESCRIBES RESTS ON OUR BASES IN THE PACIFIC. TODAY, WE SEE TENSION BETWEEN CHINA AND TAIWAN. WE HAVE READ RECENTLY OF A RISING TENSION BETWEEN CHINA AND JAPAN. WE KNOW THAT THE NORTH KOREANS ARE DEVELOPING A NUCLEAR CAPABILITY WHICH THREATENS ALL OF ITS NEIGHBORS IN THE REGION AND WILL ONE DAY SOON MOST LIKELY PUT THE UNITED STATES WITHIN REACH OF ITS MISSILES. IN THIS EQUATION WE MUST FACTOR IN THAT THE UNITED STATES IS REDUCING ITS FORCES IN SOUTH KOREA. WE ARE LOOKING AT PULLING MARINES OUT OF OKINAWA AND REPOSITIONING THEM ON U.S. TERRITORY. WHILE WE HAVE BASING RIGHTS AND FRIENDSHIPS WITH MANY NATIONS OF THE REGION, SUCH AS THAILAND AND SINGAPORE IN ADDITION TO JAPAN AND SOUTH KOREA, IT IS THE BASES ON UNITED STATES SOIL IN THE REGION WHICH ARE KEY TO STABILITY.

AS I HAVE REVIEWED THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS ON CLOSING BASES, IN GENERAL I BELIEVE THEY RECOGNIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PACIFIC. I AM REASSURED THAT THE INSIDE THE BELTWAY GROUP IS SLOWLY STARTING TO SEE THAT THE PACIFIC REPRESENTS OUR NATION'S FUTURE, ITS GROWTH AND CHALLENGES. THAT IS WHY THE EIELSON DECISION IS SO PUZZLING. EIELSON IS THE CLOSEST UNITED STATES BASE TO PYONGYANG. ITS A-10'S ARE DESIGNED FOR THE TYPE OF WAR THAT MIGHT ERUPT ON THAT PENINSULA. ITS F-16'S COULD RAPIDLY DEPLOY TO KOREA IN THE EVENT OF A CRISIS. AND, THE NORTH KOREANS KNOW THIS. THEY SEE THE FORCES IN ALASKA THAT ARE POISED TO DEFEND SOUTH KOREA. BY REMOVING THESE AIRCRAFT, COUPLED WITH THE OTHER REDUCTIONS IN FORCES ON THE PENINSULA, I FEAR THAT WE ARE SENDING KIM JONG IL THE WRONG MESSAGE.

I CONCUR WITH THE IDEA OF REALIGNING OUR FORCES IN ALASKA, BUT THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN REALIGNED IN THE OTHER DIRECTION. WE SHOULD

BE MOVING MORE AIRCRAFT TO EIELSON AND TO ELMENDORF AS WELL. IF THE AIR FORCE WANTED TO RELOCATE ITS A-10'S TO A SINGLE BASE FOR EFFICIENCIES, EIELSON WOULD BE A MUCH MORE STRATEGICALLY ADVANTAGEOUS LOCATION THAN VIRTUALLY ANY MILITARY BASE IN THE LOWER 48.

THE F-15'S THAT ARE MOVING SOUTH SHOULD BE REPLACED BY AN EQUAL NUMBER OF F-22'S, INSTEAD WE ARE TRADING THREE SQUADRONS OF F-15'S FOR ONE OR MAYBE TWO SQUADRONS OF F-22'S.

IF WE LOOK TO THE SOUTH PACIFIC TODAY WE SEE THE UNITED STATES BUILDING UP ITS FORCES ON GUAM. WE HAVE MOVED THREE SUBMARINES THERE IN RECENT YEARS, WITH PERHAPS A FOURTH TO COME. WE HAVE BOMBERS SITTING ON THE RAMP AT ANDERSON AIR FORCE BASE.

