

RECORD VERSION

STATEMENT BY

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FT BLISS, TEXAS

BEFORE THE

READINESS AND MANAGEMENT SUBCOMMITTEE

ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

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WITHDRAWAL OF PUBLIC LANDS FOR EXCLUSIVE USE BY THE MILITARY  
FOR TESTING AND FIRING RANGES

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Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the Committee, I'm honored to appear before you today. My name is Major General Dennis D. Cavin. I am the Commander of the US Army Air Defense Artillery Center and Ft. Bliss and am here to explain the importance of McGregor Range to our Nation's Air and Missile Defense.

I believe that I am well qualified to explain the importance of McGregor Range to our Army and our Nation. In my role as the Commanding General of Ft. Bliss, I am responsible for the training and readiness of all units assigned to Ft. Bliss which includes all Patriot missile battalions stationed in the continental United States. Additionally, as the Chief of Army Air and Missile Defense, I am Commandant of the United States Army Air Defense Artillery School, responsible for the air and missile defense doctrine, organization, training, leader development, material and soldiers.

Simply put, McGregor Range is a crucial asset in ensuring that our nation's air and missile defense forces are trained and ready. This is the only range in the continental United States that allows air and missile defense units to train as they will fight. It provides the operational depth needed to meet realistic training scenarios. This ability to train in realistic conditions develops confidence in our soldiers, doctrine and equipment that make them our nation's '911' force of choice for air and missile defense.

This range also supports the Joint Training Exercise Roving Sands, which is the world's largest integrated air defense exercise. During this two-week exercise, we train and test concepts for air defense interoperability with our sister services as well as our allies. The lessons that we have learned from this exercise have translated in tactics, techniques and procedures that we use throughout the world today during contingency operations when our Patriot forces are called upon just like we did three times last year in our contingency

deployment to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Most importantly, this exercise trains our soldiers and leaders in joint and combined operations which is how they will fight and win when called upon.

McGregor Range also performs a vital role in both the developmental and operational testing of weapon systems. The diversity of weapon systems tested on this range is truly staggering. The Abrams tank was tested here during the 1970's. More recently we tested the Bradley Linebacker, Sentinel radar, HUMRAAM, JLENS, and operational integration for the Patriot PAC-3. We are also conducting operational testing of system interoperability between the Army's Theater High Altitude Area Defense and Patriot, an important step in our development of a seamless, nearly lead-proof missile defense system of systems.

McGregor also supports developmental testing operations by White Sands Missile Range, recently supporting the testing of the Army Tactical Missile system. Many of these tests cannot be transferred to other installations because the terrain of McGregor Range allows very controlled presentations of target aircraft for radar detection.

McGregor Range supports US Air Force training at Holloman AFB, New Mexico. The close proximity of air-to-ground targets on McGregor Range improve the efficiency of air-to-ground training operations and will support training of the 49<sup>th</sup> Tactical Fighter Wing, another part of America's '911' response force.

Ft. Bliss and McGregor Range also play a role in our National Security Strategy of political enlargement and engagement through our international military training and foreign military sales programs. McGregor Range is an asset that no other nation possesses for the training of air and missile defense

systems. Additionally, when our allies train on this range, we benefit through improvement in interoperability and increase levels of understanding between our forces and those of our allies.

Perhaps the most important role of McGregor Range is yet to be realized. This range, along with the rest of Ft. Bliss is likely to be one of the only places in the United States where the Army's forces of the future can train under realistic conditions outside of the combat training centers. For example, the Army's Strike Force could deploy to McGregor Range by C-17, moving directly to a field environment, much as they would if deployed for major contingency operations. McGregor Range offers the depth and variation in terrain which will allow the Army After Next to fully exercise weapons and sensor capabilities which are now in development.

While McGregor Range performs a vital role in our nation's defense, it is also a showcase of environmental stewardship. For the past 40 years, we have maintained a balance between both military and non-military use of this tremendous resource without parallel. McGregor Range is well known for its trophy quality pronghorn and mule deer herds and top quality grazing. In fact, several environmental organizations cite the pristine condition of the environment on this range.

