

Robert and Sandra Matheny
1411 South Abilene
Portales, NM 88130
(505) 359-0561

The Honorable Samuel Skinner
BRAC Commission
2521 South Clark Street, Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

05312005

Dear Commissioner Skinner:

I seldom take the time to write governmental leaders when I disagree with their actions, but the initial decision to close Cannon Air Force Base strikes me as ill advised and untimely.

I have not experienced a time in our history since World War II when this nation has been under greater threat. The Administration is pursuing an aggressive foreign policy that has uncovered actual or potential enemies across the globe. From Iraq to Iran to North Korea to Indonesia, and even China, we could be engaged in other wars at the drop of a hat. Although modernization of our forces is one reason given for the closing of bases, this is not a good time to even hint at a decrease in our military readiness.

Cannon AFB in particular is strategically positioned to provide training for our defense in this perilous time. For many years, the communities of Clovis and Portales have maintained a positive, welcoming relationship with Cannon people. Base commanders have shared with me that the relationship is unusual compared to attitudes experienced in other base/town relationships; some communities hope the bases will leave. The morale of Cannon's people has been immensely enhanced by the relationship.

An extensive bombing range and restricted air space complemented by weather that seldom prohibits flying gives Cannon an advantage few bases enjoy. Cannon has received high marks for quality and is recognized for cost effectiveness and efficiency in accomplishing its mission.

I know that the economic, social and cultural impact on eastern New Mexico is not a part of your consideration, but there are many bases located in or near metropolitan areas that would only marginally be affected with the loss of a base. Some would care little whether their bases stay or close.

You have a difficult task ahead. I encourage you to carefully consider all of the comparative data before making your final decision. Cannon is an invaluable asset for our defense.

Sincerely,



Robert L. Matheny
President Emeritus,
Eastern New Mexico University

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General Lloyd W. Newton
BRAC Commission
2521 South Clark Street, Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Commissioner Newton

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General James T. Hill
BRAC Commission
2521 South Clark Street, Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202

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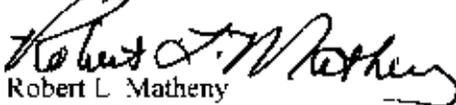
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