

MARTIN HEINRICH  
1ST DISTRICT, NEW MEXICO

1505 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-6318

20 FIRST PLAZA, NW, SUITE 603  
ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87102  
(505) 346-6781

HEINRICH.HOUSE.GOV



COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC FORCES  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS

COMMITTEE ON  
NATURAL RESOURCES  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
NATIONAL PARKS AND PUBLIC LANDS

## Congress of the United States

### House of Representatives

May 18, 2009

Major General Kenny C. Montoya  
The Adjutant General, NM National Guard  
47 Bataan Blvd  
Santa Fe, NM 87508-4695

Re: F-16s at the 150<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing

Dear Adjutant General Montoya:

With the recent release of the fiscal year 2010 budget for the United States Air Force, and Secretary of Defense Robert Gates' announcement to retire the F-16s at the 150<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing, I want to keep you informed about what I am doing to address this important issue.

First, with high-profile members of the Department of Defense testifying before the House Armed Services Committee (HASC), I am pressing these officials to provide honest answers, to make them aware of our concerns and to ensure we have the most accurate, up-to-date information. On Wednesday, May 13, Secretary Gates and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Michael G. Mullen testified before the full HASC. At that hearing, I asked Secretary Gates and Admiral Mullen directly about the fighter gap caused by the proposed cut of 250 tactical aircraft. Secretary Gates replied saying that the Quadrennial Defense Review, which is due in February 2010, would address force structure of tactical aircraft more specifically. This response increases my concerns about the seemingly premature decision to single out the 150<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing. That is why I am more committed than ever to finding answers. This week, when the Secretary of the Air Force testifies before the HASC, I will push once again for answers.

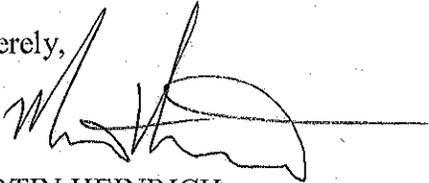
Second, I am actively working to form a "Fighter Gap Task Force" with fellow HASC colleagues Representative Gabrielle Giffords (AZ-08) and Representative Frank LoBiondo (NJ-02), who are also committed to preserving a fighter mission for Air Guard units at their local bases and other tactical installations across the country. Together with this group of like-minded representatives in Congress, I intend to work to address the fighter aircraft shortfall and to allow for a seamless transition into a suitable mission for the 150<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing.

As we all know, the 150<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing has over 60 years of "exquisite service," as Admiral Mullen said in Wednesday's hearing, and Kirtland Air Force Base was ranked the number one fighter base in the country in the 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission (BRAC) process. It is important to note that most other F-16 cuts in the budget were 2005 BRAC action divestitures, which leaves the 150<sup>th</sup> as one of few F-16 units proposed to be cut in the fiscal year 2010 budget that was not previously affected by the process.

This issue is a top priority for me. As we all look to find a path forward that makes sense and remains in the best interest of New Mexico, please know I value your input and would welcome the opportunity to work with you. As I mentioned earlier in this letter, the HASC has hearings scheduled this week; I've included the details below. If you have any suggestions, feel free to contact my staff, either Tony Samp at (202) 225-6316, or Antonio Sandoval at (505) 346-6781. They can also be reached via email at Tony.Samp@mail.house.gov or Antonio.Sandoval@mail.house.gov.

Thank you for all you are doing. Though we must acknowledge that we are in the midst of an uphill battle, I also believe there exists an opportunity to find success in this effort.

Sincerely,



MARTIN HEINRICH  
Member of Congress

cc: Governor Bill Richardson  
Mayor Martin Chávez  
Hanson Scott, Director, Office of New Mexico Base Planning and Support  
Colonel Steve Ver Helst, Commander, 150<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing  
Greg Winegardner, Chairman, Kirtland Partnership Commission  
Stuart Purviance, Executive Director, Kirtland Partnership Commission

**Tuesday, May 19<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 EST.** The full House Armed Services Committee will meet to receive testimony on the Fiscal Year 2010 National Defense Authorization Budget Request from the Department of the Air Force.

Witnesses:

The Honorable Michael B. Donley  
Secretary of the Air Force

General Norman A. Schwartz, USAF  
Chief of Staff  
U.S. Air Force

AND

**Wednesday, May 20<sup>th</sup> at 10AM EST.** The Readiness subcommittee will meet to receive testimony on the Fiscal Year 2010 National Defense Authorization Budget Request for the Military Services' Operation and Maintenance Funding.

Witness:

General William M. Fraser III, USAF  
Vice Chief of Staff  
U.S. Air Force