



State of New Mexico

Office of the Governor

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Governor Bill Richardson Secures German Commitment To Keep Fighter Planes And Pilots In Alamogordo

Governor says Germans will also study training pilots for next generation fighter at Holloman AFB

BERLIN, GERMANY- Governor Bill Richardson today announced that he has secured a commitment from the German government to permanently continue the German Air Force presence at Holloman Air Force Base. The announcement came after Governor Richardson met with German Defense Minister Peter Struck and Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer. Currently more than 800 German Military and civilian personnel are stationed at Holloman in support of the Tornado fighter jet.

“This was the most important meeting of our visit to Germany,” said Governor Richardson. “It’s a critical success for New Mexico and Holloman Air Force Base.”

“As a result of our discussions with Governor Richardson, I can confidently state that we will continue to train German pilots at Holloman Air Force Base,” said Minister Struck. “We greatly value our relationship with the State of New Mexico, the people of Alamogordo, and Holloman. The location is well suited to our training requirements and our personnel and their families very much enjoy the Alamogordo community.”

The German military is undergoing a transformation similar to the BRAC (Base Realignment and Closure) review taking place in the United States. There had been concern that the German Air Force would move the Tornado squadron out of Alamogordo and back to Germany.

Minister Struck says not only will the German Air Force keep a Tornado squadron presence in Alamogordo, but Germany is also studying the possibility of using Holloman to train pilots for the new Eurofighter. Germany has purchased and is in the process of receiving 180 of the new aircraft.

“I appreciate Minister Struck’s commitment to keep the German personnel and planes at Holloman,” added Governor Richardson. “New Mexico has a great relationship with Germany, and this solid partnership is another example of how we’re working together to the benefit of Germany and New Mexico, and the United States as a whole.”

Governor Richardson was joined in the meeting by Secretary of Economic Development Rick Homans, and Lanny Messersmith, Honorary Consul for New Mexico and West Texas to the Federal Republic of Germany. Consul Messersmith serves as a liaison between New Mexico and Germany and he is actively involved with the German community in Alamogordo.

“I see the German pilots and their families on a daily basis, and I can tell you this is much more than a military relationship,” said Consul Messersmith. “It’s a very personal relationship.”

Governor Richardson just concluded a three-day trade mission to France and Germany, where he met with top executives from 38 French and German companies encouraging them to expand or initiate business with New Mexico. He was joined on the trip by Secretary Homans, New Mexico Tourism Secretary Mike Cerletti, Jim Colson, President and CEO of the New Mexico Economic Development Partnership, Albuquerque Mayor Martin Chavez, Consul Messersmith, and a number of New Mexico business and civic leaders.

In December of last year, Governor Richardson hosted the initial meeting with the German Air Force Delegation led by Lieutenant General Klaus-Peter Stieglitz, at the Governor’s Residence in Santa Fe.