

**STATEMENT OF**  
**GENERAL LORI J. ROBINSON, UNITED STATES AIR FORCE**  
**COMMANDER,**  
**UNITED STATES NORTHERN COMMAND**  
**AND**  
**NORTH AMERICAN AEROSPACE DEFENSE COMMAND**



**BEFORE THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

**APRIL 6, 2017**

## Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION .....	3
STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT .....	4
RUSSIA .....	5
CHINA .....	5
NORTH KOREA .....	6
IRAN .....	7
THREAT NETWORKS.....	7
USNORTHCOM AND NORAD.....	8
HOMELAND DEFENSE .....	8
BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENSE .....	8
AEROSPACE WARNING AND AEROSPACE CONTROL .....	10
THE ARCTIC .....	14
DEFENSE SUPPORT OF CIVIL AUTHORITIES .....	15
NATURAL DISASTERS .....	16
THREAT NETWORKS.....	17
THEATER SECURITY COOPERATION.....	20
CANADA .....	20
MEXICO.....	21
THE BAHAMAS.....	22
CONCLUSION.....	23

## INTRODUCTION

Chairman McCain, Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you to provide my assessment of the posture and future of United States Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) and North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD). I am here today on behalf of the active Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen, National Guardsmen, Reservists, DoD civilians, and members of the Canadian Armed Forces who are the foundation and the future of the defense of the United States and Canada. Strengthened by robust relationships with our interagency and regional partners, the men and women of USNORTHCOM and NORAD are dedicated to defending the United States and Canada; we accept this obligation as the most fundamental and enduring of our responsibilities.

USNORTHCOM and NORAD operate in a strategic environment that is as ambiguous and dangerous as any in our recent history. Threats to the United States and Canada are increasingly global, transregional, all-domain, and multi-functional in nature. Forged by an indispensable partnership, the Commands operate both independently and synergistically, conducting complementary missions with a shared purpose of common defense. The synergies that exist between the two Commands enable us to conduct our missions expeditiously and seamlessly in the face of very real threats.

As those who would do harm to our two countries develop new capabilities and harden their intentions, we have never had a greater need for agile, responsive capabilities to defend and protect our citizens. In the long term, strained resources, competing priorities, and emerging threats challenge our ability to meet all of our commitments, a dilemma that requires innovative solutions, including new ways of cooperating with allies and trusted partners. I believe our

April 6, 2017

---

ability to maintain a resilient and flexible force that can respond in a crisis requires prudent and stable funding. As a Combatant Commander, I rely on the Services to provide me with ready and capable forces and equipment to defend the United States and Canada. While I am grateful for the support of this Committee, sequestration and a series of Continuing Resolutions have introduced resource uncertainty and compelled the Services to prioritize current readiness over end-strength and modernization, a decision that translates into risk to our strategic advantage and technological edge in future conflicts.

USNORTHCOM and NORAD—two distinct Commands with a common purpose—remain steadfast in our responsibility to provide for the defense of the United States and Canada. Our Commands are working diligently with fellow Combatant Commands, our North American neighbors, and our interagency partners to defend the United States and Canada in depth.

## **STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT**

Today, the strategic environment we face is complex, characterized by a growing number of strategically significant actors who represent real challenges and risks to the United States and our regional partners. Russia, China, North Korea, Iran, and non-nation-state violent extremist forces are capable of varied attacks against North America in multiple domains, from multiple approaches, and at increasingly greater ranges. States and non-state actors have devoted significant research and resources to erode our physical standoff and decision space. The Homeland is no longer a sanctuary protected by oceans and other geography.

Globalization and access to advanced technology gives a greater number of adversaries, both state and non-state entities, the ability to reach us conventionally and asymmetrically while obscuring their intentions. I believe a range of competitors will confront the United States and its partners and interests through intimidation, destabilization, and the use of force. The threats

to the Homeland remain diffuse, less attributable, and increasingly complex. This outlook is challenging but not insurmountable, and it serves to reinforce the importance of

USNORTHCOM and NORAD readiness to adapt and evolve to meet the demands of tomorrow.

