

JUL 13 2005

Received

**Russell Parker**  
1417 Belvidere St  
El Paso, TX 79912-1802  
(915) 581-1407  
rparker2@elp.rr.com

July 8, 2005

Honorable Kay Bailey Hutchinson  
222 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Hutchinson

We in the El Paso area greatly appreciate the support you have provided for Fort Bliss over the years and look forward to it continuing.

The recently released BRAC proposal for Fort Bliss will be a great boon to the post and to the El Paso area. However, there is one portion that I find unfathomable, and that is the proposal to transfer the US Army Air Defense School and associated elements to Fort Sill, Oklahoma. To me, that makes no sense at all. It would be more reasonable to me to do the reverse!

During almost 60 years, Army air defense and its soldiers have built Fort Bliss and this region into the "Home of Army Air Defense, and an untold number of Allies have considered it such and still see it as such. It has an outstanding international reputation and international agreements, not the least of which is one with Germany. Thousands of Allied soldiers from numerous countries have trained here on various air defense weapon systems, performed technical and tactical 'wring out' (including firing on the nearby ranges) of systems their countries have purchased from the USA, and deployed them across the world.

I participated in both Nike Ajax and Nike Hercules 'package training' at Fort Bliss, trained with new troops, checked out the systems, and fired them at Red Canyon range and McGregor range prior to deployment in defense of this country. There is no other location in the USA where the Army (and our Allies) can train, and fire all their weapons. As you may know, the White Sands Missile Range, Holloman Air Force Base, and Fort Bliss air space is the largest DOD controlled airspace in the world. Because of this, over the years, it has been involved in many Joint, Combined, and International maneuver, air, and air defense exercises orchestrated by the Air Defense School.

Germany co-located their Air Defense School at Fort Bliss years ago to take advantage of the same facilities and capabilities I have mentioned. I find it hard to believe they would move all their people to Fort Sill.

The Air Defense School includes the combat development and the training development aspects of air defense, as well as the tactics development. Moving all of this (some people say, "well, its only about 4500 people") would completely gut air defense, and Fort Bliss probably would no longer be remotely associated with air defense, except to provide firing ranges to which everyone would have to come from afar in order to train on, 'wring out', and validate new air defense weapon systems.

JUL 13 2005  
Received

There is no symbiosis in co-location of air defense artillery and field artillery. There are many more operational differences than similarities between the ground fires of field artillery and the overhead protective fires of air defense artillery. These differences mainly lie in command and control, communications, interoperability (joint and combined forces), and logistics; and are driven by the speed, altitude and direction of threat missiles and aircraft. Threat attack profiles and the location of our high-value assets dictate the employment of a distributed and layered mix of air defense systems and units throughout the depth and breadth of the Theater of Operations. The proposed move will be disruptive and costly, with no operational advantage to Field Artillery, Air Defense Artillery, the Army, or the Theater CINCs.

The great disruption of such a proposed move will be caused by having to relocate hundreds of sophisticated electronic trainers, simulators, etc. The greatest problem will be, that although the military personnel will go where they are reassigned, the highly qualified and almost indispensable civilian technicians are most likely not to! That will be a tremendous obstacle to overcome in the difficult re-establishment of everything air defense at Fort Sill. I speak from experience concerning the unwillingness of civilian personnel to move.

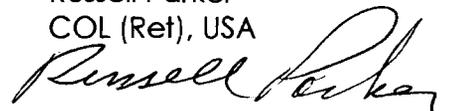
When the Army divided DARCOM into 'research and development' and 'support' in the 1970s, I was the Project Manager for the Air Defense Gun project at Rock Island Arsenal, Illinois. We were told that the Project Office had to move to Picatinny Arsenal, New Jersey since now the program would be monitored by the 'support side' of DARCOM. Less than 10% of the highly qualified civilians (who had a wealth of historical knowledge concerning the program and its ins and outs) agreed to move. This had a deleterious effect on continuity of the program. I anticipate the same thing happening if the Air Defense School is moved. It will take years to recover to the level of competence currently achieved at Fort Bliss. In addition, the current array of defense contractors who are in El Paso to support air defense with their highly trained technical staffs would not stay in the El Paso area, thus greatly depleting the technical job market for the El Paso area. Frankly, having lived in Lawton Oklahoma, I have great difficulty visualizing any personnel having much eagerness to relocate from the El Paso area to Lawton.

Succinctly summing up: To relocate air defense away from their best testing and training area does not make sense economically or militarily. El Paso and Fort Bliss can easily support the new maneuver units BRAC proposes to station here as well as the Air Defense Center and School and their associated air defense units.

Please do whatever you can to help the BRAC folks understand what kind of an impact moving "just some 4500 personnel" would have on the Fort Bliss/El Paso/Las Cruces/Alamogordo communities. If 4500 people must be moved, the Air Defense School is not the group to move!

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,  
Russell Parker  
COL (Ret), USA



JUL 13 2005

Received

Russell Parker  
1417 Belvidere St  
El Paso, TX 79912-1802  
(915) 581-1407  
rparker2@elp.rr.com

July 8, 2005

Mr. Anthony J. Principi  
Chairman, 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission  
2521 S. Clark Street, Suite 600  
Arlington, VA 22202

Dear Mr. Principi,

Enclosed for your information is a copy of a letter on BRAC implications (as I see them) that I have sent to the Texas and New Mexico Senators and to Representative Reyes, as well as to Governor Perry and the Mayor of El Paso, Texas.

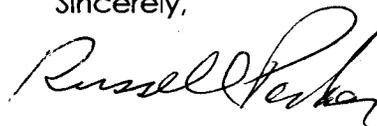
I would hope that the Commissioners have really dug into all of the far-reaching aspects relating particularly to the Air Defense School proposed move.

As a former Director of Combat Developments at the Air Defense School, I have a much deeper understanding and feeling for what I see as an extremely disastrous outcome, if a final decision is made to move the School.

I thank you for your consideration.

1 incl  
a/s

Sincerely,



Russell Parker  
COL (Ret), USA