

Record of Decision
Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement
F-35 Beddown at Eglin Air Force Base, Florida

INTRODUCTION

This Record of Decision (ROD) documents the Air Force's decision regarding the implementation of the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF or F-35) beddown portion of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) decisions and related actions at Eglin Air Force Base (AFB), Florida. In making this decision, the information, analysis, and public comments contained in the *Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for F-35 Beddown at Eglin AFB, Florida*, January 2014 (*Federal Register*, Vol. 79, No. 40, EIS No. 20140047, pg. 11428), were considered, among other relevant factors and supporting materials.

This ROD is prepared in accordance with the regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Title 42 U.S.C. §4321-4347; the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) NEPA regulations at 40 CFR, §1505.2, *Record of decision in cases requiring environmental impact statements*; and 32 CFR §989.21, implementing the Air Force Environmental Impact Analysis Process (EIAP). Specifically, this ROD:

- States the Air Force's decision;
- Identifies all alternatives considered by the Air Force in reaching the Initial Joint Training Site (IJTS) decision and specifies the alternative considered environmentally preferable;
- Identifies and discusses relevant factors balanced by the Air Force in making the IJTS decision, including economic and technical considerations, the Air Force's missions, and essential national policy considerations, and states how those considerations entered into the decision;
- States whether all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm resulting from the selected alternative have been adopted, and if not, why they were not; and
- Carries forward and continues the existing mitigation, monitoring, and enforcement program based on the February 2009 ROD and directs its revision to reflect the analyses in the SEIS and this ROD.

DECISION SYNOPSIS

The Air Force will implement the No Action Alternative. The No Action Alternative reflects the Air Force's "Record of Decision, Implementation of Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) 2005 Decisions for the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) Initial Joint Training Site (IJTS), Eglin AFB, Florida," dated February 5, 2009 (*Federal Register*, Volume 74, page 34, February 23, 2009) as combined with, and updated by, the information, analysis, and public comments contained in the SEIS (Pgs. 2-2 to 2-4, §2.1). The No Action Alternative in the SEIS allows for the limited operations of 59 F-35 aircraft as established by the February 2009 ROD. The mitigation and monitoring plan (MMP) based on the February 2009 ROD, entitled *BRAC 2005 Decisions and Related Actions Final Mitigation and Monitoring Plan for JSF at Eglin AFB* (May 2009) (hereafter 2009 MMP for JSF at Eglin AFB (EAFB)) and the provisions applicable to F-35 operations and procedures in *Eglin Air Force Base Instruction, 11-201, Flying Operations, Air Operations* (1 May 2013) (hereafter *EAFBI 11-201*) will be updated to include the mitigations built into the No Action Alternative and operational monitoring required by this ROD.

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The Air Force will also implement related actions, such as the recommendations from the Gulf Regional Airspace Strategic Initiative (GRASI).

BACKGROUND

The Air Force issued a ROD in February 2009 which addressed the F-35 IJTS and resulted in a decision to implement a portion of the F-35 IJTS Alternative 1 presented in the October 2008 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). That decision included the delivery of 59 Primary Aerospace Vehicle Authorized (PAA) F-35 aircraft, associated cantonment construction, and limited certain F-35 flight training operations at Eglin Main Base.

The primary purpose of the SEIS was to analyze the beddown, location, operational alternatives and possible mitigations for the 59 PAA F-35s authorized for delivery by the February 2009 ROD (Air Force (Twenty-four (24) PAA F-35A aircraft), Navy (Fifteen (15) PAA F-35C aircraft), and Marine Corps (Twenty (20) PAA F-35B aircraft)) including the use of the Duke Field airfield and construction of a new runway at Eglin Main Base. The SEIS analyzed additional alternatives regarding the proposed distribution of F-35 flight operations, on and off the Eglin Main Base, to allow efficient pilot training, deconflict flying operations with other military and civilian operations, and reduce or avoid noise impacts on sensitive receptors.

