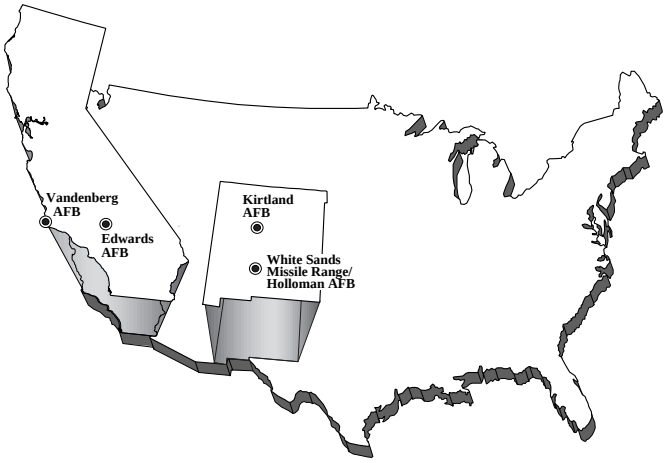

CHAPTER 8
PUBLIC COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

8.0 PUBLIC COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

8.1 INTRODUCTION

The MDA has complied with the NEPA mandate of public participation in the environmental impact analysis process primarily in three ways:

- Public scoping meetings were held at the following locations at which the MDA presented an overview of the ABL program, described the Proposed Action and alternatives, and invited public comments:
  - Lancaster, California on 1 April
  - Lompoc, California on 3 April
  - Albuquerque, New Mexico on 15 April
  - Las Cruces, New Mexico on 17 April.

- Public hearings were held at the following locations at which the MDA presented the findings of the Draft SEIS and invited public comments:
  - Lancaster, California on 15 October
  - Lompoc, California on 17 October
  - Albuquerque, New Mexico on 22 October
  - Las Cruces, New Mexico on 24 October.

- The Draft SEIS was made available for public review and comment in September and October 2002.

Public comments received both verbally at the public meetings and in writing during the review period have been considered and are addressed by the MDA in this section.

8.2 ORGANIZATION

This Public Comment and Response section is organized into several subsections, as follows:

- This Introduction, which describes the process, organization, and approach taken in addressing public comments

- A consolidated comment-response document

- An index of commentors

- A transcript of the public hearings

- Photocopies of all written comments received.

These sections are described below.

Comments received that are similar in nature or address similar concerns have been consolidated to focus on the issues of concern, and a response is provided that addresses all of the similar comments. Some comments simply state a fact or opinion; for example “the Draft SEIS adequately assesses the

impacts on [a resource area]." Such comments, although appreciated, do not require a specific response and are not called out herein. The comments and responses are grouped by area of concern, as follows:

1.0 MDA Policy

2.0 Purpose and Need for Action

3.0 Alternatives Including the Proposed Action

4.0 Local Community

5.0 Airspace

6.0 Hazardous Materials and Hazardous Waste Management

7.0 Health and Safety

8.0 Water Resources

9.0 Air Quality

10.0 Noise

11.0 Biological Resources

12.0 Cultural Resources

13.0 Socioeconomics

Within each area, each consolidated comment-response is numbered sequentially. For example, under 7.0 Health and Safety, individual comments-responses are numbered 7.1, 7.2, etc. At the end of each numbered comment-response is a set of numbers that refer to the specific comment in the documents received that were combined into that consolidated comment. The numbers of the individual comments are indicated in parentheses (e.g., 3-2, 6-2, 14-1). Comment 3-2, for example, refers to document 3, comment number 2. A reader who wishes to read the specific comment(s) received may turn to the photocopies of the documents included in this section. Below each comment number is the number of the consolidated comment in which the specific comment has been encompassed (e.g., 7.1). Thus the reader may reference back and forth between the consolidated comments-responses and the specific comment documents as they were received.

It should be emphasized that not only have responses to SEIS comments been addresses in this comment-response section, as explained, but the text of the SEIS has also been revised, as appropriate, to reflect the concerns expressed in the public comments.

The list of commentors includes the name of the commentor, the identifying document number that has been assigned to it, and the page number in this section on which the photocopy of the document is presented.

1.0 MDA Policy

1.1 Comment: Opposed to the Airborne Laser (ABL) program. (3-6, 6-1, 9-2, 13-3, 14-4, 16-4)

Response: The Secretary of Defense has directed the Missile Defense Agency (MDA) to develop a capability to defend the United States, deployed forces, U.S. allies, friends, and areas of vital interest from ballistic missile attack. In response, MDA is developing the Ballistic Missile Defense System (BMDS) to provide layered defense. The ABL is an element of the BMDS.

1.2 Comment: The ABL is a misuse of military forces as it could migrate from a defensive weapon to an offensive weapon. (3-12, 13-1)

Response: The ABL system is one element of the MDA's BMDS, which is intended to provide an effective defense for the United States, its deployed forces, and its friends and allies from limited missile attack. The ABL is a defensive weapon system that is designed to spot, track, engage, and destroy missiles during the boost phase when a missile is under power and is being thrust skyward by its rocket engines. Using a weapons-class laser, the missile would be destroyed during the initial boost phase, shortly after being launched. The ABL is not designed as an offensive weapon.

1.3 Comment: The development and implementation of the ABL and other missile defense systems and accompanying technologies is in conflict with federal environmental policy. (6-5)

Response: The SEIS analyzes the potential effects of implementing the Proposed Action and alternatives in relation to the human environment in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (40 CFR Part 1508.14). The phrase "human environment" includes the natural and physical environment and the relationship of people with that environment.

1.4 Comment: More public hearings should be conducted with advanced notices distributed in the major and minor media. (9-1, 10-1, 15-1)

Response: A public scoping meeting and a public hearing was conducted near each of the four installations at which ABL test activities could occur. Public notice of these meetings was published as paid advertisements in local newspapers. The paid advertisement offers better notification because the notice is within the body of the newspaper rather than in the public notice section at the back of the newspaper. In addition to the newspaper notifications, installation public affairs released press releases to the media notifying them of the upcoming meetings. Based on the effort to notify the public, no further public hearings are scheduled.

2.0 Purpose and Need for Action

No comments were received for this area of concern.

3.0 Alternatives Including the Proposed Action

3.1 Comment: Section 2.2.1 should state that ground testing from Holloman Air Force Base (AFB) would occur across the National Monument and would require closure and evacuation of the public. (12-1)

Response: Text has been added to Section 2.1.1 to indicate that ground testing from Holloman AFB across the White Sands National Monument would require closure and evacuation of the public.

4.0 Local Community

No comments were received for this area of concern.

5.0 Airspace

No comments were received for this area of concern.

6.0 Hazardous Materials and Hazardous Waste Management

6.1 Comment: Unexploded ordnance is a concern in other countries and this program could result in unexploded ordnance in other countries. (3-7)

Response: During the ABL test program no explosive warheads would be installed on the target missiles; therefore, no unexploded ordnance would result from test activities. Impacts of unexploded ordnance in other countries as a result of deploying the ABL aircraft during war times is beyond the scope of the SEIS.

6.2 Comment: What hazardous waste would be produced and how would it be disposed of. (3-15)

Response: The estimated quantities of wastes generated during ABL test activities is presented in Table 2.2-4 of the SEIS. Each installation where test activities would occur has policies and procedures in place to dispose of hazardous waste and spill prevention control and countermeasure plans in the event a release did occur. The policies and procedures for managing hazardous waste at each installation are presented in Sections 3.1.3, 3.2.3, 3.3.3, and 3.4.3.

6.3 Comment: Even a small amount of hazardous material when factored into the total toxicity levels in our environment, local, statewide, and national is unacceptable. (7-1)

Response: ABL test activities would be conducted in accordance with a hazardous materials management program and pollution prevention program to ensure environmental compliance, and to minimize the use of hazardous materials. Each installation where test activities would occur currently has policies and procedures in place to manage hazardous materials and spill prevention, control, and countermeasures in place in the event of a release. Table 2.2.2 of the SEIS provides the estimated quantities of chemical storage at Edwards AFB during the ABL test program. Because Edwards AFB has been designated as the Home Base, this is the only installation that will store bulk quantities of ABL laser chemicals. Spill prevention, control, and countermeasure procedures, methods, and equipment have been developed and implemented for the ABL system in coordination and compliance with Edwards AFB hazardous materials/waste

storage and transfer areas. The other test installations would not store ABL laser fuels, only existing stores of hazardous materials would be used to support ABL test activities (e.g., fuel to power generators, solvents, household cleaners). The hazardous materials policies and procedures for each installation are presented in Sections 3.1.3, 3.2.3, 3.3.3, and 3.4.3.

6.4 Comment: The Air Force should address the potential applicability of Toxic Reporting Inventory (TRI) requirements under the Emergency Planning and Community-Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA), the Pollution Prevention Act, and Executive Order 13148 at facilities in the United States where ABL chemicals are proposed for storage such as at Edwards AFB. (11-1, 11-3)

Response: Table 1.5.1, Environmental permits and Licenses, has been revised to include EPCRA, the Pollution Prevention Act, and Executive Order 13148.

6.5 Comment: The FEIS and amended record of decision should identify whether there are known readily available, less harmful substitutes for identified applications and purposes (i.e., less toxic substances to carry out ABL testing activities). (11-2)

Response: ABL test activities would be conducted in accordance with a hazardous materials management program and pollution prevention program to ensure environmental compliance, and to minimize the use of hazardous materials. The chemicals identified for use in the ABL systems are specifically designed for the effective operation of the chemical oxygen iodine laser (COIL). No other chemicals have been identified that could be used in place of those designed for the ABL system.

7.0 Health and Safety

7.1 Comment: What is the potential for harm to the public if there is an accident of the ABL aircraft? (3-1, 3-2, 3-5)

Response: The potential for an accident of the ABL aircraft is presented in Appendix C of the 1997 FEIS for the ABL program. According to the analysis, the probability of an accident that severely damages the hull of the aircraft, creating the possibility of a rupture of the laser fuel tanks, is less than one in a million. Historically, 80 percent of the catastrophic accidents of the Boeing 747-400 have occurred during the takeoff, initial climb, initial approach, final approach, and landing phases of the aircraft. These phases constitute 10 percent of the flight time of an average mission (approximately 18 minutes of a 3-hour flight). The analysis focused on the takeoff and initial climb out of the ABL aircraft because the aircraft would be returning to the Home Base (Edwards AFB) with smaller amounts of laser fuel and jet fuel due to completion of test activities. If a catastrophic accident occurs during the high-speed portion of a takeoff, before the aircraft left the ground, or during the initial climb out of the aircraft, the laser fuel tanks may rupture and contribute to a fire or explosion. In both scenarios, the greatest concern for the public would be the possible uncontrolled release or formation of toxic chemicals as a result of the crash and fire. Studies of aircraft crash scenarios have shown that approximately two thirds of the aircraft fuel would be consumed in the initial fireball, the remaining fuel would pool in the crater caused by the aircraft impact and then burn. Since hydrogen peroxide and ammonia are oxidizers (chemicals that promote combustion) and chlorine, helium, and nitrogen are gases, the chemicals stored as laser fuel are expected to be consumed in the initial fireball. The initial fireball would last approximately 5 minutes, where as the remaining one third of the aircraft fuel could burn for several hours. If the accident occurred during the initial, low speed portion of the takeoff, resulting in the aircraft fuselage contacting the runway but not rupturing, any releases

involving the laser fuel would be confined behind a pressure bulkhead. The crew of the aircraft could safely evacuate the aircraft and any releases of laser fuel chemicals could be vented in a controlled manner, preventing the formation of toxic concentrations, or pumped into containers for disposal (U.S. Air Force, 1997a). The probability of the low speed accident is less than one in a million. This type of accident would occur within the installation boundaries and contained by base personnel. The public would not be involved and only minor on-site contamination would be anticipated.

7.2 Comment: The ABL technology is dangerous because it can be directed upward or downward. (3-3)

Response: During ABL flight testing activities, the geometry of the tests would preclude operation of the laser, except at a horizontal or upward angle. The ABL aircraft would fly at an altitude above 35,000 feet. The laser systems would be directed above horizontal and track targets in an upward direction to eliminate potential ground impact. Based upon this scenario, it has been calculated that if a laser beam misses the target, the beam trajectory would be such that the beam would depart the controlled airspace above the pre-approved altitude as coordinated with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). The ABL system would not be directed downward during test activities.

7.3 Comment: Testing the ABL near civilian populations is not appropriate. (3-8)

Response: Ground-testing activities are designed to be conducted within the installation boundaries and would be conducted in areas with no civilian populations. Flight-testing activities are designed to take place over established military ranges and within established restricted military operations areas. These specific areas are used to reduce the possibility of civilians being impacted during testing. In cases where civilian populations could be impacted by testing activities, previously established policies and procedures are in place to ensure test areas are cleared of civilians before testing is conducted (e.g., road closures, notice to airmen, notice to mariners). A discussion of safety procedures employed by the installations during proposed ABL test activities is presented in Sections 3.1.4, 3.2.4, 3.3.4, and 3.4.4.

7.4 Comment: Testing the ABL at Kirtland AFB will make Albuquerque a first strike target. (3-11, 3-14)

Response: No evidence of heightened attack from testing the ABL at an existing military installation has been identified.

7.5 Comment: The airborne laser system is part of a group of weapons systems that require the use of controversial communications technologies to track targeted moving objects. These transmissions have proven adverse physiological affects. The environmental impact report must show the local incidences of these physiological affects compared to incidence in areas not exposed to the acoustic bombardment. (6-2)

Response: The ABL aircraft uses standard communications equipment to maintain contact with ground locations. The potential effects of the use of ground-based radar systems throughout the world to aid in identifying missile launches when the ABL aircraft is commissioned to active service is beyond the scope of analysis of this SEIS. This SEIS addresses the test phase of the ABL aircraft only.

7.6 Comment: Section 3.3.4.2 discussion regarding debris recovery operations and restoration should indicate that activities would be conducted under terms of a special use permit issued by the National Park Service at White Sands National Monument.

Response: Text has been added to Section 3.3.4.2 to indicate that any debris recovery and restoration activities within the White Sands National Monument would be conducted under terms of a special use permit issued by the National Park Service at White Sands National Monument.

7.7 Comment: It is possible for safety measures to fail during test activities. This poses a high risk for safety and health of the area. (14-1, 14-2, 16-1, 16-2)

Response: Sections 3.1.4, 3.2.4, 3.3.4, and 3.4.4 describe the mechanisms that would be in place to ensure a safe environment to conduct ABL test activities. These mechanisms include interlocks to ensure the laser beam is only directed at the target; the interlock system would shut off the laser if it deviates from the intended path to the target.

8.0 Water Resources

8.1 Comment: The influx of 50 people (50 families) to the Albuquerque area could have an adverse effect on the regions aquifer. (3-4, 3-9)

Response: The estimated 50 temporary personnel that would be present during the ABL test period at Kirtland AFB are not anticipated to have an adverse effect to the regions water supply. The 50 personnel would be in the region on a temporary basis (approximately 2 weeks) and would not be new permanent residents in the region. Based on an average per capita consumption of 110 gallons per day, an estimated 77,000 gallons of water would be consumed by the 50 test personnel during the 2-week test period. This is a small fraction of the 448,607 population of Albuquerque, which would equate to approximately 690,844,000 gallons of water consumed in a two-week period.

8.2 Comment: Permittees should amend the existing Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plans to incorporate any additional activities and pollutant controls dictated by the Proposed Action. (5-1)

Response: As appropriate, the installations would amend their existing storm water pollution prevention plans to accommodate the proposed ABL test activities.

9.0 Air Quality

No comments were received for this area of concern.

10.0 Noise

No comments were received for this area of concern.

11.0 Biological Resources

11.1 Comment: The Wright's fishhook cactus (*Mammillaria wrightii*) does not occur on Kirtland AFB nor is it listed as federally endangered. Check the species list provided in Appendix E. (12-4, 12-5)

Response: The species discussed in the SEIS are those known or suspected to occur at Kirtland AFB and White Sands Missile Range, the lists provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is for species occurring within the respective counties that the installations are within. The text and tables in the SEIS have been revised as appropriate based on the USFWS list and installation specific species lists provided by the installations.

11.2 Comment: The discussion regarding potential effects of ground-testing activities on biological resources is vague. It is unclear what types of injury, what types of laser energy produce the injuries, and under what conditions impacts to wildlife may occur. (12-6)

Response: Text has been added to clarify that precautions would be in place to prevent the laser energy from straying from the intended target to further protect biological resources from being affected during test activities.

11.3 Comment: The statement regarding ground- testing activities being conducted, to the extent possible, outside of the migratory waterfowl season to minimize impacts should not be limited to waterfowl. (12-7)

Response: Text has been revised to not limit migratory bird species to only waterfowl.

12.0 Cultural Resources

No comments were received for this area of concern.

13.0 Socioeconomics

13.1 Comment: The influx of 50 people would cause an economic impact. (3-9)

Response: The potential impact to socioeconomics as a result of the ABL test program are presented in Sections 3.1.9, 3.2.9, 3.3.9, and 3.4.9. The estimated 50 temporary personnel that would be present during the ABL test period would have a small, positive, yet largely unnoticeable effect on socioeconomics in the local communities near the installations.

13.2 Comment: The ABL program could have a national and international effect to socioeconomics. (3-13)

Response: The areas evaluated for potential socioeconomic impacts as a result of ABL test activities are those communities in the immediate vicinity of the test installations that would most likely host the personnel associated with ABL test activities. These areas include the local communities surrounding Edwards AFB, Kirtland AFB, White Sands Missile Range/Holloman AFB, and Vandenberg AFB. The estimated 50 temporary personnel that would be present during the test period would have a small, positive, yet largely unnoticeable effect on the socioeconomics in the local communities. Because ABL test activities are only proposed at

installations in California and New Mexico, national or international socioeconomic effects are not anticipated.

13.3 Comment: The effects of the development of the ABL system on economic and social environments would be detrimental. The ABL system poses a serious mental health threat and jeopardizes our children's future economic stability. The environmental impact report must include a study of the psychic effects on children of financial instability and the anticipation of violence. (6-3) (6-4)

Response: The analysis of psychic effects of financial instability and the anticipation of violence is beyond the scope of the SEIS. No known financial instability or violence is anticipated from conducting tests of the ABL system.

13.4 Comment: Section 3.3.9.1 does not mention that White Sands National Monument has an annual public use of over 500,000 visitors and is the most visited National Park Service site in New Mexico. Also, the impacts analysis in Section 3.3.9.2 should state that ground-based laser testing from Holloman AFB would significantly increase closures of public use of the National Monument, resulting in inconvenience to the public. (12-3)

Response: Text has been added to Section 3.3.9 regarding annual visitation to White Sands National Monument and the short-term increase of closures from public use of the National Monument, resulting in inconvenience to the public.

13.5 Comment: There will be an impact to California commercial and recreational fishing, especially below the Western Range. Ocean vessels must be notified in advance of potential hazards. Flight tests may require the closure of one or more of the state or national parks, thus disrupting activities in the area and calling to question environmental impacts of these areas. (13-2, 14-3, 16-3)

Response: Section 3.4.9 addresses the potential effects to commercial and recreational fishing off the California coast. Section 3.4.4 discusses the existing procedures for the notice to airmen, notice to mariners, clearance of state and county beaches, as well as protection of workers on off-shore oil rigs associated with ABL test activities at Vandenberg AFB and over the Western Range.

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MISSILE DEFENSE AGENCY

PUBLIC HEARING ON THE

DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR

THE AIRBORNE LASER PROGRAM

CERTIFIED COPY

HELD AT 44055 NORTH SIERRA HIGHWAY

LANCASTER, CALIFORNIA

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2002

ATKINSON-BAKER, INC.
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A P P E A R A N C E S

SPEAKERS:

COLONEL JOHN J. POWERS

KENNETH ENGLADE, Public Affairs Officer

CAPTAIN JOE WIMMER

ALSO PRESENT:

EVA WALLACE

ROBYN BARELA, Spanish Interpreter

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I N D E X

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LANCASTER, CALIFORNIA - TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2002

7:02 P.M.

COLONEL POWERS: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I'd like to welcome you to the public hearing on the Draft Supplemental Environment Impact Statement for proposed test activities of the Airborne Laser Program. Since cell phones and pagers can be distracting, it would be greatly appreciated if you would turn off or change the setting to a nonaudible or vibration ring on your cell phones and pagers. If you'll please have a seat, we'll get started.

The video that you are just watching is a tape of the first flight of the modified 747 aircraft from the Boeing facility in Wichita, Kansas. The aircraft was flown to test the structural integrity after all the modifications were completed to its airframe. None of the active lasers were onboard. The payload was simulated with ballast.

Now, if everyone will please stand, we'll play the National Anthem, and we'll get started.

(National Anthem was played.)

COLONEL POWERS: Okay. Ladies and gentlemen, my name is Colonel John Powers, and I'll be the presiding officer for tonight's meeting. My purpose here is to ensure that we have a fair, orderly hearing and all that

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wish to be heard have a chance to speak. I would like to welcome your participation in tonight's events.

At this point, I'd like to introduce the other members in the public participation panel and their role in this meeting: Colonel Eva Wallace, from the Airborne Laser System Program office at Kirtland Air Force Base in New Mexico is the senior Airborne Laser Program office representative at this program hearing.

Ms. Robyn Barela, from the Airborne Laser System Program office at Kirtland Air Force Base in New Mexico is the Spanish speaker, and she is here to help anyone in the audience who feels more comfortable addressing their issues in Spanish rather than English. She will not translate the entire proceeding but will serve as an aide.

Ms. Barela, would you please introduce yourself.

(Ms. Barela speaks to the audience in Spanish.)

COLONEL POWERS: Thank you.

Mr. Ken Englade from the Airborne Laser System Program Public Affairs Office in Kirtland, who will present an overview of actions leading to the preparation of the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement and describe the proposed action and alternatives.

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And Captain Joe Wimmer, from the Airborne Laser System Program External Affairs Office at Kirtland Air Force Base in New Mexico, who will present the findings of the Draft Supplemental Impact Statement.