WE ARE CONSIDERING MOVING MARINES AND UNMANNED RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT THERE AS WELL. THE NAVY IS EXAMINING STATIONING ANOTHER AIRCRAFT CARRIER IN THE PACIFIC AT HAWAII OR FARTHER TO THE WEST UNDERSTANDING THAT THE PACIFIC IS THE BEST SPOT TO LOCATE OUR FORCES. ALL OF THIS IS IN RECOGNITION THAT PRESENCE MAKES A DIFFERENCE. WE NEED TO BASE OUR FORCES FOR STRATEGIC ADVANTAGE. THE BASES IN ALASKA SERVE THAT PURPOSE.

PERHAPS MY FRIEND SENATOR STEVENS NEEDS TO TAKE HIS POLAR PROJECTION MAP BACK TO THE PENTAGON, BECAUSE THE PEOPLE WHO MADE THIS RECOMMENDATION SIMPLY JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND THE STRATEGIC ADVANTAGE OF BASING FORCES IN ALASKA.

MY FRIENDS, SENATOR STEVENS AND I ARE FROM AN EARLIER GENERATION. WE FOUGHT OUR WAR 60 YEARS AGO.

WE BOTH RETURNED FROM THE CONFLICT WITH THE STEADFAST BELIEF THAT WE NEED A STRONG NATIONAL DEFENSE TO DETER AGGRESSION. WE HAVE DEVOTED MUCH OF OUR LIVES TO FOSTERING THAT GOAL. AS WE STAND HERE TODAY AND THINK ABOUT OUR FUTURE, WE KNOW THAT WE MUST REMAIN VIGILANT; WE MUST SEND CLEAR SIGNALS TO POTENTIAL ADVERSARIES THAT WE ARE WELL POSITIONED TO DETER OR IF NECESSARY DEFEAT ANY FOE.

IT IS CLEAR THAT ASIA IS THE REGION THAT OFFERS US THE GREATEST POTENTIAL RISK. AND, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE NATIONS OF THE REGION, BOTH ALLIES AND ADVERSARIES, KEEP AN EYE ON THE LOCATION OF U.S. FORCES, OUR BASES TO MEASURE OUR RESOLVE. IT IS VITAL THAT WE MAINTAIN OUR PRESENCE IN THIS REGION. WE ARE TOLD THAT THE MAIN REASON TO MOVE THE FORCES FROM ALASKA WAS THAT IT COSTS MORE TO STATION FORCES THERE, THAT WE CANNOT AFFORD TO PAY THE SMALL INCREMENTAL PRICE DIFFERENCE.

I HAVE WATCHED THIS REGION FOR MANY YEARS. I KNOW WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE APPEAR TO TURN OUR BACK OR FAIL TO ACT DECISIVELY TO DETER AGGRESSION. FOR THOSE THAT ARGUE THAT WE CANNOT AFFORD TO BASE OUR FORCES IN ALASKA, I WOULD SAY THAT WE CANNOT AFFORD NOT TO BASE OUR FORCES HERE. THAT DECISION WOULD CLEARLY BE COSTLY AND TO THE DETRIMENT OF OUR NATION AND ITS SECURITY.

MANY OF YOU IN THIS AUDIENCE ARE EXPERTS IN THIS ARENA. YOU HAVE DEDICATED YOUR LIFE TO OUR NATION'S DEFENSE. WHAT I HAVE TRIED TO CONVEY TONIGHT ABOUT THE PACIFIC IS NO SECRET TO YOU. WE HAVE ALL SEEN THE MILITARY IMPROVEMENTS COMING FROM CHINA AND THE DRIVE TO NUCLEAR WEAPONS FROM THE NORTH KOREANS. YOU KNOW OUR FORCES HAVE SERVED QUIETLY IN THE PHILIPPINES IN RECENT YEARS TO HELP TRAIN THE PHILIPPINE MILITARY TO ROLL BACK TERRORIST FORCES IN THAT EXPLOSIVE REGION.

WE ALL KEEP A WARY EYE ON OTHER NATIONS IN THE REGION WHICH COULD SLIP UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF RADICAL RELIGIOUS FORCES.