The SEIS evaluated beddown locations on the Eglin Reservation, operational parameters, and the degree to which other mitigation measures are possible. The SEIS contains analyses of operational alternatives and presents potential mitigations for the 59 aircraft authorized to be delivered to Eglin AFB under the February 2009 ROD. Due to the potential noise impacts both on and off Eglin AFB the Air Force imposed, via the February 2009 ROD, temporary operational limitations on F-35 flight training activities to avoid and minimize noise impacts. These limitations were to remain in place until the SEIS was completed and the Air Force decided how best to proceed, recognizing that these limitations might not be practical for use on a long-term basis. The reduced flight operations were distributed among all three airfields (Eglin Main Base, Duke Field, and Choctaw OLF):

To reduce noise impacts over the City of Valparaiso, runway (RW) 12/30 was identified as the primary runway for F-35 operations at Eglin Main Base. Limited F-35 operations were allowed from RW 19, which, other than takeoffs, included only those flight operations necessary for emergencies, unplanned contingencies and weather affecting aircraft performance limitations and requirements. Limited F-35 operations were allowed from RW 01, which, other than approaches and landings, includes only those flight operations necessary for emergencies, unplanned contingencies, and weather affecting aircraft performance limitations and requirements.

The F-35 Joint Program Office (JPO) released updated noise profiles for all three F-35 variants after the Draft SEIS was published in September 2010; consequently, the Air Force delayed the release of the Final SEIS. During the delay, HQ AETC revised the F-35 operational plans, and the GRASI was completed. As more fully discussed in the SEIS (§1.2.6, pages 1-6 thru 1-11), the Air Force then provided updated analyses to address several changes regarding updated noise profiles, revised F-35 operational plans (program requirements, utilization rates, night operations, student production, and operational tables that support the roll-up in Appendix E, Table E-16) and GRASI airspace recommendations (SEIS, Table 1-2).

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The Air Force summarized the substantive comments received on the 2010 Draft SEIS and provided Air Force responses in §1.4.4 of the Final SEIS. The Final SEIS's Appendix A, Volume II provides copies of government agency comments on the 2010 Draft SEIS. Copies of agency and public comments received on the 2013 Revised Draft SEIS and the Air Force's responses to those substantive comments are presented in the SEIS at Appendix A, Volume III.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

As more fully discussed in the SEIS (Pg. 2-8, Chap. 2), the Air Force alternatives on the Eglin Reservation require a primary operating base, or Main Operating Base (MOB). The MOB will provide aircraft maintenance, logistical support, a ramp for nighttime beddown, and functions as the location from which aircraft would be launched and recovered.

The alternatives in the 2008 FEIS looked exclusively at existing facilities and located the training and maintenance facilities, hangars and dorms near the main airfield to meet the BRAC goals and objectives of using existing capacity, reducing costs, and capturing efficiencies.

The SEIS was not limited by BRAC's goals and objectives. In the SEIS, the Air Force considered (1) siting the MOB at locations other than Eglin Main Base, (2) adding an additional runway at each of the existing auxiliary fields and (3) changing the configuration of the Eglin Main Base runway to avoid noise impacts to local areas, such as the City of Valparaiso.

To identify reasonable alternatives, the Air Force developed a three-phase screening process (SEIS, Pgs. 2-8 to 2-20, §2.3). Phase 1 developed and applied initial screening criteria for the Main Operating Base and auxiliary fields. Phase 2 involved presenting the results of the initial screening process at public scoping meetings and considering public input. Phase 3 incorporated additional public and local military user input received after the scoping meetings to develop the alternatives carried forward for detailed analysis.

The three-phase alternative screening process revealed that two primary, or "anchor" locations, could support the Main Operating Base airfield requirements; Eglin Main Base and Duke Field. Using these anchor alternatives, a 50-NM radius was mapped and each field within that radius was evaluated under established screening criteria for auxiliary fields.

Choctaw Field, Duke Field, and Eglin Main RW 12 met all the screening criteria for auxiliary fields. These auxiliary fields would receive the majority of F-35 operational flight training. Tyndall AFB and Naval Air Station (NAS) Pensacola would be used as Practice Instrument Approach Fields (PIAFs) (PIAFs are not considered auxiliary fields; NAS Pensacola and Tyndall AFB are the only airfields to be used as PIAFs). Other F-35-compatible airfields within the surrounding area may be used on an infrequent basis. Alternatives that were carried forward for analysis in the SEIS were:

- No Action - The decision made in the February 2009 ROD allowing delivery of 59 F-35 aircraft, construction, and limited flight training operations at Eglin Main Base as analyzed, described, and documented in the SEIS.
- 1A - No Runway Limitations at Eglin Plus Use of Duke Field and Choctaw Field.
- 1I - One New Runway at Eglin Plus Use of Duke Field and Choctaw Field.
- 2A - Duke Field Parallel Runways and Landing Helicopter Amphibious (LHA) area Plus Choctaw Field.

