

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT FOR  
PROPOSED CONSTRUCTION OF A GROUND-BASED MIDCOURSE  
DEFENSE NORTHEAST REMOTE IN-FLIGHT INTERCEPTOR  
COMMUNICATION SYSTEM DATA TERMINAL**

**AGENCY:** Missile Defense Agency (MDA)

**ACTION:** Finding of No Significant Impact

**BACKGROUND:** The MDA has prepared the attached Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze the potential environmental consequences of building three In-Flight Interceptor Communication System Data Terminals (IDTs) at Fort Drum or Niagara Falls Air Reserve Station (ARS), New York.

Within the Department of Defense, the MDA is responsible for developing and fielding a Ballistic Missile Defense System (BMDS). The BMDS is designed to intercept threat missiles during all phases of flight: boost, midcourse, and terminal. Ground-Based Midcourse Defense (GMD) is an element of the BMDS, which employs Ground-Based Interceptors (GBIs) to intercept and destroy long-range ballistic missiles during the midcourse phase of their flight before their reentry into the Earth's atmosphere. The Proposed Action is needed to provide a communications link that will help guide the GBI to its target.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION:** The Proposed Action is to build three IDTs and an IDT Support Facility (ISFAC).

**PREFERRED IDT SITE**

Site 6 (Memorial Heights) at Fort Drum, New York, was determined to be the preferred site for the remote performance region IDT cluster. Site 6 is located on an existing dirt road and along a ridgeline near the eastern end of the cantonment (troop quarters) area of the installation. The proximity of this Site 6 to the main installation provides easy connection to utility and communications lines. In addition, the site has sufficient space for optimal placement of the IDT facility (a cluster of three IDT buildings, the ISFAC, and backup generators would require an area of approximately 6 to 7 hectares (14.9 to 17.5 acres) including a perimeter road and perimeter fencing). Although only one IDT would be built initially, this entire area would be cleared during construction, as the IDT antenna requires a clear line of site (LOS) above adjacent structures or natural objects. To ensure

LOS is maintained throughout the life of the program, an encroachment-free zone would be created and would require selective clearing of trees along the IDT perimeter fence for up to an additional 7 hectares (17.5 acres) of cleared area.

### **ALTERNATE IDT SITES**

During the evaluation process several alternate sites for IDT cluster fielding were identified. Although these sites did not rate as high as the preferred site during the site selection process, they are nonetheless viable sites that could possibly be used for the IDT and therefore were evaluated in the EA. These alternate sites include one site on Niagara Falls ARS, New York, and two other sites on Fort Drum.

### **ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED ACTION**

#### **No-Action**

The No-action Alternative would be to not proceed with the fielding of IDTs at any of the sites considered at Fort Drum or Niagara Falls ARS. For the potential sites being considered for IDTs, the No-action Alternative would be a continuation of activities currently occurring or planned at those locations.

#### **Alternative Sites Not Carried Forward for Analysis**

Several additional sites at Fort Drum and one site at Hancock Field, New York were considered for use as IDT locations. The Fort Drum sites were not carried forward for analysis in the EA because they ranked lowest in the siting study, and the Hancock field site had operational conflicts.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS**

#### **Methodology**

Fourteen resource areas were initially considered to provide a context for understanding the potential effects of the Proposed Action and to provide a basis for assessing the severity of potential impacts. Only eight of these areas have the potential for environmental impacts at the analyzed sites. These areas include air quality, airspace, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, land use, socioeconomics, and utilities. These resource areas were analyzed in the EA as applicable for each proposed location or activity.

Implementation of the Proposed Action at either Fort Drum or Niagara Falls ARS would not result in significant impacts to any of the resource areas listed above. All activities would be carried out in compliance with applicable Federal, state,

and local regulations and requirements. A summary of the impacts for the eight resource areas are described in the following paragraphs.

#### *Air Quality*

Facility construction and site preparation activities necessary for the Proposed Action would have a localized, minimal impact on air quality. It is anticipated that the proposed construction would not cause exceedances of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards or state standards and would not have a long-term impact to air quality in the Fort Drum or Niagara Falls ARS area. Backup generators would operate for up to 500 hours per year. It is anticipated that all emissions generated by the proposed generators would be included in current air permits at Fort Drum or Niagara Falls ARS and would not impact the regional air quality. \_\_\_\_\_

#### *Airspace*

No adverse impacts to air space above Fort Drum or Niagara Falls ARS are anticipated. Based on electromagnetic compatibility modeling of the IDT and coordination with the Joint Spectrum Center, Army Aviation Missile Command, Army Aeronautical Services Agency, and other cognizant activities, a no-fly area would be established at the IDT site, and would include the airspace within 213 meters (700 feet) of the IDT. At this distance, the energy produced by the maximum radiation of the IDT would be less than 200 volts per meter, a level safe for any civilian or military aircraft, fixed wing or rotorcraft. A weekly test schedule would be provided to insure aircraft avoid the area, minimizing potential impacts to airspace.

