

TEXT OF CONVERSATION WITH THAD SANDSTROM -- 4/18/73

A great number of the civilians will be reassigned to the Air National Guard, and some will have opportunities of relocation. We expect less than 10 of the civilians will actually lose their jobs. ~~But-you're-not-going~~ There is a massive closing of bases across the country, for a total savings of ~~\$4~~ ^{\$400 mil.} million a year. I have been working on it for a number of days, trying to satisfy myself that it was first of all a military decision and secondly, an economic one. Of course, the budget has been cut severely by some in the Congress by some x who feel we should cut everything out of the military, although I was not one of those voting for any such reductions. This happened to be one area where a cut was needed. McConnell remains about the same. Neither Fort Leavenworth nor Fort Riley are affected by the announcement which will be made public at 2:00 today. I asked if this reduction will affect the overall strength militarily and they, of course, say no, "it's necessary reduction in strength and necessary to close some of the installations because of the budget, but does not have any overall affect on our military strength".

I don't like it from the standpoint that I know it affects a great many people in Topeka, and many will look upon it as a bad day. But to be completely realistic, we're cutting other programs. I didn't vote for the cuts in the military budget last year. To economize in government, we have to expect that the military portion will also be affected by that economy. So guess I accept it. All I want to make certain is that the basis for closing it was military and economic and now we can move forward with some positive policies to insure use of the base to use as a civilian airport and secure

use of the hospital, etc., and make it a plus rather than a minus. There are many possibilities for use by the city and others, of course with the ANG still there, and they are leaving some 200 military personnel there to work with the ANG so it will be a joint use operation -- which has some advantages, with the government picking up some of the costs. We will have a team there within 10 days to discuss not only the closing, but the possibilities following the closing. In fact, the Mayor will be in Washington this afternoon, and I have arranged a briefing with General Boswell and I will be attending with the Mayor. September is the date by which time all personnel who were leaving would be removed, and after that the ^{DOD} government checks with every Federal agency to see what use of the property might be. If that period passes and no one has any use, then the City and other interested parties may make their interests known.