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- 2B - Duke Field Parallel Runways and LHA Plus Eglin RW 12.
- 2C - Duke Field Parallel Runways and LHA Plus Eglin RW 12 and Choctaw Field.
- 2D - Duke Field Single Runway and LHA Plus Eglin RW 12 and Choctaw Field.
- 2E - Duke Field Single Runway and LHA Plus Choctaw Field.

Alternatives 1B, 1C, 1D, 1E, 1F, 1G, and 1H were presented at the public scoping meetings, but were eliminated as alternatives carried forward for detailed analysis (SEIS, Pg. 2-21, §2.3.2).

No Action Alternative: The No Action Alternative for the SEIS includes the 59 PAA F-35 aircraft, the associated cantonment construction, and continued limited flight training operations at Eglin Main Base as directed in the February 2009 ROD. The No Action Alternative analyzes the beddown of the three squadrons allowed by the February 2009 ROD; an Air Force squadron with 24 PAA F-35As, a Marine Corps Fleet Replacement Squadron with 20 PAA F-35Bs, and a Navy Fleet Replacement squadron with 15 PAA F-35Cs. Delivery of these ROD-approved F-35s at Eglin AFB began in July 2011. It should be noted that several years have elapsed since the February 2009 ROD; consequently the Air Force also updated the baseline data in the SEIS's No Action Alternative to reflect the most current information. For the SEIS (Pg. 2-2, §2.1), the existing conditions effectively are the consequences associated with the No Action Alternative; thus, those consequences were generally presented as the existing conditions (Chapter 3) for each affected resource.

Alternative 1A – No Runway Limitations at Eglin, Plus Use of Duke Field and Choctaw Field: Alternative 1A would eliminate RW 01/19 flight limitations identified in the February 2009 ROD, and enable approximately 30 average annual operations per day for F-35 training. Duke Field and Choctaw Field would be used as auxiliary fields to support flight training activities. The Air Force identified Alternative 1A as the Preferred Alternative for the SEIS.

Alternative 1I – One New Runway at Eglin Plus Use of Duke Field and Choctaw Field: Under Alternative 1I, one new runway with a minimum length and width of 8,000 by 150 feet would be constructed to the northwest of RW 12/30 on Eglin Main Base (SEIS Pgs. 2-41 to 2-42, Figures 2-15 and 2-16). The total acreage to be cleared for construction would be 2,127 acres. This alternative would include a taxiway across Highway (Hwy) 85 to Eglin Main Base. Live munitions would need to be transported by wheeled vehicles to a new live ordnance loading area(s) located near the new runway area. A new precision instrument approach would be installed on the new runway. Choctaw Field and Duke Field would supplement activities on these new runways and be used as auxiliary fields.

Common Elements Among No Action Alternative and Alternatives 1A and 1I: There are certain common elements (SEIS, Pg. 2-38, §2.3.4) among the No Action Alternative and all the Alternative 1 scenarios. The MOB would be Eglin Main Base, while any combination of Duke Field and Choctaw Field could be used for auxiliary fields. Environmental effects of operations associated with the 59 F-35 aircraft at each airfield were analyzed for each of these alternatives.

All facilities evaluated in the SEIS (with the exception of the new runways being proposed under Alternatives 1I, 2A, 2B, and 2C) were previously analyzed in the 2008 FEIS. F-35 aircraft would utilize the runways at NAS Pensacola and Tyndall AFB for practice approaches under all of the action alternatives, including the No Action Alternative (SEIS, §2.3.4, §2.3.1.2, et al).

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The 2014 Final SEIS includes 1,947 operations at NAS Pensacola and 6,862 operations at Tyndall AFB.

All alternatives were designed to minimize or avoid the routine use of RW 01/19 to avoid or reduce noise impacts to the maximum extent practical. Appendix E, Pg. E-85, Table E-16 provides the number and types of flights that would occur on RW 01/19 for each alternative, including the No Action Alternative.