#### *Biological Resources*

Fort Drum Site 6 requires clearing of 7 hectares (17.5 acres) of primarily forest and deciduous/brush for the IDTs and facilities and selective clearing for LOS of an additional 7 hectares (17.5 acres) of primarily forest and deciduous/brush. Sites 1 and 7 would require clearing of 6.9 hectares (17 acres) of primarily landscaped and maintained areas for the IDTs and facilities, and selective clearing for LOS of an additional 4 hectares (9.9 acres) of primarily forest and deciduous/brush. The Niagara Falls ARS Site would require clearing of 6.9 hectares (17 acres) of primarily landscaped and maintained areas for the IDTs and facilities and no selective clearing for LOS. \_\_\_\_\_

#### *Cultural Resources*

An archaeological survey for Fort Drum Site 6 indicates there are no known prehistoric or archaeological resources within the areas of potential ground \_\_\_\_\_

disturbance. Sites 1 and 7 at Fort Drum are heavily disturbed from previous activities and the likelihood of historic properties is low. An archaeological survey would be conducted if Sites 1 or 7 were selected for the IDT. At Niagara Falls ARS, a base wide, Stage 1 archaeological survey report completed in February 2000, determined that none of the historic artifacts identified were considered culturally important and no further cultural resource investigations were recommended.

#### *Geology and Soils*

Potential impacts would be similar at the Fort Drum sites and at the Niagara Falls ARS site. Site preparation activities, such as fencing and construction of the IDTs, would result in minor, short-term impacts to soils. Stormwater permits would be obtained for construction activities, and Best Management Practices to prevent soil erosion would be implemented. Where trenching would be required for utility and communication routing, it would follow existing rights-of-way, resulting in short-term soil impacts. Operational activities, such as maintenance and testing of generators, would not affect geology and soils.

#### *Land Use*

Construction of the IDT and fencing for Fort Drum Site 6 would remove approximately 7 hectares (17.5 acres) of land from the training land use category. The training lands surrounding Site 6 could continue to be used. Locating the IDT at Fort Drum Site 1 would remove approximately 6.9 hectares (17 acres) from the industrial land use category. This represents approximately 10 percent of the industrial land use category on Fort Drum. The land adjacent to Site 1 could continue to be used for community facilities and buffer area. Locating the IDT at Fort Drum Site 7 would remove approximately 3.5 hectares (8.6 acres) from the buffer area land use category and 3.3 hectares (7.4 acres) from the troop housing land use category. This represents approximately 11 percent of the buffer area and 9 percent of the troop housing area. The land adjacent to Site 7 could continue to be used for troop housing, buffer area, and community facilities. At Niagara Falls ARS, construction of the IDT, fencing, and communication lines would be consistent with the existing land use. Approximately 6 hectares (14.9 acres) would be cleared for the IDT and perimeter fencing. The surrounding lands are primarily used as administrative space.

#### *Socioeconomics*

It is anticipated that construction and operation of the proposed IDTs at Fort Drum or Niagara Falls ARS would result in a small but positive economic benefit to the installation and surrounding region.

### *Utilities*

Water, wastewater, solid waste disposal, electricity, natural gas, and communication line installation would be required to support the proposed facilities. The construction and operation of the IDTs would not exceed any of the operational capabilities of the existing Fort Drum or Niagara Falls ARS water, wastewater, electricity, and natural gas systems. The potential increase in solid waste generated from the nominal increase in personnel would be minimal, and would not substantially increase demand on the capacity of existing landfills.

### **Cumulative Impacts**

Cumulative impacts are those that result when impacts of an action are combined with the impacts of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions at a given location. Cumulative impacts were considered for each resource area at each site. Cumulative impacts are similar at Fort Drum and Niagara Falls ARS. Minor cumulative impacts were identified for air quality due to short term construction emissions and testing of the backup power generators. Minor cumulative impacts were identified for biology due to the loss of less than 14 hectares (35 acres) of wildlife habitat. Geology and soils would also have minor cumulative impacts from soil erosion during construction activities. A small but positive economic impact to the local communities would result in a positive cumulative impact to socioeconomics. No cumulative impacts were identified for cultural resources, land use, or utilities at any of the potential sites.

**CONCLUSION:** The environmental analysis shows that no significant impact would occur from the Proposed Action to build three IDTs and an ISFAC at either Site 6 at Fort Drum or the Niagara Falls ARS. Preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, therefore, is not required. A follow-up action list will be developed and completed by the Executing Agent to ensure compliance with the actions described in the EA.

### **PUBLIC REVIEW**

A Public Notice was published in the Watertown Daily Times newspaper beginning 9 June 2004 to announce a 30-day public comment period. Copies of the Environmental Assessment and the Finding of No Significant Impact were made available for review upon request and at the at the Flower Memorial Library, Watertown, NY; the Gouverneur Public Library, Gouverneur, NY; the Lowville Free Library, Lowville, NY; and the Robert C. McEwen Library, Fort Drum, NY. Contact for comments: U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command, ATTN: SMDC-EN-V, Post Office Box 1500, Huntsville, AL 35807-3801, Fax: 256-955-5074. No comments were received during the public comment period of 9 June to 9 July 2004.

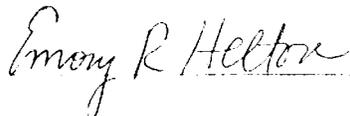
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NORTHEAST REMOTE IN-FLIGHT INTERCEPTOR COMMUNICATION  
SYSTEM DATA TERMINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

**AGENCY:** Missile Defense Agency (MDA)

**ACTION:** Finding of No Significant Impact

APPROVED:

FORT DRUM



DATE: 16 Jul 94

EMORY R. HELTON  
Colonel, Special Forces  
Garrison Commander

APPROVED:

MISSILE DEFENSE AGENCY



DATE: 26 July 2004

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