

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 17, 2018

The Honorable Heather A. Wilson
Secretary of the Air Force
Department of the Air Force
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1670

Dear Secretary Wilson:

We write in strong support of Dyess Air Force Base (Dyess AFB) near Abilene, Texas being selected as the principal base for the new B-21 Raider long-range strike bomber. For generations, Dyess AFB has served as a training base for our most critical bombing platforms. As the Air Force commences the basing review process, we urge the selection committee to consider several factors that make Dyess AFB the ideal home for the new bomber.

Dyess AFB has the operational capacity, infrastructure, and ranges necessary to provide optimal support for mission training. The 2018 National Defense Strategy stated, “The Joint Force must be able to strike diverse targets inside adversary air and missile networks.” The B-21 Raider was designed to meet this requirement and deliver an unequivocal strategic advantage over our adversaries, making this long-range strike capability a critical asset on the modern battlefield. But building the long-range strike capability requires an installation with extensive training capacity and optimal weather conditions – an installation, in other words, like Dyess AFB.

Located in North-Central Texas, Dyess AFB has been home to the United States’ bomber fleet since the 1940’s, and has served as the *only* training base for B-1s since the aircraft became operational in the 1980’s. The new B-21 fleet would be able to utilize existing infrastructure and immediately take advantage of the ranges and optimal training conditions that the B-1 has been utilizing for over three decades. The region allows for approximately 350 days of flying weather annually, which provides ample opportunities for year-round pilot training. Additionally, Dyess AFB is in the process of upgrading Military Operations Areas and modernizing technologies that will expand its reputation as the world’s premier bombing installation. As the product of close collaboration with Air Force Global Strike Command, Air Combat Command, and the Federal Aviation Administration, the improvements will expand both regional airspace and range training capabilities, providing an environment in which the B-21 program would thrive.

Locally, the Abilene community for generations has maintained a strong tradition of support for service members and their families, and we are confident that it will continue to foster these important relationships in the years ahead. The Air Force annually presents an achievement award to one U.S. community that demonstrates the strongest levels of support for its local military base. Dyess AFB won the award so frequently that the Air Force renamed the award “the Abilene Trophy.” Abilene has also been awarded the 2017 Barksdale Trophy, an award bestowed on the community that provides the best support for an Air Force Global Strike

Command Wing. As the numerous awards suggest, Abilene has embraced the Air Force and Air Force families as a centerpiece of their community since the Service's inception.


For 76 years, Dyess AFB has effectively served as a premier bomber base for B-47s and B-52s, and has been the principal base for the B-1 since the aircraft's introduction. We sincerely hope that the B-21 Raider will be the next member of the bomber family to join our community.

Thank you for your consideration of Dyess AFB as the next home for the B-21 Raider. If we can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out to our offices.

Sincerely,



JOHN CORNYN
United States Senator



TED CRUZ
United States Senator