## **RUSSIA**

In an attempt to retain a sphere of influence in the post-Soviet era, Russia continues to exhibit increasingly aggressive behavior, both regionally and globally. Despite a declining economy and domestic pressures, Vladimir Putin continues to expand and diversify Russia's long-range strike capability, including land- and sea-based ballistic missiles, cyber weapons, and most recently, a new generation of highly precise, conventionally armed cruise missiles that can reach the United States and Canada. I know that these advanced capabilities provide a range of strike options that Russia could use to hold targets at risk in the United States and Canada in a crisis. Russia has chosen to be a strategic competitor with the United States, and their capabilities present an all-domain threat to USNORTHCOM and NORAD interests.

## **CHINA**

China's efforts to achieve regional preeminence and undermine U.S. influence are a growing concern. Beijing continues to modernize its military and pursue an expansion and diversification of its strategic forces capable of holding the United States at risk. China has added dozens of road-mobile intercontinental ballistic missiles to its longstanding force of silo-based intercontinental ballistic missiles and has begun operating its first viable class of ballistic missile submarines, which adds a long-range, sea-based leg to China's nuclear retaliatory capability.

## **NORTH KOREA**

As part of its decades-long quest for strategic nuclear weapons, North Korea continues its provocative, coercive patterns and aggressive weapons development activity. 2016 was one of North Korea's most active years in terms of nuclear weapon and missile program development in pursuit of weaponizing a nuclear ballistic missile capable of reaching the United States.

Pyongyang completed its fourth and fifth nuclear detonations, as well as its second consecutive successful satellite launch using an intercontinental ballistic missile-class booster, and conducted the nation's first successful tests of an intermediate-range ballistic missile and a submarine-launched ballistic missile. In his five years as Supreme Leader, Kim Jong Un has conducted nearly three times as many ballistic missile tests as his father and grandfather did in their combined 63 years in power.

In 2016, North Korea suffered a series of embarrassing test failures, which could lead to some dismissive conclusions about the maturity of their development. However, it is Kim Jong Un's willingness to accept public failure that worries me the most. In contrast to his father, who used missile and nuclear tests primarily to extract diplomatic concessions, Kim is pursuing a systematic program to develop, test, and field a viable weapon system as a deterrent to a regime-ending attack. In many cases, failed tests provide just as much insight, if not more, than a successful test.

Amidst an unprecedented pace of North Korean strategic weapons testing, our ability to provide actionable warning continues to diminish. North Korea's closed society and robust denial and deception capabilities challenge our ability to observe missile and nuclear test preparations, a concern that would be exacerbated in crisis or in wartime and complicate our ability to defend the United States.

## IRAN

In contrast to Russia, China, and North Korea, Iran does not possess a nuclear weapon. Iran has committed considerable resources to a space launch program that has achieved technological milestones that could contribute to the development of longer-range missiles including intercontinental ballistic missiles. Iranian officials have announced a self-imposed 2,000 kilometer limit on missile ranges, providing the capability to strike Israel from launch sites in central Iran, but insufficient to threaten Western Europe or North America. However, Iran is developing advanced missile capabilities and conducting flight tests of systems—such as the medium-range missile Iran launched on January 29<sup>th</sup>—that incorporate technologies that could be used to develop longer range systems. Those advancements could include future intercontinental ballistic missile technology capable of holding the United States at risk.

## THREAT NETWORKS

The emergence of adaptive threat networks introduces a range of challenges to the United States and our regional partners. Threat networks tend to operate in the seams of society and may traffic in licit or illicit goods and services. These networks are sophisticated and resilient, joining with other networks around the world and engaging in a wide array of threatening activities. The destabilizing and corruptive influence of these networks creates vulnerabilities that can be exploited by our adversaries and threaten our national security.

