



Realistic Bomber Training Initiative Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (RBTI Draft Supplemental EIS)

Welcome to the Public Hearings

Sheryl Parker: Ladies and Gentlemen we would like to begin the formal portion of the public hearing meetings.

Thank you for coming this evening to the Public Hearing meeting for the Realistic Bomber Training Initiative Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement or to make it shorter the RBTI Draft Supplemental EIS.

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to the public hearing officer, Colonel Kirk Granier

Note: this starts the hearing officer brief.



RBTI Draft Supplemental EIS

Please send written comments to:

Ms. Sheryl Parker
RBTI Supplemental EIS Project Manager
HQ ACC/A7ZP
P.O. Box 65399
Langley AFB, VA 23665-5399

The hearing officer goes over his presentation while this slide stays up during this presentation.



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**Cooperating Agency:
Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)**

Slide 3 of the hearing officer brief: Representing the FAA is Ms. Nan Terry and Mr. Joe Yadouga from the FAA.



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Public Hearings are being held at:

Snyder, TX: Monday, December 5

Alpine, TX: Tuesday, December 6

Pecos, TX: Wednesday, December 7

Taos, NM: Friday, December 9

Sheryl Parker: Thank you Col. Granier and good evening ladies and gentlemen.

Thank you for coming to the RBTI Draft Supplemental EIS public hearings.

This week we are holding four meetings: three in west Texas and one in Taos, New Mexico—areas potentially affected by the RBTI proposal.



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Hearing Agenda

- Background of RBTI
- The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Process and the Supplemental EIS
- Draft Supplemental EIS Analysis Results
- Hearing Rules for Commenting
- Oral Comments

Good evening everyone. For the next few minutes, I'd like to provide you with some information about the Realistic Bomber Training Initiative. I'll cover the proposal itself, the original EIS prepared and the supplement that is out right now for public comment.

After my brief presentation, Colonel Granier will go over the how the public hearing will be conducted, to ensure that everyone who wants to has an opportunity to participate—this will be followed by your oral comments on the SEIS.

Before I start the official part of the briefing, I'd like to introduce you to the rest of the RBTI Public Hearing Team



RBTI Supplemental EIS

Introductions

Ms. Sheryl Parker, RBTI Supplemental EIS
Project Manager, Air Combat Command

Air Force Public Hearing Meeting Team

Headquarters Air Combat Command
Dyess AFB, Texas
Barksdale AFB, Louisiana

As I mentioned previously, my name is Sheryl Parker, Air Force project manager for this supplemental EIS.

I am joined by Lt. Brandon Pollachek, the public affairs officer at Dyess AFB in Abilene and Sr Airman Schenck, also with Dyess Public Affairs.

Airspace Managers from Dyess AFB and Barksdale AFB, and HQ Air Combat Command are also here, as well as B-1 pilot Capt Mark Hoffman and Electronic Scoring System POC, TSgt Musgrove.

We also have Mr. Mark Jurkovich from Wright Patterson AFB (during the Texas meetings), and Dr. Ojars Skujins from Wright Patterson AFB (during Taos, NM meeting).

Col. Granier our hearing officer, will facilitate the oral comments.



RBTI Draft Supplemental EIS Background

RBTI Provides:

- Combat and training units with realistic, integrated training using linked assets that simulate the conditions found in combat missions.
- Training assets closer to Barksdale and Dyess AFBs:
 - maximize combat training time,
 - reduce low-value transit time, and
 - train replacement aircrews within limited flying hour allocations.
- Training flexibility and variability supporting bomber combat mission requirements.