Alternative 2A – Duke Field Parallel Runways and LHA Plus Choctaw Field: Under this alternative, parallel runways would be created by the construction of one new runway to the east of Duke Field's current area of operations (SEIS Pg. 2-44, Fig. 2-17). The new runway would have a minimum length and width of 8,000 by 150 feet. In addition to the new runway construction, an LHA strip and separate vertical landing pads would be constructed. The total acreage to be cleared for the construction would be 3,078 acres.

Alternative 2B – Duke Field Parallel Runways and LHA Plus Eglin RW 12: This alternative is generally the same as Alternative 2A; however, flight operations would be supplemented by the use of Eglin Main RW 12.

Alternative 2C – Duke Field Parallel Runways and LHA Plus Eglin RW 12 and Choctaw Field: Under this alternative, the notional location and construction activities would be the same as Alternative 2A, however, flight operations would be supplemented by the use of Eglin Main RW 12 and Choctaw Field.

Alternative 2D – Duke Field Single Runway and LHA Plus Eglin RW 12 and Choctaw Field: Under this alternative, the current runway would be utilized. Precision instrument approach training would occur at Duke RW 18 using the existing Instrument Landing System (ILS), while Choctaw Field and Eglin Main RW 12 would supplement flight operations.

Alternative 2E – Duke Field Single Runway and LHA Plus Choctaw Field: Under this alternative, the current runway would be utilized. Precision instrument approach training would occur on Duke RW 18 using the existing ILS, while Choctaw Field would supplement flight operations. However, various fields in the surrounding area may be used as PIAFs or to relieve potential congestion. Those operational activities will be at transient levels.

Common Elements Among Alternatives 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D, and 2E: The Main Operating Base for Alternatives 2A, 2B, 2C, 2D, and 2E would be Duke Field using various combinations of Eglin Main RW 12 and Choctaw Field as auxiliary fields. All alternatives were designed to minimize or avoid the routine use of RW 01/19 to avoid or reduce noise impacts to the maximum extent practical. Appendix E, Pg. E-85, Table E-16, provides the number and types of flights that would occur on RW 01/19 for each alternative, including the No Action Alternative.

Environmental effects of 59 F-35 aircraft operations at each airfield were analyzed for all alternatives. The 2014 Final SEIS includes 1,947 operations at NAS Pensacola and 6,862 operations at Tyndall AFB.

A fuel line from Eglin Main Base would be constructed to provide the appropriate volume of JP-8 (jet fuel) to support training activities and would be built within current utility easements or rights-of-way and would Parallel Hwy 85 and Hwy 123. New facilities proposed for

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construction are similar, except for the new parallel runways and related facilities under Alternatives 2A, 2B, and 2C.

All support facilities for the IJTS such as dormitories, academic training, and flight simulators as outlined in the FEIS were located at Eglin Main Base as previously approved in the February 2009 ROD and were not subject to analysis in the SEIS. Those facilities would continue to be used as planned and not constructed at Duke Field (SEIS, pg. 2-43, §2.3.5.)

Environmentally Preferred Alternative

Of the alternatives considered in the SEIS and carried forward in this ROD, the environmentally preferred alternative is the No Action Alternative. This alternative resulted from the 2009 BRAC ROD authorization of delivery of 59 PAA F-35 aircraft, associated cantonment construction and limited flight training operations on RW 01/19 that, other than approaches and landings to RW 01 and departures on RW 19, only include emergencies, unplanned contingencies, and weather affecting aircraft performance limitations and requirements. Under the No Action Alternative, the average F-35 operations per day off RW 01/19 would be 0.77 (SEIS, Appendix E, Table E-16). Noise impacts under this alternative were compared to the 2006 Eglin AFB Air Installation Compatible Use Zone (AICUZ) Study, which was used for the Eglin Main Base noise impacts baseline in the October 2008 FEIS. The No Action Alternative resulted in 607 fewer individuals impacted by 65 dB DNL than in 2006.

RWs 19 and 30 are the only runways on Eglin Main Base equipped with an ILS. The No Action Alternative would continue training inefficiencies resulting from the flight restrictions on RW 01/19. This alternative would also increase training costs associated with placing additional instrument flight rules (IFR) operations at other airfields within the region. These flight restrictions degrade operational capability and significantly limit the Air Force's decision space when planning for known contingencies such as temporary runway closures for construction and/or repair.