The purpose of tonight's hearing is to receive your comments, suggestions, and criticisms of the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement or SEIS. Those of you who have not had an opportunity to review the Draft SEIS may want to read the summary of the major findings in the handout available at the door. The findings will also be addressed by the panel members in their presentations. Throughout the hearing, I ask that you keep in mind that the public hearing is not designed to be a debate, nor is it primarily designed as a question-and-answer session. However, clarifying questions asked as part of your comment time may be appropriate. This hearing is also not a time set aside for you to use your comment time to personally attack those whose views may be different from your own.

In the first part of tonight's meeting, the members of the panel will brief you on the details of the proposed action and alternatives and the findings of the Draft SEIS. The second part of the meeting will give you an opportunity to provide information and make statements for the record. This input assures that the

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decision-makers may benefit from your knowledge of the local area and any adverse environmental effects you think may result in the proposed action or alternatives.

Tonight's hearing is designed to give you an opportunity to comment on the adequacy of the Draft SEIS. Keep in mind that the SEIS is simply intended to assure that the decision-makers will be fully apprised of the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed action and alternatives before they decide on a course of action. Consequently, comments on issues unrelated to the SEIS are really beyond the scope of this hearing and will not be addressed.

I would like to make a few administrative comments. First of all, if you wish to speak tonight, I ask that you fill out one of the cards that are located on the registration table as you came into the room. From these cards, I will call your name, and come up forward and state your comments. If you did not pick up a card and would like to make a comment tonight, please raise your hand and one of the representatives will bring you a card.

After the panel has finished its presentations, we will have a 15-minute recess. During the time, we will collect the cards. When the meeting resumes, I will recognize elected officials first. Then I will call members of the public in random order from the cards that

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have been handed in. For those of you who have not indicated on the card that you want to make a statement but wish to speak later, please fill out another card at the registration table during the break.

I want to make sure that we have an opportunity to fully consider the comments that you make tonight. We have an individual here who will record everything that is said so that we don't overlook any of your comments.

I'd also like to establish a few ground rules so that all of us have the benefit of hearing individual comments and that we have a good meeting transcript.

First, please speak only after I recognize you, and address your remarks only to me. If you have a written statement, you may place it in the box next to the podium or you may read it aloud within the time limit or you can do both.

Second, please speak clearly and slowly into the microphone stating your name and the capacity in which you appear. This will help our reporter with the transcript.

Third, each person will be recognized for five minutes. If you exceed this time, I will ask you to stop at that point. If you have more comments than you are able to present in the five minutes, please prioritize them

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so that the most important are addressed first in case you run out of time. After everyone has had the opportunity to comment, I will then address the audience to see if anyone would like to speak again.

Fourth, please do not speak while another person is speaking. Only one person will be recognized at a time. If you decide later to make a comment after the public hearing or have additional considerations, we encourage you to send your written comments to the address shown on the screen or indicated on the comment sheet.

Finally, if you would like a copy of the Final SEIS, you may state that in a written comment sheet or on the attendance card that you filled out at the door. Private addresses provided will be compiled to develop a mailing list for those requesting copies of the Final SEIS. Personal home addresses and phone numbers written on the written comment sheet or attendance card will not be published in the Final SEIS.

If no one has any questions at this time, I'll turn the program over to Mr. Ken Englade who will present an overview of the actions leading to the Draft SEIS and describe the proposed action and alternatives.

MR. ENGLADE: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Ken Englade, and I'm from the Airborne Laser

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Public Affairs Office. This SEIS, supplemental environmental analysis based upon changes in the proposed test program that have occurred since the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the program definition and risk reduction phase of the Airborne Laser Program was published in April 1997. The SEIS is being used to fulfill our requirements to comply with the National Environmental Quality Acts or NEPA.

The Environmental Impact Statement published in 1997 considered options for siting a home base, a diagnostic test range, and an expanded area test range in support of the Airborne Laser Program. A screening process was developed to narrow the number of alternative locations for detailed analysis. This process was designed to identify a number of candidate locations that can meet a threshold of operational considerations necessary to conduct the Airborne Laser Program.

The record of decision for the 1997 Environmental Impact Statement identified Edwards Air Force Base as the home base to support the Airborne Laser aircraft and conduct ground-test activities of the Airborne Laser systems, White Sands Missile Range as the diagnostic test range, and the Western Range as the expanded-area test range. These two areas would support proposed flight activities of the Airborne Laser systems.

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This environmental effort was begun in March 2002 with the publication of a Notice of Intent to prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement or SEIS for Airborne Laser test actions in the Federal Register.

A scoping meeting was held near each location where the activities will occur to include here in Lancaster on April 1, 2002, to receive public input on the scope of the issues to be addressed in the SEIS. After scoping, we collected the necessary data and conducted the environmental analysis. The notice of availability was published in the Federal Register on September 20, 2002.

In addition to tonight's hearing, written comments on the Draft SEIS will continue to be accepted at this address until November 5, 2002. After the comment period is over, we will evaluate all comments, both written and verbal, and perform additional analysis or change the SEIS where necessary. Again, as in the scoping process, equal consideration will be given to all comments, whether they are presented here tonight or mailed to us.

Once the review process is complete, we will produce a Final SEIS scheduled for completion in March 2003 and mail it to all those on the original distribution list for the Draft SEIS. If you are not on our mailing list, you can request a copy by writing to this address. The

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Final SEIS will include comments received during the public review period and our responses to those comments. If appropriate, we will group comments into categories and respond accordingly.

The SEIS will serve as an input for a Record of Decision. We expect to accomplish the Record of Decision in late spring of next year. The Draft SEIS was prepared to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA, and the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations. Efforts were made to reduce needless bulk, write in plain language, focus only on those issues that are clearly related to the environment, and to integrate with other documents required as part of the decision-making process.

The analysis focuses on impacts that may occur as a direct or indirect result of the proposed Airborne Laser test activities.

Now I will present an overview of the proposed action and alternatives that have been analyzed. Afterwards Captain Wimmer will present a synopsis of the results of our analysis.

The Airborne Laser system is one element of the Missile Defense Agency's Ballistic Missile Defense System which is intended to provide an effective defense for the United States, its deployed forces, and its friends

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and allies from limited missile attack during all three stages of an attacking missile's flight.

The three segments are the boost segment, midcourse segment, and the terminal segment. The boost segment is when the missile is under power and is being thrust skyward by its rocket engines. The midcourse segment is the longest segment. This is when the missile is in a ballistic arc, heading for it's target. The terminal segment is the few remaining moments of the missile's flight before the missile reaches its target. Each element of the Ballistic Missile Defense System is designed to work independently to provide an effective defense against incoming missiles.

The Airborne Laser is designed to destroy missiles during the boost phase. The Airborne Laser is a weapon system that is designed to spot, track, engage, and destroy missiles. Using a megawatt-class laser, the missile would be destroyed during the initial boost phase shortly after being launched.

The Airborne Laser system consists of a modified Boeing 747-400F aircraft that utilizes four lasers. The first three are not designed to destroy, but rather they are used to gather information regarding the target and to make the high-energy laser more effective.

These three lasers are the Active Ranging

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System Laser, the Track Illuminator Laser, and the Beacon Illuminator Laser. The Active Ranging System provides basic information regarding the target, such as speed, altitude, range and direction. The Track Illuminator Laser provides the high-energy targeting system with the optimum location upon which to attack the target. The Beacon Illuminator Laser is used to gather information on the atmosphere between the aircraft and the target.

The fourth laser is the high-energy, weapons-class laser that is designed to destroy the target. It is a megawatt-class laser generated by chemical reaction.

A battle management command center onboard the aircraft provides computerized control of the laser weapon system, communications, and intelligence.

During the initial testing program, a fifth laser will be used. The surrogate high-energy laser is a lower-power laser and will be used as a simulation of the high-energy laser.

During flight-test activities, the Airborne Laser aircraft would fly at or above 35,000 feet and would detect and track launches or target missiles using onboard sensors. Active tracking of the missile can begin when the missile clears the cloud tops. The

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high-energy laser would be directed in an upward direction toward the missile. The energy from the laser would heat the missile's booster components and cause a stress fracture in the outer surface of the missile. This would allow gasses from the booster rocket to escape, causing an explosion that would destroy the missile.

The geometry of the test would preclude operation of the laser except at a horizontal or upward angle. This is to ensure that lower-flying aircraft and objects on the ground would not be in the path of the laser beam. The onboard sensors would also be used to confirm that nothing in the airspace other than the intended target is within the potential beam paths. This is in addition to using the controlled and cleared airspace during the Airborne Laser flight-testing.

The proposed action is to conduct test activities of the Airborne Laser system at test ranges associated with Edwards Air Force Base and Vandenberg Air Force Base, California, and Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico, and White Sands Missile Range with support from Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico. Tests activities would involve testing the laser components on the ground and in flight to verify the laser components operate together safely and effectively.

In the event the ground-testing is not

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possible at Edwards Air Force Base, Kirtland Air Force Base and White Sands Missile Range with support from Holloman Air Force Base have been identified as alternative ground-test locations. Flight-testing is proposed at the R-2508 airspace complex utilized by Edwards Air Force Base, the Western Range off the coast of California that is utilized by Vandenberg Air Force Base and Point Mugu Naval Air Station, and White Sand Missile Range.

The Airborne Laser aircraft would be based at Edwards Air Force Base, and the aircraft would be flown to the other bases for testing as required. All test flights would begin and end at Edwards Air Force Base.

Ground testing of the lower-power systems would be conducted at Edwards Air Force Base from the end of the runway associated with the Birk Flight Test Facility. Ground targets would include a rotoplane, which is a ferris wheel-like rotating target, and stationary target boards.

High-energy ground activities would be conducted using a ground-based simulator. No open-range testing of the high-energy laser would be conducted.

Kirtland Air Force Base and White Sands Missile Range with support from adjacent Holloman Air Force Base have been identified as alternative ground-test locations if conditions prevent testing at Edwards Air

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Force Base.

If ground testing occurs at Kirtland Air Force Base, the aircraft would be flown to Kirtland Air Force Base and use existing runways, taxiways, and aircraft parking areas. Only the lower-power laser systems would be tested at Kirtland Air Force Base using the existing Sandia Laser Target Range.

If ground testing occurs at White Sands Missile Range, the aircraft will be flown to Holloman Air Force Base and use approved runways, taxiways, and aircraft parking areas. Only the lower-power laser systems would be directed westward toward targets placed within White Sands Missile Range.

Ground-testing procedures include automatic laser turret limiting devices and/or laser-blocking devices to prevent laser energy from extending beyond the target backstops and from the defined laser beam path. Target backstops include natural features such as hills, mountains, and buttes, or manmade earthen berms.

Flight-testing of the Airborne Laser system is required to confirm and expand on computer modeling and ground-test data and to provide complete testing of all systems required to have an effective weapon system.

During flight-tests, the Airborne Laser aircraft would be accompanied by up to two chase aircraft

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to monitor the test and the status of the Airborne Laser aircraft. The Airborne Laser aircraft will fly at an altitude at or above 35,000 feet and the laser systems would track targets at a horizontal or in an upward direction to minimize potential contact with the ground or other aircraft. Onboard sensors and pretest planning would be used to confirm that no aircraft or satellites are within the potential path of the beam. Also, only existing military- and FAA-controlled airspace areas would be utilized during the tests and confirmed clear of nonparticipating aircraft during testing activities.

Flight-tests would utilize the R-2508 airspace complex utilized by Edwards Air Force Base, the Western Range utilized by Vandenberg Air Force Base and Point Mugu Naval Air Station, and White Sands Missile Range, including Fort Bliss-controlled airspace and FAA-controlled airspace as necessary.

Targets that would be used during flight-testing activities would include the following: a missile alternative range target instrument or Marti, which is a balloon with a target board attached; a proteus aircraft, which is a high-altitude manned aircraft with target board attached; and target missiles that simulate a potential missile threat.

Both low- and high-power tests would be

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conducted on the Marti and missile targets. Only lower-power tests would occur with the proteus aircraft as it is a manned target vehicle.

The tests will evaluate the Airborne Laser System's ability to acquire, track, and engage targets. Missiles used during the flight-test activities will have a flight-termination system to ensure that debris would be contained on the range in the event the target missile must be destroyed in flight.

In the event that the aircraft is unable to land at Edwards Air force Base after conducting test activities, preplanned divert bases have been established. The divert bases would have personnel specifically trained to support the Airborne Laser aircraft and appropriate equipment to handle Airborne Laser hazardous materials.

The no-action alternative would involve conducting Airborne Laser test activities as described in the original testing program discussed in the 1997 document. Other alternatives were considered and eliminated from further consideration in the 1997 document. These alternatives included different test-demonstration methods, laser-system types, and test installations or locations.

I would now like to turn the microphone over to Captain Joe Wimmer who will discuss the findings of the

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Draft SEIS.

MR. WIMMER: Good evening. My name is Captain Joe Wimmer. I will briefly review the resources detailed in the Draft SEIS that may be affected due to the proposed Airborne Laser test activities.

Based on the proposed laser test activities being addressed in this SEIS and actions that have already been addressed within the EIS prepared in 1997, the analysis indicated that there would be no or few potential impacts for several resource areas. These resources are highlighted on this slide. I will summarize the analysis results briefly.

Under the Local Community Category, land use and aesthetics did not require further analysis because proposed test activities would occur on existing test ranges and no new military construction- -- which is abbreviated as MILCON -- funded activities would occur. It was determined no land-use would occur; therefore, no impacts are anticipated.

Utilities did not require further analysis because no substantial permanent employment changes would occur and utility requirements for test activities were not changed. It was determined that no impacts to utilities are anticipated.

Transportation did not require further

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analysis because no substantial permanent employment changes would occur and standard operating procedures are in place to control traffic during proposed test activities. It was determined that no impacts to roadways and transportation and railroads are anticipated.

And finally, environmental justice did not require further analysis because Airborne Laser test activities would be conducted and contained within the installation and range boundaries. It was determined no disproportionately high and adverse impacts to low-income and minority population would occur.

Under the hazardous materials and hazardous waste management category, installation restoration program sites would not require further analysis because there are no installation restoration program sites in the vicinity of proposed ground target locations.

Storage tanks did not require further analysis because no changes to the requirement for storage tanks was identified. This determined -- it was determined that storage tanks associated with the Airborne Laser Program were adequately addressed in the 1997 EIS.

Asbestos did not require further analysis because no MILCON-funded facility construction or demolition activities are proposed to support test activities, and it was determined that no impacts from

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asbestos are anticipated.

Pesticide usage did not require further analysis because the proposed test activities would not require an increase in the use of pesticides.

Polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, did not require further analysis because no PCB-containing equipment would be utilized; therefore, no impacts are anticipated.

Radon did not require further analysis because the proposed test activities would not be conducted in facilities that would be permanently occupied. It was determined that no impacts from radon are anticipated.

Medical and biohazardous waste did not require further analysis because medical and biohazardous waste would not be generated during proposed test activities; therefore, no impacts are anticipated.

Lead-based paint did not require further analysis because, as with asbestos, no MILCON-funded facility construction or demotion activities are proposed to support test activities, and it was determined that no impacts from lead-based paint are anticipated.

Under the Natural Environmental Category, soils and geology did not require further analysis because no MILCON-funded facility construction or demolition activities are proposed to support test activities and no

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ground disturbance would occur.

Water resources did not require further analysis because, similarly to soils and geology, no MILCON-funded facility construction or demolition activities are proposed to support test activities. No ground disturbance would occur. Washdown activities of the aircraft at Edwards Air Force Base would be conducted in accordance with the applicable Base management plans addressing wastewater and pollution prevention.

The Draft SEIS focuses on potential impacts that would occur as a result of the proposed Airborne Laser test activities. Resources evaluated in detail include socioeconomics, airspace hazardous materials and hazardous waste management, health and safety, air quality, noise, biological resources, and cultural resources.

Under the Local Community category, socioeconomics was analyzed further because Edwards Air Force Base has been designated as a home base and up to 250 personnel, permanent program-related personnel, and up to 50 temporary personnel during test activities are anticipated. These personnel would have a small, positive, yet largely unnoticeable effect on the population, income, and employment in the region.

Airspace was not analyzed further in regards to impact on the ground, because by virtue of the proposed

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ground-test scenarios, it would occur close to the ground and would not have airspace-use impacts. The proposed flight test scenarios in the R-2508 airspace complex were analyzed and determined it would not have an adverse impact on activities conducted within the complex. The restricted areas, military operating areas, and associated air traffic control-using agency has a scheduling office responsible for establishing an activity schedule for the portions of the R-2508 complex that would be used and forwarded to the controlling air route traffic control center. Jet route J110, which transects the northern portion of the R-2508 complex, could experience a change in it's availability if flight-test activities occurred after sunset and on the weekends. The potential change in the availability of this jet route during the short duration of flight-test activities is not expected to result in substantial effects to air traffic.

Hazardous materials and hazardous waste management was analyzed further because the integrated maintenance facility at Edwards Air Force Base would be used to store, handle, and mix chemicals for the laser. This conforming and compatible storage area is situated in a remote area approximately 1.2 miles from the Birk Flight Test Facility. Storage and handling areas consist of concrete pads with associated tanks, piping, values, relief

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devices, and related storage and transfer equipment. Effluents from the operation of the high-energy laser will be managed by the use of chemical scrubbers and chemical reactions that produce nontoxic byproducts. Any hazardous waste generated during test activities would be stored at an approved 90-day accumulation point and disposed of in accordance with applicable regulations.

Health and safety was analyzed further because of the potential hazards associated with the system. Lasing activities would be managed under appropriate range safety regulations. Backdrops, buffer zones, beam path restrictors, and administrative controls would be in place during the ground-test activities. Open-range testing of the laser systems would not be conducted if water is present in the adjacent dry lake. All laser engagements of the Marti drop and proteus tests would occur at altitudes above 35,000 feet; therefore, public exposure to hazardous levels of direct laser energy would be eliminated. Any laser energy that misses the target would continue upward and away from the ground.

Under the Natural Environment category, air quality was analyzed further because of the potential for emissions associated with the system and was determined that the ground-testing contribution to the total emissions would be minimal. The major source of emissions would be

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due to the vehicles used for flight support and emissions from Airborne Laser aircraft and chase aircraft takeoffs and landings. Total emissions for volatile organic compounds and nitrogen oxides from test activities would be approximately 16.5 and 31.55 tons per year respectively. The emissions resulting from the proposed action are far less than 10 percent of the emission inventories of the Kern County Air Pollution Control District and below the de minimis threshold of 50 tons per year. Under current regulations, the requirements for air quality conformity do not apply to the action. Because the emission levels are primarily mobile in nature, a new source of review would not be triggered for flight-testing activities.

Noise was analyzed further because of the introduction of new noise sources. Noise generated by the ground pressure recovery assembly during ground tests of the high-energy laser is expected to be approximately 10 decibels. The associated ejector tubes and turbopumps are expected to generate noise levels of approximately 110 to 134 decibels over an approximate 20-second period during ground tests. These notice levels would be attenuated somewhat based on their location within the system integration laboratory and next to the Birk Flight Test Facility hangar. Increased noise levels from the use of aerospace ground equipment adjacent to the runway during

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ground-testing activities would not exceed typical flightline noise levels. The Airborne Laser aircraft and chase aircraft would maneuver at high attitudes at approximately 35,000 feet; therefore, noise from these aircraft would be less than 55 decibels. Analysis results determined for ground- and flight-testing activities, no adverse noise impact is anticipated.

Biological resources were analyzed further because threatened and endangered species are found on Edwards Air Force Base. Ground-testing activities would be conducted just prior to sunrise or after sunset to minimize atmospheric effects of ground heating and blowing dust. This time period would minimize any potential harassment or take of desert tortoises as they would typically be within burrows at these hours. In addition, no ground disturbance would occur during placement of the targets. No adverse effects to biological resources are anticipated during flight-test activities due to the high attitude, 35,000 feet or higher, in which the tests would occur.

Cultural resources were analyzed because the sites exist on Edwards Air Force Base. Because ground-test activities would occur on previously disturbed, paved, or developed land and no construction activity would be necessary, no impacts to cultural resources are anticipated. In addition, no target debris is anticipated

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during flight-test activities within the R-2508 airspace complex; therefore, no debris recovery or ground disturbance is anticipated.

The no-action alternative in this SEIS reflects the proposed test activities analyzed in the 1997 Environmental Impact Statement. Therefore, no new impacts are created, and potential impacts are discussed in that document. As previously stated, this SEIS does not discuss the findings of that document except as a basis of comparison. Therefore, the no-action alternative generates no new impacts.

In closing, I remind you that this study is in a draft stage. Our goal is to provide the decision-makers with accurate information on the potential environmental consequences of the proposed Airborne Laser test activities. To do this, we are soliciting your support -- comments on the Draft SEIS. This information will support informed decision-making.

Now I'd like to turn the meeting back over to Colonel Powers.

COLONEL POWERS: Okay. Thank you. At this point, we're going is to take a 15-minute recess, and then we'll begin with the next portion of the hearing, which is the public comment portion. So do we have anybody at this point who is signed up to speak?

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(No audible response.)

COLONEL POWERS: Okay. Well, we'll take a 10-minute recess, and see if anybody changes their mind. Okay. Take a 10-minute recess.

(Recess.)

COLONEL POWERS: Okay. If everybody will take their seats again.

Okay. Do we have anybody that wishes to speak?

(No audible response.)

COLONEL POWERS: Okay. Just for the record, since I do have one card that is checked in the affirmative, I believe that person may have during the recess gotten an answer to their question. So if there are no speakers, then there is no need for me to go through the instructions on how speakers are supposed to conduct themselves during this portion of the hearing.

So this concludes the public hearing. And if you should later decide to make comments or would like to receive copies of the Final SEIS, you may do so through the address shown on the slide that I think will be put up in a second. You can get the address here at the table in the front of the room.

Okay. If there's nothing else, appreciate you coming and participating in this public hearing and

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have a good evening and a safe ride home.