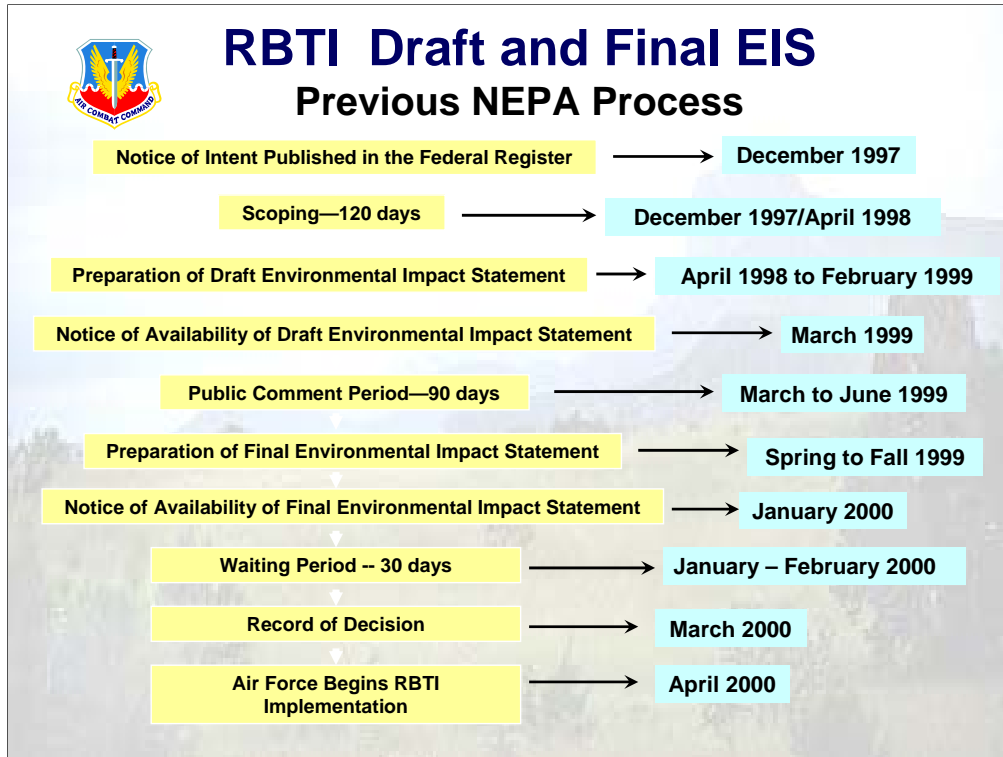
What exactly is the Realistic Bomber Training Initiative

This proposal was developed by the Air Force to provide airspace and an associated electronic scoring site system that could provide realistic, integrated training to closer to Barksdale and Dyess AFB. In order to be adequately prepared for battle time situations, we have to be able to train like we fight, This proposal would provide that level of training.

By bringing this training capability closer to the B-1 and B 52 bases, it would maximize combat training time, reduces transit time, and train aircrews within limited flying-hour allocations.

In summary, RBTI provides the training flexibility and variability that bombers need to conduct their combat training missions.

Now, I would like to review the background leading up to where we are now with the supplemental EIS process.



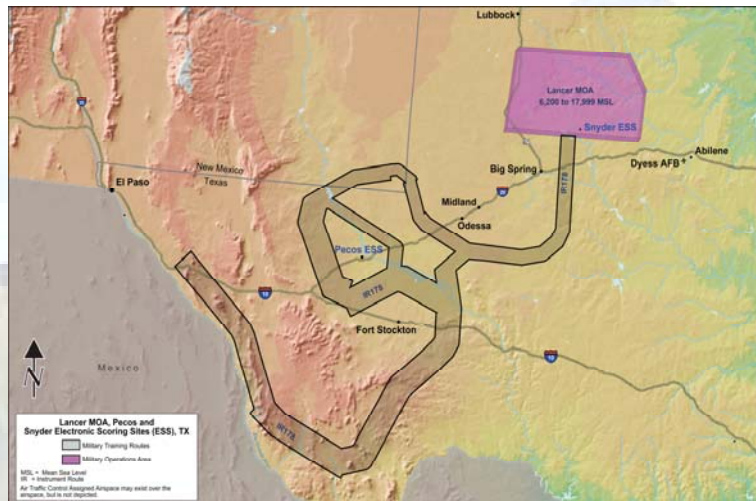
The National Environmental Policy Act requires that all federal agencies look at the potential impacts to human and natural environment prior to implementing a proposal. For the RBTI proposal, the AF accomplished the highest level of analysis, and Environmental Impact Statement.

