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July 11, 2005

The Honorable Anthony J. Principi, Chairman
Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
2521 South Clark Street, Suite 600
Arlington, VA 20002

Dear Chairman Principi:

Please find attached a copy of the testimony I wish to submit for July 11th's Regional Hearing in San Antonio, Texas. We are all aware of the very hard job which you have in front of you as you continue to assess the requirements for defense bases in light of our future defense needs. This is not an easy job, nor, as I know you are aware, one that comes without heavy criticism.

As you assess the needs of our nation and our nation's Army, I would request that you remember the role artillery has played in every war our nation has fought since its founding. I am convinced that as you consider its role, both you and the Commission will be convinced of the role Fort Sill should play with respect to artillery and air defense artillery. There is no other facility in the United States that can replicate the expertise and core knowledge that Fort Sill provides. For this reason alone, I firmly believe it would be unwise to examine options that would lead to the destruction of our nation's artillery capabilities.

Again, I would like to thank both you and the Commission members for your time and efforts. You task is hard, but I believe if the Commission strongly analyzes the data, the results will be self evident.

I look forward to hearing from you in the future and to hearing your impressions as to the results of the San Antonio regional meeting.

Sincerely,

Tom Cole
Member of Congress.

Testimony of Congressman Tom Cole
submitted to the
Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission
San Antonio, Texas
July 11, 2005

Mr. Chairman, members of the Commission, today I would like to address a number of issues that I believe will be of interest to the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission. Specifically, I will address the realignment of the Air Defense Artillery (ADA) School from Fort Bliss (Texas) to Fort Sill (Lawton, Oklahoma). Additionally, I will further address the proposed creation of the Net Fires Center at Fort Sill.

Mr. Chairman, as you know, the Department of Defense proposed to realign the Air Defense Artillery School to Fort Sill. This move reestablishes the historical connection between the Artillery branch and the Air Defense Artillery Branch. In a time when the services are focused on jointness at an interservice level, this move will strengthen the joint relationship between Artillery and Air Defense Artillery. Additionally, as a Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) initiative, this move represents an excellent opportunity to gain efficiencies within the TRADOC command structure, allowing enhanced budgeting and co-location of instructors, equipment and infrastructure at Fort Sill.

The home of the Field Artillery since 1911, Fort Sill has in recent years transformed itself into a joint-service installation that represents the Army, the Air Force, and the Marines. Additionally, in the immediate area, Fort Sill has established relationships with Altus, AFB, Vance, AFB, and Tinker, AFB. This jointness and proximity to the Air Force creates effective synergies that support the Department of Defense's proposal to relocate the ADA School to Fort Sill. Additionally, Fort Sill has established training facilities which are conducive to training the ADA students and will increasingly be used in the future. As Army's Center of Excellence for Joint Fires and Effects, and the location of the joint-service Fires and Effects Course, Fort Sill is

optimally prepared to integrate the ADA students into these programs and training opportunities.

Mr. Chairman, the Commission must also understand that as a Forces Command (FORSCOM) institution, Fort Sill is ready to integrate an ADA battalion into the base force structure. With the new modularity transformation that is occurring within the United States Army, the co-location of Artillery and ADA units will be critical to ensuring the ability to coordinate fires and effects in the theater of battle. Additionally, as an Army certified Power Projection Platform, Fort Sill has the ability to deploy forces immediately in support of the nation's interests. One must remember that, under the Army's modularity structure, both Artillery and ADA will usually be co-located with the proper Units of Action. However, there remains a need for units that could be sliced out to larger, or smaller, more compartmentalized units. The location of this battalion will achieve precisely that. Finally, beyond the yearly savings associated with the realignment of the ADA School, there could be an additional savings of $15,000,000 by relocating the ADA institutional instruction facility currently programmed for construction at Fort Bliss in 2010 to Fort Sill.[1]

Mr. Chairman, with respect to the local community, Lawton, Oklahoma is able to provide excellent child care, transportation, employment, and an improved cost of living advantages for our soldiers and their families. Of note, these are significant improvements over those Fort Bliss can provide in these areas.[2] These things are an important part of sustaining the force once the move of the ADA School occurs. Knowing this community, and knowing of its dedication to sustaining our nation's defenses, I can assure you that the community will make every effort to overcome any challenges associated with the move. No community in America is more committed to the defense of our country and the well-being of our men and women in uniform than Lawton.