We can ill afford to continue to spend tens of millions of dollars for short duration withdrawals when we have pressing needs to improve the quality of life for our soldiers and for equipment modernization. We have established an outstanding record of stewardship over the lands entrusted to us during the past 40-years. Our public and professional obligations will permit us to do no less in the future.

The readiness of our Nation's military forces depends upon tough realistic

training. We are blessed to have some of America's best who are willing to wear the uniform and shoulder the burden of our nation's defense. We are also fortunate to have the intellectual and industrial capability to develop weapon systems and doctrine without parallel. However, without the ability to train under the toughest and most realistic conditions possible, these resources are wasted. While I am here primarily to discuss the McGregor Range, I must also emphasize how important the continued withdrawal of the other ranges under review is to our nation's defense. More than ever, success on our nation's battlefields relies upon bringing all assets to bear. For instance, at Nellis Air Force Range, Air Force pilots learn air-interdiction to protect our ground forces from air attack while this in turn allows our Patriot force to focus on defense against theater ballistic missiles. Likewise, the air-to-ground skills developed at the Barry M. Goldwater Range are used to provide close air support to our ground maneuver forces. These are the kinds of skills that we cannot afford to develop under fire.

Our proposal includes the continuation of non-military activities that occur over more than 271,000 acres of the range, subject to national security requirements and the protection of public safety. We believe that this approach balances national security requirements with the public good.

Mr. Chairman, the availability of training ranges, such as McGregor are critical to our ability to fight and win our nations' wars. If we fail to provide our soldiers with the training they need, we fail our duty to them and our nation. You cannot have a trained and ready force, unless you provide that force with the best possible training environment prior to sending them into harm's way. There simply is no substitute.

I thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today and I am prepared to answer the committee's questions.

## BIOGRAPHY

Major General Dennis D. Cavin was born in Martin, Tennessee on October 22, 1947. In 1970, he graduated from the University of Tennessee at Martin with a Bachelor's Degree in Agriculture, and was commissioned as an Air Defense Artillery officer. He also earned a Master's Degree in Management in 1982 from Webster University. His military education includes the Air Defense Artillery Officer Basic and Advanced Courses, the Army Command and General Staff College, and the Industrial College of the Armed Forces.

General Cavin assumed his current position as the Commanding General, United States Army Air Defense Artillery Center and Fort Bliss on 30 July 1998. His previous assignments include: Deputy Commanding General, United States Army Air Defense Artillery Center and Fort Bliss, Texas; Directorate, Management Directorate, Office of the Chief of Staff, Army, Washington, D.C.; Chief, Air Defense Division, Force Development Branch, Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans, United States Army, Washington, D.C.; Commander, 108<sup>th</sup> Air Defense Artillery Brigade, Fort Polk, Louisiana; Chief, Personnel Services Division, The Joint Staff, Washington, D.C.; Secretary of the General Staff, III Corps, Fort Hood, Texas; Commander, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 68<sup>th</sup> Air Defense Artillery, 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas; Chief, Air Defense Artillery Element, III Corps, Fort Hood, Texas; Secretary of the General Staff, 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division (Light), Schofield Barracks, Hawaii; Aide-de-Camp to the Commanding General, United States Army Recruiting Command, Fort Sheridan, Illinois; Institutional Testing Coordinator and Area Commander, United States Army Jackson District Recruiting Command, Jackson, Mississippi; Recruiting Area Commander, United States Army, Los Angeles District Recruiting Command, Los Angeles, California; and Commander, Battery A, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 7<sup>th</sup> Air Defense Artillery, Fort Bliss, Texas.

General Cavin's decorations and awards include the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit (with three Oak Leaf Clusters), Meritorious Service Medal (with Oak Leaf Cluster), Army Commendation Medal (with three Oak Leaf Clusters), the Army Staff Identification Badge, and the Joint Staff Identification Badge.

General Cavin is married to the former Mary Brann. They have one daughter, Mrs. Brandie Costello.