This slide shows the initial RBTI Environmental Impact Analysis timeline. As you can see, it initiated in 1997 and ended in April 2000 with the AF implementing the proposal.

The FAA was also a cooperating agency during preparation of the initial RBTI EIS



Preferred Alternative: Revised Alternative B: IR-178/Lancer MOA



The initial RBTI EIS analyzed 3 alternatives to fulfill the realistic bomber training requirement.

Two alternatives were located in Texas and one in New Mexico

Exact locations of the airspace associated with these alternatives is depicted on one of the poster displays

The Air Force chose Alternative B as the preferred alternative.

This is still the Air Force preferred alternative.

Lancer Military Operations Area (MOA) and IR-178 (a military training route or MTR) are located almost entirely in western Texas.

This airspace is composed of more than 85 percent pre-existing airspace.

Under the RBTI proposal 10 emitter sites underlying both MOA and MTR airspace and 2 Electronic Scoring Sites—one in Pecos and one in Snyder, TX were also established.

These land-based assets were established on purchased or leased private lands across west Texas.

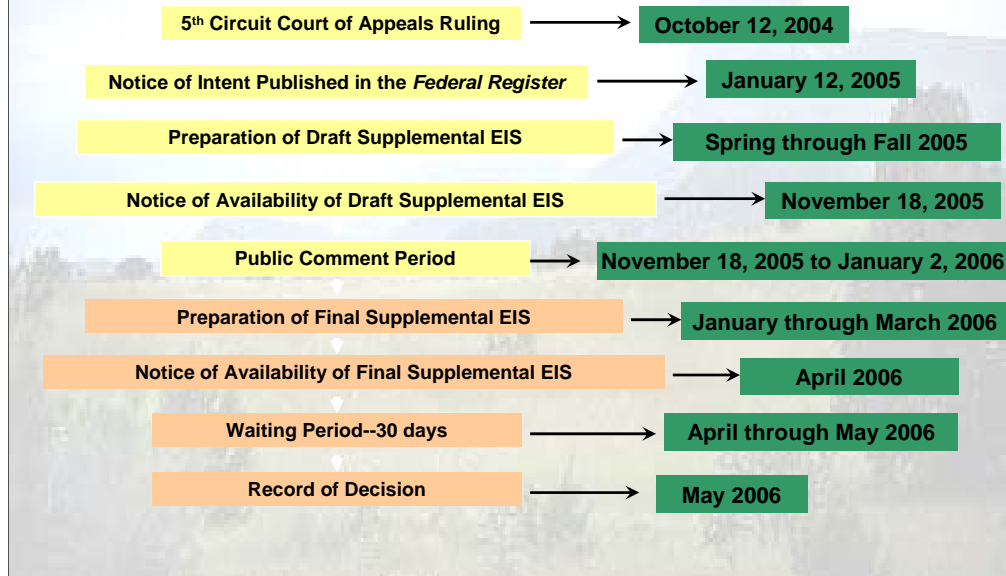
After the final RBTI EIS was published in January 2000, the Air Force issued a Record of Decision, identifying Alternative B for implementation.

In April 2000, the FAA conducted a formal aeronautical study and evaluation of the proposed Lancer MOA/IR-178.

Following the independent evaluation, the FAA adopted the above airspace



RBTI Draft Supplemental EIS Ongoing NEPA Process



In a lawsuit filed in March 2003 to challenge the RBTI, the United States District Court ruled in favor of the Air Force, noting that we had complied with NEPA and met its obligations.

Plaintiffs appealed this ruling, and in October 2004, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit required the Air Force to prepare a Supplemental EIS.

One of the plaintiffs also filed a separate petition in the Fifth Circuit alleging that the FAA had failed to comply with NEPA in approving the RBTI airspace.