THE PACIFIC REPRESENTS THE FUTURE FOR OUR ECONOMY. THE NATIONS OF THAT REGION WILL CONTINUE TO GROW AND THRIVE WITH NEW OR EXPANDING TRADE MARKETS. OUR MILITARY FORCES REMAIN THE LYNCHPIN TO PEACE AND STABILITY AND FUTURE ECONOMIC GROWTH FOR ALL THE NATIONS THAT BORDER THE PACIFIC OCEAN.

WE SIMPLY MUST MAINTAIN OUR PRESENCE AND A CREDIBLE DETERRENT. AS WE REVIEW OUR FORCES THERE, WE MUST REALIZE THAT WE CANNOT DEPEND FOREVER ON BASING RIGHTS IN FOREIGN NATIONS. THE ONLY LONG TERM ANSWER FOR OUR NATION IS TO MAINTAIN OUR BASES IN THAT THEATER.

TOMORROW MY COLLEAGUE AND GOOD FRIEND SENATOR TED STEVENS IS HEADING TO ALASKA TO MEET WITH THE MEMBERS OF THE BASE CLOSURE COMMISSION TO TRY AND EXPLAIN THESE SIMPLE BUT CRITICAL FACTS. FOR THE SAKE OF OUR NATIONAL SECURITY I WISH HIM GREAT SUCCESS IN THAT MISSION.

ARLEIGH BURKE, THE HERO OF THE PACIFIC UNDERSTOOD PREPAREDNESS. HE HAD THE STRATEGIC VISION REQUIRED TO PREPARE FOR THE BATTLE AND TRAIN HIS MEN. HE HAD THE STRATEGIC VISION TO PUSH FORWARD THE POLARIS SUBMARINE PROGRAM WHICH HELPED GUARANTEE OUR NATION'S SECURITY FOR A GENERATION. HE HAD THE VISION TO HELP ESTABLISH THIS VERY SUCCESSFUL AND GREATLY RESPECTED ORGANIZATION. I BELIEVE IF ARLEIGH BURKE WERE HERE TONIGHT HIS MESSAGE WOULD BE SIMILAR. WE MUST MAINTAIN OUR STRENGTH AND READINESS. WE MUST

POSITION OUR FORCES TO SERVE AS A CREDIBLE DETERRENT TO POTENTIAL ADVERSARIES.

WE MUST USE THE STRATEGIC ADVANTAGE THAT LOCATION PROVIDES US IN THE AREA WITH THE VASTNESS OF THE ASIA PACIFIC REGION. AND, I BELIEVE HE WOULD REACH THE SAME CONCLUSION, WE SHOULD BE BOLSTERING OUR FORCES IN THE PACIFIC, IN ALASKA, AND NOT REMOVING THEM FOR PENNY WISE INSIGNIFICANT COST SAVINGS.

I THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR KINDNESS, AND ONCE AGAIN MY THANKS TO OUR HOSTS AT THE CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES FOR GRANTING ME THE HONOR OF THIS AWARD.

**STATEMENT OF SENATOR DANIEL K. INOUE  
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WE ALL RECOGNIZE IN THIS DAY AND AGE OUR FORCES CAN BE RAPIDLY DEPLOYED ANYWHERE AROUND THE GLOBE. BUT EVEN SO, THE TIME TO DEPLOY CAN BE DRASTICALLY REDUCED BY MAINTAINING FORCES NEAR TROUBLE SPOTS. AS OTHERS CAN ATTEST TO WITH FAR GREATER KNOWLEDGE THAN I, ALASKA IS CLOSER TO THE POTENTIAL HOT SPOTS IN ASIA THAN ANY BASE IN THE CONTINENTAL UNITED STATES.

ALASKA IS ALSO CLOSER TO THE TROUBLED BALKAN REGION THAN THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF BASES IN THE UNITED STATES.