(Hearing concluded at 7:50)

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STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
)
COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES,)

I, Maxine Miller, do hereby certify that I reported stenographically the foregoing sworn statement at the time and place heretofore set forth; that the same was thereafter reduced to typewritten form by me or at my supervision; and I do further certify that this is a true and correct transcript of my stenographic notes so taken.

I further certify that I have no interest in the subject matter.

Witness my hand this 21st day of October, 2002.

Maxine Miller

Maxine Miller

Shorthand Reporter

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REPORTER'S CERTIFICATION OF CERTIFIED COPY

I, MAXINE MILLER, Notary Public No. 929568 and Shorthand Reporter in the state of California, certify that the foregoing pages 1 through 30 constitute a true and correct copy of the original proceedings taken on October 15, 2002.

I declare under the penalty of perjury under the laws of the state of California that the foregoing is true and correct.

Dated this 21st of October, 2002.

Maxine Miller

MAXINE MILLER, Notary Public No. 929568

Document 2

PUBLIC HEARING ON THE DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR AIRBORNE LASER PROGRAM AT EDWARDS AFB AND VANDENBERG AFB, CALIFORNIA, AND KIRTLAND AFB, WHITE SANDS MISSILE RANGE AND HOLLOMAN AFB, NEW MEXICO

CERTIFIED COPY

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Lompoc, California

Thursday, October 17, 2002

ATKINSON-BAKER, INC.
CERTIFIED COURT REPORTERS
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REPORTED BY: MARCY A. STYLES, CSR NO. 10604

FILE NO.: 9C070E4

Document 2

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2002

COLONEL POWERS:

I guess we will get started here.

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I would like to welcome you to the public hearing on the draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for proposed test activities of the Airborne Laser Program.

Since cell phones and pagers can be distracting, it would be greatly appreciated if you would turn off or change the setting to non-audible or vibration ring on your cell phones and pagers. If you will please have a seat, we will get started.

The video you were just watching is a tape of the first flight of the modified 747-400F aircraft from the Boeing facility in Wichita, Kansas. The aircraft was flown to test the structural integrity after all the modifications were completed to its airframe. None of the active lasers were onboard -- the pay load was simulated with ballast.

Now, if everyone will please stand, we'll play the National Anthem, and we will get started.

(Video -- National Anthem)

COLONEL POWERS: Okay. My name is Colonel John Powers, and

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I will be the presiding officer for tonight's meeting. My purpose here tonight is to ensure that we have a fair, orderly hearing, and that all who wish to be heard, have a fair chance to speak.

At this point, I would like to introduce the other members of the public hearing panel, and their role in this meeting.

Colonel Eva Wallace, from the Airborne Laser System Program office at Kirtland Air Force Base in New Mexico, is the senior airborne laser system program office representative at this public hearing.

Ms. Robyn Barela, from the Airborne Laser System Office Program in Kirtland Air Force Base in New Mexico, is a Spanish speaker, and she is here to help anyone in the audience who feels more comfortable addressing their issues in Spanish, rather than English. She will not translate the entire proceeding, but will serve as an aide.

Ms. Barela, would you please introduce yourself?

(Ms. Barela introduces herself in Spanish.)

COLONEL POWERS: Thank you, Ms. Barela.

Mr. Ken Englade from the Airborne Laser Public Affairs Office, who will present an overview of the actions leading to the preparation of the draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, and describe the proposed

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action and alternatives.

And Captain Joe Wimmer from the Airborne Laser System Program External Affairs Office at Kirtland Air Force Base in New Mexico, who will present the findings of the draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement.

The purpose of tonight's hearing is to receive your comments, suggestions, and criticisms of the draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement or SEIS.

Those of you who have not had an opportunity to review the draft SEIS, may want to read the summary of the major findings, in the handout available at the door. The findings will also be addressed by the panel members in their presentations.

Throughout this hearing, I ask that you keep in mind that this public hearing is not designed to be a debate, nor is it a popularity vote on the draft SEIS, nor is it primarily designed as a question-and-answer session. However, clarifying questions asked, as part of your comment time, may be appropriate. This hearing is also not time set aside for you to use your comment time to personally attack those whose views may be different from your own.

In the first part of tonight's meeting, the members of the panel will brief you on the details of the proposed action and alternatives and the findings of the draft SEIS.

The second part of the meeting will give you an opportunity to provide information and make statements for the record. This input ensures that the decision makers may benefit from your knowledge of the local area and any adverse environmental effects you think may result from the proposed action or alternatives.

Tonight's hearing is designed to give you an opportunity to comment on the adequacy of the draft SEIS. Keep in mind that the SEIS is simply intended to ensure that the decision makers will be fully apprised of the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed action and alternatives, before they decide on a course of action. Consequently, comments on issues unrelated to the SEIS are really beyond the scope of this hearing and will not be addressed.

I would like to make a few administrative comments. First of all, if you wish to speak tonight, I ask that you fill out one of the cards that are located in the registration table as you came into the room. From these cards I will call your name for you to come forward and state your comments. If you did not pick up a card and would like to make a comment tonight, please raise your right hand, and one of our representatives will bring you a card.

After the panel has finished its

presentations, we will have a fifteen-minute recess, and during this time, we will collect the cards. And when the meeting resumes, I will recognize elected officials first. Then I will call members of the public, in random order, from the cards that have been handed in.

For those who have not indicated on the cards that you want to make a statement but wish to speak later, please fill out another card at the registration table during break.

I want to make sure that we have the opportunity to fully consider the comments that you make tonight. We have an individual here that will record everything that is said, so that we don't overlook any of your comments.

I would like to establish a few ground rules, so that all of us have the benefit of hearing individual comments and that we have a good meeting transcript.

First, please speak only after I recognize you, and address your comments to me. If you have a written statement, you may place it in the box next to the podium, or you may read it aloud, or you may do both.

Second, please speak clearly and slowly into the microphone, stating your name and the capacity in which you appear. This will help our recorder with the transcript.

Third: Each person will be recognized for five minutes. If you exceed this time limit, I will ask you to stop at that point. If you have more comments than you will be able to present in five minutes, please prioritize them so that the most important comments are addressed first, in case you run out of time. After everyone has had an opportunity to comment, I will then address the audience to see if anybody would like to speak again.

Fourth: Please do not speak while another person is speaking. Only one person can be recognized at a time.

If you later decide to make a comment after this public hearing or have additional considerations, we encourage you to send your written comments to the address shown on the screen or indicated on the comment sheet.

Finally, if you would like a copy of the final SEIS, you may state that on a written comment sheet or on the attendance card that you filled out at the door. Private addresses provided will be compiled to develop the mailing list for those requesting copies of the final SEIS. Personal home addresses and phone numbers written on the written comment sheet or attendance card, will not be published in the final SEIS.

If no one has any questions at this time, I will turn the program over to Mr. Ken Englade, who will

present an overview of the actions leading to the preparation of the draft SEIS, and describe the proposed action and alternatives.

Any questions?

MR. KEN ENGLADE: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Ken Englade, and I'm from the airborne laser public affairs office. This SEIS is a supplemental environmental analysis, based upon changes in the proposed test program that have occurred since the final environmental impact statement for the program definition and risk reduction phase of the Airborne Laser Program was published in April 1997. The SEIS is being used to fulfill our requirements to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA.

The Environmental Impact Statement published in 1997 considered options for siting a home base, a diagnostic test range, and an expanded-area test range in support of the Airborne Laser Program. A screening process was developed to narrow the number of alternative locations for detailed analysis.

This process was designed to identify a number of candidate locations that could meet a threshold of operational considerations necessary to conduct the airborne laser program.

The record of decision for the 1997

Environmental Impact Statement identified Edwards Air Force base as the home base (to support the airborne laser aircraft and conduct ground test activities of the airborne laser systems), White Sands Missile Range as the diagnostic test range, and the Western Range as the expanded-area test range. These two areas would support proposed flight test activities of the airborne laser systems.

This environmental effort was begun in March 2002, with the publication of a notice of intent to prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, or SEIS, for airborne laser test actions in the federal register.

A scoping meeting was held near each location where the activities will occur, to include here at Lompoc on April 3rd, 2002, to receive public input on the scope of issues to be addressed in the SEIS. After scoping, we collected the necessary data and conducted the environmental analysis. The notice of availability was published in the Federal Register on September 20th, 2002.

In addition to tonight's hearing, written comments on the draft SEIS will continue to be accepted at this address until November 5th, 2002. After the comment period is over, we will evaluate all comments, both written and verbal, and perform additional analysis or change the SEIS where necessary.

Again, as in the scoping process, equal

consideration will be given to all comments, whether they are presented here tonight or mailed to us.

Once the review process is complete, we will produce a final SEIS scheduled for completion in March 2003, and mail it to all those on the original distribution list from the draft SEIS.

If you are not on our mailing list, you can request a copy by writing to this address. The final SEIS will include comments received during the public review period and our responses to those comments.

If appropriate, we will group comments into categories and respond accordingly. The SEIS will serve as input for the record of decision. We expect to accomplish the record of decision in late spring of next year.

The draft SEIS was prepared to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act or NEPA, and the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations. Efforts were made to reduce needless bulk, write in plain language, focus only on those issues that are clearly related to the environment, and to integrate with other documents required, as part of the decision-making process.

The analysis focuses on impacts that may occur as a direct or indirect result of the proposed airborne laser test activities.

Now I will present an overview of the proposed

action and alternatives that have been analyzed. Afterwards, Captain Wimmer will present a synopsis of the results of our analysis.

The airborne laser system is one element of the Missile Defense Agency's ballistic missile defense system, which is intended to provide an effective defense for the United States, its deployed forces, and its friends and allies, from limited missile attack during all three stages of an attacking missile's flight.

The three segments are the boost segment, the midcourse segment, and the terminal segment. The boost segment is when the missile is under power and is being thrust skyward by its rocket engines. The midcourse segment is the longest segment. This is when the missile is in a ballistic arc, heading for its target. The terminal segment is the few remaining moments of the missile's flight before the missile reaches its target. Each element of the ballistic missile defense system is designed to work independently, to provide an effective defense against incoming missiles.

The airborne laser is designed to destroy missiles during the boost phase. The airborne laser is a weapon system that is designed to spot, track, engage, and destroy missiles. Using a megawatt-class laser, the missile would be destroyed during the initial boost phase, shortly

after being launched.

The airborne laser system consists of a modified Boeing 747-400F aircraft that utilities four lasers; the first three are not designed to destroy, rather they are used to gather information regarding the target and to make the high-energy laser more effective.

These three lasers are the active ranging system laser, the track illuminator laser, and the beacon illuminator laser. The active ranging system provides basic information regarding the target, such as speed, altitude, range and direction. The track illuminator laser provides the high-energy laser targeting system with the optimum location upon which to attack the target. The beacon illuminator laser is used to gather information on the atmosphere between the aircraft and the target.

The fourth laser is the high-energy weapons class laser that is designed to destroy the target. It is a megawatt-class laser generated by a chemical reaction.

A battle management command control center onboard the aircraft provides computerized control of the laser weapon system, communications, and intelligence.

During the initial testing program, a fifth laser will be used. The surrogate high-energy laser is a lower-power laser and will be used as a simulation of the high-energy laser.

During flight-test activities, the airborne laser aircraft would fly at or above 35,000 feet, and would detect and track launches of target missiles, using onboard sensors. Active tracking of the missile could begin when the missile clears the could tops. The high-energy laser would be directed at an upward direction toward the missile. The energy from the laser would heat the missile's booster components and cause a stress fracture in the outer surface of the missile. This would allow gases from the booster rocket to escape, causing an explosion that would destroy the missile.

The geometry of the test activities would preclude operation of the laser, except at a horizontal or upward angle. This is to ensure that lower-flying aircraft and objects on the ground would not be in the path of the laser beam. The onboard sensors would also be used to confirm that nothing in the air or space, other than the intended target, is within the potential beam path. This is in addition to using controlled and cleared airspace during the airborne laser flight testing.

The proposed action is to conduct test activities of the airborne laser system at test ranges associated with Edwards Air Force Base and Vandenberg Air Force Base, California and Kirtland Air Force Base and White Sands Missile Range, with support from Holloman Air Force

Base, New Mexico. Test activities would involve testing the laser components on the ground and in flight, to verify that laser components operate together safely and effectively.

In the event that ground testing is not possible at Edwards Air Force Base, Kirtland Air Force Base and White Sands Missile Range, with support from Holloman Air Force Base, have been identified as alternative ground test locations. Flight testing is proposed at the R-2508 airspace complex utilized by Edwards Air Force Base; the Western Range off the coast of California that is utilized by Vandenberg Air Force Base and Point Mugu Naval Air Station; and White Sands Missile Range.

The airborne laser aircraft would be based at Edwards Air Force Base, and the aircraft would be flown to the other bases for testing, as required. All test flights would begin and end at Edwards Air Force Base.

Ground testing of the lower-power laser systems would be conducted at Edwards Air Force Base from the end of the runway associated with the Birk Flight Test Facility. Ground targets would include a rotoplane, which is a ferris wheel-like rotating target, and stationary target boards.

High-energy ground testing activities would be conducted, using a ground-based simulator; no open-range testing of the high-energy laser would be conducted.

The Kirtland Air Force Base and White Sands Missile Range, with support from adjacent Holloman Air Force Base, have been identified as alternative ground test locations if conditions prevent testing at Edwards Air Force Base.

If ground testing occurs at Kirtland Air Force Base, the aircraft would be flown to Kirtland Air Force Base and use existing runways, taxiways, and aircraft parking areas. Only the lower-power laser systems would be tested at Kirtland Air Force Base, using the existing Sandia Laser Target Range.

If ground testing occurs at White Sands Missile Range, the aircraft will be flown to Holloman Air Force Base and use approved runways, taxiways, and aircraft parking areas, only the lower-power laser systems would be tested. The laser systems would be directed westward toward targets placed within White Sands Missile Range.

Ground-testing procedures include automatic laser turret-limiting devices and/or laser-blocking devices to prevent laser energy from extending beyond the target backstops and from the defined laser beam path. Target backstops include natural features such as hills, mountains, and buttes, or man-made earthen berms.

Flight testing of the airborne laser system is required to confirm and expand on computer modeling and

ground test data, and to provide complete testing of all systems required to have an effective weapon system.

During flight tests, the airborne laser aircraft would be accompanied by up to two chase aircraft to monitor the test and the status of the airborne laser aircraft. The airborne laser aircraft would fly at an altitude at or above 35,000 feet, and the laser systems would track targets at a horizontal, or in an upward direction, to minimize potential contact with the ground or other aircraft. Onboard sensors and pre-test planning would be used to confirm that no aircraft or satellites are within the potential path of the beam. Also, only existing military and FAA-controlled airspace areas would be utilized during the tests and confirmed clear of non-participating aircraft during testing activities.

Flight tests would utilize the R-2508 airspace complex utilized by Edwards Air Force Base; the western range utilized by Vandenberg Air Force Base and Point Mugu Naval Air Station; and White Sands Missile Range, including Fort Bliss-controlled airspace and FAA-controlled airspace, as necessary.

Targets that would be used during flight-testing activities include the following:

A missile alternative-range target instrument, or MARTI, which is a balloon with a target board attached.

A Proteus aircraft, which is a high-altitude, manned aircraft with a target board attached.

And target missiles that simulate a potential threat missile.

Both low- and high-power tests would be conducted on the MARTI and missile targets. Only lower-power tests would occur with the Proteus aircraft, as it is a manned target vehicle.

The tests will evaluate the airborne laser system's ability to acquire, track, and engage targets. Missiles used during the flight-test activities will have a flight termination system to ensure that debris would be contained on the range, in the event the target missile must be destroyed in flight.

In the event that the aircraft is unable to land at Edwards Air Force Base after conducting test activities, preplanned divert bases have been established. The divert bases would have personnel specifically trained to support the airborne laser aircraft, and appropriate equipment to handle airborne laser hazardous materials.

The no-action alternative would involve conducting airborne laser test activities as described in the original testing program discussed in the 1997 document.

Other alternatives were considered and eliminated from further consideration in the 1997 document.

These alternatives included different test demonstration methods, laser system types, and test installations or locations.

I would now like to turn the microphone over to Captain Joe Wimmer who will discuss the findings of the draft SEIS.

CAPTAIN WIMMER: Good evening; my name is Captain Joe Wimmer. I will briefly review the resources detailed in the draft SEIS that may be affected due to the proposed airborne laser test activities, based on the proposed airborne laser test activities being addressed in this SEIS and actions that have already been addressed within the EIS prepared in 1997. The analysis indicated there would be no or few potential impacts for several resource areas. These resources are highlighted on this slide, and I will summarize the analysis results briefly.

Under the "Local Community" category, Land Use and Aesthetics did not require further analysis, because proposed test activities would occur on existing test ranges and no new military construction, which is abbreviated as MILCON, funded activities would occur. It was determined that no land use changes would occur; therefore, no impacts are anticipated.

Utilities did not require further analysis

because no substantial permanent employment changes would occur, and utility requirements for test activities would not change. It was determined that no impacts to utilities are anticipated.

Transportation did not require further analysis, because no substantial permanent employment changes would occur, and standard operating procedures are in place to control traffic during proposed test activities. It was determined that no impacts to roadways, air transportation, and railroads are anticipated.

And finally, Environmental Justice did not require further analysis, because airborne laser test activities would be conducted and contained within the installation and range boundaries. It was determined that no disproportionately high and adverse impacts to low-income and minority population would occur.

Under the "Hazardous Materials and Hazardous Waste Management" category, Installation Restoration Program Sites did not require further analysis, because there are no installation restoration program sites in the vicinity of the launch sites.

Storage Tanks did not require further analysis, because no changes to the requirement for storage tanks was identified; therefore, it was determined that storage tanks associated with the Airborne Laser Program

were adequately addressed in the 1997 EIS.

Asbestos did not require further analysis, because no MILCON-funded facility construction or demolition activities are proposed to support flight test activities -- excuse me, test activities. It was determined that no impacts from asbestos are anticipated.

Pesticide Usage did not require further analysis, because the proposed test activities would not require an increase in the use of pesticides.

Polychlorinated Biphenyls (or PCBs) did not require further analysis, because no PCB-containing equipment would be utilized during proposed test activities; therefore, no impacts are anticipated.

Radon did not require further analysis because the proposed test activities would not be conducted in facilities that would be permanently occupied. It was determined that no impacts from radon are anticipated.

The Medical and Biohazardous Waste did not require further analysis, because medical and biohazardous waste would not be generated during the proposed test activities; therefore, no impacts are anticipated.

Lead-Based Paint did not require further analysis, because as with the asbestos, no MILCON-funded facility construction or demolition activities are proposed to support test activities. It was determined that no

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impacts from lead-based paint are anticipated.

Under the "Natural Environment" category, Soils and Geology did not require further analysis, because no MILCON-funded facility construction or demolition activities are proposed to support test activities, no ground disturbance would occur.

Water Resources did not require further analysis, because similar to soils and geology, no MILCON-funded facility construction or demolition activities are proposed to support test activities, no ground disturbance would occur.

The draft SEIS focuses on potential impacts that would occur as a result of proposed airborne laser test activities. Resources evaluated in detail include socioeconomics, airspace, hazardous materials, and hazardous waste management, health and safety, air quality, noise, biological resources, and cultural resources.

Under the "Local Community" category, Socioeconomics was analyzed further, because flight-testing activities at Vandenberg Air Force Base are expected to trigger the rotation of up to 50 program-related, temporary personnel into and out of Vandenberg Air Force Base for short periods surrounding each test event. The rotation of up to 50 program-related, temporary personnel would have a small, positive, yet largely unnoticeable effect on

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population, income, and employment in the area surrounding Vandenberg Air Force Base.

There is the potential for impacts to local commercial and recreational fishing in the waters offshore of Vandenberg Air Force Base and below the warning areas of the Western Range. However, ocean vessels would be notified in advance of launch activity, as part of routine operations, through a notice to mariners to warn vessels of test operations and the potential hazards. All efforts are made to ensure that the flight corridors are clear of vessels.

Flight-testing activities have the potential for impacts on local recreation activities, because they may require the temporary closure of one or more of the State and County parks in the area surrounding Vandenberg Air Force Base. While inconvenient for the individuals involved, the relative small number of park visitors that could be affected, along with the fact that existing evacuation agreements are in effect, determined impacts to recreational use of the parks would not be substantial. No adverse impacts to socioeconomics are anticipated under the proposed action.

Airspace was analyzed further to determine if the use of the Western Range for the proposed flight-testing activities would have an adverse impact on activities

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conducted within the range. The agencies that use the special airspace of the Western Range, have a scheduling office that is responsible for establishing a real-time activities schedule for those restricted areas. The schedule and any changes are forwarded to the controlling air route traffic control center. There would be no impact to the regional air routes, because no airways or jet routes pass through or near the restricted areas to be used during the flight-testing activities. No adverse impacts from airspace usage are anticipated under the proposed action.

Hazardous Materials and Hazardous Waste Management was analyzed further, because hazardous materials will be used to launch missiles. The hazardous materials used during missile launch preparation would be similar to those currently used at Vandenberg Air Force Base, and would be transported to the missile preparation area, using ground support equipment, without the need for revised procedures.

In the event the airborne laser aircraft is unable to land at Edwards Air Force Base, Vandenberg Air Force Base has been identified as one of three preplanned, divert bases in which the aircraft could be diverted to. Vandenberg Air Force Base personnel would be specifically trained to support the airborne laser aircraft, and appropriate equipment to handle the airborne laser hazardous materials would be in place. No adverse impacts from

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hazardous materials or hazardous waste management are anticipated under the proposed action.

Health and Safety was analyzed further, because of the potential hazards associated with the system. The primary hazard associated with the flight-testing activities is the reflected laser energy off a target missile, and missile debris falling within the Western Range boundaries. Any laser energy that misses the targeted missile would continue upward and away from the ground. The reflected laser energy hazards for the high-energy laser have been extensively investigated and possible-for-reflection scenarios predicted. The possibility of public exposure to hazardous levels of direct, nonreflected laser energy would be eliminated by the decision to restrict laser-firing angles to above the horizontal plane from the airborne laser aircraft's altitude of 35,000 feet or higher.

