[ms-0398.030.016.004]

3675 Fenelon Street
San Diego, CA 92106

March 12, 1993

Mr. M. Larry Lawrence, Chairman
Hotel Del Coronado
Coronado, California

**RE: SAN DIEGO AIRPORT SELECTION**

Dear Mr. Lawrence:

I read with interest a report of your views on Miramar in the March 10 edition of the Union-Tribune. I'm surprised that the newspaper would print them.

With 30 years experience in commercial aviation, I'll pass on what I've learned. The Copley Press, the Navy, and some local politicians have me half convinced that I'm all wet, but I leave that to your judgment.

**Otay Mesa:**

A company I ran at the time did the first San Diego-Tijuana study in 1974. In a professional manner, we pronounced the idea to be total nonsense. It irked me greatly when I personally saw a copy of the study in Ron Robert's office. Roberts has cost this town two years and $500,000 to confirm a conclusion we reached almost twenty years ago.

On top of the technical objections, I hope you read the Op/Ed piece in the Daily Transcript of 3/11/93. I have a pipeline to the Mexican group, and they tell me that Roberts et al have deeply insulted Mexico, to the point that T~~win Port~~s will never be built - and the Mexicans will see to it. What a waste.

**Miramar:**

There is so much baloney surrounding this facility. Your statement is totally correct. There is an opportunity open. And your stature and persistence could make a difference. Examples:

1. Senior naval personnel who are in a position to know tell me flat out, anonymously, that Miramar has no strategic mission. It is basically there to service the health, welfare and recreational needs of active and retired naval personnel. For example, the "Top Gun" school has 186 personnel assigned; Commissary and Services have almost 1200. I have suggested that we can leave all the Navy support facilities in place; we are interested in the airfield. No dice.

2. The government's acquisition cost of Miramar is reported by the Navy to be $263,394,996, before depreciation. The Navy says they want $2.0 to $6.0 billion for the base. I pointed out that the same taxpayers who buy air stations also pay for airports.

3. SANDAG has some charts that show that, if Miramar went commercial, it would always generate less noise than the Navy operations, i.e. a positive environmental impact. The charts are being withheld as too sensitive.

4. My general estimates indicate that each daily intercontinental arrival by a 747 would produce $90 million a year in basic dollars. Five trips a day would more than make up for the conversion of Miramar. Japan Air Lines is negotiating now for rights at Tijuana. They'd rather be here.

What would I like to see you do? Three suggestions:

1. Get the Navy to allow up to five intercontinental flights a day into Miramar. These flights normally arrive early afternoon and depart early evening, so should be no problem. When I was a Vice President with PSA we set up passenger facilities at Phoenix in two weeks. (Double wide mobile homes.) Again, we can do it now.

2. Have the Administration launch a pilot study to show how military facilities can be profitably converted to civilian use. The pilot, of course, is Miramar. It is vital to force the Navy to cooperate. I would be happy to write a statement of work for such a study, and I would certainly bid on it.

3. The County Aviation Department has $8.0 million in the till. I believe it can be used for airport development. That might be the source of matching funds.

I met with a mayoral staff member on the day of your article. A lot of hand wringing about your comment on brains. In fact, the City intends to do nothing about the airport. They are hoping that events will force them to make a decision. In that regard, the interim base closure list did not help them.

You have chosen a difficult course. At the same time, the airport decision will have a major impact on San Diego's development for at least the next 50 years.

I'd like to help. Phone 222-4488, day or night.

Sincerely,

George J. Mitchell

George J. Mitchell