SEIS PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

- Draft SEIS Notice of Availability (NOA) - Federal Register, Vol. 75, No. 185, September 24, 2010 with associated public media announcements.
- Public hearings in the following Florida communities: Valparaiso (October 12, 2010), Niceville (October 13, 2010), and Crestview (October 14, 2010).
- Revised Draft SEIS NOA - Federal Register, Vol. 78, No. 115, June 14, 2013 with associated public media announcements to address updated F-35 operational plans and updated noise/flight profiles, as well as results from a regional airspace study (e.g., GRASI) that was completed after the 2010 Draft SEIS was published. During the public review process for the Revised Draft SEIS, a public hearing was held in Valparaiso, Florida, on July 9, 2013.

MITIGATIONS

Noise

All of the action alternatives, including the no action alternative, involved relocating some percentage of the F-35A/B/C aircraft operations from the existing runways at Eglin Main Base to

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runways that are surrounded by fewer noise-sensitive land uses. Mitigations that were incorporated into all of the alternatives to reduce and/or avoid impacts are:

- Substantial reduction in the number of total operations from the number analyzed in the BRAC 2005 FEIS and the 2010 Draft SEIS.
- Reduction in the number of flights on RW 01/19 from those analyzed in the BRAC 2005 FEIS and the 2010 Draft SEIS.
- Use of PIAFs to reduce ILS use of RW 19.
- Change in flight profiles for all three F-35 variants.
- Change in flight tracks for all three F-35 variants.
- Adjusted arrival and departure procedures.
- Reduced from the BRAC 2005 FEIS the number of "late night" (between 10:00 PM and 7:00 AM) flying operations.
- Use of flight simulators for some training.

Specific aspects of flying at Eglin AFB that will be regularly reexamined within the context of mitigation, monitoring and management include, but are not limited to:

- Modifying ground tracks used by aircraft to avoid noise-sensitive areas to a greater degree.
- Modifying altitude, engine power setting and airspeed profiles used by the F-35 to reduce impacts to noise sensitive areas.
- Modifying the F-35 training plan, as more experience is gained with training pilots on the F-35, to minimize training event requirements that are not absolutely necessary for pilot combat readiness.

The SEIS presented impacts associated with two types of potential impacts; those associated with the F-35 beddown construction and ground operations (SEIS Pg. 2-50, Table 2-17), and those connected with F-35 flight operations (SEIS Page 2-58, Table 2-18). These tables also reflect the No Action Alternative condition for each resource.

In the February 2009 ROD, mitigations were applied relative to noise. Limitations were imposed on operations to Runway 01/19 for F-35 aircraft pending the outcome of the SEIS and related ROD. In developing the noise impacts discussed in the FEIS, average daily operations by runway were allocated and the distribution of flight tracks and distribution of daily operations were determined.

Under the SEIS, No Action Alternative flight operations of the F-35 aircraft are constrained so as to minimize noise impacts on residential areas. The SEIS summarized the number of residents in the vicinity of Eglin Main Base, Duke Field and Choctaw Field potentially exposed to noise levels greater than 65 dB DNL and the estimated number of populations of concern affected by noise levels greater than 65 dB DNL under the No Action Alternative (SEIS Pg. 3-49, Table 3-13).

Since the over flights are what causes the direct noise impacts over Valparaiso, the Air Force limited F-35 operations over Valparaiso to avoid new noise impacts to the maximum extent possible. Runway 12/30 was identified as the primary runway for F-35 operations at Eglin Main

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Base. The local Eglin AFB flying instruction (EAFBI 11-201) was amended to include F-35 operations and includes the following limitations:

- RW 12/30 was identified as the primary runway at Eglin Main Base for F-35 operations.
- RW 19 operations other than takeoffs included only those flight operations necessary for emergencies, unplanned contingencies, and weather affecting aircraft performance limitations and requirements. RW 01 operations other than approaches and landing, included only those flight operations necessary for emergencies, unplanned contingencies, and weather affecting aircraft performance limitations and requirements. These limited RW 01/19 operations are to ensure flight safety and/or protect persons or property from harm.

Due to the changes in noise and operational data noted above, the No Action Alternative is not completely synonymous with the February 2009 ROD, therefore the 2009 MMP for JSF at Eglin AFB (EAFB) and F-35 operations and procedures in *EAFBI 11-201* will be updated to include the mitigations built into the No Action Alternative.