However, because of the missile's flight path angle, when intercepted by the laser beam, reflections from the target missile surface could be directed downward. Flight-test activities would be configured so that any reflected energy would be contained within the range boundaries. The targets in all high-energy laser tests would be flying at altitudes above 35,000 feet. Because the diffusely-reflected energy is spread over a large area, the

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energy density rapidly decreases to below the maximum permitted exposure levels. Any directed laser energy that misses the target would exit restricted airspace above 45,000 feet and continue upward, eventually exiting the earth's atmosphere.

Vandenberg Air Force Base has in place established procedures to ensure a safe environment to conduct airborne laser flight-test activities. Restricted airspace areas would be controlled according to eastern and Western Range 127.1 range safety requirements, safety operating instructions, the 30th Space Wing Regulations and FAA directives and regulations. The notice to mariners and a notice to airmen would be disseminated prior to launch activities. Established procedures related to evacuating or sheltering personnel on off-shore oil rigs during launch operations would be implemented. The State and County beaches potentially affected during launch activities would be closed. Analysis results determined health and safety impacts from the proposed airborne laser-testing activities at Vandenberg Air Force Base would be inconsequential.

Under the "Natural Environment" category, Air Quality was analyzed further, because of the potential for emissions from the flight tests and missile launches. The estimated emissions from flight-test activities are below the de minimis conformity determination level of 100

tons per year, and are less than one percent of the Santa Barbara County's total emissions. The estimate of criteria pollutant emissions is based on the number of proposed missile launches, and includes estimates for the service vehicles. The criteria pollutant emissions, due to the missile launch activities, would produce insignificant changes in regional air quality. No adverse impacts from air quality are anticipated under the proposed action.

Noise was analyzed further, because the testing activities involve hazardous noise-producing equipment. Flight-test activities would involve the airborne laser aircraft and up to two chase aircraft. These aircraft would fly and maneuver at altitudes about 35,000 feet. No noise impact from the airborne laser aircraft or the chase aircraft are anticipated, due to the altitude of the proposed test activities. All target missiles would be launched from the existing launch areas at Vandenberg Air Force Base. The noise from the proposed target missiles would be much less than the larger missiles currently launched from the Vandenberg Air Force Base. Therefore, a lower noise impact from the missile launches would be expected. Analysis results determined, for flight-testing activities, no adverse noise impacts are anticipated under the proposed action.

Biological Resources were analyzed further,

because threatened and endangered species are found on Vandenberg Air Force Base. The test missiles are much smaller than any of the space launch vehicles currently launched. The potential disturbance to the indigenous pinnipeds population is expected to be less. As test plans are detailed and finalized, the appropriate permits would be obtained as part of the standard launch protocol. The trajectory of the target missiles would be such that the first stage of the missile and any debris from the destruction of the missile during test activities would occur no closer than three miles from the coastline.

Analysis of the effects of a target missile impacting the ocean approximately 130 kilometers, or 81 miles from the launch point, has shown an extremely low probability of hitting any marine mammals, and the effect of the propellent remaining onboard would be localized to a small volume of water for a short period of time. An analysis of the effect of missile debris on migrating gray whales, using gray whales as a representative species, suggested that during peak migration densities, a whale could be struck and killed by falling debris with an expected probability of one in one hundred thousand. Missile launches occurring at other than peak migration times would present significantly lower risks to migrating whales.

An analysis of the impacts associated with the operation of the high-energy laser showed that laser activities would not have significant impacts upon the wildlife at Vandenberg Air Force Base or the Western Range. The analysis, which takes into account the high altitude at which the proposed laser activity would occur, along with the test geometry, determined that the high-energy laser would be prevented from being engaged in a downward direction. No adverse impacts are anticipated under the proposed action.

Cultural Resources were analyzed, because sites existing on Vandenberg Air Force Base -- the flight-testing activities at Vandenberg Air Force Base would consist of the launching of missiles from existing coastal launch sites. Target missile debris would land in the ocean well away from the coastline. Debris falling offshore would pose no threat to Vandenberg Air Force Base's cultural resources. No adverse impacts are anticipated under the proposed action.

The no-action alternative in this SEIS reflects the proposed test activities analyzed in the 1997 Environmental Impact Statement. Therefore, no new impacts are created, and potential impacts are discussed in that document. As previously stated, this SEIS does not discuss the findings of that document, except as a basis of

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comparison. Therefore, the no-action alternative generates no new impacts.

In closing, I remind you that this study is in a draft stage. Our goal is to provide the decision makers with accurate information on the potential environmental consequences of the proposed airborne laser test activities. To do this, we are soliciting your comments on the draft SEIS. This information will support informed decision making.

I would now like to turn the meeting back over to Colonel Powers.

COLONEL POWERS: Thank you, Captain Wimmer.

Next is the main portion of the meeting, which is the public comment period. And before we go into that, we will take a ten-minute recess. So if anybody who filled out a card didn't initially indicate that you wanted to make a statement, but now feel you want to make a statement, use this time during the next ten minutes to fill out a card indicating such.

Okay. So we will take a ten-minute recess and then we will hear the comments.

(Break taken.)

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COLONEL POWERS: Okay. This apparently is going to be short because I have cards here and nobody signed up to speak. So does anybody have any comments? Last chance here, now. Anybody want to get up and speak? Okay. All right.

All right. Apparently, we have no speakers. I will say that again. And that being the case, this hearing is concluded. If you should later decide to make additional comments, or would like to receive a copy of the final SEIS, you may do so through the address that will be available at the front desk. Okay. This hearing is concluded. Good night and thank you for coming.

(Proceedings concluded at 8:00 p.m.)

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STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
) SS
COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO)

I, the undersigned, a Certified Shorthand Reporter of the State of California, do hereby certify:

That the foregoing proceedings were taken before me at the time and place herein set forth; that any witnesses in the foregoing proceedings, prior to testifying, were placed under oath; that a verbatim record of the proceedings was made by me using machine shorthand which was thereafter transcribed under my direction; further, that the foregoing is an accurate transcription thereof.

I further certify that I am neither financially interested in the action nor a relative or employee of any attorney of any of the parties.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have this date subscribed my name.

Date: 10/27/02

MARCY STYLES
CSR No. 10604

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MISSILE DEFENSE AGENCY

IN THE MATTER OF A
PUBLIC HEARING ON THE SUPPLEMENTAL
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR
THE AIRBORNE LASER PROGRAM

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

October 22, 2002
7:00 PM
Marriott Hotel
2101 Louisiana Boulevard, Northeast
Albuquerque, New Mexico

PANEL MEMBERS:
CAPT. JOE WIMMER
COL. JOHN POWER
MR. KEN ENGLADE

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110 Twelfth Street, NW, Albuquerque, NM 87102

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COL. POWERS: Okay. I think we'll go and get started. We have a couple more people, it looks like, signing in, but they should be in here momentarily.

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. I'd like to welcome you to the public hearing on the draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for proposed test activities of the Airborne Laser Program.

Since cell phones and pagers can be distracting, it would be greatly appreciated if you would turn off or change the setting to nonaudible or vibration ring on your cell phones and pagers.

And if you'll have a seat, we'll get started.

Starting last summer, the modified 747-400F aircraft was flown to test the structural integrity after all the modifications were completed to its airframe. None of the active lasers were on board. The payload was simulated with ballast.

Now, if everyone will please stand, we'll play the national anthem, and we'll get started.

Thank you.

My name is Col. John Powers, and I will be the presiding officer for tonight's meeting. My purpose here is to ensure that we have a fair, orderly hearing and that all who wish to be heard have a fair chance to do so.

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At this point, I'd like to introduce the other members of the public hearing panel and their role in this meeting.

Col. Eva Wallace, from the Airborne Laser System Program Office at Kirtland Air Force Base in New Mexico, is the senior Airborne Laser System Program Office representative at this public hearing.

Capt. Sal Rodriguez, from the Airborne Laser System Program Office of Kirtland, is a Spanish speaker, and he is here to help anyone in the audience who feels more comfortable addressing their issues in Spanish rather than English. He will not translate the entire proceeding but will serve as an aide.

Capt. Rodriguez, if you would please introduce yourself.

CAPT. RODRIGUEZ: *Senoras y senores, mi nombre es Capt. Sal Rodriguez. Me encuentro hoy aqui con el proposito de asistir a aquellas personas que tengan alguna pregunta o preguntas y prefieran o se sientan mejor haciendolas en Espanol, en cambio de el Ingles. Por razones de tiempo, entre otras, no traducire todo el procedimiento en Espanol, pero hare todo lo posible por contestar sus preguntas.*

Muchas gracias.

COL. POWERS: Thank you.

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Mr. Ken Englade, from the Airborne Laser System Program Public Affairs Office at Kirtland, will present an overview of actions leading to the preparation of the draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement and describe the proposed action and alternatives.

And Capt. Joe Wimmer, from the Airborne Laser System Program External Affairs Office at Kirtland, will present the findings of the draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement.

The purpose of tonight's hearing is to receive your comments, suggestions and criticisms of the draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, or SEIS.

Those of you who have not had an opportunity to review the draft SEIS may want to read the summary of the major findings in the handout available at the door. The findings will also be addressed by the panel members in their presentations.

Throughout this hearing, I ask that you keep in mind that this public hearing is not designed to be a debate, nor is it a popularity vote on the draft SEIS, nor is it primarily designed as a question and answer session; however, clarifying questions asked as part of your comment time may be appropriate.

This hearing is also not a time set aside for you to use your comment time to personally attack those

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whose views may be different from your own.

In the first part of tonight's meeting, the members of the panel will brief you on the details of the proposed action and alternatives and the findings of the draft SEIS.

The second part of the meeting will give you an opportunity to provide information and make statements for the record. This input ensures that the decision makers may benefit from your knowledge of the local area and any adverse environmental effects that you think may result from the proposed action or alternatives.

Tonight's hearing is designed to give you an opportunity to comment on the adequacy of the draft SEIS. Keep in mind that the SEIS is simply intended to ensure that the decision makers will be fully apprised of the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed action and alternatives before they decide on a course of action.

Consequently, comments on issues unrelated to the SEIS are really beyond the scope of this hearing and will not be addressed.

I would like to make a few administrative comments. First of all, if you wish to speak tonight, I ask that you fill out one of the cards that are located on the registration table as you came into the room.

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From these cards, I will call your name for you to come up -- come forward to state your comments. If you did not pick up a card and would like to make comments tonight, please raise your hand, and one of our representatives will bring you a card.

After the panel has finished its presentations, we will take a 15-minute recess. During this time, we will collect the cards, and when the meeting resumes, I will recognize elected officials first, then I will call members of the public in random order from the cards that have been handed in.

For those of you who have not indicated on the cards that you want to make a statement but wish to speak later, please fill out another card at the registration table during that break.

I want to make sure that we have an opportunity to fully consider the comments that you make tonight, and because of that, we have an individual here who will record everything that is said so that we don't overlook any of your comments.

I'd like to establish a few ground rules so that all of us have the benefit of hearing individual comments and that we have a good meeting transcript.

First, please speak only after I recognize you, and address your comments to me. If you have a written

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statement, you may place it in the box next to the podium that will be set up, or you may read it aloud, or you may do both.

Second, please speak clearly and slowly into the microphone, stating your name and the capacity in which you appear. This will help our recorder with the transcript.

Third, each person will be recognized for five minutes. If you exceed this limit, I will ask you to stop at that point. If you have more comments than you will be able to present in five minutes, please prioritize them so that the most important comments are addressed first, in case you run out of time.

After everyone has had an opportunity to comment, then I will address the audience to see if anyone would like to speak again.

Fourth, please do not speak while another person is speaking. Only one person will be recognized at a time.

If you later decide to make a comment after the public hearing or have additional considerations, we encourage you to send your written comments to the address that will be shown on the screen or indicated on the comment sheet.

Finally, if you would like a copy of the final

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SEIS, you may state that on a written comment sheet or on the attendance card that you filled out at the door. Private addresses provided will be compiled to develop the mailing list for those requesting copies of the final SEIS. Personal home addresses and phone numbers written on the written comment sheet or attendance card will not be published in the final SEIS.

If no one has any questions at this time, I will turn the program over to Mr. Ken Englade, who will present an overview of the actions leading to the preparation of the draft SEIS and describe the proposed action and alternatives.

Mr. Englade.

MR. ENGLADE: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Ken Englade, and I'm from the Airborne Laser Public Affairs Office.

This SEIS is a supplemental environmental analysis based upon changes in the proposed test program that have occurred since the final Environmental Impact Statement for the Program Definition and Risk Reduction Phase of the Airborne Laser Program was published in April, 1997.

The SEIS is being used to fulfill our requirements to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA.

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The Environmental Impact Statement published in 1997 considered options for siting a home base, a diagnostic test range and an expanded area test range in support of the Airborne Laser Program.

A screening process was developed to narrow the number of alternative locations for detailed analysis. This process was designed to identify a number of candidate locations that could meet a threshold of operational considerations necessary to conduct the Airborne Laser Program.

The Record of Decision for the 1997 Environmental Impact Statement identified Edwards Air Force Base as the home base to support the airborne laser aircraft and conduct ground test activities of the airborne laser systems, White Sands Missile Range as the diagnostic test range and the Western Range as the expanded area test range.

These two areas would support proposed flight test activities of the airborne laser systems.

This environmental effort was begun in March, 2002, with the publication of a notice of intent to prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, or SEIS, for airborne laser test actions in the Federal Register.

A scoping meeting was held near each location

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where the activities will occur, to include here at Albuquerque on April 15th, 2002, to receive public input on the scope of issues to be addressed in the SEIS.

After scoping, we collected the necessary data and conducted the environmental analysis. The notice of availability was published in the Federal Register on September 20th, 2002.

In addition to tonight's hearings, written comments on the draft SEIS will continue to be accepted at this address until November 5th, 2002. After the comment period is over, we will evaluate all comments, both written and verbal, and perform additional analysis or change the SEIS where necessary.

Again, as in the scoping process, equal consideration will be given to all comments, whether they are presented here tonight or mailed to us.

Once the review process is complete, we will produce a final SEIS, scheduled for completion in March, 2003, and mail it to all those on the original distribution list for the draft SEIS. If you are not on our mailing list, you could request a copy by writing to this address. The final SEIS will include comments received during the public review period and our responses to those comments.

If appropriate, we will group comments into

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categories and respond accordingly. The SEIS will serve as input for the Record of Decision. We expect to accomplish the Record of Decision in late spring of next year.

The draft SEIS was prepared to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA, and the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations. Efforts were made to reduce needless bulk, write in plain language, focus only on those issues that are clearly related to the environment and to integrate with other documents required as part of the decision-making process.

The analysis focuses on impacts that may occur as a direct or indirect result of the proposed airborne laser test activities.

Now I will present an overview of the proposed action and alternatives that have been analyzed. Afterwards, Capt. Wimmer will present a synopsis of the results of our analysis.

The airborne laser system is one element of the Missile Defense Agency's ballistic missile defense system, which is intended to provide an effective defense for the United States, its deployed forces and its friends and allies from limited missile attack during all three stages of an attacking missile's flight.

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The three segments are the boost segment, the midcourse segment and the terminal segment.

The boost segment is when the missile is under power and is being thrust skyward by its rocket engines.

The midcourse segment is the longest segment. This is when the missile is in a ballistic arc, heading for its target.

The terminal segment is the few remaining moments of the missile's flight before the missile reaches its target.

Each element of the ballistic missile defense system is designed to work independently to provide an effective defense against incoming missiles. The airborne laser is designed to destroy missiles during the boost phase.

The airborne laser is a weapon system that is designed to spot, track, engage and destroy missiles. Using a megawatt class laser, the missile would be destroyed during the initial boost phase, shortly after takeoff.

The airborne laser system consists of a modified Boeing 747-400F aircraft that utilizes four lasers. The first three are not designed to destroy, rather they are used to gather information regarding the target and to make the high-energy laser more effective.

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These three lasers are the active ranging system laser, the track illuminator laser and the beacon illuminator laser.

The active ranging system provides basic information regarding the target, such as speed, altitude, range and direction.

The track illuminator laser provides the high-energy laser targeting system with the optimum location upon which to attack the target.

The beacon illuminator laser is used to gather information on the atmosphere between the aircraft and the target.

The fourth laser is the high-energy, weapons class laser that is designed to destroy the target. It is a megawatt class laser generated by a chemical reaction.

A battle management command center onboard the aircraft provides computerized control of the laser weapons system, communications and intelligence.

During the initial testing program, a fifth laser will be used. The surrogate high-energy laser is a lower-power laser and will be used as a simulation of the high-energy laser.

During flight test activities, the airborne laser aircraft would fly at or above 35,000 feet and

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would detect and track launches of target missiles using onboard sensors. Active tracking of the missile could begin when the missile clears the cloud tops.

The high-energy laser would be directed at an upward direction toward the missile. The energy from the laser would heat the missile's booster components and cause a stress fracture in the outer surface of the missile. This would allow gases from the booster rocket to escape, causing an explosion that would destroy the missile.

The geometry of the test activities would preclude operation of the laser except at a horizontal or upward angle. This is to ensure that lower-flying aircraft and objects on the ground would not be in the path of the laser beam.

The onboard sensors would also be used to confirm that nothing in the air or space, other than the intended target, is within the potential beam path. This is in addition to using controlled and cleared air space during airborne laser flight testing.

The proposed action is to conduct test activities of the airborne laser system at test ranges associated with Edwards Air Force Base and Vandenberg Air Force Base, California, and Kirtland Air Force Base and White Sands Missile Range, with support from Holloman Air

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Force Base, New Mexico.

Test activities would involve testing the laser components on the ground and in flight to verify that laser components operate together safely and effectively.

In the event that ground testing is not possible at Edwards Air Force Base, Kirtland Air Force Base and White Sands Missile Range, with support from Holloman Air Force Base, have been identified as alternative ground test locations.

Flight testing is proposed at the R-2508 Air Space Complex utilized by Edwards Air Force Base, the Western Range off the coast of California that is utilized by Vandenberg Air Force base in Point Mugu Naval Air Station and White Sands Missile Range.

The airborne laser aircraft would be based at Edwards Air Force Base, and the aircraft will be flown to the other bases for testing as required. All test flights would begin and end at Edwards Air Force Base.

Ground testing of the lower-powered laser systems would be conducted at Edwards Air Force Base from the end of the runway associated with the Birk Test Flight facility. Ground targets would include a rotoplane, which is a ferris wheel-like rotating target, and stationery target boards.

High-energy ground testing activities would be

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conducted using a ground-based similarity. No open range testing of the high energy laser would be conducted.

Kirtland Air Force Base and White Sands Missile Range, with support from adjacent Holloman Air Force Base, have been identified as alternative ground test locations if conditions prevent testing at Edwards Air Force Base.

If ground testing occurs at Kirtland Air Force Base, the aircraft would be flown to Kirtland Air Force Base and use existing runways, taxiways and aircraft parking areas. Only the lower-power laser systems would be tested at Kirtland Air Force Base using the existing Sandia laser target range.

If ground testing occurs at White Sands Missile Range, the aircraft will be flown to Holloman Air Force Base and use approved runways, taxiways and aircraft parking areas. Only the lower-power laser systems would be tested. The laser systems would be directed westward, toward targets placed within White Sands Missile Range.

Ground testing procedures include automatic laser turret limiting devices and/or laser blocking devices to prevent laser energy from extending beyond the target backstops and from the defined laser beam path. Target backstops include natural features such as hills, mountains and buttes or man-made earthen berms.

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Flight testing of the airborne laser system is required to confirm and expand on computer modeling and ground test data and to provide complete testing of all systems required to have an effective weapons system.

During flight tests, the airborne laser aircraft would be accompanied by up to two chase aircraft to monitor the test and the status of the airborne laser aircraft. The airborne laser aircraft would fly at an altitude at or above 35,000 feet, and the laser systems would track targets at a horizontal or in an upward direction to minimize potential contact with the ground or other aircraft.

Onboard sensors and pretest planning would be used to confirm that no aircraft or satellites are within the potential path of the beam. Also, only existing military and FAA-controlled air space areas would be utilized during the test and confirmed clear of nonparticipating aircraft during testing activities.

Flight tests would utilize the R-2508 Air Space Complex utilized by Edwards Air Force Base, the Western Range utilized by Vandenberg Air Force Base and Point Mugu Naval Air Station and White Sands Missile Range, including Fort Bliss controlled air space and FAA controlled air space as necessary.

Targets that would be used during flight

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testing activities include the following: A missile alternative range target instrument, or MARTI, which is a balloon with a target board attached; a Proteus aircraft, which is a high altitude manned aircraft with target board attached; and target missiles that simulate a potential threat missile.

Both low- and high-power laser tests will be conducted on the MARTI and missile targets. Only lower-powered tests would occur with the Proteus aircraft as it is a manned target vehicle.

The test will evaluate the airborne laser system's ability to acquire, track and engage targets. Missiles used during the flight test activities will have a flight termination system to ensure that debris would be contained on the range in the event the target missile must be destroyed in flight.

In the event that the aircraft is unable to land at Edwards Air Force Base after conducting test activities, preplanned divert bases have been established. The divert bases would have personnel specifically trained to support the airborne laser aircraft and appropriate equipment to handle airborne laser hazardous materials.

The no-action alternative would involve conducting airborne laser test activities as described in

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the original testing program discussed in the 1997 document.

Other alternatives were considered and eliminated from further consideration in the 1997 document. These alternatives include different test demonstration methods, laser system types and test installations or locations.

I would now like to turn the microphone over to Capt. Joe Wimmer, who will discuss the findings of the draft SEIS.

CAPT. WIMMER: Good evening. My name is Capt. Joe Wimmer.

I will briefly review the resources detailed in the draft SEIS that may be affected due to the proposed airborne laser test activities.

Based on the proposed airborne laser test activities being addressed in this SEIS and actions that have already been addressed within the EIS prepared in 1997, the analysis indicated that there would be no or few potential impacts for several resource areas. These resources are highlighted on this slide, and I will summarize the analysis results briefly.