I am concerned by an increasing convergence of activity over threat networks resulting in a multi-layered and asymmetric threat to our national security. The nexus between transnational criminals and transnational terrorists is not an operational one—the two groups do not appear to be actively collaborating today to conduct attacks in the United States. What concerns me more are the ways the transnational terrorists may be able to leverage the pathways established by

April 6, 2017

---

threat networks, especially as their capabilities are diminished from operational setbacks overseas.

## **USNORTHCOM AND NORAD**

USNORTHCOM and NORAD, in collaboration with key stakeholders, defend the United States and Canada from threats and aggression through an adaptive, flexible, and resilient defense enterprise underpinned by strong relationships, ready Commands, and responsive capabilities to fulfill the Commands' roles in the shared responsibility of the defense of our nations. Our combined and complementary USNORTHCOM and NORAD defensive capabilities must counter threats across all domains and be able to adapt and outpace evolving threats. We are proud of the histories of our Commands, but we will not rest there. Looking to the future, we will continue to adapt and evolve to meet ever-changing threats.

## **HOMELAND DEFENSE**

### **BALLISTIC MISSILE DEFENSE**

One of the prominent aspects of my role as the Commander of USNORTHCOM is our Ballistic Missile Defense mission. North Korea's unprecedented level of nuclear testing and ballistic missile development offers a sobering reminder that the United States must remain vigilant against rogue nation-states that are able to threaten the Homeland. I am confident in our ability to employ the Ground-based Midcourse Defense element of the Ballistic Missile Defense System to defend the Homeland against a limited long-range ballistic missile attack from North Korea. As adversaries continue to pursue credible and advanced capabilities, we too must evolve our missile defense capabilities to outpace increasingly complex threats. The relationship between USNORTHCOM, supporting Combatant Commands, and the Missile Defense Agency is the cornerstone of our ability to outpace these evolving threats.



April 6, 2017

Today's Ballistic Missile Defense System's Ground-based Midcourse Defense is designed to intercept incoming threats in the midcourse phase of flight, a strategy which provides the largest window of intercept and maximizes the use of our interceptors. Synergistic and comprehensive improvements across the entirety of the Ballistic Missile Defense System, including advanced sensors and enhanced interceptors, are foundational to maximizing system performance. I support the Ballistic Missile Defense System development path set by Vice Admiral Jim Syring and his team at the Missile Defense Agency, whose priorities include, improving our persistent sensor architecture, operational effectiveness of our interceptors, lethality of our kill vehicles, and robust sustainment and testing.

Modernization of our sensor architecture is essential to maintaining our strategic advantage and confidence in our ability to defeat evolving, more complex threats. Thanks to the men and women at the Missile Defense Agency, and the support of this Committee, we are on track to deploy the Long Range Discrimination Radar. This critical midcourse sensor will improve persistent coverage of the United States and improve our target tracking and discrimination capability against potential countermeasures, thereby improving the effectiveness of our ground-based interceptors.

The Missile Defense Agency is in the final phase of fielding additional ground-based interceptors, which will result in a total inventory of 44 by the end of calendar year 2017. This robust inventory is essential to our ability to engage multiple threats, but it alone is not sufficient to address evolving future threats. In addition to continued modernization of the current Exo-atmospheric Kill Vehicles, I believe it is imperative we continue with the engineering, design, and test work currently underway on the Redesigned Kill Vehicle. Furthermore, we need to explore innovative technical solutions such as the upgraded tactical ground-based interceptor

April 6, 2017

---

booster with a 2- or 3-stage selectable mode designed to increase battlespace and, as we learn more from the Redesigned Kill Vehicle, explore the development of interceptor variants like the Multi-Object Kill Vehicle.

Foundational to our confidence in the Ballistic Missile Defense System, and how we operationally employ it, are robust test and sustainment programs. I support the Missile Defense Agency's efforts to maintain a regular ground-based interceptor flight test cadence and a vigorous ground test program. With every flight and ground test, we learn more about the system's capabilities and discover new ways to optimize its performance.