The 33rd Operations Group Commander (33 OG/CC) will be responsible for tracking and enforcing flight limitations on RW 19 (other than takeoffs) and RW 01 (other than approaches and landings) to include only those flight operations necessary for emergencies, unplanned contingencies, and weather affecting aircraft performance limitations and requirements. The 33 OG/CC will be assisted by both the 33rd Fighter Wing (33 FW) and 96th Operations Support Squadron (96 OSS) Tower in tracking and enforcement of these flight limitations.

Air Quality

Air quality mitigations identified in the 2009 MMP for JSF at EAFB will be carried forward and implemented for remaining F-35 related construction.

Airspace

As discussed (SEIS Pg. 3-6, §3.2.6), flight training operations associated with the No Action Alternative would impact air traffic controller workload and would contribute to increased congestion (air and ground delays) for military and civilian aircraft across the region. The following GRASI recommendations relating to the F-35 mission (SEIS Pg. 1-6, §1.2.6 and Pg. 2-38, §2.3.4) will assist the Air Force to minimize congestion and related impacts:

- Utilization of special use airspace (SUA). Additional non-Eglin-controlled airspace was incorporated to expand training opportunities. Additional SUA units evaluated include Camden Ridge/Pine Hill, Carabelle East/West, Compass Lake, Desoto/Restricted Area R-4401, Warning Area W-155, W-470 and Moody 1, 2, and 3 and Military Training Routes IR-17/IR-31, VR-1017/VR-1056 (SEIS Pg. 1-10, Table 1-2).
- Relocation of simulated flameout operations. Some simulated flameout approaches have been shifted from Eglin Main Base and Duke Field to Choctaw Field and Tyndall AFB to improve airspace in the North/South corridor.
- Creation of new Air Traffic Control Assigned Airspace (ATCAA). Four new ATCAAs are currently being established.

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- Efficient use of airspace. Use of airspace within R-2915 and R-2914 involves utilizing a new scheduling tool that would track and compare scheduled airspace with airspace actually utilized in order to increase efficiency and allow for more flexibility.

Several other recommendations provided during the GRASI study may help improve overall congestion in the region and aid air traffic controllers in their decision making process. These recommendations may be implemented over time:

- Establishing standard instrument departures (SIDs) and standard terminal arrival routes (STARs) through coordination with other locations and routing entry points for east-west aircraft traffic over shoreline airspace for ascent and descent in order to increase efficiency.
- Operating hours. A study is currently being conducted on the feasibility of expanding operations to six days a week, however a decision has not yet been made.
- Landscape-scale training. Establishing new partnerships for landscape-scale training involves utilizing nonmilitary airspace and compatible private, local, state, and federal lands for nonhazardous missions. A long-term study to identify requirements and opportunities for increased mission capability and flexibility was started in April 2012.
- North Pensacola Military Operating Area (MOA) reorganization. Reorganizing the North Pensacola MOA is currently being evaluated by the Navy for feasibility.

Transportation

The demand on several roadways equates to the need for capacity improvements. Improvements that should be considered, but are outside direct control of the Air Force, include Congestion Management System (CMS) and Transportation System Management (TSM) projects, a corridor management plan that looks at access along the corridor and transit improvements. The Air Force has and will continue to work with the local counties and Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to improve the public transportation system throughout the region. The Transportation Mitigation section of the 2009 MMP for JSF at EAFB will be carried forward and updated as needed.

Physical Resources

To minimize the potential for impacts to groundwater, wetlands, floodplains and other surface water resources identified in the February 2009 ROD, the management requirements directed to be employed in the February 2009 ROD and the water quality mitigations and erosion control management actions included in the 2009 MMP for JSF at EAFB are carried forward and will continue to be employed.

Cultural Resources

The Air Force will implement mitigation measures provided through the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) §106 project-specific amended programmatic agreement (SEIS, Appendix F, *Cultural Resources*) and as defined in the existing 2009 MMP for JSF at EAFB.

Biological Resources

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The management actions, prohibitions and limitations directed in the February 2009 ROD and mitigation measures identified in the 2009 MMP for JSF at EAFB are carried forward and will continue to be employed.

Safety

The management actions and safety measures directed in the February 2009 ROD and identified in the 2009 MMP for JSF at EAFB for day-to-day construction and maintenance activities are carried forward and will continue to be employed.