Under the local community category, land use and esthetics did not require further analysis because proposed test activities would not occur on existing test

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ranges and no new military construction, which is abbreviated as MILCON, funded activities would occur. It was determined that no land use changes would occur. Therefore, no impacts are anticipated.

Utilities did not require further analysis because no substantial permanent employment changes would occur and utility requirements for test activities would not change. It was determined that no impacts to utilities are anticipated.

Transportation did not require further analysis because no substantial permanent employment changes would occur and standard operating procedures are in place to control traffic during proposed test activities. It was determined that no impacts to roadways, air transportation and railroads are anticipated.

Finally, environmental justice did not require further analysis because airborne laser test activities would be conducted and contained within the installation and range boundaries. It was determined that no disproportionately high and adverse impacts to low-income and minority populations would occur.

Under the hazardous materials and hazardous waste management category, installation and restoration program sites did not require further analysis because there are no installation/restoration program sites in

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the vicinity of the proposed ground target locations.

Storage tanks did not require further analysis because no changes to the requirement for storage tanks was identified. Therefore, it was determined that storage tanks associated with the Airborne Laser Program were adequately addressed in the 1997 EIS.

Asbestos did not require further analysis because no MILCON-funded facility construction or demolition activities are proposed to support test activities. It was determined that no impacts from asbestos are anticipated.

Pesticide usage did not require further analysis because the proposed test activities would not require an increase in the use of pesticides.

Polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, did not require further analysis because no PCB-containing equipment would be utilized during proposed test activities. Therefore, no impacts are anticipated.

Radon did not require further analysis because the proposed test activities would not be conducted at facilities that would be permanently occupied. It was determined that no impacts from radon are anticipated.

Medical and biohazardous wastes did not require further analysis because medical and biohazardous wastes would not be generated during proposed test activities.

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Therefore, no impacts are anticipated.

Lead-based paint did not require further analysis because, as with asbestos, no MILCON-funded facility construction or demolition activities are proposed to support test activities. It was determined that no impacts from lead-based paint are anticipated.

Under the natural environment category, soils and geology did not require further analysis because no MILCON-funded facility construction or demolition activities are proposed to support test activities and no ground disturbances would occur.

Water resources did not require further analysis because, similarly to soils and geology, no MILCON-funded facility construction or demolition activities are proposed to support test activities, no ground disturbance would occur.

The draft SEIS focused on potential impacts that would occur as a result of the proposed airborne laser test activities. Resources evaluated in detail include socioeconomics, air space, hazardous materials and hazardous waste management, health and safety, air quality, noise, biological resources and cultural resources.

Under the local community category, socioeconomics was analyzed further because ground

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testing activities at Kirtland Air Force Base are expected to require up to 50 program-related temporary personnel for the duration of the test activities.

The addition of up to 50 program-related temporary personnel would have a small, positive, yet largely unnoticeable, effect on the population, income or employment in the region surrounding Kirtland Air Force Base.

Air space was not analyzed further because only ground testing activities of the airborne laser system are proposed at Kirtland Air Force Base.

Hazardous materials and hazardous waste management was analyzed further because small quantities of existing stores of aviation fuel and petroleum oil and lubricants at Kirtland Air Force Base would be used to fuel and maintain the aircraft ground support equipment used to supply power to the aircraft and laser systems during ground testing activities.

These small quantities would result in a negligible increase in materials requirements from current base operations.

In the event the airborne laser aircraft is unable to land at Edwards Air Force Base after conducting test activities, Kirtland Air Force Base has been identified as one of the three preplanned divert bases in

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which the airborne laser aircraft would be diverted to.

Personnel at Kirtland Air Force Base would be specifically trained to support the airborne laser aircraft and appropriate equipment to handle the airborne laser's hazardous materials would be in place.

Health and safety was analyzed further because of the potential hazards associated with the system. Only the lower-power laser systems would be ground tested at Kirtland Air Force Base from pad 4 to multiple target platforms at varying distances, specifically four, five and seven kilometers downrange.

Targets used during the firing of the laser system include billboard-mounted target boards and rotoplane-mounted target boards.

In order to minimize potential laser hazards, multiple controls would be used to reduce the potential for off-range lasing and accidental lasing of unsuspecting receptors.

The first of these controls include use of backdrops and enclosures.

The second type includes horizontal and vertical buffer zones.

The third type includes administrative controls, for example, only allowing authorized and trained personnel near the test area.

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And the final type includes removal of mirror-like reflecting surfaces from the test area.

Under the natural environment category, air quality was analyzed further because of the potential for emissions from the ground level testing activities.

After reviewing the expected emissions from the test scenarios and comprise -- comparing them to the total emissions created by Kirtland Air Force Base, the analysis determined that the effects would be minimal. There would be no takeoff or landing off the airborne laser aircraft set to arrive and depart Kirtland Air Force Base upon completion of the test activities.

The estimated emissions are a fraction of a percent of the Bernalillo County total emissions. The potential air quality impacts from the proposed airborne laser testing activities at Kirtland Air Force Base will be inconsequential.

Noise was analyzed further because the testing activities use hazardous noise-producing equipment. An analysis to determine noise levels from the use of the aircraft ground support equipment adjacent to the runway during ground testing activities and the landing and takeoff of the airborne laser aircraft would not cause adverse effects to residential areas or to the local population. Analysis results -- analysis results

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determined no adverse noise impacts are anticipated.

Biological resources were analyzed further because threatened and endangered species are found on Kirtland Air Force Base. The results determined adverse impacts of biological resources are not expected because the ground testing activities would utilize an existing laser test range and no construction or ground disturbance would occur.

Cultural resources were analyzed because sites exist on Kirtland Air Force Base. The ground testing activities would occur on previously disturbed, paved or developed land. No construction activity would be necessary for ground testing activities. Therefore, there are no foreseen impacts of cultural resources on Kirtland Air Force Base resulting from activities proposed by the Airborne Laser Program.

The no-action alternative in this SEIS reflects the proposed test activities analyzed in 1997 Environmental Impact Statement. Therefore, no new impacts are created, and potential impacts are discussed in that document.

As previously stated, this SEIS does not discuss the findings of that document except as a basis of comparison. Therefore, the no-action alternative generates no new impacts.

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In closing, I remind you that this study is in a draft stage. Our goal is to provide the decision makers with accurate information on the potential environmental consequences of the proposed airborne laser test activities.

To do this, we are soliciting your comments on the draft SEIS. This information will support informed decision-making.

I'd like to now turn the meeting back over to Col. Powers.

COL. POWERS: Thank you.

Well, the next portion of this public hearing will be the public comment phase, and before we do that, we'll take a 15-minute recess so I can gather the cards and see who's going to be speaking tonight.

Anybody who would like to speak, if you haven't already filled out a card, please do so so that we can recognize you when we come back from our recess.

So let's take a 15-minute recess.

(Proceedings in recess.)

COL. POWERS: Okay. I guess we can continue.

Before we do proceed, I want to remind you of a couple of points.

Please limit your comments to five minutes so that everyone can be heard.

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And also, please state your name clearly before you make a statement for the record.

The panel members are not the decision makers regarding the proposed action or alternatives. If during the public comment period a speaker requires a clarification prior to providing a comment, the panel members will try to answer the clarification.

To ensure that everyone has an opportunity to speak, I also ask that repetitive statements be avoided. If you agree with the comments of an earlier speaker, please simply state your concurrence.

Okay.

We have no elected officials or representatives of elected officials that I can see; is that correct?

So I'll just call randomly from the cards that I have here. And please forgive me if I butcher a name or have trouble reading the handwriting.

But I'll start out with Nicholas Wechselberger.

MR. WECHSELBERGER: Yes.

I was hoping I wouldn't be first, but --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Somebody has to do it.

MR. WECHSELBERGER: Yes, somebody has to do it.

I guess, rather than make a comment at this point, perhaps any clarification you could shed on the danger that the chemicals in the aircraft would pose, in

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case there was an accident, to urban population, you know, if the plane were to crash or anything of this nature, what kind of dangers -- what kind of impact would that have on injuries to people in the area.

COL. POWERS: Well, as I said earlier, this isn't designed as a question-and-answer session.

MR. WECHSELBERGER: Okay.

COL. POWERS: That would be beyond what would really be a clarification.

But if you have comments you would like to make or concerns you would like to express, you're certainly free to use your five minutes for that.

MR. WECHSELBERGER: Okay.

Yes, yeah. Okay. So my concern is not knowing the nature of the chemicals involved for the reaction for the laser, and in case there was an accident, I'm concerned about the proximity of these weapons to urban populations.

So basically, that's it.

COL. POWERS: All right. Thank you.

Jeanne Pahls.

MS. PAHLS: I'm also glad I wasn't first. So second is better.

I do have a lot of concerns about this -- the laser weapons in space. I think that explosions in space

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aren't very good for the environment in space.

I think we already have more weapons than any planet could possibly need. And to have weapons in space, lasers in space is another step toward war, toward domination of a planet, further control of the resources of the planet, and I don't think war is ever good for the environment.

All of these weapons don't offer us any protection from others' anger. That's been proven to us by September 11, by the snipers in Washington -- or the sniper in Washington, by the explosions that have happened in Israel. That technology does not protect us. We like to think it does, but it has not been a protection to us in the past year.

I think that a different foreign policy would be the only way we could really find protection, one that respects people who are living in poverty, and then we won't have that kind of anger directed toward us.

I see that anything that takes us toward war is going to cause the death of a lot of children, a lot of families, a lot of military folks, a lot of people in uniform and out of uniform, and I think that all of that makes me frightened.

I think that a lot of energy, effort, money and resources are going into this, and, you know -- I mean,

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I'm a teacher. I'm a third grade teacher. I have children in my classroom that I see every single day who are hungry. I'm teaching children from very poor families, and I see hunger in my room every day.

And I think about how the money that's going into the wars that our president is advocating and the weapons that our president is pushing for could be going into things that would help that seven-year-old in my classroom who is hungry every single day.

And I think that poverty is never good for the environment, either, or for the neighborhood in which that poverty lives.

And all I'm -- in all of the pictures that you have, the weapon -- the laser is directed upward, but, you know, we've seen enough history behind us to know what human nature is like.

And I'm not saying that -- I'm just saying -- what I'm trying to say is that in past history, lots of things have been done on behalf of our government that are appalling to any one of us and that we would never do ourselves, but that they have been done anyway.

Blankets with the small pox virus were handed out on purpose to the Native Americans. Hitler -- this is not our government, but Hitler certainly carried out some terrible things with the help of the German people.

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I'm German myself. You know, probably some of my own relatives in Germany may have done those things. They probably never thought they would.

But we know that human nature, once it has technology or once it has power, can do horrible things. And this is very powerful technology, and I shudder to think of what could be done with something like this directed upward or directed downward.

I think it would just be a matter of time before some power that be would choose to direct the beam downward. I think that we've seen enough in our history of humanity to know that that would probably happen eventually.

In this city, we have not enough water to go around already. We've got an endangered species, the little silvery minnow that's dying, and even with the size of our city and the resources that we have now, it's already -- we're taxing our water aquifer, and we're starting to have to use the river water, and we can see that the river is dying, and it's not going to be there.

So I know that you guys said that it would just be 50 people that would be working on this, but when I hear 50 people, I hear, you know, 50 families using water, 50 lawns maybe.

I think that we're a little too big for our

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resources now, and I don't know what to do about that, and I think bringing more people in to work on laser weapons here would be very harmful to our use of water in this area, since we don't have enough already.

I think that Nick's point about the danger that chemicals in the aircraft would pose in case of an accident is a very valid point. The dangers that chemicals in any aircraft would pose -- I mean, any kind of accident would cause harm to the environment.

And I don't see any reason to add more risk of any kind of crashes, any kind of accidents, any kind of debris falling out of the sky, when we already have more weapons than we could possibly ever use. And those weapons are not protecting us already.

That's pretty much all I had to say.

COL. POWERS: Thank you.

Robin Phillips.

MS. PHILLIPS: My name is Robin Phillips. And I appreciate an opportunity to come and express my comments. I'm glad that they are being recorded.

I'm definitely not in favor of the program. In fact, I'm not in favor of increasing the military industrial complex at all. When the Bush family started their first war for oil in 1990 and '91, my tax bill, what I sent in, was $500,000.

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I resent feeling that I am part of this problem of paying for the increase in the military industrial complex. I feel that as this has increased, it's robbing not only the capital -- the financial capital, but also the intellectual capital that could be going into other -- other areas of society that I feel I'd rather place my money.

I'm happy to pay my fair share of taxes, but I don't approve of paying for these expensive weapons systems like this.

And that's the main thing I wanted to express.

COL. POWERS: Thank you.

Alan Klein.

MR. KLEIN: My name is Alan Klein. I represent no organization, other than maybe the human family, just an average proponent of that.

I was impressed in a way by the display that you had going, the visual display while the national anthem was being played. It was impressive in a way that certain, shall we say, technical or Hollywood-style presentations are, except I noticed it was -- it was completely sort of a Star Wars kind of thing. There weren't any human beings in it.

My feeling is that I don't know all the technical aspects -- or any of the technical aspects that

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you were going over in regard to this particular weapon, but I think that nothing can be considered outside of the total environmental impact.

And I think that we know that weapons are often heralded as being something -- having some special technical ability, but yet again, we've seen that they don't usually live up to that, not only in the tests that we've seen of the anti-ballistic missile program, quite costly at that, but also what happened during the Gulf War. The weapons were said to be quite a bit more effective than they turned out to be.

And I'd like to say that it's on record that the Air Force dropped more -- more bombs on Cambodia and Laos in that actually questionable illegal operation by the then president than were dropped in all of World War II.

Now, this had a -- this continues to have an impact in terms of unexploded ordnance that then does explode and farmers and children and so forth lose their -- you know, if they're not killed, they certainly -- they lose -- they lose limbs as a result of that.

So I think that we have to consider the impact of our weapons program, or as it -- not only as it does stand, but as it -- as it would in the future, in terms

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of human beings everywhere.

I see that everything on our earth is interconnected. We can't really divorce ourselves, nor can we say that -- as one senator did, that, well, American life is worth more than other lives. I think life is just life. It's indivisible.

We all want to live. We all want to prosper in some way. I don't really feel that our program will -- as it stands, will work out. There's no way to consider -- to be able to govern the consequences of actions, for example, in Iraq once they start.

So I'm suggesting that there are -- that there are other ways that we need to explore, peaceful ways, creative ways. I mean, I don't know that this is really creative.

And I agree with the speaker beforehand who said that, well, you know, this is -- this is a -- this uses a lot of -- a lot of great talents, intellectual abilities and so forth, which could be used in ways that would -- in which everyone could prosper.

So I think we really need to consider that there are -- there are great possibilities ahead of us that we could be -- we could be -- as Congressman Denish said, we could be a nation among nations leading -- leading the world in peaceful, cooperative endeavors and

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finding ways to eliminate violence, whether it be crime in the streets, violence in the home or violence in terms of war, which is actually the most mass form.

Thank you all for this opportunity.

COL. POWERS: Thank you.

Dorie Runting? Did I pronounce that right?

MS. RUNTING: Thank you, sir.

I do agree with the previous speakers.

And I know you're here to hear about the scientific aspects of this weapon and the environmental impacts, but when it comes to weapons and military spending, this has always been off limits as far as our popular input is concerned.

I mean, we have no channels for voting on our military budget. We have no effective way for citizens to have an input on our military policy, our foreign policy as far as the military goes. We just don't.

So you -- when we come to these hearings as a way to express that -- and we do have a convention that -- to which we belong for the peaceful uses of outer space. This contravenes that convention. I mean, not just this, but the whole program for outer space, so-called defense, and this -- I have no doubt that this weapon will be used in an offensive way, because it seems that it's a very powerful weapon.

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So in addition, outer space -- the whole outer space program is going to -- one aspect of it is to send up all the stuff into space which will be eventually coming down to earth, I'm sure, and I don't know -- we just don't seem to consider that aspect of it.

In addition to the fact that it's going to set up a competition with other countries doing the same, and also private endeavor in outer space will want their share of the space up there.

So I -- it just doesn't seem right to me, and I -- I guess that's what I have to say about it.

Thank you.

COL. POWERS: Thank you, ma'am.

Bob -- I believe it's Anderson.

MR. ANDERSON: That's right.

Col. Powers, thank you.

My name is Bob Anderson. I'm a professor with the University of New Mexico.

And I want to thank you for having this hearing. We didn't know about it until Friday, or we'd have had more people here. It suddenly appeared in the paper.

And I just wanted to let you know that a lot of us are here from a group called New Mexico Solidarity Network, and we're very much opposed to the arms race and

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the militarization of our economy in the state here. And we want to speak to these issues, I think probably under what you would call a category of socioeconomic issues and things like that. And I think that the EIS misses a lot of that.

I wanted to say I wouldn't -- I endorse everything that all my friends have said here. I think that they're right on target. And I want to just amplify on a few of those and try to speak more focused on a few of those.

8 One is that the first thing that strikes me is bringing any kind of more weapons systems and testing into an area where there's a population of over a half 7.3 million people is stupid. It's not a common sense, good idea. There's people that have spoken on the impact on our water supply here by bringing more people in.

And this is just a stepping stone to more and bigger projects. We know this from reading President Bush's first strike plan and whole missile defense program, what Kirtland Air Force Base is involved in, and you know it as well as I do, the whole militarization of space, and this is a key part of that.

9 Economically here, environmentally, we can't 8.1 take more of an impact like that. We're running out of water. We know that. It's costing all of us more tax,

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and as taxpayers, we don't like that.

10 Socioeconomically, your project will employ, as you know, 50 people, and it always finds positive impacts on these things, but we -- this state has probably spent one trillion dollars on nuclear weapons in the Manhattan Project.

We're the first in the state with the largest percentage of people in poverty, children without health 13.1 care access. Ms. Pahls says there's kids going to school here that don't have food, they don't have eyeglasses, they don't have books.

We don't need more of this model of economic development based on the Cold War and this arms race, which this is a part of, and this is going to lead us to. Socioeconomically, this is a disaster for us. It's going to create more of the problems than we've got.

And we'd like to see our money spent in directions that's going to benefit the people, first off, of this state, but look at it nationally and internationally. That is part of the violation of a whole number of treaties.

Ms. Bunting spoke to that, the arms control treaties, the weapons in space. The missile defense program has a whole plan laid out to build weapons, and the militarization of space lasers and nuclear weapons

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are part of that.

We're very much opposed to that. We want you all to know that. And people have been protesting these things, much like what we have.

And I think that what you've noticed here in the last, oh, two or three months, since probably about two years ago at Seattle, there's a ground swell of opposition to this policy, the militarization of our diplomatic and political problems, trying to find high-tech solutions for them that don't find solutions for us.

We don't like that. American people and the people of the world are speaking out on this massively. And I think that you folks should be aware of that. And we don't want to see our city where we're at more deeply involved.

11 And it's going to make us targets in one way, 7.4 if there is ever any kind of larger retaliation on these things. But this application of technology and brain power is misplaced. I think that most of us feel that. This is dangerous, what you're doing and where you're taking us in this.

12 It's a misuse of our military. I'm a former 1.2 military person. And that was one of the things that made me aware of these kinds of things, is that we're

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12 using these for aggressive offensive operations.

We start off talking about defensive, it's 1.2 going to be a small operation, and the next thing you know we've got full-blown programs that are going everywhere. And it's a political control problem.

I hope you folks are military professionals and value what you're doing and the use of your science and technology, but I think most of us will tell you that it's been misused. And we don't want to see that. We'd like to see a better use of that.

13 So socioeconomically, environmentally, this program is more of the problems than we've got, and we don't see any of your points trying to address those and 13.2 putting it into a larger context using political implications of it locally for us, nationally what it means and internationally as a part of an escalation of an arms race study that is headed into space.

You have to look at that environmentally, what that's going to mean when other countries try to catch up with these exotic technologies. This is the mother of all weapons. This is the dream weapon, the Holy Grail, which we know that militarists have been trying to achieve for many, many years, directing energy beam weapons.

It's an amazing, fabulous technology. But all

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it's going to do is lead us down the road of greater escalations of people in other countries to try to match that or try to stop us from developing it.

And we'd like to see that done internally, politically, and on the basis that benefits all of us, instead of going down this road the wrong way. We can see a lot of local implications in that.

So that's my comments and concerns about it, and I thank you for being here.

COL. POWERS: Thank you.

Okay. I have one more card, Todd Lindblom.

MR. LINDBLOM: Yeah. Thanks for --

COL. POWERS: Let me just remind you -- smoke was coming off her hands, she was trying to type so fast. So if I could ask you to just make your comments as slowly and clearly as you can so that we make sure she gets them all.

MR. LINDBLOM: I'm not going to say much. I'd just like to -- I'd like to say what everybody else has said tonight so eloquently.

I'm representing New Mexico Vecinos United. It's an organization that tries to make neighborhoods better places to live. And I think this project is just going to make neighborhoods worse places to live just because it's going to create more poverty or more of a

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divide between those who have and those who don't.

That's all I got to say.

COL. POWERS: Thank you.

Okay. That's all the cards I have.

Is there anybody who has not filled out a card who would now like to fill out a card and speak?

Is there anybody who has already spoken that has thought of a few more comments they'd like to make in the time allotted?

Yes. I see -- if I remember right, that's Ms. Jeanne Pahls?

MS. PAHLS: That's right. I always -- I always -- I cannot keep my mouth shut, I'm afraid. I do have one more point that I realized after I sat down that I did want to say.

14 And that is that I think that one more thing that is bad for the environment of Albuquerque is that producing weapons like this here in Albuquerque makes us 7.4 a target, and we're going into a very unstable time, I believe, and having all this weapons production, especially right here in the city, not outside the city, but right in the city, makes us -- makes us a target.

And that, once again, is something that puts our environment at risk and our children at risk.

COL. POWERS: Thank you.

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Anybody else who's already spoken that -- okay.

I see one person who may need to fill out a card because he hasn't spoken before.

Can we get a card for that gentleman?

While he's filling out that card, I saw --

Can you state your name again?