In a single opinion covering both the Air Force and FAA cases, the Court of Appeals upheld the adequacy of the RBTI Final EIS in most respects, but “remanded the Air Force and FAA to prepare a Supplemental EIS which adequately addresses wake vortex impacts and the FAA comments as required by Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and Air Force regulations.

A Notice of Intent (or NOI) to prepare the RBTI Draft Supplemental EIS was published in the Federal Register January 2005 in response to the Court ruling. Preparation of the Draft Supplemental EIS (in cooperation with the FAA) began in the Spring of 2005 and resulted in publication of this document in November 2005.

We are now in the 45-day public comment period. Following receipt of comments, the Air Force will prepare the Final Supplemental EIS, including responses to relevant comments.

The Final Supplemental EIS availability will be announced in local newspapers and the Federal Register in Spring 2006.

Copies of this final document will be sent to those of you who already received a copy of the draft and/or have indicated this evening that you would



RBTI Draft Supplemental EIS

- Supplemental EIS shall be prepared, circulated, and filed in the same fashion (exclusive of scoping) as a draft and final EIS (40 CFR 1502.9(c)(4)).
- There is no required format for a supplemental EIS but it should address only those changes or new information that are the basis for preparing the supplement

Why and how is a Supplemental EIS prepared?

Regulations guiding supplemental EIS formulation are found in the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Title 40: Protection of the Environment; Chapter V: Council of Environmental Quality, Part 1502, section 9, as well as 32 CFR 989.20 (Air Force environmental guidelines).

This supplemental EIS will reflect an up-to-date consideration of the proposal's (i.e., RBTI) effects on the human and natural environment.

In our case, the Court has directed us to reevaluate two areas: wake vortex effects on structures and directly address FAA comments.



RBTI Draft Supplemental EIS

A wake vortex is:

- Generated from the wing tips
- A function of aircraft weight, speed, and wing span
- Influenced by atmospheric conditions, winds, and ground clutter

Although the original RBTI EIS addressed vortices generated by aircraft, the court required the Air Force to prepare further analysis. Therefore additional detail was provided in the Supplemental EIS on this subject.

What is a wake vortex and how is it generated.

As aircraft move through the air, they create vortices from their wing tips. A complex set of variables and conditions influence the behavior and persistence of vortices, including aircraft weight and size, wing span, wind and weather conditions, flight mode altitude, and speed.

Other factors also influence vortex behavior, including lateral movement, descent, and decay. Decay results in break up of a vortex.

Atmospheric conditions, particularly wind, cause vortices to break up faster and move laterally.



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Wake Vortex Effects

Wake vortices from B-52 and B-1B low-altitude flights, except under rare atmospheric and wind conditions, fail to generate sufficient wind speeds to damage ground structures and vehicles, or pose a hazard to people or animals on the surface. The conclusions presented in the Draft Supplemental EIS analysis include:

As presented in the SEIS, wake vortices from B-1 and 52 low altitude flights except under rare atmospheric and wind conditions to not generate wind speeds sufficient enough to damage ground structures or vehicles, or pose a hazard to people or animals on the surface.

The conclusions presented in the DEIS include: (go to next slide)



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Wake Vortex Effects *(cont.)*

- Most vortices would not reach ground level, but dissipate at a minimum height related to wing span;
- Atmospheric conditions and winds, like those common to west Texas [or this area of New Mexico], cause accelerated vortex decay and dissipation;

Most vortices would not reach ground level, but dissipate at a minimum height related to wing span

Vortices also sink at a rate of several hundred feet per minute, slowing and losing strength as they descend further.

As they descend, the vortex velocities decrease and the vortices decay and break up.

Usually, they break up in 1 to 2 minutes, depending on aircraft type.

