

May 28, 2005

Adm. (Ret.) Harold W. Gehman Jr.  
BRAC Commission  
2521 S. Clark St.  
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Adm. Gehman:

I was shocked and perplexed when I learned that Cannon Air Force Base is on the BRAC list, slated for closure. I had understood, perhaps erroneously, that the criteria for evaluation of military value included encroachment, airspace, community support, and the economic effect of closure or realignment on the local community. Unlike other bases that will be gaining personnel, expanded missions, or both, Cannon Air Force Base has **NO** encroachment issues. In fact the exact opposite is true. The base could expand 7 miles before reaching Clovis and almost 15 miles before reaching Portales. As for airspace, the base is just minutes away from the Melrose Bombing Range, providing a superb opportunity for pilot training. Efforts have been underway for the past two years to have that airspace designated supersonic to further enhance that training.

The community support for the base in Clovis and Portales is unparalleled, in my opinion, in any branch of the military service. The Committee of Fifty has been actively supporting the Air Force and its presence at Cannon Air Force Base for half a century. This support extends far, far beyond attending dinners and other functions at the base. The Committee has worked tirelessly to make this base a jewel among the services, as evidenced by the acquisition and donation of the land necessary to extend Cannon's run ways. The Committee has worked with the New Mexico Congressional delegation to ensure that funding was included in the federal budget for numerous construction projects at Cannon, such as the new fire station, control tower and paving the runways. For years, the Committee and the Clovis-Curry County Chamber of Commerce have hosted base personnel of all levels and their families at an annual cook-out, Cannon Appreciation Days. For the past three years, members of the Committee have donated additional money to purchase door prizes to be given away in drawings to those in attendance. The prizes filled a flat bed trailer and included bicycles, patio furniture, X boxes, DVD players, and big screen TVs. The Committee has been working diligently with the Air Force and the FAA to establish supersonic airspace for the base. Add to that the fact that the base enjoys well over 300 days of perfect flying weather every year and perhaps you can begin to understand why I was perplexed by the announcement.

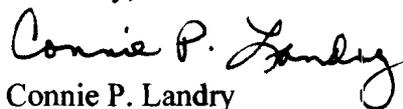
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The other criterion that was seemingly disregarded during the evaluation was the economic impact on Clovis and Portales. Local and state officials have analyzed this issue and have projected that closing Cannon Air Force Base would result in a loss of 20% of the jobs in the Clovis market. I work at a small, independent bank with its main office in Clovis and a branch in Portales. My CEO and board of directors have asked me to develop a plan to address the anticipated reduction in income. That plan includes the elimination of 3 to 4 employees out of our present staff of 20. We are already seeing adverse effects on the economy, just because we are on the list. Housing starts had been robust for the past two years. Contractors have now virtually shut down new construction. Real estate sales, which had also been strong for the past two years, have declined significantly, with sales contracts being cancelled following the release of the BRAC list. Needless to say, this is only the tip of the iceberg. The Clovis economy had just begun to rebound from the effects of a prolonged drought. I fear that will be nothing when compared to the depth and breadth of the impact of the base closure. While other military installations around the nation would be readily absorbed by their surrounding cities and towns, the facilities at Cannon would likely succumb to the ravages of time and the environment before they would be adequately utilized for some other purpose.

I appreciate the fact that the commission will be holding one of its regional meetings in Clovis on June 24<sup>th</sup>. I urge all nine members of the commission to attend this meeting. Only by seeing the facilities currently at Cannon, seeing the potential for expansion and better utilization of those facilities, and experiencing the support of people in Clovis and Portales will you be able to fully appreciate that Cannon Air Force Base is indeed a jewel that should be kept to continue to play a vital role in the security of the United States.

Sincerely,

  
Connie P. Landry

May 28, 2005

Mr. Philip Coyle  
BRAC Commission  
2521 S. Clark St.  
Arlington, VA 22202

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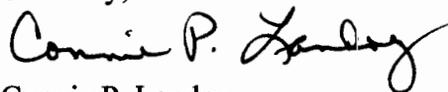
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Connie P. Landry

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Rep. James H. Bilbray  
BRAC Commission  
2521 S. Clark St.  
Arlington, VA 22202

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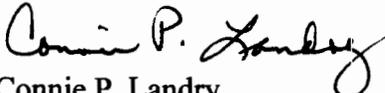
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Connie P. Landry

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Anthony J. Principi  
BRAC Commission  
2521 S. Clark St.  
Arlington, VA 22202

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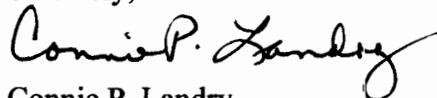
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2521 S. Clark St.  
Arlington, VA 22202

