



May 30, 2005

Dear Admiral Harold W. Gehman, Jr.:

I write to you today about the possible closure of Cannon Air Force Base. I was born in Portales, New Mexico and have spent nearly all my summers there as a child. I still have family there that I visit often. Portales and Clovis *are* the all-American cities of the southwest.

I've laid in the tall grasses outside of Canon Air Force Base and watched the many different types of planes that have flown there over the years. I've sat in on my grandmother's English classes that she taught for over a decade at the base, and I've seen many friends get married there. I've seen the integral relationships between the base and the people of Portales and Clovis. I know what a gem it is to these communities and the hope that the base brings to the heart of them. All of these are sentimental reasons to keep the Cannon Air Force Base open. Realistically, the closure of this base will put a nail in the coffin of these towns' financial survival. The base is profoundly enmeshed in the livelihood of these two towns.

Because I now live in Colorado Springs, I rely on friends and family to tell me of the base's relevancy beyond the obvious financial relationship. I know that when you have the opportunity to visit the base and its surrounding communities, you'll fall in love with it just as we all have. You'll see how the base has become part of the body and spirit of the community it is rooted in. Still, listed below are some key points for you to consider before making the decision to close this base.

1. Cannon does not fit the criteria provided for base closure.
2. The base has an abundance of air space and no encroachment issues. This provides for safer and more realistic training scenarios for pilots.
3. Once the New Mexico Training Range Initiative is implemented, we will be able to offer pilots the ability to fly supersonic during training missions. This is a very important point, as it allows the Air Force to better train in real-life situations.
4. The weather in Eastern New Mexico provides year round training ability.
5. The Melrose bombing range is seconds from the end of the of the runway at Cannon. This allows pilots to get airborne, and immediately begin training operations over the bombing range, rather than spending all of their fuel just to get to the range, having one Passover, then returning to the base.
6. Cannon has the space and facilities to accommodate war-fighting, training , and readiness as was evidenced by the recent joint training effort between Cannon