FOR YEARS, MY FRIEND AND COLLEAGUE SENATOR STEVENS HAS INFORMED NUMEROUS SENIOR OFFICIALS IN THE PENTAGON OF THE REALITIES OF GEOGRAPHY. WHILE IT IS COUNTERINTUITIVE TO THOSE OF US WHO ARE USED TO LOOKING AT A STANDARD FLAT MAP, THE STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF ALASKA BECOMES IMMEDIATELY APPARENT WHEN ONE LOOKS AT A MAP FROM THE POLAR PERSPECTIVE. ALASKA IS SIMPLY CLOSER TO ASIA AND EASTERN EUROPE. INSIDE THE BELTWAY, PEOPLE TEND TO BE EITHER UNAWARE OF THIS FACT OR SIMPLY CHOOSE TO IGNORE IT. IT IS HARD TO DETERMINE THE LONG TERM STRATEGIC VALUE OF A MILITARY BASE, FOR THE FUTURE IS ALWAYS UNCERTAIN. THE WORLD IS NOT A STATIC ENVIRONMENT. IN THE 1970'S OUR ATTENTION WAS CENTERED ON SOUTH EAST ASIA. IN THE 1980'S IT WAS THE CENTRAL PLAINS OF EUROPE. IN THE 1990'S IT WAS THE TROUBLED BALKANS AND TODAY IT IS SOUTHWEST ASIA. OUR FOCUS CHANGES OVER TIME.

BUT, THE BATTLE IN SOUTH WEST ASIA IS NEARLY COMPLETE. OUR TROOPS ARE NOT ON THEIR WAY HOME, THE MISSION MIGHT NOT YET BE ACCOMPLISHED, BUT THE CHALLENGES WE FACE IN IRAQ AND AFGHANISTAN ARE NOT THOSE WHICH ARE LIKELY TO REQUIRE A HUGE INFLUX OF AMERICA'S MILITARY MIGHT. IN FACT, FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE THERE IS ONLY ONE AREA OF THE WORLD WHICH COULD REQUIRE THE NATION'S AWESOME POWER TO BE BROUGHT TO BEAR, AND THAT IS ASIA.

TODAY IN ASIA WE FACE A BELLIGERENT DICTATOR IN KIM JONG IL. WE KNOW ALL TOO WELL THAT THE NORTH KOREANS ARE IN POSSESSION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND HAVE THOUSANDS OF ARTILLERY PIECES AIMED AT SEOUL. WE ARE AWARE THAT THE NORTH KOREANS HAVE MORE THAN ONE MILLION MEN IN THEIR MILITARY WITH AN ESTIMATED TWO THIRDS POSITIONED NEAR THE BORDER.

WE KNOW THAT ASIA IS AN AREA WITH SIGNIFICANT MILITARY FORCES, THAT SIX OF THE WORLD'S LARGEST ARMIES ARE IN ASIA, INCLUDING CHINA, VIETNAM, INDIA, AND NORTH KOREA.

TERRORISM IS FLOURISHING IN ASIA. TODAY WE FACE CHALLENGES FROM RADICALS SUCH AS ABU SAYEF IN THE PHILIPPINES AND THE JEMAA ISLAMIYA FORCES IN INDONESIA.

BUT OF MOST CONCERN IS THE POTENTIAL ADVERSARY WE COULD FACE IN CHINA, THE ONLY NATION THAT IS LIKELY TO DEVELOP INTO SUPERPOWER STATUS IN THE COMING YEARS. IN A RECENT EDITION OF ATLANTIC MONTHLY, ROBERT KAPLAN LAID OUT ONE OF THE REASONS WHY WE MUST REMAIN VIGILANT IN ASIA.

QUOTING FROM THE FIRST SENTENCE OF THAT ARTICLE KAPLAN WRITES, "THE MIDDLE EAST IS JUST A BLIP. THE AMERICAN MILITARY CONTEST WITH CHINA IN THE PACIFIC WILL DEFINE THE TWENTY FIRST CENTURY. AND CHINA WILL BE A MORE FORMIDABLE ADVERSARY THAN RUSSIA EVER WAS."