Our ability to defend the United States against ballistic missile threats is underpinned by the dedication of Missile Defenders like Staff Sergeant Caroline Domenich. Staff Sergeant Domenich is a member of the Alaska Army National Guard assigned to the 49th Missile Defense Battalion. She has served as a communications officer, is now a weapons officer in the Fire Direction Center at Fort Greely, Alaska, and was recently named the Missile Defender of the Year. I am grateful for the professionalism and proficiency of Staff Sergeant Domenich and her fellow Missile Defenders who stand ready to engage inbound threats when called upon to protect the United States.

## **AEROSPACE WARNING AND AEROSPACE CONTROL**

NORAD's Aerospace Warning and Aerospace Control missions are a vital component of the defense of the United States and Canada. Through the execution of Operation NOBLE EAGLE, NORAD defends our Nations' airspace around the clock and accomplishes this critical mission with a combination of armed fighters on alert, air patrols, aerial refueling, Airborne Warning and Control System surveillance platforms, the Integrated Air Defense System in the National Capital Region, and our ground-based Air Defense Sector surveillance detection

April 6, 2017

---

capabilities. These assets allow NORAD to respond to both symmetric and asymmetric air threats to the United States and Canada.

Since 9/11, more than 70,000 sorties have been flown in support of Operation NOBLE EAGLE. Continuous improvement of air domain awareness and intercept capabilities will ensure that NORAD forces can protect our most critical national infrastructure and maintain a basing architecture that defends key terrain and our most critical national infrastructure.

With almost 58,000 general aviation aircraft registered within 250 miles of the National Capital Region, we continue to look for ways to ensure we are using our Operation NOBLE EAGLE assets efficiently and effectively. In the years after 9/11, NORAD was frequently launching Operation NOBLE EAGLE assets to intercept general aviation aircraft that unintentionally violated restricted airspace around the National Capital Region. In an effort to reduce preventable intercepts, we started working with our interagency partners on a proactive outreach campaign to educate the general aviation community about restricted airspace and notify aircraft owners and pilots of upcoming airspace restrictions. The foundation of our ability to conduct meaningful community outreach is the tenacity of Airmen such as Major Andrew Scott, a Public Affairs Officer assigned to our 601st Air Operations Center. Major Scott has been a member of the Florida Air National Guard since 2005 and is a key leader in our combat information cell. Major Scott and the 601st team have fostered strong relationships with our interagency partners, including the Federal Aviation Administration, the U.S. Coast Guard, and the Civil Air Patrol. As a result of the community outreach program, we are seeing a significant decrease in accidental airspace incursions, which lead to an 80 percent reduction in unnecessary launches of intercept aircraft and other tactical actions.

April 6, 2017

---

In the late 1950s, when NORAD was established to defend North American airspace, the Soviet Union was the only nation-state capable of striking North America militarily. We were able to maintain physical standoff from our adversary by keeping Russian bombers out of missile range of North America. Today, that physical standoff has eroded due to technological advancements by our adversaries. Commanders today have much less decision space, in part because hostile actions can occur from greater ranges with little or no warning.

Russia continues to use heavy bombers, surface vessels, and submarines to demonstrate its ability to launch advanced, long-range, conventionally-armed cruise missiles. These emerging capabilities constitute a real challenge to our air defense architecture, and NORAD faces an increased risk to our ability to defend the United States and Canada against Russian cruise missile threats. The increased standoff capability, low altitude, and small radar signature of cruise missiles make defending against them a technical and operational challenge. I am confident in the layered approach provided by our family of systems to conduct cruise missile defense. We continue to work with the Joint Integrated Air and Missile Defense Organization, the Missile Defense Agency, and other stakeholders to pursue improvements to our indications and warnings, surveillance, and engagement capabilities to meet the evolving challenges posed by advanced threats.