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[1] "Base Visit Report: Fort Sill, OK", Base Closure and Realignment Commission, June 11, 2005, p. 5

[2] "Economic Impact Report" (Economic Region of Influence El Paso v. Lawton, OK), Department of Defense, p.6

With respect to the environment, Fort Sill also provides a superior location for the ADA school. In terms of to air quality, Fort Sill is in attainment for criteria pollutants and maintains a CAA Synthetic Minor Operating permit.[3] There should be no adverse environmental impact by the move. In contrast, Fort Bliss is in "serious Non-Attainment for O3, and marginal NonAttainment for PM, & CO."[4] With respect to noise mitigation, it is likely that Fort Bliss will have significant problems with noise in the near future as units are relocated from Europe. Specifically, "adding 4+ bde-sized units represents [a] greater than 50% increase in noise generating operations, and may result in significant impacts and further restrictions."[5] With respect to water resources, Fort Bliss has a limited ability to accept troops from Europe while maintaining the current population of the base. With the addition of 20,000 troops from Europe, Fort Bliss will be significantly pressed to provide adequate water to the new families. Specifically, this "[w]ill require upgrade of water and wastewater infrastructure and will likely require purchase of potable water resources."[6] Fort Sill, in contrast, is adequately supplied with water to meet its new mission.[7]

Mr. Chairman, all these advantages to locating the ADA School at Fort Sill also play directly into the reason the Department of Defense announced its intention to establish a Net Fires Center at the installation. This important project grows directly out of the Joint Center for Fires and Effects that is already present at Fort Sill. This premier training facility has contributed directly to supporting troops deploying to Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. By harnessing off the shelf technology available only in Hollywood, Fort Sill, the Institute for Creative Technologies and

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[3] "Installation Environmental Profile: Fort Sill", Department of Defense submission to Base Closure and Realignment Commission, p.1

[4] "Summary of Cumulative Environmental Impacts (SCEI) [TABS Draft Final] - SCEI for Fort Bliss", Department of Defense submission to Base Closure and Realignment Commission, p.1

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Summary of Cumulative Environmental Impacts (SCEI) [TABS Final Version] - SCEI for Fort Sill - E&T-0061v3 Net Fires Center (Sill)", Department of Defense submission to Base Closure and Realignment Commission, p. 2

Techrizon (formerly TELOS OK) have created a test bed for interactive learning and training. This state-of-the-art training facility provides valuable immersive environments to better understand the synergistic and multiplier effects associated with artillery and other fires.

With this in mind, one can see the importance and the value of co-locating the ADA School with the Artillery School. The future Net Fires Center will provide enhanced opportunities for ADA branch to better study and practice operational doctrine and the employment of its operational fires. This submersive approach to training has been proven to be particularly effective in training our soldiers for deployment.

Mr. Chairman, it is important to add that the creation of a Net Fires Center will advance and improve the Maneuver Support Center (MANSCEN) model. It will do this by "consolidating functionally related Branch Centers & schools, which fosters consistency, standardization and training proficiency."[8] Working hand in hand with both the Artillery and ADA schools, the Net Fires Center will consolidate training and integrally contribute to reducing TRADOC's footprint.[9] Over twenty years, the Net Fires Center will contribute directly to saving $319.1 million for the Department of Defense.[10]

Mr. Chairman, when one takes the time to look at what Fort Sill brings to the table, one can clearly see that it is a uniquely positioned installation that cannot be replicated elsewhere. Simply put, when one looks at Fort Bliss, what does one see around it? One sees the type of encroachment that many military bases are challenged with on a daily basis. When one looks to Fort Sill, one sees a dynamic community which fully supports the base, very little encroachment, and room to expand the base. Additionally, one sees an active community that is aggressively supporting military activities by attempting to procure buffer zones for the base, expanding housing options, and working closely with the base to address issues as they arise.

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[8] "Base Realignment and Closure Report: Volume I: Part 2 of 2", Department of Defense, p. E&T 12.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid.

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, as you consider what Fort Sill provides for our nation, I would remind you that it was valued in the top one fifth of all bases for military value. It would be a serious mistake, therefore, to reduce this military value by taking steps to stop the transformative process and joint integration that is occurring there now. The path for the future is clear. As the multiplier effect of fires is more fully realized, the Army and the Air Force will continue to advance the concept of joint fires. In the near future, I expect the Army and the Air Force will be announcing advances with respect to Joint Terminal Air Controllers. If anything, Fort Sill is situated better than any other installation for future expansion and further integration of service specific fires.

Mr. Chairman, I genuinely appreciate the opportunity to submit this testimony today and look forward to answering any questions you may have with respect to Fort Sill, the ADA School, or the Net Fires Center.