



BRAC Commission

August 19, 2005

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Received

The Honorable James T. Hill
Commissioner
Defense Base Closure
& Realignment Commission
2521 S. Clark Street, Suite 600
Arlington, VA 22202-3920

Dear Commissioner Hill:

During the Cannon AFB site visit and Regional Hearing in June, there were a number of questions related to Cannon's role in joint training. I would appreciate your thoughts on the attached White Paper. We believe this paper raises real issues regarding the strategic shift in gravity of forces to the southwest United States and their requirements for robust joint training.

Again, we appreciate your dedication to the BRAC process and your willingness to raise these important issues regarding Cannon AFB.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R Harris", written in a cursive style.

Randy Harris
Chairman, Committee of Fifty

Attachment (1) Joint Concept Paper
CC: Mr. David Combs

**Talking Points: Cannon AFB's Role
Concept for Joint Operations and Training as the Army and Air Force
Undergo Transformation**

- Cannon Air Force Base (AFB) is an ideal aviation facility for which the Military Capabilities Index (MCI) and true Military Value were not properly evaluated because incorrect, incomplete and misleading data were scored through a flawed Air Force process.
- If data were properly reported and evaluated, Cannon would score well with respect to “Composite Integrated Force Training” because of its own assets and other Service (U.S. Army) military installations in the region.
- Of the six distinctive capabilities¹ of the Air Force, precision engagement is most relevant to fighter units training with Army units. Specifically, Air Interdiction (AI) and Close Air Support (CAS) are essential to joint operations and training including air and ground forces. CAS would typically be worked with a Forward Air Controller – Airborne (FAC-A) or a ground-based Tactical Air Control Party (TACP).
- Cannon’s current F-16 operational mission or any potential fighter aircraft; its location; its un-encroached range complexes and unrestricted airspace for military training are invaluable assets for the mission and training requirements of the transforming future Army. Many training requirements will be generated by the region’s major Army installations: Fort Bliss near El Paso, Texas; Fort Sill near Lawton, Oklahoma; Fort Carson near Colorado Springs, Colorado; and Fort Hood near Killeen, Texas.
- The geographical proximity of Cannon AFB allows the Air Force greater flexibility, value and versatility in training with the Army. For example, the northeast boundary of Fort Bliss’ McGregor Range is about 155 NM southwest of Cannon; Fort Sill’s range, by comparison, is about 220 NM due east of Cannon; Fort Carson is about 270 NM to the northwest, and Fort Hood is about 340 NM to the southeast.
- Proximity to Fort Bliss makes joint training from Cannon AFB both realistic and useful without “out-and-back” scenarios² or aerial refueling. Fort Sill can also be supported in a similar fashion, but time on station is reduced because of the greater distance.
- The greater distances to Fort Carson and Fort Hood, while supportable from Cannon AFB for joint operations and training, would require aerial refueling or out-and-back operations for effective resource utilization and meaningful training.
- Given the Army’s military value ranking of its 97 installations, the four Army installations (Forts Bliss, Sill, Hood and Carson) are in the top 19 installations of 97 ranked by the Army, and Fort Bliss is ranked number one and is well within a routine operating radius for aircraft

¹ The distinctive capabilities flowing from the Air Force’s vision and core competencies are air and space superiority, global attack, rapid global mobility, precision engagement, information superiority and agile combat support.

² Aircraft would launch from Cannon AFB, transit to the training range, complete the mission and recover at a nearby suitable airfield. Aircraft would be refueled and serviced, launch for another mission and recover at Cannon AFB.

based at Cannon AFB. The four Army installations also will be home to approximately 30% (13 Brigade Combat Teams/Units of Action—BCT/UA) of the Army's ground maneuver force, a Corps Headquarters (25% of active Army inventory) at Fort Hood and four Division headquarters (1 at Forts Carson and Bliss and 2 at Fort Hood). The four Division Headquarters are 40% (4 of 10) of the Army's command and control elements for maneuver forces.

- Fort Bliss is scheduled to receive the 1st Armored Division and its four BCT/UAs; various echelons above division units from Germany and Korea; maneuver battalions; and a support battalion and aviation units from Fort Hood over the 2006 -2011 time period. Fort Bliss is projected to gain 15,918 military positions and 370 civilian positions.
- Relocating 1st Armored Division units and echelon above division units to Fort Bliss will transform it from an institutional training installation into a major, mounted-maneuver training installation. Future significant training requirements are well supported by excess training capacity. The historic use of Ft Bliss as a JNTC site underscores the significant potential for exercising joint operations.
- Cannon AFB would be one of the few active Air Force installations in either New Mexico or Texas capable of providing fighter support for CAS operations and training.
- *McGregor Range* is integral to the Fort Bliss complex and is well suited to joint CAS operations. Cannon AFB based assets will be routinely able to spend 20 to 30 minutes on station on typical training sorties. McGregor Range Base Camp is also home to the Army Combined Arms Support Battalion.
- The northern area of the McGregor Range complex includes the Wilde Benton airstrip. Wilde Benton is a 7,800 foot, hard-packed airstrip capable of handling aircraft up to and including C-130s and C-17s. Coupled with the six Nap-Of-the-Earth (NOE) helicopter training courses and the Cane Cholla helicopter gunnery range, McGregor provides the Army an outstanding training environment which is further enhanced by the capability to utilize Air Force assets as well.
- Fort Sill and its emerging Air Defense Artillery (ADA) mission (the ADA School is recommended to move from Fort Bliss to Fort Sill in BRAC 2005) and proximity to Cannon AFB offers training opportunities for both Army and Air Force assets. Aircraft based at Cannon AFB can periodically offer a realistic threat array to ADA units, and the aircraft can simultaneously practice threat avoidance maneuvers.
- Forts Carson and Hood offer similar opportunities for joint training. However, training missions from Cannon AFB must utilize aerial refueling or conduct out-and-back operations.
- Proximity to and utilization of Army range facilities by Cannon AFB-based assets increase joint understanding between Services and emphasize combined operations through joint training missions. This approach to future contingency operations is a necessity, and it can be exercised whenever needed or desired by maneuver and CAS air assets at Forts Bliss, Sill, Carson and Hood and Cannon AFB.