We are nearly finished with the first part of our three-phase Homeland Defense Design effort, which is intended to enhance our ability to detect, track, and investigate suspicious aircraft, cruise missiles, and unmanned aircraft systems, and when necessary, cue our defense systems against the full spectrum of air threats. This year, we will continue to integrate advanced sensors in the National Capital Region and are on track to begin the second phase of the Homeland Defense Design in FY18 to expand aerospace surveillance capabilities. Phase 3 of

April 6, 2017

---

our Homeland Defense Design is in concept development and is intended to validate and incorporate emerging technology and explore scalable and deployable options for the rest of North America.

Our ability to find, fix, and finish air threats is largely dependent on the capability of the fighter aircraft that conduct NORAD's Aerospace Control Alert mission. Fundamental to the aircrafts' detect and track capability is the modernization of its radar systems. We are working with the U.S. Air Force to procure and field Active Electronically Scanned Array radars for our Aerospace Control Alert fighters, starting with the aircraft that defend the National Capital Region.

In recent years, Russia's Long Range Aviation Command has assumed an increasingly significant role in Russia's military assertiveness, starting with regular out-of-area patrols in 2007 and spiking in 2014 with more out-of-area patrols than in any year since the Cold War. Russian heavy bomber activity in the approaches to North America declined sharply in 2016, but a closer look reveals troubling new capabilities. Russia's strategic air forces spent much of the year cycling bombers through a modernization program that enables their aircraft to carry an advanced family of cruise missiles capable of holding the United States and Canada at risk.

With our Canadian teammates, we continue to capitalize on existing synergies and identify opportunities to evolve NORAD into a more agile Command capable of outpacing the full spectrum of threats. We will continue to prioritize investments in detection and surveillance through advanced indications and warning technology to ensure we are able to deter and, if necessary, defeat the full spectrum of aerospace and other attacks on the United States and Canada.

## THE ARCTIC

The harsh Arctic environment and polar icecap have long enhanced North American security by providing a physical barrier in the northern approaches to the United States and Canada. Today, receding sea ice and growing interest in Arctic economic prospects are increasing human presence and activity in the region. I consider the foundation for defense, security, and safety in the Arctic to be whole-of-government cooperation and collaboration with our trusted partners. In 2016, USNORTHCOM and NORAD supported the development of the 2016 DOD Arctic Strategy and we will continue to focus on ways to ensure the Arctic is a secure and stable region where U.S. national interests are safeguarded, the U.S. homeland is defended, and nations work cooperatively to address challenges. For USNORTHCOM and NORAD, the Arctic remains a strategic avenue of approach and a region with evolving challenges. I believe it is important that USNORTHCOM and NORAD be prepared to operate in the this harsh environment for missions such as search and rescue, patrolling, or maintaining Aerospace Warning and Aerospace Control along the Alaskan and Canadian coastlines.

In the near term, increased human activity in the region will demand close maritime coordination and unity of effort between international, interagency, and industry partners in response to an emergency. Last year, the U.S. Coast Guard and USNORTHCOM sponsored the Arctic-focused search and rescue exercise ARCTIC CHINOOK, a partnership field training exercise based on a maritime mass rescue scenario involving an adventure-class cruise ship operating in the Arctic that is forced to abandon ship after a catastrophic event.

One of my roles is to be the DOD advocate for Arctic capabilities. I am responsible for collaborating with Arctic stakeholders to enable a holistic view of Arctic capabilities. Our Arctic Capabilities Advocacy Working Group provides a forum for DOD, interagency, and trusted

April 6, 2017

---

international partners to identify requirements, capabilities, and shortfalls across the spectrum of DOD Arctic operations. Constrained budgets and demands from competing global priorities compel us to identify prudent opportunities to invest in material and non-material capabilities that enable us to ensure security and support safety in the Arctic.

We are primarily focused on improving fundamental operational capabilities that support domain awareness, communications, infrastructure, and sustainable presence in the Arctic. For instance, with the support of the working group, we successfully advocated for the construction of an open-bay barracks in Utqiagvik (formerly known as Barrow), Alaska. This 40-person facility opened in January and is supporting Alaska Army National Guard exercises and training. In addition, through NORAD's collaboration with the Department of Defense and the Canadian Department of National Defence, we facilitated the release of the Mobile User Objective System to Canada, which will provide better communications commonality among the bi-national NORAD enterprise.

