

Final

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
for
Global Hawk Main Operating
Base Beddown

**United States Air Force
Air Combat Command**



March 2001

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Assembly Bill	NESHAP	National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants
AFB	Air Force Base	NM	Nautical Mile
AFI	Air Force Instruction	NO _x	Nitrogen Oxides
AGE	Aerospace Ground Equipment	NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
AGL	Above Ground Level	O ₃	Ozone
AICUZ	Air Installation Compatible Use Zone	PAA	Primary Aircraft Assigned
APCD	Air Pollution Control District	Pb	Lead
APZ	Accident Potential Zone	PM ₁₀	Particulate Matter < 10 Micrometers in Diameter
AQMD	Air Quality Management District	ppm	Parts per Million
AQCR	Air Quality Control Region	PSD	Prevention of Significant Deterioration
ARTCC	Air Route Traffic Control Center	RAPCON	Radar Approach Control
BASH	Bird-aircraft strike hazard	RCRA	Resource Conservation and Recovery Act
BMP	Best Management Practices	SEL	Sound Exposure Level
CAA	Clean Air Act	sf	Square Feet
CARB	California Air Resources Board	SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality	SIP	State Implementation Plan
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations	SO _x	Sulfur Oxides
CO	Carbon Monoxide	SWPPP	Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan
COA	Certificate of Authorization	TRACON	Terminal Radar Approach Control
CWA	Clean Water Act	UAV	Unmanned Aerial Vehicle
CZ	Clear Zone	µg	Microgram
dB	Decibel	µg/m ³	Microgram per Cubic Meter
DNL	Day-Night Average Sound Level	USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
DoD	Department of Defense	VFR	Visual Flight Rules
DRMO	Defense Reutilization and Marketing Office	VOC	Volatile Organic Compound
EA	Environmental Assessment		
EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency		
ERP	Environmental Restoration Program		
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration		
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact		
FY	Fiscal Year		
g	Gram		
HAP	Hazardous Air Pollutant		
IFR	Instrument Flight Rules		
IICEP	Intergovernmental/Interagency Coordination for Environmental Planning		
Lb	Pound		
LRE	Launch and Recover Element		
M	Million		
m ³	Cubic meter		
MCE	Mission Control Element		
MOA	Military Operations Airspace		
MSL	Mean Sea Level		
NAA	Nonattainment Areas		
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards		
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act		

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

1.0 NAME OF PROPOSED ACTION

Global Hawk Main Operating Base Beddown.

2.0 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

The U.S. Air Force, Headquarters Air Combat Command (ACC) proposes to establish a main operating base within the contiguous United States for the Global Hawk, a high altitude, high endurance, unmanned aerial vehicle. This proposal involves locating 18 aircraft, associated equipment, and approximately 900 personnel at an Air Force base.

Five alternative locations for the Global Hawk main operating base beddown were considered in the analysis: Beale Air Force Base (AFB), California; Edwards AFB, California; Ellsworth AFB, South Dakota; Tinker AFB, Oklahoma and Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio. The no-action alternative was also analyzed. Under this alternative, the Air Force would not beddown the Global Hawk at one of the five alternative bases. The Air Force's preferred alternative is to establish the Global Hawk main operating base at Beale AFB, California.

3.0 SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

The Environmental Assessment provides an analysis of the potential environmental impacts resulting from implementing the proposed action. Ten resource categories were evaluated in detail to identify potential environmental consequences. Resource categories discussed in the EA are: airspace management, air safety, noise, land use, socio-economics, air quality, hazardous materials and hazardous wastes, soils and water, biological resources, and cultural resources.

Basing the Global Hawk for operational use at any of the bases would require the development of specific flight operation procedures to meet Federal Aviation Administration requirements. These specific procedures would be developed by the Air Force and involve air traffic control facilitation outlined in formal agreements. No significant impacts to airspace management would result from the establishment of these procedures.

Implementation of the proposed action at any of the five alternative bases would increase annual baseline airfield operations by 1,248, an increase of no more than 3.1 percent at any one base. Aircraft located at the bases generate sound exposure levels 18 to 27 decibels higher than Global Hawk, resulting in negligible changes to the noise environment due to Global Hawk aircraft operations.

No conflicts with existing on-base land uses would result from the proposed construction at any of the bases. The proposed facilities would be located in compatible land use areas. Maintenance and operation of the Global Hawk would generate approximately 2,300 pounds of hazardous waste per year. The added hazardous waste would not affect current hazardous waste management procedures or generator status for any of the bases. No new types of hazardous waste would be generated from the operation of the Global Hawk aircraft.

Site-specific environmental impacts for each base are provided below:

Beale AFB: The proposed beddown would add a maximum of 1,673 jobs and up to \$146 million dollars in revenue to the region of influence. The proposed action would be phased over a 12-year period, and therefore would not result in a significant impact to the local labor pool or economy. Beale AFB is located in a maintenance area for ozone; however, the proposed action would not contribute ozone-related emissions above Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) established *de minimus* levels for ozone. Therefore, a formal air quality conformity determination is not required. No significant impacts to natural or cultural resources would be expected since the areas considered for construction are in developed or disturbed areas of the base. Vernal pools are located on the base, but none are located on proposed construction sites. No sensitive natural resource species are located on the proposed construction sites. No properties listed in the National Register of Historic places occur in the area around the base.

