

7/5/2005

May 30, 2005

The Honorable Anthony J Principi, Chairman
BRAC Commission
2521 South Clark Street, Suite 600
Arlington, Virginia 22202

Dear Chairman Principi:

I was shocked to learn of the Department of Defense's recommendation to close Cannon Air Force Base.

I read with great interest the selection criteria for Base Realignment and Closure and the reasons given by the Department of Defense (DOD) to support the closure of Cannon AFB. Not only do I believe that the reasons are flawed, I also believe that Cannon AFB does not fit the criteria for base closure and that the DOD failed to make the BRAC Commission fully aware of some important information to be considered.

The DOD gives priority consideration for BRAC to military value, therefore allow me to emphasize some important information that the BRAC commission may not have been made aware of, specifically regarding the New Mexico Training Range Initiative (NMTRI). Developed by Colonel Robert Yates, former Commander of the 27th Fighter Wing at Cannon AFB, the NMTRI is a proposal to provide more realistic training opportunities for the 27th Fighter Wing and the New Mexico Air National Guard in Cannon Air Force Base managed airspace. The NMTRI includes modifying existing airspace, creating new airspace, authorizing supersonic flight at medium altitudes, and expanding the use of defensive countermeasures into the new and modified airspace. The resulting airspace would allow pilots to train in the full range of missions and tactics they require to prepare for combat. The NMTRI is a collaboration between the New Mexico Economic

Development Department's Office for Military Base
Planning, the Federal Aviation Administration, and the Air
Force. Years of work have been put into the NMTRI, by
both the Air Force and the State of New Mexico.

RECEIVED
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Implementation of the NMTRI is a key component of national defense. It is my belief that the pending approval of the NMTRI would have significant impact of the DOD's first criterion for Base Closure and Realignment, which is listed as: The current and future mission capabilities and the impact on operational readiness of the total force of the DOD, including the impact on joint warfighting, training and readiness.

The second criterion, "The availability and condition of land, facilities, and associated airspace (including training areas suitable for maneuver by ground, naval, or air forces throughout a diversity of climate and terrain areas and staging areas for the use of the Armed Forces in homeland defense missions) at both existing and potential receiving locations" should also have greater consideration. Cannon AFB has an abundance of air space and no encroachment issues. The communities surrounding Cannon AFB are in part responsible for that. In the early 90's, Curry County and the state of New Mexico purchased air easements around Cannon AFB and gave them to the Air Force. The local community also purchased the land north of Cannon AFB and gave it to the Air Force for additional housing, now known as Chavez Manor. Our community also purchased land west of Cannon AFB and again gave it to the Air Force for the installation of instrument lighting on the alternate runway. Not only is there availability of land and airspace, it is being given to the Air Force by the state and local communities.

One of the reasons and the seventh criterion given by the DOD dealt with the economic impact on the communities surrounding Cannon AFB. The DOD suggests there would be a maximum potential reduction of 4,780 jobs, both direct and indirect. A recent Economic Impact Study indicated that almost 7,000 jobs, both direct and indirect, result from Cannon AFB operations. As you can see there is a marked difference in the numbers.

I implore you to vote to overturn the recommendation and remove Cannon from the BRAC list.

Sincerely,

Albert Cruz

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Mary Mc Couston, Armaillo, TX 79107

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Pat Cupell
Amador IV

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Kelly W. Hill
County Commissioner

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