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Final Environmental Assessment for the Defensive Training Initiative, Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico

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Abstract: The 27th Fighter Wing (27 FW) at Cannon Air Force Base (AFB) is an integral part of the United States Aerospace Expeditionary Force (AEF). The AEF concept integrates fighters, bombers, support aircraft, and tactical airlift into one functional unit that responds rapidly and decisively to potential crises anywhere in the world. Cannon AFB's F-16 pilots are routinely deployed to the world's "hot spots" and subjected to hostile radar and anti-aircraft defenses. The increasing sophistication of enemy equipment and tactics requires that the 27 FW pilots be trained to instantly respond to these threats. Continued survival depends on this training. Defensive training involves the rapid response of pilots to threats from opposing radar, reflexive maneuvering, and dispensing of defensive countermeasures. Defensive countermeasures include **chaff** that confuses enemy search radars and radar-guided missiles, and flares that decoy heat-seeking missiles and sensors. The 27 FW, the proponent of this action, currently conducts training using **chaff** and flares, but is limited to the restricted airspace associated with the Melrose Air Force Range (AFR) (R-5104/5105). The 27 FW proposes to conduct defensive training using **chaff** and flares in the existing military airspace designated as Pecos Military Operations Area (MOA)/Air Traffic Control Assigned Airspace (ATCAA), Sumner ATCAA, and Taiban MOA. **Chaff** use also is proposed for defensive training in the northern portion of Military Training Routes (MTRs) Visual Routes (VRs)-100/125. Implementation of this proposal would expand defensive training for F-16 pilots of the 27 FW stationed at Cannon AFB and other transient users. This Defensive Training Initiative (DTI) Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969. It addresses the 27 FW's Proposed Action and reasonable alternatives to the Proposed Action.

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