[the bracketed words inserted for the Taos meeting to replace “west Texas”]



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Wake Vortex Effects *(cont.)*

- Vortices resulting from normal B-52 and B-1B operations would produce wind speeds of no more than 10 mph at the surface and 27 mph at 22 feet AGL;
- Under rare atmospheric and wind conditions, as well as a result of rapid climbs, or pull-ups by B-1Bs, an extremely low potential exists for vortices to decay more slowly and result in higher velocities; and
- Ground structures, persons, and animals in the area underlying IR-178 are consistently subject to average winds and winds gusts that exceed potential B-52 and B-1B vortex wind speeds.

Vortex analysis results associated with the B-52s and B-1Bs indicate that under normal flight and atmospheric conditions, the vortex strength would not cause structural damage at or near ground-level.

Common vortices could produce momentary ground-level gusts between 3 and 10 mph.

Under all standard operating conditions, the maximum velocities of vortex gusts would be 27 mph at 22 feet AGL and 27 mph at 66 feet AGL for the B-1B and B-52, respectively.

Again, comparison to the standard wind scales indicate that none of these vortex speeds would cause damage to structures, vehicles, animals, or people. Both gusts and average wind speeds in the affected areas are commonly greater than these vortex speeds.

Under the rare instance of a pull-up maneuver, vortex velocities could reach the levels where slight structural damage could occur.

However, Air Force aircraft are required to avoid structures by at least 500 feet.



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Wake Vortex Effects (cont.)

The probability of a vortex reaching the ground and affecting a structure would be minimal because:

- FAA rules require all aircrews, including the Air Force, to avoid persons, vessels, vehicles, and structures by at least 500 feet.
- Few aircrews receive authorization to fly below 500 feet AGL, limiting the potential for vortex effects on the ground.
- Only six segments of proposed IR-178 permit operation to 300 feet AGL, thereby reducing the area potentially subject to wake vortices.
- Aircrews would fly a maximum of 5% below 500 feet AGL further reducing potential vortex impacts.

Sheryl Parker: Just speak to the bullets.

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Aircrews would fly a maximum of 5% below 500 feet AGL further reducing potential vortex impacts.



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Response to FAA Comments

The RBTI Final EIS incorporated comments received from the FAA and the Supplemental EIS:

- Formally summarizes the FAA comments;
- Outlines the changes made in the original Final EIS and where they were made; and
- Provides responses to these comments.

In its decision, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals noted that Air Force regulations implementing NEPA require that an EIS include “responses to comments on the Draft EIS by modifying the text and referring in the appendix to where the comment is addressed or providing a written explanation in the comments section, or both”.

Treating the FAA’s informal aeronautical input as “comments on the Draft EIS,” the Court determined that the Air Force “responded to the FAA solely by modifying the text,” but failed to “refer in the appendix to where the FAA’s comments were addressed or provide any written explanation.”

The original Final EIS did analyze and address potential airspace impacts, devoting dozens of pages of discussion to the topic.

This Supplemental EIS, in compliance with the Court’s order, specifically identifies how and where the Air Force addressed the FAA’s aeronautical comments in the Final EIS.



RBTI Draft Supplemental EIS

In summary:

- The analysis and impacts presented in the original RBTI Final EIS on wake vortex effects to ground structures, people, and animals are similar to those conclusions drawn in the RBTI Draft Supplemental EIS.
- The FAA comments were incorporated into the RBTI Final EIS but are specifically addressed in the RBTI Draft Supplemental EIS.

The analysis and impacts presented in the original RBTI Final EIS on wake vortex effects to ground structures, people, and animals are similar to those conclusions drawn in the RBTI Draft Supplemental EIS.

The FAA comments were incorporated into the RBTI Final EIS but are specifically addressed in the RBTI Draft Supplemental EIS.



RBTI Draft Supplemental EIS

Please submit your written comments to:

Ms. Sheryl Parker

RBTI Supplemental EIS Project Manager

HQ ACC/A7ZP

P.O. Box 65399

Langley AFB, VA 23665-5399

Comment period closes on: January 2, 2006

Again, here is the address you should send any written comments.

At this point I would like to invite Col. Granier to begin the official comment period for the RBTI Supplemental EIS.