## **DEFENSE SUPPORT OF CIVIL AUTHORITIES**

As the Commander of USNORTHCOM, I provide DOD assistance to federal, state, local, territorial, and tribal authorities. Defense Support of Civil Authorities is a unique mission in that we facilitate DOD support in response to requests for assistance from civil authorities for a range of needs, including domestic emergencies, law enforcement support, man-made incidents, and natural disasters. Our civil partners are charged with the direct responsibility to respond to these crises and we work hard to develop and maintain the relationships necessary to deliver responsive capabilities when our partners request assistance.

## NATURAL DISASTERS

Our disaster response actions are most often in support of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, with whom we plan and train to be ready to provide timely and tailored DOD capabilities for a spectrum of contingencies.

One of our key DOD partners in this endeavor is U.S. Transportation Command, on whom we rely to provide timely support of Federal Emergency Management Agency requirements. In addition to the transportation support they provide, their Joint Enabling Capabilities Command provides a trained and ready cadre of key subject matter experts to augment our Headquarters and deployed command and control forces with specialized transportation planning and communications capabilities.

In 2016, we partnered with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and a host of other federal, state, local, and Canadian provincial authorities to conduct Exercise ARDENT SENTRY, our annual Tier 1 disaster response exercise. The exercise simulated a 9.0-magnitude earthquake occurring in the Cascadia Subduction Zone, followed by a tsunami and several aftershocks along the coast of Washington, Oregon, Northern California, and British Columbia. This complex, integrated training environment offered USNORTHCOM an opportunity to practice our procedures and validate our processes with our federal, state, local, and multinational emergency responders.

This year, our ARDENT SENTRY exercise will give us an opportunity to plan and exercise a bilateral and whole-of-government response to an improvised nuclear threat in the New York City region and in Halifax Canada. The scenario will enable Canadian and United States forces to practice collaboratively rendering safe several devices near Halifax. The next phase of the exercise will challenge our consequence management procedures with Canada, our



April 6, 2017

---

Federal Emergency Management Agency Region II partners, the Department of Justice, and our interagency partners in response to two subsequent improvised nuclear device detonations and the resulting counterterrorism crime scene.

DOD capabilities are only useful if they are accessible and responsive to emergent relief requests. Our rigorous training regimen was put to the test in October, 2016 when Hurricane Matthew was developing in the eastern Caribbean. To provide ready support to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's response plan, USNORTHCOM coordinated with the Services to provide six DOD installations as incident staging bases to facilitate the deployment of commodities (e.g. water, food, blankets, cots, and generators) by staging these items closer to the expected impacted areas, thereby reducing response time.

## **THREAT NETWORKS**

In my first eleven months as Commander of USNORTHCOM and NORAD, I have invested highly productive time visiting our southwest border and Mexico, garnering an increased appreciation of the threats to our borders. Transnational Criminal Organizations and their networks continue to affect conditions in Mexico and Central America, which introduces instability and creates challenges for our U.S. law enforcement partners responsible for securing our borders.

The threat is fueled primarily by Transnational Criminal Organizations which function through vast networks that transcend physical, geographic, and societal boundaries. These networks are able to operate in legitimate society, which increases the likelihood of their survival despite the best efforts of law enforcement professionals. This challenge exists in the seams among U.S. institutions and far exceeds the ability of any one agency or nation to confront it. The global nature of these networks necessitates an unprecedented level of cooperative effort

April 6, 2017

among federal, state, local, international law enforcement, and intelligence community partners and combatant commands. I believe countering threat networks is a long-term proposition that will require continuous effort, creative solutions, and a strengthening of the unified network of law enforcement, DOD, intelligence community, and international partners.