MR. KLEIN: Yes. Alan Klein.

What I have to say will be short. I concur with all the excellent remarks of Bob Anderson, very well organized.

I'd just like to say that -- emphasize that the State of New Mexico is number one on the -- on the scale of poverty and, I believe, number 50 in terms of child health coverage. This was -- this was printed recently in the Albuquerque Journal.

I'd like to contrast that, since we're always talking about we have to reform our welfare, that some of these corporations, like Boeing, for example, are making really big, big money. There's big money in this. And we know that the people in the -- in the military and pentagon have rotated into slots in the -- in the defense industry, no doubt very well-paying slots.

I think at one time, and maybe it's the situation now, where they had to put in a six-month waiting period. So there's a lot of money going into a

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few corporations, and it's also true that some of the largest corporations in this country have had years when they paid no taxes and got a rebate instead. I've never been able to figure out how that occurred.

But I think there's a lot better ways we could take this money, because putting money into so-called defense, and we have these graveyards of weapons, is a dead-end. It does not -- if any, it just -- it zaps the economy, it zaps our strength as a nation, as people.

So we can do better than that.

Thank you.

COL. POWERS: Thank you.

Charles Powell.

MR. POWELL: Yes, sir.

I'm Charles Powell. I'm a former Air Force veteran. I served at a Titan missile complex during the Cuban missile crisis.

I have very serious concerns about issues of war and peace. One of my concerns has to do with hazardous waste, you know, exactly what wastes are going to be produced by this program, how will they be disposed of and so on. 15 6.2

I'm also very concerned about the misdirecting of our resources and talents to weapons instead of meeting the needs of the people of the world.

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My largest concern is that apparently the decision to do this has already been made, and if anything, we can only impact how it's going to be done other than whether it should be done. And I think that's very unfortunate.

Thank you.

COL. POWERS: Thank you.

And lastly, Sally-Alice Thompson.

MS. THOMPSON: I just have two points.

One is that the environment is not going to be helped by having -- by having what are supposed to be defensive weapons when they're really offensive weapons, because of the dangers that have been -- it's been pointed out before, but the danger of terrorism, which is -- the twin towers would not have been protected by this, and the people that are being hit by the snipers would not have been protected, the people that were hit by the anthrax would not have been protected.

And who knows what the next kind of -- next kind of attack's going to be? And none of it is going to help -- none of it's going to be helped by this high technology, which is only aggravating the rest of the world and making us hated throughout the rest of the word.

I travel quite a bit, and I see people from

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other parts of the world, and they're not happy with the fact that we are attempting to monopolize outer space, which this is the beginning of.

The other point is that -- it's been hinted at before by other people, by other speakers, that the -- the way that our country would be great is to work toward positive development rather than destructive development. Destruction does not -- in the final analysis, makes for wealth for a few people, but for the vast majority of the population of the world, it's -- it's negative rather than positive.

And we need to start thinking positively.

Thank you.

COL. POWERS: Thank you.

Are there any other comments?

Yes. Okay.

Again, could you state your name -- that's Nicholas Wechselberger?

MR. WECHSELBERGER: Nicholas Wechselberger.

COL. POWERS: Yes. Okay.

MR. WECHSELBERGER: Yes. Okay.

So as you might imagine, I was thrown off being the first person to respond. I was also thrown off by the limited parameters that the response could deal with. So I just had a brief comment.

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And I really appreciated the statements of my other fellow citizens, concerned citizens. And I just want to reinforce and concur really an important point. The input by citizens is, in this case, in a really obscure location that very few people know about, and you have to take the heat for larger policy issues.

And our fervent hope, I'm sure that everyone would agree, is that the statements that we're making, our concerns will actually filter up to those who are actually responsible for these very important decisions, that affect the whole world.

As Bob said, looking at things in a larger context, and the idea that these kind of decisions will escalate thinking about military confrontations, making us targets, targets more than we are now, and that it violates treaties that are negotiated through peace and not through violence and power.

And a really excellent statement that Dorie made then made me feel compelled to make another statement, which was that citizens have no avenue to vote on military budget or have input on military decisions. We're left out of that loop.

And thank you for listening, and I hope you'll pass this on.

COL. POWERS: Thank you.

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Okay. If there are no further comments, this concludes the public hearing. If you should later decide to make additional comments or would like to receive copies of the final SEIS, you may do so through the address shown on the slide.

We appreciate you coming tonight, and we appreciate your participation in this public hearing, and thank you.

This hearing is adjourned.

(Proceedings adjourned at 8:23 PM.)

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STATE OF NEW MEXICO)
) ss.
COUNTY OF BERNALILLO)

I, CHERYL ARREGUIN, the officer before whom the foregoing proceedings were taken, do hereby certify that I personally recorded the proceedings by machine shorthand; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings; that I am neither attorney nor counsel for, nor related to or employed by any of the parties to the action in which this proceeding is taken, and that I am not a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto or financially interested in the action.

NOTARY PUBLIC
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Expires: 12/31/02

My Commission Expires: 12/10/03

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SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
PUBLIC HEARING

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

OCTOBER 24, 2002
7:00 P.M.
201 EAST UNIVERSITY
LAS CRUCES, NEW MEXICO

(28297)

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A P P E A R A N C E S :

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P R O C E E D I N G S

COLONEL JOHN POWERS: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to welcome you to the public hearing on the draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for proposed test activities of the Airborne Laser Program. Since cell phones and pagers can be distracting, it would be greatly appreciated if you would turn off or change the setting to a non-audible or vibration ring on your cell

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phones and pagers. If you'll please have a seat, we'll get started. The video you were just watching is a tape of the first flight of the modified 747-400F aircraft from the Boeing facility in Wichita, Kansas. The aircraft was flown to test the structural integrity after all the modifications were completed to its airframe. None of the active lasers were on board. The payload was simulated with ballast.

Now, if everyone will please stand, we'll play the National Anthem, and we'll get started.

(Video of the National Anthem played)

COLONEL JOHN POWERS: Ladies and gentlemen, my name is Colonel John Powers and I will be the presiding officer for tonight's meeting. My purpose here tonight is to ensure that we have a fair, orderly hearing and that all who wish to be heard, have a fair chance to speak. I would like to welcome your participation in tonight's events.

At this point, I would like to introduce the other members of the public hearing panel and their role in this meeting.

Colonel Eva Wallace, from the Airborne Laser System Program Office at Kirtland Air Force Base in New Mexico, is the senior Airborne Laser System Program Office representative at this public hearing.

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Captain Sal Rodriguez, from the Airborne Laser System Program Office at Kirtland Air Force Base in New Mexico, is the senior Airborne Laser System Program Office representative at this public hearing.

Captain Sal Rodriguez, from the Airborne Laser System Program Office at Kirtland Air Force Base New Mexico is a Spanish speaker, and he is here to help anyone in the audience who feels more comfortable addressing their issues in Spanish rather than English. He will not translate the entire proceeding, but will serve as an aide. Captain Rodriguez, would you please introduce yourself?

Captain Sal Rodriguez:

(Introduction in Spanish)

COLONEL JOHN POWERS: Mr. Ken Englade, from the Airborne Laser Public Affairs Office, who will present an overview of actions leading to the preparation of the draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement and describe the proposed action and alternatives.

And Captain Joe Wimmer, from the Airborne Laser System Program External Affairs Office at Kirtland Air Force Base in New Mexico, who will present the findings of the draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement.

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The purpose of tonight's hearing is to receive your comments, suggestions, and criticism of the draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement or SEIS. Those of you who have not had an opportunity to review the draft SEIS, may want to read the summary of the major findings in the handout available at the door. The panel members will also address the findings in their presentations.

Throughout this hearing, I ask that you keep in mind that this public hearing is not designed to be a debate, nor is it a popularity vote on the draft SEIS, nor is it primarily designed as a question and answer session. However, clarifying questions asked as part of your comment time may be appropriate. This hearing is also not a time set aside for you to use your comment time to personally attack those whose views may be different from your own.

In the first part of tonight's meeting, the members of the panel will brief you on the details of the proposed action and alternatives and the findings of the draft SEIS. The second part of the meeting will give you an opportunity to provide information and make statements for the record. This input ensures that the decision-makers benefit from your knowledge of the local area and any adverse

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environmental effects you think may result from the proposed action or alternatives.

Tonight's hearing is designed to give you an opportunity to comment on the adequacy of the draft SEIS. Keep in mind that the SEIS is simply intended to ensure that the decision-makers will be fully apprised of the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed action and alternatives before they decide on a course of action. Consequently, comments on issues unrelated to the SEIS are really beyond the scope of this hearing and will not be addressed.

I would like to make a few administrative comments. First of all, if you wish to speak tonight, I ask that you fill out one of the cards that are located on the registration table as you came into the room. From these cards, I will call your name for you to come forward and state your comments. If you did not pick up a card and would like to make a comment tonight, please raise your hand and one of our representatives will bring you a card.

After the panel has finished its presentations, we will have a 15-minute recess. During this time, we will collect the cards. When the meeting resumes, I will recognize elected officials first. Then I will call members of the public in random order

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from the cards that have been handed in. For those of you who have not indicated on the cards that you want to make a statement but wish to speak later, please fill out another card at the registration table during the break.

I want to make sure that we have an opportunity to fully consider the comments you make tonight. We have an individual here who will record everything that is said so that we won't overlook any of your comments.

I'd like to establish a few ground rules so that all of us have the benefit of hearing individual comments and that we have a good meeting transcript.

First: Please speak only after I recognize you, and address your remarks to me. If you have a written statement, you may place it in the box next to the podium, or you may read it aloud -- within the time limit -- or you may do both.

Second: Please speak clearly and slowly into the microphone, stating your name and the capacity in which you appear. This will help our recorder with the transcript.

Third: Each person will be recognized for five minutes. If you exceed this time limit, I

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will ask you to stop at that point. If you have more comments than you will be able to present in five minutes, please prioritize them so that the most important comments are addressed first, in case you run out of time. After everyone has had the opportunity to comment, I will then address the audience to see if anyone would like to speak again.

Fourth: Please do not speak while another person is speaking. Only one person will be recognized at a time.

If you later decide to make a comment after this public hearing, or have additional considerations, we encourage you to send your written comments to the address shown on the screen or indicated on the comment sheet.

Finally, if you would like a copy of the final SEIS, you may state that on a written comment sheet or on the attendance card you filled out at the door. Private addresses provided will be compiled to develop the mailing list for those requesting copies of the final SEIS. Personal home addresses and phone numbers written on the written comment sheet or attendance card will be published in the final SEIS.

If no one has any questions at this time, I will turn the program over to Mr. Ken Englade, who

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will present an overview of actions leading to the preparation of the draft SEIS and describe the proposed action and alternatives.

MR. KEN ENGLADE: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, my name is Ken Englade and I'm from the Airborne Laser Public Affairs Office. This SEIS is a supplemental environmental analysis based upon changes in the proposed test program that have occurred since the final environmental impact statement for the program definition and risk reduction phase of the Airborne Laser Program was published in April 1997. The SEIS is being used to fulfill our requirements to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act or NEPA.

The Environmental Impact Statement published in 1997, considered options for siting a home base, a diagnostic test range, and an expanded-area test range in support of the Airborne Laser Program. A screening process was developed to narrow the number of alternative locations for detailed analysis. This process was designed to identify a number of candidate locations that could meet a threshold of operational considerations necessary to conduct the Airborne Laser Program.

The record of decision for the 1997

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Environmental Impact Statement indentified Edwards Air Force Base as the home base to support the airborne laser aircrafts and conduct ground test activities of the airborne laser systems, White Sands Missile Range as the diagnostic test range, and the Western Range as the expanded-area test range. These two areas would support proposed flight test activities of the airborne laser systems.

We began in March 2002 with the publication of a notice of intent in the Federal Register to prepare a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement or SEIS for airborne laser test actions.

We held a scoping meeting near each location where the activities would occur. At the Las Cruces meeting on April 17th, 2002, we received public input on the scope of issues to be addressed in the SEIS. After scoping, we collected the necessary data and began the environmental analysis. We published the notice of availability of the draft for public review and comment in the federal register on September 20th, 2002.

In addition to tonight's hearing, written comments on the draft SEIS will continue to be accepted at this address until November 5th, 2002. After the comment period is over, we will evaluate all comments,

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both written and verbal, and perform additional analysis or change the SEIS, where necessary. Again, as in the scoping process, equal consideration will be given to all comments, whether they are presented here tonight or mailed to us.

Under the current schedule, once the review process is finished, we will complete the final SEIS in March 2003, and mail it to those on the list that appears in the draft SEIS. If you are not on our mailing list, you can request a copy by writing to this address. The final SEIS will include comments received during the public review period and our responses to those comments.

If appropriate, we will group comments into categories and respond accordingly. The SEIS will serve as input for the record of decision. We expect to accomplish the record of decision in late spring of next year.

The draft SEIS was prepared to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA, and the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations. We strove to reduce needless bulk, write in plain language, focus only on those issues that were clearly related to the environment, and be compatible with other documents required in the decision-making

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process.

The analysis focused on impact that would occur as a direct or indirect result of the proposed airborne laser test activities. Now, I will present an overview of the proposed action and alternatives that have been analyzed. Afterwards, Captain Wimmer will present a synopsis of the results of our analysis.

The airborne laser system is one element of the missile defense agency's ballistic missile defense system. It is intended to provide an effective defense for the United States, its deployed forces, and its friends and allies from limited missile attack during the three phases of attacking missile's flight.

The three segments are, the boost segment, the midcourse segment, and the terminal segment. The boost segment is when the missile is under power and is being thrust skywards by its rocket engines. The midcourse segment is the longest. It occurs when the missile is in a ballistic arc, heading for its target. The terminal segment includes the few remaining moments of the missile's flight before the missile reaches its target. Each element of the ballistic missile defense system is designed to work independently to provide an effective defense against incoming missiles.

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The airborne laser is designed to destroy missiles during the boost segment. The airborne laser is a weapon system that is designed to spot, track, engage, and destroy missiles. Using a megawatt-class laser, the missile would be destroyed during the initial boost segment, shortly after being launched.

The airborne laser system consists of a modified Boeing 747-400F aircraft that utilizes four lasers, the first three are not designed to destroy, rather they are used to gather information regarding the target and to make the high-energy laser more effective.

These three lasers are the active ranging system laser, the track illuminator laser, and the beacon illuminator laser. The active ranging system would provide basic information regarding the target, such as speed, altitude, range and direction. The track system with the optimum location at which to attack the target. The beacon illuminator laser would gather information on the atmosphere between the aircraft and target.

The fourth laser is the high-energy, weapon class laser that is designed to destroy the target. It is a megawatt-class laser generated by a chemical reaction.

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A battle managment command center onboard the aircraft would provide computerized control of the laser weapon system, communications, and intelligence. During the initial testing program, a fifth laser would be used. The surrogate high-energy laser, a low-power laser, would be used to simulate the high-energy laser.

During the flight-test activities, the airborne laser aircraft would fly at or above 35,000 feet and could detect and track launches of target missiles using onboard sensors. Active tracking of the missile could begin when the missile clears to cloud tops. The high-energy laser would be directed at an upward direction toward the missile. The energy from the laser would heat the missile's booster components and cause a stress facture in the outer surface of the missile. This would allow gases from the booster rocket to escape, causing an explosion that would destroy the missile.

The geometry of the test activities would preclude operation of the laser except at a horizontal or upward angle. This would ensure that lower-flying aircraft and objects on the ground would not be in the path of the laser beam. The onboard sensors would also be used to confirm that nothing in the air or space, other than the intended target, would be within the

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potential beam path. This would be in addition to using controlled and cleared airspace during airborne laser flight-testing.

The proposed action is to conduct test activities of the airborne laser system at test ranges associated with Edwards and Vandenberg Air Force Base, California, and Kirtland and Holloman Air Force Base and White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico. Test activities would involve testing the laser components on the ground and in flight to verify that laser components operate together safely and effectively.

In the event that ground-testing is not possible at Edwards Air Force Base, Kirtland and Holloman Air Force Base and White Sands Missile Range have been identified as alternative ground test locations. Flight-testing is proposed at the R-2508 Airspace Complex utilized by Edwards Air Force Base; the Western Range off the coast of California that is utilized by Vandernberg Air Force Base, point Mugu Naval Air Station; and White Sands Missile Range.

The airborne laser craft would be based at Edwards Air Force Base and the aircraft would be flown to the other bases for testing as required. All test flights would begin and end at Edwards Air Force Base.

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Ground testing of the lower-power laser systems would be conducted at Edwards Air Force Base from the end of the runway associated with the Birk Flight Test Facility. Ground targets would include a rotoplane, which is a Ferris wheel-like rotating target, and stationary target boards.

High-energy ground-testing activities would be conducted using a ground-based simulator; no open range testing of the high-energy laser would be conducted.

Kirtland and Holloman Air Force Base and White Sands Missile Range have been identified as alternative ground test locations if conditions prevent testing at Edwards Air Force Base.

If ground testing occurs at Kirtland Air Force Base, the aircraft would be flown to Kirtland Air Force Base and use existing runways, taxiways, and aircraft parking areas. Only the lower-power laser systems would be tested at Kirtland Air Force Base using the existing Sandia laser target range.

If ground testing occurs at White Sands Missile Range, the aircraft would be flown to Holloman Air Force Base and use approved runways, taxiways, and aircrafts' parking areas. Only the lower-power laser systems would be tested. The laser systems would be

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directed westward toward targets placed within White Sands Missile Range.

Ground-testing procedures would include automatic laser turret limiting devices and/or laser blocking devices to prevent laser energy from extending beyond the target backstops and from the defined laser beam path. Target backstops would include natural features such as hills, mountains, and buttes, or manmade earthen berms.

Flight-testing of the airborne laser system is required to confirm and expand on computer modeling and ground test data, and to provide complete testing of all systems required to have an effective weapon system.

During the flight tests, the airborne laser aircraft would be accompanied by up to two chase aircraft to monitor the test and the status of the airborne laser aircraft. The airborne laser aircraft would fly at an altitude at or above 35,000 feet and the upward direction to minimize potential contact with the ground or other aircraft. Onboard sensors and pre-test planning would be used to confirm that no aircraft or satellites were within the potential path of the beam. Also, only existing military or FAA controlled airspace areas would be utilized during the

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tests and confirmed clear of non-participating aircraft during the testing activities.

Flight-tests would utilize the R-2508 Airspace Complex utilized by Edwards Air Force Base; the Western Range utilized by Vandernberg Air Force Base and Point Mugu Naval Air Station; and White Sands Missile Range, including Fort Bliss controlled airspace and FAA controlled airspace as necessary.

Targets that would be used during flight-testing activities include the following: missile alternative range target instrument, or MARTI, which is a balloon with a target board attached. A Proteus aircraft, which is a high-altitude manned aircraft with target board attached, and target missiles that simulate a potential threat missile.

Both low- and high-power tests would be conducted on the MARTI and missile targets. Only lower-power tests would occur with the Proteus aircraft as it is a manned target vehicle.

The tests would evaluate the airborne laser system's ability to acquire, track, and engage targets. Missiles used during the flight-test activities that requires a flight termination system, determined by range safety, will be used to ensure that debris would be contained on the range in the event the

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target missile had to be destroyed in flight due to off-nominal missile flight trajectory.

In the event that the aircraft is unable to land at Edwards Air Force Base after conducting test activities, preplanned divert bases have been established. The divert bases would have personnel specifically trained to support the airborne laser aircraft and appropriate equipment to handle airborne laser hazardous materials.

The no-action alternative would involve conducting airborne laser test activities as described in the original testing program discussed in the 1997 document.

Other alternatives were considered and eliminated from further consideration in the 1997 document. Those alternatives included different test demonstration methods, laser systems types, and test installations or locations.

I would now like to turn the microphone over to Captain Joe Wimmer, who will discuss the findings of the draft SEIS.

CAPTAIN JOE WIMMER: Good evening, my name is Captain Joe Wimmer. I will briefly review the resources detailed in the draft SEIS that may be affected due to the proposed airborne laser test

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activities.

Based on the proposed airborne laser test activities being addressed in this SEIS and actions that have already been addressed within the EIS prepared in 1997, the analysis indicated that there would be no or few potential impacts for several resource areas. These resources are highlighted on the slide, and I will summarize the analysis results briefly.

Under the local community category, land use and aesthetics did not require further analysis because proposed test activities would occur on existing test ranges and no new military construction, which is abbreviated as milcon, funded activities would occur, it was determined that no land use changes would occur; therefore, no impacts are anticipated.

Utilities did not require further analysis. Because no substantial permanent employment changes would occur and utility requirements for test activities would not change, it was determined that no impacts to utilities are anticipated.

Transportation did not require further analysis. Because no substantial permanent changes would occur and standard operating procedures are in place to control traffic during proposed test

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activities, it was determined that no impacts to roadways, air transportation, and railroads are anticipated.

And finally, environmental justice did not require further analysis. Because airborne laser test activities would be conducted and contained within the installation and range boundaries, it was determined that no disproportionately high and adverse impacts to low-income and minority population would occur.

Under the hazardous materials and hazardous waste management category, installation restoration program sites did not require further analysis because there are no installation restoration program sites in the vicinity of proposed test locations.

Storage tanks did not require further analysis because no changes to the requirement for storage tanks was identified; therefore, it was determined that storage tanks associated with the Airborne Laser Program were adequately addressed in the 1997 EIS.

Asbestos did not require further analysis because no milcon-funded facility construction or demolition activities are proposed to support test

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activities, it was determined that no impacts from asbestos are anticipated.

Pesticide usage did not require further analysis because the proposed test activities would not require an increase in the use of pesticides.

Polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs did not require further analysis because no PCB-containing equipment wold be utilized during proposed test activities; therefore, no impacts are anticipated.

Radon, did not require further analysis. Because the proposed test activities would not be conducted in facilities that would be pernamently occupied, it was determined that no impacts from randon are anticipated.

Medical and biohazardous waste did not require further analysis because medical and biohazardous waste would not be generated during proposed test activities; therefore, no impacts are anticipated.