MR. KAPLAN GOES ON TO ARGUE THAT THE AWESOME POTENTIAL OF CHINA WILL PRESENT THE GREATEST POSSIBLE THREAT TO PEACE AND STABILITY IN ASIA.

HE POINTS OUT THAT WE HAVE NO NATO IN ASIA AS WE HAD TO MATCH THE SOVIET UNION; THAT THE UNITED STATES IS VIRTUALLY ON ITS OWN IN THIS REGION. HE NOTES THAT OUR COUNTERWEIGHT TO CHINESE EXPANSION RESTS ON THE FORCES OF THE PACIFIC COMMAND.

I WOULD SUBMIT TO YOU THAT THE ARTICLE BY MR. KAPLAN SHOULD MAKE US ALL STOP AND CONSIDER THIS ISSUE VERY CAREFULLY.

THE COUNTERWEIGHT THAT THE AUTHOR DESCRIBES RESTS ON OUR BASES IN THE PACIFIC. TODAY, WE SEE TENSION BETWEEN CHINA AND TAIWAN. WE HAVE READ RECENTLY OF A RISING TENSION BETWEEN CHINA AND JAPAN. WE KNOW THAT THE NORTH KOREANS ARE DEVELOPING A NUCLEAR CAPABILITY WHICH THREATENS ALL OF ITS NEIGHBORS IN THE REGION AND WILL ONE DAY SOON MOST LIKELY PUT THE UNITED STATES WITHIN REACH OF ITS MISSILES. IN THIS EQUATION WE MUST FACTOR IN THAT THE UNITED STATES IS REDUCING ITS FORCES IN SOUTH KOREA. WE ARE LOOKING AT PULLING MARINES OUT OF OKINAWA AND REPOSITIONING THEM ON U.S. TERRITORY. WHILE WE HAVE BASING RIGHTS AND FRIENDSHIPS WITH MANY NATIONS OF THE REGION, SUCH AS THAILAND AND SINGAPORE IN ADDITION TO JAPAN AND SOUTH KOREA, IT IS THE BASES ON UNITED STATES SOIL IN THE REGION WHICH ARE KEY TO STABILITY.

AS I HAVE REVIEWED THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS ON CLOSING BASES, IN GENERAL I BELIEVE THEY RECOGNIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PACIFIC. I AM REASSURED THAT THE INSIDE THE BELTWAY GROUP IS SLOWLY STARTING TO SEE THAT THE PACIFIC REPRESENTS OUR NATION'S FUTURE, ITS GROWTH AND CHALLENGES. THAT IS WHY THE EIELSON DECISION IS SO PUZZLING. EIELSON IS THE CLOSEST UNITED STATES BASE TO PYONGYANG. ITS A-10'S ARE DESIGNED FOR THE TYPE OF WAR THAT MIGHT ERUPT ON THAT PENINSULA. ITS F-16'S COULD RAPIDLY DEPLOY TO KOREA IN THE EVENT OF A CRISIS. AND, THE NORTH KOREANS KNOW THIS. THEY SEE THE FORCES IN ALASKA THAT ARE POISED TO DEFEND SOUTH KOREA. BY REMOVING THESE AIRCRAFT, COUPLED WITH THE OTHER REDUCTIONS IN FORCES ON THE PENINSULA, I FEAR THAT WE ARE SENDING KIM JONG IL THE WRONG MESSAGE.

I CONCUR WITH THE IDEA OF REALIGNING OUR FORCES IN ALASKA, BUT THEY SHOULD HAVE BEEN REALIGNED IN THE OTHER DIRECTION. WE SHOULD

BE MOVING MORE AIRCRAFT TO EIELSON AND TO ELMENDORF AS WELL. IF THE AIR FORCE WANTED TO RELOCATE ITS A-10'S TO A SINGLE BASE FOR EFFICIENCIES, EIELSON WOULD BE A MUCH MORE STRATEGICALLY ADVANTAGEOUS LOCATION THAN VIRTUALLY ANY MILITARY BASE IN THE LOWER 48.