USNORTHCOM continues to develop strong strategic security partnerships and foster opportunities to support to our domestic law enforcement partners. Our subordinate command, Joint Task Force North, recruits and employs Title 10 units to provide support to federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies. When requested, DOD assets are employed in support of an intelligence-driven, counter-network approach that simultaneously enhances unit readiness by allowing units to train on their mission essential tasks in a setting that approximates the environment common to many forward-deployed locations. In 2016, USNORTHCOM supported more than 150 all-domain, multi-agency domestic law enforcement operations, providing detection and monitoring capabilities, ground sensor platoons, unmanned aerial systems, mobility support, and analytical services. Our support contributed to law enforcement interdiction of \$150M in illicit goods.

The support we provide to our law enforcement partners is enabled through the determination and expertise of patriots like Sergeant Tanner Richie, a U.S. Marine Corps maintenance chief assigned to the 2nd Ground Sensor Platoon at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. Originally from Santa Cruz, California, Sergeant Richie is a trained ground sensor operator and sensor system maintainer who has deployed on four Joint Task Force North missions in support of the U.S. Border Patrol. As the maintenance chief for the platoon, Sergeant Richie identified a way to leverage satellite communications infrastructure to provide expanded sensor capability in areas along the border that were previously unreachable by Very High Frequency radio

April 6, 2017

---

employment. Through Sergeant Richie's ingenuity, USNORTHCOM is now able to provide increased ground sensor support to our law enforcement partners. The technical solution he tested along the border will have a lasting positive impact on ground sensor employment in the future.

We continue to pursue opportunities to mature synchronization and interoperability among all the stakeholders operating on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border. What began as an annual Border Commanders Conference to conduct senior-leader dialogue has developed into monthly cross-border coordination engagements, facilitated by USNORTHCOM's component command, United States Army North, to enable collaboration among U.S. law enforcement agencies and Mexican Military Region and Zone Commands. These engagements are an opportunity to share best practices and bilateral solutions designed to disrupt Transnational Criminal Organizations along the border. This bilateral collaboration further matured into concurrent patrols conducted by U.S. law enforcement and Mexico's Secretariat of National Defense (SEDENA) on respective sides of the border. The information sharing conducted through these concurrent patrols resulted in a recent seizure by SEDENA of 10,000 pounds of marijuana at the border.

I see the DOD support role in this highly complex problem as critical, and I intend to improve the relationships and strengthen the support USNORTHCOM is able to provide to domestic law enforcement agencies and our international partners. In the near term, we will continue to explore options for enhancing our support to our law enforcement partners at the ports of entry who work tirelessly to stem the flow of illicit trafficking into the U.S. In addition, we will pursue synchronized planning and coordinated operations with our partners to illuminate the networks that threaten our National security.

## **THEATER SECURITY COOPERATION**

### **CANADA**

The United States and Canada share the longest international border in the world, and our collaborative relationship is one of the closest and most extensive in history. This relationship reflects a unique friendship, underpinned by common values, that has evolved over the course of the last century. Our bi-national command, NORAD, is the gold standard for military collaboration providing for the common defense of our nations and people.

A critical component of our operational defense framework is the tri-command relationship between USNORTHCOM, NORAD, and the Canadian Joint Operations Command. This steadfast relationship extends beyond our integrated USNORTHCOM and NORAD headquarters at Peterson Air Force Base to the Canadian commanders who have established relationships with U.S. counterparts across the border to ensure our countries can support each other when needed. Together, we are working to further integrate our operational framework into an adaptive continental defense arrangement that can function across multiple domains to defend the United States and Canada, while preserving each nations' unilateral ability to conduct national missions.

As NORAD approaches our 60th year defending the United States and Canada, we need to evolve our bi-national defense to deter, and if necessary, defeat potential future attacks. We will continue to prioritize interoperability and all-domain command and control through regular operations, combined training and exercises, combined planning, information and intelligence sharing, and personnel exchanges to ensure we are capable of conducting operations together, across the spectrum of conflict.