Lead-based paint did not require further analysis, because as with asbestos, because no milcon-funded facility construction or demolition activities are proposed to support test activities, it was determined that no impacts from lead-based paint are anticipated.

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Under the natural environment category, soils and geology did not require further analysis because no milcon-funded facility construction or demolition activities are proposed to support test activities, no ground disturbance would occur. Some soil disturbance would be expected during missile debris recovery actions at White Sands Missile Range. Any debris from target missiles would be recovered in accordance with standard operating procedures to minimize potential impacts to soils and to reduce the potential for soil erosion.

Water resources did not require further analysis because similarly to soils and geology, no milcon-funded facility construction or demolition activities are proposed to support test activities, no ground disturbance would occur. Some soil disturbance would be expected during missile debris recovery actions at White Sands Missile Range. Any debris from target missiles would be recovered in accordance with standard operataing procedures to minimize potential impacts to soils and to reduce the potential for soil erosion.

The draft SEIS focuses on potential impacts that would occur as a result of the proposed airborne laser test activities. Resources evaluated in

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detail include socioeconomics, airspace, hazardous materials and hazardous waste management, health and safety, air quality, noise, biological resources, and cultural resources.

Under the local community category, socioeconomics was analyzed further, because testing activities conducted at White Sands Missile Range and Holloman Air Force Base would require up to 50 program-related, temporary personnel for short periods. The 50 program-related personnel would have a small, positive, yet largely unnoticeable, effect on population, income, and employment in the area surrounding the installations.

Airspace for Holloman Air Force Base was analyzed further because if ground tests could not be conducted at Edwards or Kirtland, Holloman Air Force Base and White Sands Missile Range would be used. Ground and flying safety considerations associated with lasers would restrict aircraft operations during staging and testing. Locations would be selected that minimize these impacts. If a suitable ground test location could not be identified, ground testing would be postponed until conditions at Edwards or Kirtland Air Force Base were suitable. The 1997 EIS recognized the fact that airborne testing would have an effect on

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Holloman operations as well.

Airspace for White Sands Missile Range was analyzed further because of flight testing scenarios. No new special use areas would be necessary. White Sands Missile Range air traffic control would ensure that the flight test area is clear prior to implementing test activities. The FAA may, when appropriate, implement flight level restrictions for non-participating aircraft to ensure they are clear of the test area.

Airborne laser aircraft use of the existing special use airspace such as restricted areas, military operation areas, and associated air traffic control assigned airspace would not have a significant impact on current and future activities conducted within these areas. The scheduling office that is responsible for establishing the activity schedule for the portions of the White Sands Missile Range airspace complex that would be utilized, forwards the proposed test schedule, along with any subsequent changes, to the controlling air traffic control center to ensure non-participating aircraft remain clear of the test area.

Hazardous materials and hazardous waste management was analyzed further because the hazardous

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materials used for range testing operations would include cleaning solvents, paint compounds, explosive material and toxic propellants. Liquid propellants would be used in missile flight systems. The existing hazardous materials storage and handling capabilities at White Sands Missile Range and Holloman Air Force Base would permit proper handling of all materials. Any debris from target missile impact areas would be recovered in acccordance with White Sands Missile Range standard operating procedures.

Missile debris and oxidizer or fuel released after a test would be handled in accordance with the White Sands Missile Range installation spill contingency plan. Missile debris would be loaded on a truck and transported to an approved range residue accumulation point for analysis. The debris would be characterized to determine if it is a hazardous waste. Hazardous wastes would be disposed of via permitted procedures through the White Sands Missile Range hazardous waste storage facility.

In the event the airborne laser aircraft is unable to land at Edwards Air Force Base after conducting test activities, Holloman Air Force Base has been identified as one of three pre-planned divert bases which the airborne laser aircraft would be

Document 4

diverted to. Personnel at Holloman Air Force Base would be specifically trained to support the airborne laser aircraft and appropriate equipment to handle the airborne laser hazardous materials would be in place.

Health and safety was analyzed further because of the potential hazards associated with the system. In the event that ground-testing was conducted here, the lower-power platfomrs would be staged on Holloman Air Force Base and point west at targets on White Sands Missile Range. Laser safety precautions would be followed and activities at Holloman would be curtailed during testing on White Sands Missile Range.

The San Andres Mountains behind the targets would provide a vertical bondary to contain any direct laser beams or reflections. Areas subject to direct or reflected beams would be cleared of all non-essential personnel and access would be restricted. Laser targets would be positioned within a shroud to limit the possibility of deflection when the laser beam struck these surfaces.

The primary hazards associated with flight-testing activities are the reflection of laser energy off a target and debris impacts on the range. The possibility of public exposure to hazardous levels of direct, non-reflected laser energy would be

Document 4

eliminated by the decision to restrict laser firing angles to above the horizontal plane from the airborne laser aircraft's altitude of 35,000 feet or higher. Howerver, because of the missile's flight path angle, when intercepted by the laser beam, reflections from the target missile surface would be directed downward.

Flight-test activities would be configured so that any hazardous reflected energy would be contained within range boundaries. The targets in all high-energy laser tests would be flying at altitudes above 35,000 feet.

Because the diffusely reflected energy is spread over a large area, the energy density rapidly decreases to below the maximum permitted exposure levels. Any direct laser energy that misses the target would exit restricted airspace above 45,000 feet and continue upward eventually exiting the earth's atmosphere.

Flight-testing activities may involve off-range lasing, where the laser systems are fired form FAA-controlled airspace at targets within White Sands Missile Range controlled airspace. White Sands Missile Range air traffic control would ensure that the flight test area is clear prior to implementing test activities. The FAA may, when appropriate, implement

Document 4

flight level restrictions for non-participating aircraft to ensure that they are clear of the test area.

White Sands Missile Range ground and flight safety determines the dimensions of the safety zone surrounding the launch and impact area, which areas of the missile range are evacuated for each mission, activation of the flight-termination system in the event of missile failure, missile intercept safety zones, and oversees the testing of missiles.

Evacuations, clearances, and road closures would be implemented to ensure worker and public safety. Roadblocks would be established before launch activities begin, and appropriate ground and air surveillance sweeps would occur to ensure the appropriate areas are evacuated. The U.S. Highways 70 and 380 are regularly closed during missile tests at White Sands Missile Range and could be closed during the flight-testing activities.

Missile debris would be contained within the range boundaries. Missile debris would be recovered in accordance with existing White Sands Missile Range standard operating procedures. Recovery operations would be conducted utilizing existing roads, helicopter, or by foot and typically last less than one

Document 4

day. Debris would be recovered immediately as part of a continuous effort to keep White Sands Missile Range clear of debris. Analysis results for ground- and flight-testing activities determined no adverse health and safety impacts are anticipated.

Under the natural environment category, air quality was analyzed further because of the potential for emissions associated with the system. The emissions from the ground-level-testing activities, would be minimal. The limited use of Holloman for take-offs and landings would contribute negligibly to the emissions generated by the thousands of annual aircraft operations previously analyzed.

The ground level emissions created by the airborne laser flight-testing activities would occur from missile setup, launch activities, and debris recovery. These emissions are estimated to be less than one percent of the six counties' total emissions. The increase in criteria pollutant emissions would not produce significant changes in air quality at White Sands Missile Range.

Noise was analyzed further because the testing activities use hazardous noise producing equipment. Noise levels from the use of the aircraft ground support equipment adjacent to the runway during

Document 4

ground-testing activities and the landing and takeoff of the airborne laser aircraft would not cause adverse effects to residential areas or the local populations.

During flight-testing, the airborne laser aircraft would be accompanied by up to two chase aircraft. These aircraft would maneuver at altitudes above 35,000 feet. The noise level from the aircraft maneuvering at this altitude is estimated to be less than 55 decibels; therefore, no adverse noise impacts are anticipated.

Biological resources were analyzed further because threatened and endangered species are found on White Sands Missile Range. Lasers are currently used on White Sands Missile Range in various programs, and analysis of these laser programs indicated that there was a potential for physical injury to wildlife.

According to a study performed in 1980 regarding laser activity at White Sands Missile Range, there have been negligible cumulative impacts on wildlife populations. Because the ground-test activities that might be conducted at White Sands Missile Range would only involve the lower-powered laser systems, adverse impacts to biological resources are not expected.

Document 4

The target missile trajectories would be planned to avoid debris impact in the San Andres National Wildlife Refuge and other sensitive areas and adhere to requirements of the agreement between the national park service and White Sands Missile Range with regards to debris impact in the White Sands National Monument.

Target debris would be contained within the range boundaries and could result in the negligible loss of some vegetation. After each flight test, debris would be recovered as quickly as possible. If the debris team utilizes a helicopter, the debris recovery flight would involve a gradual descent to pick up the debris, followed by the helicopter flying descent to pick up the debris, followed by the helicopter flying at an altitude that would avoid startling or disturbing wildlife.

An analysis of the potential biological impacts associated with the operation of the high energy laser was discussed in the 1997 EIS. This analysis showed that laser activities would not have significant impacts upon the wildlife at White Sands Missile Range. This is due to the high altitude at which the proposed laser activity would occur and from the test geometry that would prevent the high energy

Document 4

laser from being engaged in a downward direction.

Cultural resources were analyzed because sites exist on White Sands Missile Range and Holloman Air Force Base. Because potential ground-testing activities would occur on previously disturbed, paved or developed land and no milcon-funded construction activity would be necessary; there are no foreseen impacts to cultural resouces at White Sands Missile Range or Holloman air force base.

Use of missiles as targets during flight-testing activities would result in debris impacting the ground surface due to the successful intercept of a missile target or by the termination of the missile flight due to a malfunction. Such ground impacts could potentially impact cultural resources.

Debris recovery activities would be conducted in accordance with existing White Sands Missile Range standard operating procedures. The debris recovery teams are assisted by White Sands Missile Range environmental personnel to minimize disturbances to cultural resources. Previous debris pattern modeling completed for prior missile intercept tests does not predict any debris falling on the White Sands National Monument.

The no-action alternative in this SEIS

Document 4

reflects the proposed test activities analyzed in the 1997 environmental impact statement. Therefore, no new impacts are created and potential impacts are discussed in that document. As previously stated, this SEIS does not discuss the findings of that document except as a basis of comparison. Therefore, the no-action alternative generates no new impacts.

In closing, I remind you that the study is a draft stage. Our goal is to provide the decision-makers with accurate information on the potential environmental consequences of the proposed airborne laser test activities. To do this, we are soliciting your comments on the draft SEIS. This information will support informed decision-making.

Now I'd like to turn the meeting back over to Colonel Powers.

COLONEL JOHN POWERS: Thank you, Captain Wimmer. After a 10-minute recess, we will move into the main portion of the meeting, which is the public comment period. Let's take a ten-minute break.

(Recess)

COLONEL JOHN POWERS: We are now reconvened, again. I do not have any cards so we want to check out in front to make sure there's nobody lingering out there.

Document 4

I have no cards filled out indicating that anybody wants to speak. Does anybody in the audience wish to speak? Apparently not. Okay. then this concludes the public hearing.

If you should later decide to make additional comments or would like to receive copies of the final SEIS, you may do so through the address shown on the slide.

We appreciate your participation in this public hearing. Thank you for coming. Good night.

(Hearing concluded at 7:47)

Document 4

CERTIFICATE

I, Maria Caraveo, Certified Shorthand Reporter of the State of Texas, do hereby certify that the above and foregoing contains a true and correct transcription of the proceedings for the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement Public Hearing.

Certified to on November 7, 2002.

Maria Caraveo, CSR/RPR
Certified Shorthand Reporter
Texas CSR No. 7869
Expires December 31, 2004
(28297)

Document 5

State of New Mexico
ENVIR0NMENT DEPARTMENT
Office of the Secretary
Harold Runnels Building
1190St Francis Drive, P.O. Box 26110
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87502-6110
Telephone (505) 827-2855
Fax (505) 827-2836

GARY E. JOHNSON
GOVERNOR

JOHN D'ANTONIO, Jr.
SECRETARY

September 30,2002

Charles E. Brown
Environmental Coordinator
Project Execution Division
HQ AFCEE/ECE
3207 Sidney Brooks
Brooks AFB, TX 78235-5344

Dear Mr. Brown:

RE: DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE ARIBORNE LASER (ABL) PROGRAM (SEPTEMBER 2002)

This transmits New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) comments concerning the above-referenced Draft Supplemental Environmental Assessment Impact Statement (DSEIS).

Water Quality

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) requires National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction Storm Water General Permit coverage prior to beginning construction for storm water discharges from construction projects (common plans of development) that will result in the disturbance of five or more acres (one or more acres after March 10, 2003), including expansions, of total land area. It is unclear whether activities associated with this project will involve construction but, if so, appropriate NPDES permit coverage prior to beginning construction will be required.

Among other things, this permit requires that a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) be prepared for the site and that appropriate Best Management Practices (BMPs) be installed and maintained both during and after construction to prevent, to the extent practicable, pollutants (primarily sediment, oil & grease and construction materials from construction sites) in storm water runoff from entering waters of the U.S. This permit also requires that permanent stabilization measures (revegetation, paving, etc.), and permanent storm water management measures (storm water detention/retention structures, velocity dissipation devices, etc.) be implemented post construction to minimize, in the long term, pollutants in storm water runoff from entering these waters.

Document 5

You should also be aware that EPA requires that all "operators" (see **Federal Register/Vol. 63, No. 128**/Monday, July 6, 1998 pg 36509) obtain NPDES permit coverage for construction projects. Generally, this means that at least two parties will require permit coverage. The owner/developer of this construction project who has operational control over project specifications, the general contractor who has day-to-day operational control of those activities at the site, which are necessary to ensure compliance with the storm water pollution plan and other permit conditions, and possibly other "operators" will require appropriate NPDES permit coverage for this project.

Also, operation of these types of facilities additionally require Storm Water Multi-sector General Permit (see **Federal Register/Vol. 63, No. 210**/Monday, October 30, 2000) coverage. Launch sites, impact areas, fueling, soil remediation activities, etc. likely qualify as potential sources of pollution which may reasonably be expected to affect the quality of storm water discharges, from activities that meet the USEPA definition of "industrial activities" under Sector S, K and/or L, and possibly other sectors. This permit also requires preparation of a SWPPP, and installation of appropriate storm water runoff control practices (per the SWPPP).

1
8.2 Although it appears that there is little potential to discharge pollutants to "waters of the United States" from the proposed activities, both WSMR and KAFB already have NPDES Storm Water Multi-sector General Permit coverage for "industrial activities" conducted on-site. Permittees should amend the existing Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plans to incorporate any additional activities and pollutant controls dictated by this proposed action.

Air Quality

The proposed project is in areas that are currently in attainment for all National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS). The information provided is adequate to demonstrate that both ground- and flight-test activities have no anticipated conflicts with air quality laws and regulations. Although in the proposed action there is a short-term, minor increase in pollutant emissions due to testing activities, the increased emissions would not be significant and would not change the attainment status of any area. The Air Quality Bureau does not anticipate any air quality related problems as a result of the proposed project.

Hazardous Waste

Section 3.2.3.2 of the SEIS states that the increase in use of hazardous materials and the subsequent generation of hazardous wastes would be negligible, and that the small quantities oil and lubricants used on this project would be obtained from current distribution centers. Existing stores of fuels would be used to power equipment and support ground-testing activities. Existing contingency and spill control plans would be used to minimize any potential environmental consequences resulting from the use of these materials. Existing hazardous waste accumulation points would be used to contain and dispose of any hazardous waste generated from ABL project activities. No hazardous materials would be off-loaded from ABL aircraft that would be considered hazardous wastes.

Document 5

Because the generation of hazardous wastes on this project will not generate a quantity that is significant and this generation is expected to fall within quantities already permitted, no changes to the existing RCRA permit are required or anticipated.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this project.

Sincerely,

Gedi Cibas, Ph.D.
Environmental Impact Review Coordinator

NMED File No. 1639ER

Document 6

To: Maj. C. Redelsperger
ASC/TMIS
Target Rd., Bldg. 760
Kirtland AFB
NM 87117-6612

From: Tom Bolema

Please include the following statement in the Public Comment record of the hearing.

Airborne Laser Program
Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement
Lancaster, CA Public Hearing

October 15, 2002

I'm Tom Bolema of the High Desert Greens. I'm one of over 500 Green Party members residing in the Antelope Valley region. We object to the testing of the airborne laser system on the grounds that such testing violates environmental and public health and safety standards. These health and safety standards are already being compromised by congressional

1
1.1

Document 6

exemption. The Pentagon's plans put public safety at even greater risk.

2
The airborne laser system is part of a group of weapons systems that require the use of controversial communications technologies to track targeted moving objects. Of special concern in the development of the airborne laser system are these accessory communications technologies, some of which are already in operation.. Throughout the Antelope Valley, one can hear the constant low frequency "hum" emanating from these powerful transmitters.

7.5 Antelope Valley residents are being exposed to these transmissions that have proven deletory physiological affects according to Dr. Kanavy, chief of the biological effects group of the Phillips Laboratory's Electromagnetic Effects Division at Kirkland Air Force Base in New Mexico. The effects of that exposure include "behavioral aberrations, perturbations of neural networks, fetal (embryonic) tissue damage (inducing birth defects), cataractogenesis, altered blood chemistry, metabolic changes and suppression of the endocrine and immune systems..."

In Light of these findings, the environmental impact report must show the local incidence of these maladies compared to incidence in areas not exposed to the acoustic bombardment.

3
13.3 The effects of the development of the airborne laser system on our economic and social environment are also detrimental.. We acknowledge the need for and are in fact confident that

Document 6

From Tom Bolerra

we already possess an ample defense and that we can sustain it without sacrificing our quality of life. The current federal emphasis on developing missile defense weaponry is bound to keep taxpayers in debt and cold war anxieties alive for generations to come.

4 13.3 We submit that the airborne laser system poses a serious mental health threat and jeopardizes our children's future economic stability. The environmental impact report must include a study of the psychic effects on children of financial instability and the anticipation of violence.

It is evident that the majority of people worldwide want peace and prosperity and that the oppression and marginalization of groups and individuals creates animosity and the conditions for violence. We therefore cannot conscience so investing our vital resources which should be used to promote inclusion and stability. Furthermore, the responsibility of policing the planet should be shared with the rest of the world. We Americans cannot fund it alone.

5 1.3 Within the National Environmental Policy Act, Congress established that it is the policy of the federal government to "create and maintain conditions under which man and nature can exist in productive harmony." The development and implementation of the airborne laser and other missile defense systems and accompanying technologies is therefore in conflict with federal environmental policy.

Document 7

Written Comment Sheet

Airborne Laser Program
Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

Thank you for attending this public hearing. Our purpose for hosting this meeting is to give you an opportunity to comment on issues analyzed in the Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) for the Airborne Laser Program test activities proposed at Kirtland Air Force Base (AFB) and White Sands Missile Range/Holloman AFB, New Mexico, and Edwards AFB and Vandenberg AFB, California. Please use this sheet to comment on any environmental issues that you feel should be clarified in the Final SEIS.

Date: 10/22/02

1 6.3 Even a small amount of hazardous material when factored into the total toxicity levels in our environment – local, statewide and national – is unacceptable. Both our natural resources – water, land and air – and our own immune systems have been degraded over the years from a variety of toxins and radioactive materials.

Name Alan Klein

Address _____
Street Address City/State/Zip Code

Please hand this form in or mail to:
ASC/TMI
Attn: Lt. Col. Edward Marchand
3300 Target Road, Building 760
Kirtland AFB, NM 87117-6612
Fax: (505) 846-1675

Only the names of individuals making comments and specific comments will be disclosed. Personal home addresses and phone numbers will not be published in the SEIS.

Document 8

MESCALERO Apache TRIBE

TRIBAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE
101 Central Avenue
P.O. Box 227
Mescalero, New Mexico 88340
Phone: 505/464-4494 ext. 279 or 270
Fax: 505/464-9191

Mr. Charles J. Brown
HQ AFCEE/ECE
3207 Sidney Brooks
Brooks AFB, TX 78235-5344

(X) The ***Mescalero Apache Tribe*** has determined that the proposed EIS for the Airborne Laser Program **WILL NOT AFFECT** any objects, sites, or locations important to our traditional culture or religion.

( ) The ***Mescalero Apache Tribe*** has determined that the proposed _____ project by _____ **WILL AFFECT** objects, sites, or locations important to our traditional culture or religion. We request that the _____ undertake further consultations to evaluate the effects of the project on these sites.

In the future, we request that you minimally provide us with the following items to aid in our determination:

- Cultural Resource Survey Reports
- Site Forms
- Maps (Both General and Site Specific)
- Research Designs (If Applicable)
- Data Recovery Plans (If Applicable)
- Photographs

Thank you for providing the Mescalero Apache Tribe the opportunity to comment on this project. We look forward to reviewing and commenting on future Dept. of the Air Force projects.

CONCUR:

Donna Stern-McFadden
Name
Signature

10/16/02
Date

Tribal Historic Preservation Officer
Title

COMMENTS

Document 9

October 24, 2002

Mr. George H. Gauger
HQAFCEE/ECE
3207 Sydney Brooks
Brooks AFB, Texas
Fax 210-536-3890

Mr. Gauger;

Please include the attached letter from Ivan Ninichuck of Cal Poly Progressive Student Alliance and the its accompanying page of Cal Poly PSA 20 endorsers in the formal comments for the Chemical Oxygen Iodine Laser (ABL) due to be flight tested at Vandenberg AFB.

Thank you.

Sheila Baker
Member, Cal Poly Progressive Student Alliance

Document 9

October 23, 2002

Dear Mr. George H. Gauger,

Recently Vandenberg Air Force Base held a public hearing concerning the environmental impacts of proposed testing of air based laser systems that would be incorporated into the nation's plan for a missile defense system. The reports from the meeting record a low public showing of interest, and almost no rejection of the plans. Be assured that those reports are highly mistaken. For the passion and logic behind those who oppose the proposed plans are not only strong, but also grow as more information is released on the actual details of the operations and impacts of
1 such a system. Why then was there such a low turnout in Lompoc for the meeting? Simple, the wrong date was given out by VAFB, and thus the meeting was stacked with supporters. What ever may have been the intentions, or circumstances, of the misinformation given it had the result
1.4 of only solidifying our rejection of any further testing, given the fact that it seems that the public has now been almost factored out in decision-making. Such a stance will not be tolerated, and will receive considerable protest from the surrounding community. Our voices must be heard, and our opinions and arguments incorporated into any actions taken. Do not forget that we live in a nation where the power derives directly from the voice and the will of the people.

