



Mr. Anthony J. Principi  
Chairman, 2005 BRAC COMMISSION  
2521 South Clark St. Suite 600  
Arlington, VA 22202

May 17, 2005

Dear Mr. Principi:

Greetings in the Lord!

I am writing in reference to the proposed closing of Cannon Air Force Base, at Clovis, New Mexico. I want to express to you how absurd this decision seems to me in relation to the criteria guidelines laid out for 2005 Base Closure and Realignment by Michael W. Wynne, Chairman of the Infrastructure Steering Group.

I am the pastor of Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Clovis, New Mexico, and about 1/4 of the families that we serve are affiliated with the Base.

I believe that it would be a great loss to the military and to the safety and security of our country, if Cannon Air Force Base was to close.

In regard to military value I propose:

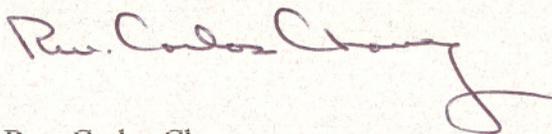
1. The weather in Eastern New Mexico is ideal. The military planes fly as many as 350 days a year because of the nice weather. There are no commercial airports within a 100 mile radius of Cannon Air Force Base, and so there is no conflict with air traffic other than a small municipal airport that accommodates private or smaller planes. As I understand, training is an essential element to the readiness of the Air Force to do its mission and, as such, is not in any way hindered or impeded due to external forces like, bad weather, complaints of residents due to noise, serious encroachment difficulties, or a community that does not want or support the Air Force and its mission.
2. Safety in my mind is an essential element that I believe is critical to the mission of the Air Force. If an accident was to happen during training, it is likely that the casualties would be kept to a minimum due to the fact that civilian encroachment is not a major problem as it is at many

of the other Air Force Bases. The surrounding area is ranch land so there are no major populated areas. Cannon Air Force Base provides miles and miles of air space for training without having to worry about issues of vast amounts of casualties if an accident was to happen.

3. There is endless room for the expansion of the facility surrounding the base and bombing range without concern of encroachment by population.
4. If my information is correct, twenty-seven percent of the fighters in the Iraq war came from Cannon AFB and there was not a single plane lost or even one casualty. They have a reputation for safety and excellence.
5. Due to the enthusiastic support of the community that Cannon Air Force Base enjoys it seems that the mission of the Air Force does not have to remain fixed and static. Since F - 16's are being retired, it seems that transition would not be impossible if the mission were to change and another plane needed to be brought in.
6. Clovis loves the military base, and is very committed to working with the Air Force to make it a win-win situation for the betterment of Clovis, and the Air Force as well. The Hospital in the city has just gone through major reconstruction in order to better serve both communities. The Community College is committed to serving the needs of the military personnel as well as the community at large. All of our schools in Clovis, and city services have major commitments in helping the Cannon Air Force Base to fare well in this location. In fact, a New Fire Department facility has been built in the north side of the City, where a major portion of the military personnel live. I don't believe that you can find another city in the country that has as much interest and commitment to the Air Force, as we do here in Clovis. I have never once, in the time I have served here, been to any public meeting where the concerns of Cannon were not taken into consideration. Our City and County Officials are always very cognizant of the needs of the Base, and open to expressing this and taking it into consideration whenever change is being considered.

In closing, I know that when you and the other members of your Commission come to Clovis, you will see for yourselves how wonderful this community really is and what an ideal location it is for an Air Force Base. You have to see this area and set foot in Clovis to really comprehend and understand what an asset Cannon Air Force Base is and what a catastrophic loss it would be economically for this area if it is closed. May God bless you in your discerning process of making wise decisions for the safety and well being of our country. Thank you for your consideration of this letter. In the peace of our God.

Sincerely Yours,



Rev. Carlos Chavez  
Pastor