



Veterans For Peace

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Albuquerque, New Mexico

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Arizona Regional Airspace EIS
c/o Cardo
501 Butler Farm Road
Suite "H"
Hampton, VA 23666

Filed by email and USPS

RE: Proposed Action by the U.S. Air Force to Optimize Two Existing MOAs in Western New Mexico for the Purpose of Conducting Tactical Aircraft Training

Dear Reviewing Officer:

This comment on the environmental impact statement (EIS) is timely filed in accordance with the filing deadline announced in the Public Notice dated January 21, 2022.

Chapter #63, Veterans For Peace supports the "No Action" alternative with respect to the U.S. Air Force's proposal to change the existing uses of the portions of Reserve MOA, Morenci MOA, and Tombstone MOA located in New Mexico. The environmental impacts in these three MOA's upon humans, flora, and fauna in the Gila National Forest should preclude any change to the existing training areas. The recovery, by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, of the endangered Mexican Grey Wolf within the two MOA's, alone should preclude the enhanced tactical training, as proposed by the USAF.

It is unnecessary for the Air Force to change the times of use, modify the horizontal and vertical dimensions, and adjust the attributes of the existing special use airspace when alternative training sites are available. The Air Force alleges that the ten MOA's,

as now configured, in the immediate vicinity of Davis-Monthan AFB, Luke AFB, and Morris AGB, provide insufficient airspace for certain tactical training.

The Air Force seeks to conduct training that features low-altitude flight and supersonic flight, plus the release of chaff and flares. We believe that such activity is incompatible with recreational commercial, and residential activity in the Gila National Forest. Further, we believe that the potential impacts of noise and vibration linked to the probability of flare induced fires make the Air Force's plan unfeasible, impractical, and ill advised.

There is precedent to selecting a "No Action" option in this regard. In November 2019, we commented on a similar proposal by the USAF. In that instance, Holloman AFB sought to expand other MOA's over the eastern portion of the Gila NF for the identical use by high performance aircraft. The arguments we raised then are the same as we are raising now.

Edwards AFB, NAS Fallon, and the Barry Goldwater Bombing Range, to name only a few, remain available for the type of training the Air Force seeks to conduct. The public lands over which the Air Forces proposes to train should be undisturbed.

Respectfully,

John E. Wilks, III
Chapter VP