

Range Initiative. It will be approved in October by the FAA and the Air Force. What that training initiative is going to do is make sure that as those pilots get off the ground, within a matter of minutes, they can train in supersonic air space. This is not true anywhere else in the country. For many, many pilots, they must fly 2 to 3 hours in order to get to a training area.

At Cannon Air Force Base, there are nearby bombing ranges, there is training, there is going to be this access to supersonic air space, which is enormously important, and they will be able to train immediately and not have to travel those long distances. That fact was not even considered by the Department of Defense because their cut-off date was December of 2004, so we are going to put that fact before the commission.

The third issue is what is called the military value and mission of this particular base. This is a top-notch base. It is an exceptional base. We have spent as a country \$53 million over the last 6 or 7 years improving the towers, improving the runways, improving and enhancing the fire-fighting capability on the base and increasing base housing so that the base is in the kind of shape to make sure that our airmen and women that train there are ready to go into battle.

To close, this is a bad decision. Our Congressional delegation and Governor are united. We are going to persuade that base closing commission that this was not the right decision for the country.

Madam Speaker, Friday the 13th was a day that unfortunately lived up to its ominous reputation when the Department of Defense (DoD) released its Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) recommendations. In what I and the entire New Mexico Congressional Delegation believe is an enormous mistake, the Secretary of Defense included Cannon Air Force Base on its list of bases recommended for closure.

The BRAC process was established over a decade ago following the collapse of the Soviet Union as a means to realign or close military installations that are believed to be no longer needed for our Nation's defense. There have been BRAC rounds in 1988, 1991, 1993, and 1995. This year's BRAC round, however, was expected to be one of the largest as Defense Secretary Don Rumsfeld pledged to shrink the number of military installations in the United States by as much as 25 percent. Although Secretary Rumsfeld recently acknowledged that the BRAC round would be less extensive than earlier thought, DoD still recommended closing 33 bases, including Cannon.

This is just the beginning of our fight to save Cannon. The list of recommendations submitted by the DoD to the BRAC Commission is only the first stage of a lengthy process. The next step is the Commission must submit its list of recommendations to President Bush on September 8th. The President will then either approve or disapprove the recommendations made by the BRAC Commission and submit to Congress. Congress will then have an up-or-down vote on the recommendations.

Until September 8th, however, I will work with the entire Congressional Delegation, Governor Richardson, and the Clovis and Portales Communities to fight to get Cannon off the list of recommended closures.

A central argument we will make to the commissioners is the issue of "range encroachment." It is the process whereby a military base is progressively hemmed in by urban growth, competition for air space, and other factors. Such a development can detract from a base's desirability, and thus make it a target for future closure and realignment in the BRAC round. Cannon has two long runways, excellent airspace, and bombing ranges with no encroachment issues.

Additionally, the Department of Defense did not take into account the New Mexico Training Range Initiative as part of its analysis of Cannon's military value. Although the Initiative has yet to be fully approved, it is expected to be by October of this year. The Training Range Initiative will allow training at supersonic speeds, only further adding to the exceptional capabilities offered by Cannon Air Force Base. It is further evidence of the DoD's shortsightedness that they failed to take into account this valuable initiative.

Cannon Air Force Base is a critical component of our Nation's defense. It is also equally, if not more, important to the communities of Clovis and Portales and the entire State of New Mexico. There are several months to fight the DoD's recommendation and I plan to do so vigilantly side-by-side with you, the other members of the Congressional Delegation, and Governor Richardson to show the BRAC Commissioners just how valuable Cannon, Clovis, and Portales are to our Nation.

FEDERALIZING THE CRIME OF KILLING A POLICE OFFICER AND FLEEING THE COUNTRY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from California (Mr. DREIER) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. DREIER. Madam Speaker, I have taken this time today to announce the introduction of legislation. Today my very distinguished colleague, the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF), has joined me in introducing legislation that calls for making it a Federal crime to kill a law enforcement officer and flee the country.

Just yesterday we saw the memorial held for the fallen peace officers, and we had here in Washington the Sheriff of Los Angeles County, Lee Baca, who is really the progenitor of this legislation, along with the Chief of Police of the City of La Verne, Ron Ingels, who was representing the California Police Chiefs Association and the Los Angeles County Police Chiefs Association.

We have had over the past 3 years a very tragic case in Southern California. Three years ago this last month we saw the tragic murder of Deputy Sheriff David March by a Mexican national, who chose to first shoot Deputy March and leave and then return and put the gun to Deputy Sheriff March's head and kill him, and then flee the

country, knowing full well that he would face, if extradited, the death penalty, and that would prevent the Mexican government from extraditing him.

Well, over the past 3 years, in a bipartisan way, my colleagues the gentleman from California (Mr. MCKEON), who represents the March family, along with the gentleman from California (Mr. SCHIFF), whom I mentioned, the gentleman from California (Mr. BERMAN), and a wide range of Members, especially of the California delegation, have come together trying to deal with this issue.

While the introduction of today's legislation will not directly deal with the March case, it clearly is legislation that is designed to ensure that as we look at the prospect of someone killing a law enforcement officer and fleeing the country, we will have the full force of the Federal Government behind our quest for a resolution. This does not in any way preempt the opportunity for county and State jurisdictions to pursue with vigor a case such as this, but it does provide the option for the Federal Government to be involved, and also to deal with any kind of negotiating that might be necessary to ensure that someone can be extradited.

Madam Speaker, I encourage my colleagues to join as cosponsors of this legislation, which will federalize the crime of killing a law enforcement officer and fleeing the country. As I say, the bill is going to be introduced today, so I would encourage as many of my colleagues as possible to join on board in this bipartisan effort to help ensure that we bring the killers of law enforcement officials to justice.

AIR FORCE ACADEMY INAPPROPRIATELY AND IMPROPERLY PUTTING PRESSURE ON CADETS TO FOLLOW CERTAIN RELIGIOUS PRACTICES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. FRANK) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Madam Speaker, a couple of weeks ago I was disturbed to read of reports that people at the Air Force Academy were inappropriately and improperly putting pressure on cadets to follow certain religious practices. In this particular case, cadets who did not follow a certain brand of Christianity were being ridiculed and being criticized, and the allegations were that they were even being pressured by officials of the Academy to follow this specific set of religious practices.

Obviously, we should create a situation in which people of any religious persuasion are free at the Academy to follow that. But for young men and women who were sent to the Academy to learn to lead our Air Force and defend our country in that important institution to be subjected to religious