UNAVOIDABLE IMPACTS

Certain F-35 activities were projected to result in disturbance and/or noise within areas not previously subject to these effects (SEIS, Pg. 2-81, §2.6.3). Some impacts that cannot be mitigated would occur and some of these impacts could be considered adverse or annoying to potentially affected individuals. Potential impacts that could occur and cannot be mitigated are the same as those included in the February 2009 ROD.

FINDINGS ON ACTIONS NOT CONSIDERED REASONABLY FORESEEABLE

As discussed in the SEIS (Pg. 5-6, §5.1.3.1) all basing actions, such as future weapon system changes, unit moves, increases in manpower of 35 or more persons proposed to take place on Air Force real property must be approved via the Air Force Strategic Basing process set out in Air Force Instruction (AFI) 10-503, *Strategic Basing*, dated 27 September 2010.

Until an approved site survey is accomplished and the environmental impact analysis process is completed, no final basing decision can be approved. Until final approval for basing has been granted by the Air Force Strategic Basing Structure, no irretrievable commitment of resources can occur, as equipment and personnel cannot move onto an installation and force structure cannot be altered.

The Air Force is aware of several conceptual actions or proposals that are not ripe for decision-making and were thus not considered to be reasonably foreseeable actions for purposes of the SEIS or this ROD. Such conceptual actions or proposals included, but are not limited to:

- F-35 Mission/Model changes. The primary purpose of the SEIS and this ROD are to analyze the beddown location, the operational alternatives and feasible mitigations for the 59 PAA F-35 (24 Air Force Conventional Takeoff and Landing (CTOL), 20 Marine Corps Short Takeoff and Vertical Landing (STOVL), and 15 Navy Carrier Variant (CV) aircraft controlled by the 33 FW) authorized for delivery by the February 2009 ROD. Any deviation from the planned F-35 mission identified in this ROD would be considered a basing action and would require Air Force approval per guidance above.
- F-35 Foreign Military Sales (FMS). The operations associated with FMS training are analyzed under the operations associated with training of international Partners described in the SEIS. Foreign students will operate within the 59 PAA F-35 framework authorized by the February 2009 ROD and the total numbers of operations reflected in the operational tables and operational plans reflected in §1.2.6 of the SEIS.
- F-35 Test and Evaluation. The extent of any F-35 test and evaluation at Eglin AFB under this SEIS is impliedly limited to the number of F-35s allocated to Eglin, the concept and

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scope of operations, their impacts, and feasible mitigations analyzed in the draft and final published versions of this SEIS and approved in the Air Force ROD. Any increase in F-35 test and evaluation aircraft at Eglin above 59 PAA would be considered a basing action.

- Relocation of Air Force Special Operations Air Warfare Center (SOAWC) from Hurlburt Field to Duke Field would be considered a separate basing action.

DECISION

The Air Force will implement the No Action Alternative including the operational limitations imposed to reduce noise over the City of Valparaiso in the February 2009 ROD. This decision adopts the No Action Alternative evaluated in the SEIS in the following particulars:

- RW 12/30 is the primary runway at Eglin Main Base for F-35 operations.
- RW 19 operations: other than takeoffs, includes only those flight operations necessary for emergencies, unplanned contingencies, and weather affecting aircraft performance limitations and requirements.
- RW 01 operations: other than approaches and landing, includes only those flight operations necessary for emergencies, unplanned contingencies, and weather affecting aircraft performance limitations and requirements.

These limited RW 01/19 operations are to ensure flight safety and/or protect persons or property from harm.

In the event that RW 01/19 flight operations occur for an emergency, unplanned contingency, or weather affecting aircraft performance limitations and requirements, the 33 OG/CC will prepare a written explanation, documenting the circumstances, including aircraft call sign, the nature of the planned operation, and the reasons that caused the unplanned takeoff or landing operation on RW 01/19 within five (5) working days. Upon request, the 33 OG/CC will provide this data, along with a written explanation to both the 33 FW/CC and the 96 TW/CC within 5-working days. The 33 OG/CC will be assisted by 96 OSS Tower in tracking and enforcement of the general limitations described above.

This recordkeeping/reporting requirement becomes effective the date this ROD is signed and will continue for at least two years from the date of delivery of the fifty-ninth (59th) PAA F-35 aircraft allowed under this and the February 2009 ROD.