THE F-15'S THAT ARE MOVING SOUTH SHOULD BE REPLACED BY AN EQUAL NUMBER OF F-22'S, INSTEAD WE ARE TRADING THREE SQUADRONS OF F-15'S FOR ONE OR MAYBE TWO SQUADRONS OF F-22'S.

IF WE LOOK TO THE SOUTH PACIFIC TODAY WE SEE THE UNITED STATES BUILDING UP ITS FORCES ON GUAM. WE HAVE MOVED THREE SUBMARINES THERE IN RECENT YEARS, WITH PERHAPS A FOURTH TO COME. WE HAVE BOMBERS SITTING ON THE RAMP AT ANDERSON AIR FORCE BASE.

WE ARE CONSIDERING MOVING MARINES AND UNMANNED RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT THERE AS WELL. THE NAVY IS EXAMINING STATIONING ANOTHER AIRCRAFT CARRIER IN THE PACIFIC AT HAWAII OR FARTHER TO THE WEST UNDERSTANDING THAT THE PACIFIC IS THE BEST SPOT TO LOCATE OUR FORCES. ALL OF THIS IS IN RECOGNITION THAT PRESENCE MAKES A DIFFERENCE. WE NEED TO BASE OUR FORCES FOR STRATEGIC ADVANTAGE. THE BASES IN ALASKA SERVE THAT PURPOSE.

PERHAPS MY FRIEND SENATOR STEVENS NEEDS TO TAKE HIS POLAR PROJECTION MAP BACK TO THE PENTAGON, BECAUSE THE PEOPLE WHO MADE THIS RECOMMENDATION SIMPLY JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND THE STRATEGIC ADVANTAGE OF BASING FORCES IN ALASKA.

MY FRIENDS, SENATOR STEVENS AND I ARE FROM AN EARLIER GENERATION. WE FOUGHT OUR WAR 60 YEARS AGO.

WE BOTH RETURNED FROM THE CONFLICT WITH THE STEADFAST BELIEF THAT WE NEED A STRONG NATIONAL DEFENSE TO DETER AGGRESSION. WE HAVE DEVOTED MUCH OF OUR LIVES TO FOSTERING THAT GOAL. AS WE STAND HERE TODAY AND THINK ABOUT OUR FUTURE, WE KNOW THAT WE MUST REMAIN VIGILANT; WE MUST SEND CLEAR SIGNALS TO POTENTIAL ADVERSARIES THAT WE ARE WELL POSITIONED TO DETER OR IF NECESSARY DEFEAT ANY FOE.

IT IS CLEAR THAT ASIA IS THE REGION THAT OFFERS US THE GREATEST POTENTIAL RISK. AND, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE NATIONS OF THE REGION, BOTH ALLIES AND ADVERSARIES, KEEP AN EYE ON THE LOCATION OF U.S. FORCES, OUR BASES TO MEASURE OUR RESOLVE. IT IS VITAL THAT WE MAINTAIN OUR PRESENCE IN THIS REGION. WE ARE TOLD THAT THE MAIN REASON TO MOVE THE FORCES FROM ALASKA WAS THAT IT COSTS MORE TO STATION FORCES THERE, THAT WE CANNOT AFFORD TO PAY THE SMALL INCREMENTAL PRICE DIFFERENCE.

I HAVE WATCHED THIS REGION FOR MANY YEARS. I KNOW WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE APPEAR TO TURN OUR BACK OR FAIL TO ACT DECISIVELY TO DETER AGGRESSION. FOR THOSE THAT ARGUE THAT WE CANNOT AFFORD TO BASE OUR FORCES IN ALASKA, I WOULD SAY THAT WE CANNOT AFFORD NOT TO BASE OUR FORCES HERE. THAT DECISION WOULD CLEARLY BE COSTLY AND TO THE DETRIMENT OF OUR NATION AND ITS SECURITY.