Edwards AFB: The proposed beddown would add a maximum of 2,062 jobs and up to \$173 million dollars in revenue to the region of influence. Because the proposed action would be phased over a 12-year period, the local community could absorb the additional labor demand and revenue increase. This would result in no significant socioeconomic impact. Edwards AFB is located in areas of nonattainment for ozone and particulate matter. The total direct and indirect emissions from the proposed beddown would be below the EPA established *de minimus* levels specified for these two criteria pollutants, therefore a formal conformity determination would not be required. Construction at Edwards AFB would occur in developed or disturbed areas of the base. In 1991, The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued a Biological Opinion pertaining to the federally threatened Desert Tortoise, which is known to occur on Edwards AFB. The Opinion covers potential impacts (loss of habitat, fatality rates) to the Desert Tortoise from any construction activities and aircraft ground operations within the flight line area. The Opinion determined that construction activities may affect but are not likely to adversely affect the Desert Tortoise. Site inspections by a trained biologist would occur during construction to allow removal of any Desert Tortoise. No adverse impacts would occur to significant cultural resources under this alternative. Buildings to be used are not historically significant. There is potential for some archaeological sites to exist on the main base, however, areas proposed for ground disturbance would be examined prior to construction and significant cultural resources, if discovered, would be avoided.

Ellsworth AFB: The proposed beddown would add a maximum of 2,498 jobs and up to \$150 million in revenue to the region of influence. The local community could absorb the additional labor demand and revenues, since the proposed action would be phased over a 12-year period, resulting in no significant socioeconomic impact. Ellsworth AFB is located in an attainment area for all EPA established National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). Therefore, a formal air quality conformity determination would not be required. No significant impacts to natural or cultural resources would be expected since the proposed construction is located in developed portions of the base. Two wetlands have been identified at the base in the vicinity of the flight line apron where Global Hawk construction is proposed. However, this area is not on the construction site and would be avoided. Although Building 7504, which is considered historically significant, would be used in this alternative, no structural changes or renovations would occur to the building.

Tinker AFB: The proposed beddown would add a maximum of 2,656 jobs and up to \$170 million in revenue to the region of influence. The proposed action would be phased over a 12-year period and therefore would not result in a significant impact to the local labor pool or

economy. Tinker AFB is located in an area in attainment for all EPA established NAAQS and therefore a formal air quality conformity determination would not be required. No significant impact to natural or cultural resources would occur. No threatened or endangered species, species of concern or wetlands are located on or near the proposed construction sites. The buildings to be used are not historically significant.

Wright-Patterson AFB: Long-term economic effect would add a maximum of 2,104 jobs and \$148 million in revenue to the region of influence. Because the proposed action would be phased over a 12-year period, the local labor pool could absorb the additional labor demand and the additional revenues absorbed into the local economy, resulting in negligible impacts. Wright-Patterson AFB is located in a maintenance area for ozone; however, the proposed action would not contribute ozone related emissions above EPA *de minimus* levels. No significant impact to natural or cultural resources would occur, as the proposed construction areas are located in developed portions of the base. The upland sandpiper, a state listed threatened species, and the Indiana bat, a federally endangered species, are known to occur in areas adjacent to proposed construction sites. However, steps would be implemented to avoid disturbing these species or their habitat near the construction sites. Although one of the buildings identified for use is considered historically significant, the Air Force has not proposed renovations to it under the Global Hawk beddown proposal.

4.0 CONCLUSION

On the basis of the findings of the Environmental Assessment, no significant impact to human health or the natural environment would be expected from implementation of the proposed action at any of the potential beddown locations. Therefore, issuance of a Finding of No Significant Impact is warranted, and preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (Public Law 91-190) is not required.


KENNETH P. SHELTON
Lt Colonel, USAF
Chairperson, ACC Environmental Leadership Board

9 Mar 01
Date

COVER SHEET
Environmental Assessment for
Global Hawk Main Operating Base Beddown

Responsible Agency: United States Air Force, Air Combat Command

Proposed Action: Establish a main operating base for the high-altitude, unmanned aerial vehicle, Global Hawk, at one of five Air Force bases within the contiguous United States.

Written comments and inquiries regarding this document should be directed to

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In addition, the document can be viewed on and downloaded from the world wide web at www.cevp.com.

Designation: Final Environmental Assessment

Abstract: The purpose of the proposed action is to establish and operate a main operating base for the Global Hawk, an unmanned aerial vehicle, at one of five Air Force bases within the contiguous United States. The proposal involves locating 18 high-altitude, long-endurance unmanned aerial vehicles, associated equipment, and approximately 900 personnel at an Air Force base. The beddown would start with an initial beddown of up to four aircraft in 2001, with two additional aircraft delivered each year through 2012. The proposal includes constructing support facilities and using existing airspace around the base. Based on the Air Force's alternative identification and evaluation process, five alternative bases were carried forward for detailed analysis: 1) Beale Air Force Base (AFB), California; 2) Edwards AFB, California; 3) Ellsworth AFB, South Dakota; 4) Tinker AFB, Oklahoma; and 5) Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio. Beale AFB is the Air Force's preferred alternative for the location of the main operating base beddown. In addition, as required by the Council for Environmental Quality regulations implementing NEPA (CFR 40 Parts 1500-1508), the no-action alternative was also analyzed. Under this alternative, the Air Force would not beddown the Global Hawk at one of the five alternative bases at this time.

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