

DCN 3358  
Executive Correspondence

**RECEIVED**

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TO: Joe Barrett (fax: (703-699-2735)  
Senior Analyst

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Barrett", with a horizontal line underneath.

FROM: Hanson Scott  
Director, Office of Military Base Planning and Support  
State of New Mexico

SUBJECT: Background Paper for Admiral Gehman

Joe: here is the paper I used with the Admiral. Regarding Military Value, we found significant discrepancies/errors in these factors:

- a. ATC restrictions of operations.
- b. Proximity of airspace.
- c. Proximity of low level routes.
- d. Suitable auxiliary airfields within 50 nm.
- e. Access to suitable airspace.
- f. Range complex supporting mission.
- g. Buildable acres for industrial operations.
- h. Mobility/surge.
- i. Area cost.
- j. Encroachment

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**Talking Paper**  
**Governor Richardson visit with Admiral Gehman on the DOD BRAC recommendation to close Cannon AFB**

**Cannon AFB should not be recommended for closure for several reasons: Military Value, Encroachment, Future Missions, and Economic Impact,**

**Military Value:** Cannon AFB incorrectly received a low evaluation on military value

-- Cannon AFB has many characteristics that should result in a very high score that is realistic for current and future mission capabilities; Cannon's rural location and the lack of congestion from commercial or civil air traffic are extremely strong points. And, as everyone is aware, weather in eastern NM is an extremely positive factor in being able to get the mission done with 329 flying days a year.

--The proximity of the Melrose Range is clearly a strong factor in Cannon's military value; Cannon aircrews do not waste transiting to other ranges and training area, nor are Cannon aircrews frequently exposed to air traffic control problems and weather interference during range operations; we understand that is not the case at other fighter locations. The Melrose Range was recently described by Air Combat Command officials as the number one Range in their command.

--The New Mexico Team has the firm impression that several important pieces of data that were submitted by the Air Force in regard to "military value" actually pertained to the F-111 operations of some 12 years ago, and the information is not valid for F-16 operations; access to low level routes being a good example. We know that Cannon AFB has easy (close) access to several low level routes (both instrument and visual) that provide optimum training, and we are working to pin this data down more accurately.

--As frequently mentioned in the last few weeks, the New Mexico Training Range Initiative was not considered. I know you are very familiar with this issue, and I have read the transcript of the Air Force hearing with your Commission. It is my understanding that the Air Force and the FAA are very close to signing their Letter of Agreement, and we expect it to be completed by the date of the Regional Hearing.

--This initiative has been a high priority at the State level; my Military Base Planning Office facilitated the initial planning meetings with the FAA in 2003, and we also brought the airlines to Albuquerque to meet with the 27<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing in February 2004—at the Air Force's request. The Air Force Chief of Staff testified to the Congress a few weeks ago as to the absolute necessity of retaining all available range and air space. These assets have been deemed to be irreplaceable by Air Force leadership. Closure of this action will essentially double the air space available to Cannon AFB aircrews and other military users of their air space.

--Further, two significant military operating areas which are easily available to Cannon AFB aircrews were not included in the Air Force analysis—Talon and Mt. Dora.

--The New Mexico team has studied closely several other factors used in the overall military value weighting, such as auxiliary airfield availability and air traffic control restrictions to operations, and the resulting scores appear to be off the mark. Cannon AFB has the outstanding advantage of having a cross-wind runway, and by this Fall, will have three Instrument Landing System approaches available—the primary runway (04/22) and the crosswind runway (13/31).

--The cross-wind runway at Cannon provides the flexibility to accommodate unforeseen runway obstruction problems and unusual wind conditions; many high-use military installations are limited to a single runway operation system locations—Little Rock AFB (C-130s) and Dyess AFB (Air Force proposes moving all B-1s to Dyess, all C-130s to Little Rock). When Cannon AFB is compared to tactical bases with similar missions and a single runway operation, Cannon is not scored favorably

--As an aside, the Air Force has mentioned the utility of over-water ranges for air-to-ground training, and this is clearly an invalid comparison

--Cannon AFB has outstanding infrastructure, including runways, ramp space, and hangars. The 27<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing can hangar all their aircraft for example

--We discovered a gross error in the amount of acres suitable for industrial operations—over 350, contrast to the ten acres described in Air Force data

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### **Encroachment**

--Cannon AFB has **absolutely no encroachment**, either impacting the installation or the Military Operating Areas and Ranges. This is not the case with several other F-16 bases, for example including Luke AFB

--For the last couple of years, we frequently heard from DOD about the importance of avoiding encroachment, and I issued an Executive Order to underscore New Mexico's commitment to this important factor. The community has worked this issue hard in the vicinity of the base; and there will no development adjacent to Cannon AFB, for example

--Many bases have encroachment issues and noise restrictions, and these facts will only become more restrictive in the future.

--Cannon AFB has never, is not currently, and will not in the future have its military operations and training adversely impacted by encroachment. The local communities are committed to Cannon's unencumbered viability

### **Force Structure**

--Removing Cannon AFB from the F-16 force structure exacerbates the rotational base. All personnel supporting F-16 operations will be overseas (including Alaska) more than 50% of the time.

--If the F-16 force structure must be reduced, it might well be best to reassign overseas F-16s to Cannon AFB

### **Future Missions**

--Cannon AFB was not considered by the Joint Cross Service Group for training missions, e.g. Moody AFB, Columbus AFB, perhaps Luke AFB

--The New Mexico Training Range Initiative greatly enhances the State's and Cannon's training capability with the air space expansion and supersonic training environment very relevant to future weapon systems like the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF)

--Cannon has the current capacity to hangar its entire wing of aircraft and this capacity applies to every fighter or Unmanned Aerial Vehicle in the current and programmed inventories.

--Especially with increased beddown at Ft. Bliss, the opportunity for joint training operations and exercises in New Mexico ranges and air space is increased substantially

--Looking to the future, Cannon AFB offers a large, inland, secure base that can be used for deployment and contingency operations to anywhere in the world—AND the facilities, ramp space, and runway complex that can be expanded if needed

### **Economic Impact:**

--The Clovis and Portales community leaders are seriously concerned about the Air Force report of Economic Impact of closing Cannon AFB; the Economic Impact of a Cannon AFB Closure would be more than twice that of any other impacted community in the nation

--For example, the annual growth rate in eastern New Mexico over the past decade is only 2%. An economic impact perhaps approaching a 30% reduction in the number of jobs imposed by the closure of Cannon AFB would result in a non-recovery classification for this community. This action would be too harsh for a community that has responded to every need expressed by the Air Force for over 60 years.