MANY OF YOU IN THIS AUDIENCE ARE EXPERTS IN THIS ARENA. YOU HAVE DEDICATED YOUR LIFE TO OUR NATION'S DEFENSE. WHAT I HAVE TRIED TO CONVEY TONIGHT ABOUT THE PACIFIC IS NO SECRET TO YOU. WE HAVE ALL SEEN THE MILITARY IMPROVEMENTS COMING FROM CHINA AND THE DRIVE TO NUCLEAR WEAPONS FROM THE NORTH KOREANS. YOU KNOW OUR FORCES HAVE SERVED QUIETLY IN THE PHILIPPINES IN RECENT YEARS TO HELP TRAIN THE PHILIPPINE MILITARY TO ROLL BACK TERRORIST FORCES IN THAT EXPLOSIVE REGION.

WE ALL KEEP A WARY EYE ON OTHER NATIONS IN THE REGION WHICH COULD SLIP UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF RADICAL RELIGIOUS FORCES.

THE PACIFIC REPRESENTS THE FUTURE FOR OUR ECONOMY. THE NATIONS OF THAT REGION WILL CONTINUE TO GROW AND THRIVE WITH NEW OR EXPANDING TRADE MARKETS. OUR MILITARY FORCES REMAIN THE LYNCHPIN TO PEACE AND STABILITY AND FUTURE ECONOMIC GROWTH FOR ALL THE NATIONS THAT BORDER THE PACIFIC OCEAN.

WE SIMPLY MUST MAINTAIN OUR PRESENCE AND A CREDIBLE DETERRENT. AS WE REVIEW OUR FORCES THERE, WE MUST REALIZE THAT WE CANNOT DEPEND FOREVER ON BASING RIGHTS IN FOREIGN NATIONS. THE ONLY LONG TERM ANSWER FOR OUR NATION IS TO MAINTAIN OUR BASES IN THAT THEATER.

TOMORROW MY COLLEAGUE AND GOOD FRIEND SENATOR TED STEVENS IS HEADING TO ALASKA TO MEET WITH THE MEMBERS OF THE BASE CLOSURE COMMISSION TO TRY AND EXPLAIN THESE SIMPLE BUT CRITICAL FACTS. FOR THE SAKE OF OUR NATIONAL SECURITY I WISH HIM GREAT SUCCESS IN THAT MISSION.

ARLEIGH BURKE, THE HERO OF THE PACIFIC UNDERSTOOD PREPAREDNESS. HE HAD THE STRATEGIC VISION REQUIRED TO PREPARE FOR THE BATTLE AND TRAIN HIS MEN. HE HAD THE STRATEGIC VISION TO PUSH FORWARD THE POLARIS SUBMARINE PROGRAM WHICH HELPED GUARANTEE OUR NATION'S SECURITY FOR A GENERATION. HE HAD THE VISION TO HELP ESTABLISH THIS VERY SUCCESSFUL AND GREATLY RESPECTED ORGANIZATION. I BELIEVE IF ARLEIGH BURKE WERE HERE TONIGHT HIS MESSAGE WOULD BE SIMILAR. WE MUST MAINTAIN OUR STRENGTH AND READINESS. WE MUST

POSITION OUR FORCES TO SERVE AS A CREDIBLE DETERRENT TO POTENTIAL ADVERSARIES.

WE MUST USE THE STRATEGIC ADVANTAGE THAT LOCATION PROVIDES US IN THE AREA WITH THE VASTNESS OF THE ASIA PACIFIC REGION. AND, I BELIEVE HE WOULD REACH THE SAME CONCLUSION, WE SHOULD BE BOLSTERING OUR FORCES IN THE PACIFIC, IN ALASKA, AND NOT REMOVING THEM FOR PENNY WISE INSIGNIFICANT COST SAVINGS.

I THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR KINDNESS, AND ONCE AGAIN MY THANKS TO OUR HOSTS AT THE CENTER FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES FOR GRANTING ME THE HONOR OF THIS AWARD.