These requirements regarding the written explanations will be reflected in EAFBI 11-201 provisions applicable to F-35 operations and procedures and will be made a part of the revised 2009 MMP for JSF at EAFB within 90 days of the signing of this ROD.

The No Action Alternative for the SEIS includes the 59 F-35 aircraft, the associated cantonment construction, and limited flight training operations that were implemented at Eglin Main Base as described in the February 2009 ROD. The No Action Alternative includes the beddown of three F-35 squadrons, as follows: an Air Force squadron with twenty-four (24) PAA F-35A aircraft, a Marine Corps Fleet Replacement Squadron with twenty (20) PAA F-35B aircraft, and a Navy Fleet Replacement squadron with fifteen (15) PAA F-35C aircraft.

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All the operational limitations will be implemented as noted above. Annual Air Traffic Control operations associated with the No Action Alternative for 59 F-35 aircraft were addressed in the SEIS (Table 2-2, et al). Appendix E, Page E-85, Table E-16, provides details on the number of flights that would occur on RW 01/19. Under the No Action Alternative, no F-35 afterburner departures will occur during "late night" (between 10:00 PM and 7:00 AM) on Eglin Main Base (SEIS, Pg. 3-13, Table 3-3; and Appendix E, Table E-16).

The Air Force will also implement recommendations from the GRASI to include utilization of non-Eglin-controlled SUA. This airspace was incorporated into the SEIS to expand training opportunities. SUA units to be used include Camden Ridge/Pine Hill, Carabelle East/West, Compass Lake, Desoto/Restricted Area R-4401, Warning Area W-155, W-470 and Moody 1, 2, & 3 and Military Training Routes IR-17/IR-31, VR-1017/VR-1056 (SEIS Pg. 1-10, Table 1-2 and Pg. 3-6, §3.2.4). The Air Force will continue working with the FAA to establish four Air Traffic Control Assigned Airspaces (ATCAA) under a memorandum of understanding with the FAA, at altitudes greater than 24,000 feet above ground level (SEIS, Pg. 2-38).

Tyndall AFB and NAS Pensacola will be utilized as PIAFs (SEIS Pg. 2-14, §2.3.1.2, et seq). The F-35 flight operations projected at NAS Pensacola (SEIS Pg. 2-38, §2.3.4) are the same as those stated in the 2008 FEIS. These flight operations were compared to those of the current NAS Pensacola AICUZ study and there were no differences in the contours, while operations projected for NAS Pensacola are consistent with levels described in the FEIS. Limitations already established with NAS Pensacola will be identified in the update to the 2009 MMP for JSF at EAFB.

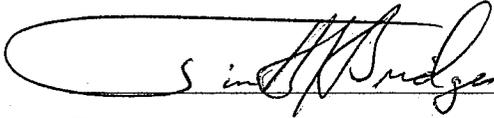
Some simulated flameout approaches will be shifted from Eglin Main Base and Duke Field to Choctaw Field and Tyndall AFB to improve airspace in the North/South corridor (SEIS Pg. 1-9, §1.2.6).

The Air Force will use a new tracking tool to monitor the use of airspace within R-2915 and R-2914 by tracking and comparing scheduled airspace with airspace actually utilized in order to increase efficiency and allow for more flexibility.

The 2009 MMP for JSF at EAFB and the provisions applicable to F-35 operations and procedures in *EAFBI 11-201* will be updated to include the mitigations built into the No Action Alternative and to reflect that the 33 OG/CC is responsible for tracking and enforcing both the identified limitations (e.g. RW 19 operations (other than takeoffs) and RW 01 operations (other than approaches and landings) including only flight operations necessary for emergencies, unplanned contingencies, and weather affecting aircraft performance limitations and requirements) and average annual daily operations generally no later than 90-days from the date of this ROD.

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The 33 OG/CC will be assisted by both the 33 FW and 96 OSS Tower in tracking and enforcement of the limited exceptions and general limitations described above. Tracking of the operations will be from the date of this decision until two full years from the date of delivery of the fifty-ninth (59th) PAA F-35, at which point the IJTS will be reevaluated to ensure the operations are meeting the needs of the IJTS.



Timothy K. Bridges
Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force
(Installations)

26 Jun 14

Date