## MEXICO

The relationship USNORTHCOM enjoys with Mexico's Secretariat of National Defense (SEDENA) and the Secretariat of the Navy (SEMAR) continues to evolve as a strategic institutional partnership. We routinely collaborate with the Mexican military as it seeks to prepare for and respond to internal security crises, contribute to regional security, and assume greater global responsibilities. They share our concerns over the negative impact of illicit flows on both sides of the border, and we are on a path toward a common military-to-military vision and strategy to address the mutual challenges that impact the security of both Nations.

USNORTHCOM continues to pursue opportunities to build interoperability with our Mexican military partners through combined training and exercises. We focus on ensuring the timely delivery of a record Foreign Military Sales of over a billion dollars in UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters and High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicles. We work closely with the U.S. interagency community and Mexican interagency organizations to support the Government of Mexico's Southern Border Strategy to improve security on their border with Guatemala and Belize.

USNORTHCOM's ability to provide focused engagements, professional exchanges, and military training with Mexico is dependent on the many warrior-diplomats who build trust and confidence with their military counterparts. Master Gunnery Sergeant Cesar Huezo, is a U.S. Marine Corps Reserve liaison officer assigned to the Theater Security Cooperation Detachment at Marine Forces North. Master Gunnery Sergeant Huezo draws upon his personal experiences as an infantryman, light armored reconnaissance section leader, and intelligence Marine—as well as his civilian career as a trauma nurse—to develop a cadre of combat-skills instructors who provide focused training to the Mexican Marines. Since 2012, Master Gunnery Sergeant Huezo

April 6, 2017

---

has developed instructional material and overseen training programs that enhanced the capacity of nearly 8,000 Mexican Marines.

Today, we are witnessing an evolution of the Mexican military from an internally focused force to one that is willing and increasingly capable of providing security leadership in Latin America. Recently, and for the first time in their institutional history, Mexico agreed to co-host the April 2017 Central American Security Conference with U.S. Southern Command and USNORTHCOM. This forum will reinforce Mexican Armed Forces regional leadership throughout Central America, and I am confident it will serve as a catalyst for greater involvement in strengthening regional security. In the near term, both SEDENA and SEMAR are actively preparing to become force providers in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations.

## **THE BAHAMAS**

The U.S. and The Bahamas share a strong bilateral relationship founded on common interests in security, trade, and disaster response. Like many nations in the region, The Bahamas suffers from a surge in human and narcotics trafficking that contribute to a corresponding rise in violent crime. The Bahamian government is committed to close cooperation with the United States on law enforcement and maritime security concerns, as well as ways to counter illicit trafficking. This past December, we conducted our annual bilateral security cooperation table-top exercise with the Royal Bahamas Defence Force and mission partners in the Government of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. The exercise challenged command and control structures, validated plans and procedures, and improved the Royal Bahamas Defence Force capability to provide maritime domain awareness, interdiction, and military assistance to civil authorities. We will continue our security cooperation efforts with the Royal Bahamas Defence Force with a

April 6, 2017

---

priority focus on emphasizing maritime domain awareness, interdiction capabilities to counter illicit flows, and increasing disaster response capabilities.

## CONCLUSION

The men and women of USNORTHCOM and NORAD remain diligent and undeterred as we stand watch. The evolving nature of global, transregional, all-domain, and multi-functional challenges have erased the lines on the map, necessitating an integrated and synchronized approach to defending the United States and Canada. To meet the challenges ahead, we actively pursue opportunities to strengthen our relationships with fellow combatant commands, our North American partners, and the interagency community. We will emphasize precision, agility, and resilience to ensure we are ready to execute in the ambiguity of a crisis.

We defend our countries by remaining ever vigilant, ever watching, and ever training as we fulfill our Commands' roles in the sacred responsibility of defending the United States and Canada. I am grateful for the support this Committee has provided our Commands and am truly honored to serve as the Commander of USNORTHCOM and NORAD. I look forward to your questions.

***“We have the watch”***