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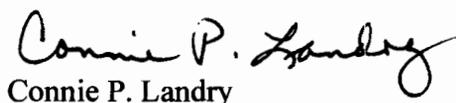
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The community support for the base in Clovis and Portales is unparalleled, in my opinion, in any branch of the military service. The Committee of Fifty has been actively supporting the Air Force and its presence at Cannon Air Force Base for half a century. This support extends far, far beyond attending dinners and other functions at the base. The Committee has worked tirelessly to make this base a jewel among the services, as evidenced by the acquisition and donation of the land necessary to extend Cannon's run ways. The Committee has worked with the New Mexico Congressional delegation to ensure that funding was included in the federal budget for numerous construction projects at Cannon, such as the new fire station, control tower and paving the runways. For years, the Committee and the Clovis-Curry County Chamber of Commerce have hosted base personnel of all levels and their families at an annual cook-out, Cannon Appreciation Days. For the past three years, members of the Committee have donated additional money to purchase door prizes to be given away in drawings to those in attendance. The prizes filled a flat bed trailer and included bicycles, patio furniture, X boxes, DVD players, and big screen TVs. The Committee has been working diligently with the Air Force and the FAA to establish supersonic airspace for the base. Add to that the fact that the base enjoys well over 300 days of perfect flying weather every year and perhaps you can begin to understand why I was perplexed by the announcement.

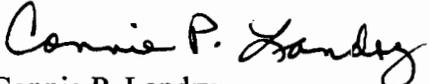
As I tried to understand the decision, I could only conclude that it will be easy to close Cannon. Admittedly, it has a very small mission, one seemingly of little military value. After all, what do 4 squadrons of aging F-16 aircraft add to the equation? One could

presume not much, but I offer another viewpoint. I believe it was these same F-16's that made strategic air strikes during the Gulf War, helping to win that war in a matter of days and with no US casualties. It was these same F-16s that conducted highly successful bombing raids in Baghdad during the current war. Yes, I understand that these planes could easily be absorbed by some other base. But that would, in my opinion, be very short-sighted. I agree that we need to modernize our military force structure and reduce spending. However, I think this action should be taken with an eye to the future. We should be asking questions such as: Where can we expand military operations without encroachment and without alienating the civilian population? Where can we get the most from our training and development dollars? Cannon Air Force Base ranks at the top of the list of answers to those questions, with the added bonus that the community **WANTS** the base here and the weather is exceptionally good for virtually any type of military operation the Air Force, the Army, and the Marines could undertake. Even the Navy could use the facilities at Cannon for flight training.

The other criterion that was seemingly disregarded during the evaluation was the economic impact on Clovis and Portales. Local and state officials have analyzed this issue and have projected that closing Cannon Air Force Base would result in a loss of 20% of the jobs in the Clovis market. I work at a small, independent bank with its main office in Clovis and a branch in Portales. My CEO and board of directors have asked me to develop a plan to address the anticipated reduction in income. That plan includes the elimination of 3 to 4 employees out of our present staff of 20. We are already seeing adverse effects on the economy, just because we are on the list. Housing starts had been robust for the past two years. Contractors have now virtually shut down new construction. Real estate sales, which had also been strong for the past two years, have declined significantly, with sales contracts being cancelled following the release of the BRAC list. Needless to say, this is only the tip of the iceberg. The Clovis economy had just begun to rebound from the effects of a prolonged drought. I fear that will be nothing when compared to the depth and breadth of the impact of the base closure. While other military installations around the nation would be readily absorbed by their surrounding cities and towns, the facilities at Cannon would likely succumb to the ravages of time and the environment before they would be adequately utilized for some other purpose.

I appreciate the fact that the commission will be holding one of its regional meetings in Clovis on June 24<sup>th</sup>. I urge all nine members of the commission to attend this meeting. Only by seeing the facilities currently at Cannon, seeing the potential for expansion and better utilization of those facilities, and experiencing the support of people in Clovis and Portales will you be able to fully appreciate that Cannon Air Force Base is indeed a jewel that should be kept to continue to play a vital role in the security of the United States.

Sincerely,

  
Connie P. Landry

May 28, 2005

Gen. (Ret.) Lloyd "Fig" Newton  
BRAC Commission  
2521 S. Clark St.  
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Gen. Newton:

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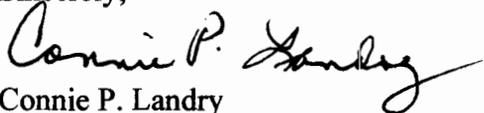
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Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Sue Ellen Turner  
BRAC Commission  
2521 S. Clark St.  
Arlington, VA 22202

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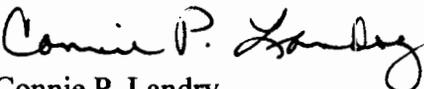
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