The proximity of VAFB has created a unique relationship between its activities and the students of Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. Not only must we consider the more general arguments concerning the development of the laser systems, but we must also realize that they will have a direct impact upon our environment. Following these environmental concerns are the economic ramifications of pouring this areas resources into supporting such operations. As we prepare to watch VAFB test America's newest weapons, we also watch the demise of our county's health care facilities. Can we be expected to support such an unbalanced dispersal of funds, during a time of human suffering? We look to work with VAFB though, to find a balance between that which is just and that which is ludicrous. Sadly at this moment there seems to be nothing but the ludicrous being presented to us.

Following these concerns are the even larger questions of what these tests mean to our nation, and its future as a world leader. In the last year all Americans have learned the lesson that our world can be violent and unpredictable. Our nation faced its greatest tragedy, and has united to face the threats that are equally shared. Let us not forget though, that the major reason why this country has risen from disaster to proud strength in such a small time is that the spirit of America's message was never extinguished. I speak of the message that we exclaimed to the world following the devastating conflicts of the last century. That message expresses America's support and undying initiative to uphold peace and security in our world. The message that aggressive states and nations who attempt to achieve oppressive military dominance over the rest of the world will not be tolerated. Let us not revoke this message by attempting to simply over power other nations with our arsenals of technology. Let us not ruin our own nation in the attempt
2 to destroy others. America's new message should not be one of destabilizing relations and
1.1 aggression, and such the current plans of forwarding the missile defense projects should be halted.

Sincerely,
[signature]
Ivan Ninichuck
Cal Poly San Luis Obispo
Physics Major
Member of the Progressive Student Alliance

Document 9

Cal Poly Progressive Student Alliance endorsers to the Ivan's letter opposing the Chemical Oxygen Iodine Laser flight tests at Vandenberg AFB.

1. Sheila J. Baker
2. [signature]
3. Kara Grote
4. Caitlin LaVie
5. [signature]
6. [signature]
7. [signature]
8. [signature]
9. [signature]
10. [signature]
11. [signature]
12. [signature] (Jon Yakubowicz)
13. Harvey Greenwald
14. [signature] (MATTHEW SUTTER)
15. [signature] (Mathias Work)
16. [signature]
17. [signature]
18. [signature]
19. [signature] (Teresa Pirron)
20. [signature] Clayton Whitt

[signature]
Aleksander Edwards

Document 10

Dear Mr. Gauger,
I would like to be on the contact list to receive information concerning the Airborne Laser Scoping Hearings and other such items that affect the ABL Program.
1 I would like to request more public hearings with advanced notices
1.4 distributed in the major and mini media. I just found out about the April hearing.
Sincerely,
R [signature]

Document 11

Mr. Brown,
below is text of EPA's Nov 4, 2002 comment letter on the Draft Supplemental EIS for the Airborne Laser Program, New Mexico and California. The signed copy has been mailed to you today. Please confirm your receipt of this email. Thank you. David Tomsovic.

Charles J. Brown, Environmental Coordinator
November 4, 2002
U.S. Air Force, Project Execution Division
HQ Air Force Center for Environmental Excellence
3207 Sidney Brooks
Brooks AFB, TX 78235-5344

Dear Mr. Brown:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) for the AIRBORNE LASER (ABL) PROGRAM; Edwards Air Force Base (AFB), Vandenberg Air Force Base, and the Adjacent Western Range (Point Mugu Naval Air Warfare Center Sea Range), California; and Kirtland Air Force Base, White Sands Missile Range, and Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico (CEQ #020385). EPA=s comments are provided under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality=s NEPA Implementing Regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act. EPA provided comments on the Draft EIS (DEIS) on January 13, 1997, rating it EC-2 (Environmental Concerns - Insufficient Information) due to potential impacts to air quality and Federally-listed threatened and endangered species. In July 1997 EPA reviewed the Final EIS (FEIS), finding that our prior concerns were addressed. EPA therefore had no objections with the project as proposed. The 1997 FEIS analyzed using an ABL system to destroy ballistic missiles during their boost phase. The Record of Decision (ROD) documented the decision to proceed with ABL homebase activities at Edwards Air Force Base; diagnostic test activities over the White Sands Missile Range; and expanded testing at Vandenberg Air Force Base and the Sea Range. Since completion of the FEIS, specific proposed test activities have been identified and additional information made available about the proposed testing, thus warranting preparation of this DSEIS.

The purpose of the ABL system is to develop and implement an airborne-based defense system to protect the United States, its armed forces, and allies from threats posed by theater ballistic missiles (defined on p. A-8 of the Glossary of Terms as short-range, intermediate-range, and medium-range), including U.S. forces stationed in Japan, the Republic of Korea, Europe and the Persian Gulf region. Aircraft carrying the ABL system would fly at high altitudes, detecting and tracking the launch of ballistic missiles using on-board sensors. Active tracking of ballistic missiles would begin when the missile reaches approximately 35,000 feet. The purpose of the Proposed Action is to test the ABL system to determine its effectiveness in meeting the need for a more accurate, effective defense against missile attacks. The purpose of this supplemental EIS is to evaluate potential impacts associated with testing activities at the military facilities listed above in California and New Mexico.

1

Document 11

Based upon EPA=s review of the DSEIS, we rate it LO, Lack of Objections. Although EPA has no objections with the DSEIS or the proposed project, we ask for one issue to be clarified in the Final EIS (FEIS) and amended Record of Decision. The Air Force should address the potential applicability of Toxic Reporting Inventory (TRI) requirements under the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act, the Pollution Prevention Act, and Executive Order 13148 at facilities in the United States where ABL chemicals are proposed for storage such as at Edwards Air Force Base. Please refer to our attached comments for additional discussion of TRI-related issues.

1 6.4

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments. Please send one copy of the Final EIS to this office (mailcode: CMD-2) at the letterhead address when it is filed with EPA=s Washington, DC office. If you have any questions, please call me or my staff contact for this project, David Tomsovic, at 415-972-3858 or electronic mail at < tomsovic.david@epa.gov>.

Sincerely,

/SIGNED BY/

Lisa B. Hanf, Manager
Federal Activities Office

Attachment: 1

cc: Michael Jansky, EPA Region 6, Dallas, TX (via email)

U.S. EPA comments on Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) - - AIRBORNE LASER (ABL) PROGRAM; Edwards Air Force Base (AFB), Vandenberg Air Force Base, and the Adjacent Western Range (Point Mugu Naval Air Warfare Center Sea Range), California; and Kirtland Air Force Base, White Sands Missile Range, and Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico - - November 4, 2002

Toxic Reporting Inventory

Table 2.2-2 (p. 2-7) addresses estimated storage requirements for bulk chemicals at Edwards Air Force Base (AFB), identifying the following storage quantities at this facility:

< Ammonia (Anhydrous) 2,000 to 4,000 pounds
< Chlorine 1,000 to 2,000 pounds
< Sulfuric Acid 660 gallons

Table 1.5-1 (p. 1-11) identifies environmental permits and licenses required by this project. Regarding hazardous materials and hazardous waste, Table 1.5-1 references the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act and the California Hazardous Waste Control Act. However, the DSEIS does not address the potential applicability of the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA), including its Toxic Reporting Inventory (TRI) requirements; the Pollution Prevention Act (PPA); or Executive Order (EO) 13148 (>Greening the Government Through Leadership in Environmental Management,= April 21, 2000), which extends TRI-related requirements to the Federal sector. EPCRA was enacted to inform communities of potential chemical hazards. EPCRA Sections 311 and 312 require facilities to report the location and quantities of chemicals stored on-site to State and local agencies in order to facilitate an effective response to chemical spills and hazardous material incidents. EPCRA Section 313 requires EPA and the States to annually collect data on releases and transfers of certain toxic chemicals from facilities, and make such data available to the public. The PPA requires that additional data on waste management and source reduction efforts be

2

Document 11

reported to EPA (see PPA Section 6607). EO 13148 instructs the Federal sector to adhere to the provisions of the EPCRA and the PPA, including TRI requirements. Ammonia, chlorine, and sulfuric acid are three chemicals that are subject to TRI requirements. Additionally, in keeping with Section 503(b) of EO 13148, the FEIS and amended Record of Decision should identify whether there are Aknown, readily available, less harmful substitutes for identified applications and purposes,@ i.e., less toxic substances to carry out ABL testing activities. The Final EIS (FEIS) and amended Record of Decision should address the potential applicability of the EPCRA, the PPA, and EO 13148 to this proj ect.

2 6.5 3 6.4

3

Document 12

United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance
Post Office Box 649
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87103

IN REPLY REFER TO:

November 1, 2002

ER 02/865

Charles J. Brown
Environmental Coordinator
Project Execution Division
HQ AFCEE/ECE
3300 Sidney Brooks
Brooks AFB, Texas 78235-5112

Dear Mr. Brown

The U.S. Department of the Interior has reviewed the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Airborne Laser Program, Kirtland Air Force Base (AFB), White Sands Missile Range (WSMR)/Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico, Edwards Air Force Base, Vandenberg Air Force Base, California. In this regard, the following comments are provided for your consideration as you develop the final document.

General Comments

The specific elements of the proposed action consist of the use of B747 aircraft outfitted with a laser weapon system to detect and track ballistic missile launches. Test missiles will be fired upon from these aircraft at altitudes above 35,000 feet to determine the effectiveness of the Missile Defense Agency's Airborne Laser Program. Ground-based testing involves individual laser components. Airborne testing will involve high energy lasers (weapon grade) and ground-based testing will involve lower energy lasers. Kirtland AFB, Holloman AFB, and WSMR were identified as potential testing locations.

Although the program was addressed in an April 1997 Final Environmental Impact Statement (ER 95/266), additional changes to the test program necessitated this Supplemental EIS. New changes include: 1) testing with more than one aircraft; 2) potential off-range escape of laser energy; 3) lowering the test altitude from 40,000 feet to above 35,000 feet; 4) testing low energy tracking laser components; and 5) changes in the location, types, and numbers of tests.

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2

Specific Comments

While White Sands National Monument is frequently mentioned, there seems to be a lack of recognition that this area is used by the public. Most closures and evacuations of Monument property for existing military testing affect the little-used western portion of the Monument, known as the co-use area, without affecting the primary public use area of the Monument. If Holloman AFB was selected for ground-based laser testing as described on page 2-8, Section 2.2.1, this would require testing across the primary public use area of the National Monument, and this should be clearly stated. Section 2.2.1 should state that testing would occur across the National Monument and would require closure and evacuation of the public.

1 3.1

Section 3.3.4.2 (in the paragraph referencing environmental consequences of health and safety) regarding debris recovery operations and restoration, should state . . . "would be under terms of a special use permit issued by the National Park Service at White Sands National Monument."

2 7.6

Section 3.3.9.1 fails to mention White Sands National Monument has an annual public use by over 500,000 visitors and is the most visited National Park Service site in New Mexico. The impact analysis of Section 3.3.9.2 should state that ground-based laser testing from Holloman AFB would significantly increase closures of public use of the National Monument, resulting in inconvenience to the public.

3 13.4

The EIS, page 3-59, states that Wright's fishhook cactus (*Mammillaria wrightii*) occurs on Kirtland AFB (Albuquerque) and is listed as a federally endangered species. This cactus is neither a listed species nor does it occur on Kirtland AFB. This cactus is known from the El Paso area. Please reference the July 11, 2002, species lists that were included in Appendix E for Bernalillo County for a current and complete species list (Consultation No. 2-22-02-I-513). We concur with the Air Force's determination that the proposed action is not likely to adversely affect listed species or critical habitat (none designated) within Kirtland AFB.

4 11.1

For a current and complete species list for WSMR, please reference (in Appendix E) the July 12, 2002, letter (Consultation No. 2-22-02-I-514). With respect to activities on WSMR, it is our understanding that this project is part of activities normally conducted on WSMR. Low energy laser ground testing activities would be conducted at Edwards AFB, and the WSMR was identified only as an alternate site. The WSMR normally coordinates with the Fish and Wildlife Service on site-specific activities which may affect federally-listed species. Based on the level of ongoing coordination with WSMR and the type and location of the activity, we concur with the Air Force's determination that the proposed action is not likely to adversely affect any federally-listed species on WSMR.

5 11.1

Statements on page 3-91 describing the effects of ground testing activities on biological resources is vague. For example, the fourth paragraph on this page states "an analysis of laser programs indicated there was a potential of physical injury to wildlife" and "quail and coyotes were only slightly impacted" but concludes that testing involving lower power lasers is not

6 11.2

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6 expected to result in adverse impacts to wildlife. It is unclear what types of injury, what types of laser energy produce such injuries, and under what conditions (and hence avoidance of) impacts to wildlife may occur. These statements should be clarified so that the potential for impacts can
11.2 be adequately addressed. Impacts to terrestrial wildlife can be avoided or minimized by conducting ground-based activities during the hottest parts of the day or avoiding early morning or early evening hours. All reasonable precautions to prevent laser energy from straying off target should likewise reduce or eliminate potential adverse impacts to wildlife.

7 The statement on page 3-91 indicating that "ground-testing activities would be conducted, to the extent possible, outside of the migratory waterfowl season to minimize impacts" should not be
11.3 limited to waterfowl. The peak bird migratory periods in New Mexico, for instance, are September through November and March through May.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this Draft Supplement. We trust our comments will be of use during future environmental documentation.

Sincerely,

for Glenn B. Sekavec
Regional Environmental Officer

Document 13

Global Network Against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space

October 29, 2002

Mr. George H. Gauger
HQAFCEE/ECE
3207 Sydney Brooks
Brooks AFB, Texas 78235

Dear Mr. Gauger:

We are sending comments regarding the Chemical Oxygen Iodine Laser, also known as the Airborne Laser which is due to be flight tested at Vandenberg AFB in 2003.

We were surprised to hear about how inaccurate notification was placed in media around Vandenberg AFB thus making it impossible for people to turn out at local hearings to voice concerns about the program.

1 Our greatest concern about this project is the need. Who is the U.S. defending
1.2 against? Who is going to launch nuclear missiles at the U.S.? Is not this system really intended as an expansion of U.S. forward deployed military that will be used to virtually surround and provoke China?

The cost of the airborne laser is outrageous. Cutbacks in child care, health care, education, social security, and environmental clean-up are happening all over the nation. How can we as a nation afford this system when our national treasury is already being drained by the military industrial complex? This system is just more welfare for the aerospace industry.

2 Finally there will be an impact to California commercial and recreational fishing,
13.5 especially below the Western Range. Ocean vessels must be notified in advance of potential hazards. Flight tests may require the closure of one or more of the state or national parks, thus disrupting activities in the area and calling to question environmental impact of these areas.

Document 13

3 Our organization is opposed to this project. It will only help create a new arms
1.1 race (which is probably what you want anyway) and will cost us our children's future.

In peace,

Bruce K. Gagnon
Coordinator

Document 14

Page 1 of 2

October 29, 2002

Mr. George H. Gauger
HQAFCEE/ECE
3207 Sydney Brooks
Brooks AFB, Texas 78235
Fax 210-536-3890

Dear Mr. Gauger,

Thank you for allowing our comments to be recorded regarding the Chemical Oxygen Iodine Laser, also known simple as the Airborne Laser which is due to be flight tested at Vandenberg AFB in 2003.

First, we are understandably disappointed that the Santa Maria Times and the Santa Barbara Press reported the ABL scoping meeting would be held on Wednesday, Oct 16, rather than its true date, Thursday, Oct. 17. Naturally few if anyone made it. Therefore, written comments from the public are especially meaningful.

1 Chemical lasers over the ocean cannot be considered
7.7 environmental. True, mechanisms will be installed to keep the laser from striking anything but the target, but these measures can fail.

The storage, handling, and use of chemical lasers presents dangers to all life on the Central Coast.
2 This project is highly unnecessary and presents a high
7.7 risk for safety and health of our area.

This project is expensive. Billions of dollars will be required just to test this system. Both Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties struggle to maintain our healthcare, our schools, and necessary services. The contrast in wasteful spending that the COIL project provides is obsene.

3 Finally, according to Vandenberg AFB Space and Missile
13.5 Times, October 25 issue, there will be an impact to local commercial and recreational fishing, especially below the Western Range. Ocean vessels must be notified in advance of potential hazards. Flight tests may require the closure of one or more of the state or national parks, thus disrupting activities in the area and calling to question environmental impact of these areas.

4 Please stop this project. Contrary to the headlines in
1.1 the Santa Barbara County newspapers, we, the public, are not mum on missile defense.

Sincerely,

Nancy H. Ferraro

Document 14

Mr George H. Gauger re: Chemical Oxygen Iodine Laser Page 2 of 2

Signature	Print Name	Address
	Ms Perry Jamieson	
2.	M^r HELEN M. BENNETT	
3.	Donna Tilleraie	
4.	Phyllis Davies	
5.	Carol Sinsheimer	
6.	BEN CAREY	
7.	DAVID E BROWNSEER	
8.	Richard J Kreyze	
9.	Elizabeth Apfelberg	
10.	Bill Baumgartner	
11.	Calvin Wilvert	
12.	Rosemary Wilvert	
13.	Joan Carter	
14.	Peg Newman	
15.	Bob McElhill	
16.	Claire Paget	
17.	Joseph R. Johnson	
18.	Marilyn Farhat	
19.		
20.		
21.		
22.		
23.		
24.		
25.		

Document 15

FYI

-----Original Message-----
From: Hutchinson Stu Contr AFRL/HEDO
Sent: Wednesday, November 06, 2002 12:51 PM
To: Gauger George H Civ AFCEE/ECE
Subject: FW: COIL scoping hearing reschedule for VAFB

Not sure how the writer got this e-mail address, but.....

Stu Hutchinson
Program Manager, Operational Safety Support Team
AFRL/HEDO SETA
Karta Technologies, Inc.
Comm 210-536-4784
DSN 240-4784

-----Original Message-----
From: sheila baker [mailto:pedal4mother@yahoo.com]
Sent: Wednesday, November 06, 2002 10:49 AM
To: laser.safety@brooks.af.mil
Cc: letters@thetribunenews.com; smtletters@pulitzer.com; letters@newtimesslo.com
Subject: COIL scoping hearing reschedule for VAFB

Mr. George H. Gauger
HQAFCEE/ECE
3207 Sydney Brooks
Brooks AFB, Texas 78235

Dear Mr. Gauger,

1 | 1.4 Please consider rescheduling the environmental impact scoping hearing that was improperly announced by VAFB and three newspapers-The Santa Maria Times, The Lompoc Record and The Santa Barbara News Press as Wednesday, Oct 16 and not Thursday, Oct 17.

I assure you that the public is very interested in this program and with adequate notice (three weeks), the voices of many can be heard in commenting on this system. Further, the Santa Barbara News Press titled the hearing as "Public Mum on Missile Defense" when no one showed for this ill-scheduled meeting.

Hopefully you can understand that in improperly announcing this meeting, our Freedom of Speech was taken away. Central Coast residents enjoy this freedom regardless of their support or opposition to any issue.

Thanks so much and please respond as soon as possible.

Sheila Baker

1

Document 16

1

Mary Beth Cunney

Mr. George H. Gauger
HQAFCEE/ECE
3207 Sydney Brooks
Brooks AFB, Texas 78235
Fax 210-536-3890

29 oct 02

Dear Mr. Gauger,

Thank you for allowing my comments to be recorded regarding the Chemical Oxygen Iodine Laser, also known simple as the Airborne Laser which is due to be flight tested at Vandenberg AFB in 2003.

First, I am understandably disappointed that the Santa Maria Times and the Santa Barbara Press reported the ABL scoping meeting would be held on Wednesday, Oct 16, rather than its true date, Thursday, Oct. 17. Naturally few if anyone made it. Therefore, written comments from the public are especially meaningful.

1 | 7.7 Chemical lasers over the ocean cannot be considered environmental. True, mechanisms will be installed to keep the laser from striking anything but the target, but these measures can fail.

2 | 7.7 The storage, handling, and use of chemical lasers presents dangers to all life on the Central Coast. This project is highly unnecessary and presents a high risk for safety and health of our area.

This project is expensive. Billions of dollars will be required just to test this system. Both Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties struggle to maintain our healthcare, our schools, and necessary services. The contrast in wasteful spending that the COIL project provides is obscene.

3 | 13.5 Finally, according to Vandenberg AFB Space and Missile Times, October 25 issue, there will be an impact to local commercial and recreational fishing, especially below the Western Range. Ocean vessels must be notified in advance of potential hazards. Flight tests may require the closure of one or more of the state or national parks, thus disrupting activities in the area and calling to question environmental impact of these areas.

4 | 1.1 Please stop this project. Contrary to the headlines in the Santa Barbara County newspapers, we, the public, are not mum on missile defense.

Sincerely,

MBC

MB Cunney

Document 17

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Governor's Office of Planning and Research
State Clearinghouse

Gray Davis
Governor

Tal Finney
Interim Director

November 6, 2002

Ken Rock
U.S. Missile Defense Agency
7100 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-7100

Subject: Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, Airborne Laser Program
SCH#: 2002094002

Dear Ken Rock:

The State Clearinghouse submitted the above named Draft EIS to selected state agencies for review. The review period closed on November 5, 2002, and no state agencies submitted comments by that date. This letter acknowledges that you have complied with the State Clearinghouse review requirements for draft environmental documents, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act.

Please call the State Clearinghouse at (916) 445-0613 if you have any questions regarding the environmental review process. If you have a question about the above-named project, please refer to the ten-digit State Clearinghouse number when contacting this office.

Sincerely,

Terry Roberts

Terry Roberts
Director, State Clearinghouse

1400 TENTH S... (916)445-061... 12-3044