

STATEMENT OF GENERAL RALPH E. EBERHART, USAF

Press Release

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BEFORE THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
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COMMANDER NORTH AMERICAN AEROSPACE DEFENSE
COMMAND

AND UNITED STATES NORTHERN COMMAND

BEFORE THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

25 March 2004

Chairman Warner, Senator Levin and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you again and to represent the outstanding men and women of North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) and United States Northern Command (USNORTHCOM). The soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen, National Guardsmen, reservists and civilians serving in our Commands are the foundation for deterring and defending threats to the U.S. and Canadian homelands. Due to their efforts, North America enjoys freedom and security.

NORAD

NORAD is a bi-national U.S. and Canadian command that is responsible for the aerospace defense of North America. NORAD ensures U.S. and Canadian air sovereignty against an ever-expanding range of threats and provides surveillance and warning of ballistic missile attack. Securing the skies of North America is our top priority.

Operation NOBLE EAGLE. NORAD maintains a robust defense against asymmetric air threats to the U.S and Canada with a series of alert fighters, tankers and airborne early warning aircraft cued by interagency warning and networked surveillance radars. NORAD also operates an Integrated Air Defense System consisting of ground-based air defense capabilities in the U.S. National Capital Region. In the past year, NORAD flew more than 6,000 sorties in support of Operation NOBLE EAGLE, with Air National Guard and Reserve Component aircraft flying 77% of them. Since the 9-11 attacks, NORAD has flown more than 34,000 sorties and scrambled or diverted fighters more than 1700 times in response to potential threats, all without a single mishap.

Exercises. In 2003, NORAD participated in 29 homeland defense exercises. The largest exercise, called VIGILANT OVERVIEW, involved over 1000 people. Common Operational Picture. NORAD and USNORTHCOM are working hand in hand to develop a common operational picture that incorporates data from air, land, sea and space-based surveillance platforms, as well as information from intelligence, law enforcement and civil sources. As part of this effort, we are expanding data link capability across North America to make a common operational picture available for commanders at all levels to give them the situational awareness they need to make sound and timely decisions.

Bi-National Planning Group. In December 2002, the U.S. and Canadian

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governments established the Bi-National Planning Group to improve defenses against maritime and land-based threats to North America, as well as to coordinate our Nations capabilities to respond to natural disasters. An early result of their efforts is that we now have bi-national awareness of maritime vessels of interest for the U.S. and Canada and are sharing information on assets available to deal with potential threats.

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Integration. We are grateful to the FAA for their cooperation and technical support as we work to improve NORAD's surveillance and command and control capabilities. We have partnered with the FAA to install approximately 300 radios in FAA facilities to provide NORAD controllers the means to communicate with fighter pilots throughout our country. We also established connectivity with 70 FAA long-range interior radars and have plans to integrate an additional 39 FAA terminal/approach control radars into our command and control network by the end of this year.

USNORTHCOM

USNORTHCOM stood up on 1 October 2002 to counter external threats and aggression to our Nation. We also command and control forces in emergency and domestic circumstances where the Secretary of Defense has approved military support. These are not new missions for the military. What is new is that these missions now have the full-time attention of a combatant command.

Full Operational Capability. USNORTHCOM achieved full operational capability on 11 September 2003, two years after the 9-11 terrorist attacks. This was based on an in-depth evaluation of our proven ability to execute missions in real-world circumstances, as well as during rigorous validation exercises.

Operations. During the past year, we conducted homeland defense and military assistance operations for pre-planned events and emergencies. A summary of our recent operations follows:

Support to the U.S. Capitol Hill Police. In February 2004, in support of the U.S. Capitol Police, we activated Joint Task Force National Capital Region (JTF-NCR) to respond to ricin contamination within the U.S. Capitol complex. The JTF-NCR deployed a 145-person U.S. Marine Corps Chemical Biological Incident Response Force to assist in environmental assessment and decontamination of congressional office buildings.

Support to the State of the Union Address. In January 2004, in support of the U.S. Secret Service, we provided command and control of all military support to the State of the Union Address, to include security, emergency medical, chemical and biological response forces.

Response to Increased Threat Level. We were fully engaged with national leadership, the intelligence community and our interagency partners to ensure the security and safety of our Nation during the late 2003-early 2004 high threat advisory period. NORAD and USNORTHCOM increased alert levels and the number of aircraft available to respond to flights of interest. We also heightened force protection levels and shortened the response timeline for Quick Reaction Forces.

California Wildland Fire Fighting. In October 2003, at the request of the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC), USNORTHCOM responded to the Southern California fires. We deployed eight C-130 aircraft equipped with Modular Airborne Fire Fighting Systems (the entire Department of Defense (DoD) fleet), six Marine Corps helicopters, a Liaison Officer at NIFC Headquarters and a Defense Coordinating Officer with a Defense Coordinating Element. March Air Reserve Base served as a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) mobilization center.

Support to 58th United Nations General Assembly. In September and October 2003,

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at the request of the U.S. Secret Service and the Department of State, we supported the 58th United Nations General Assembly with over 200 service members. We provided a command and control element and extensive explosive ordnance support.

Support to Hurricane Isabel Operations. In September 2003, Hurricane Isabel, a Category Two hurricane, made landfall on the North Carolina coast with winds in excess of 100 miles per hour, causing millions of dollars of damage in its path. At the request of FEMA, USNORTHCOM deployed Task Force–East (First Army at Forest Park, Georgia) and provided Defense Coordinating Officers to Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina. We also used Fort Bragg, North Carolina; Pope Air Force Base, North Carolina; Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia and the Defense Supply Center Columbus, Ohio as mobilization, flight operations and FEMA storage centers.

Montana Wildland Fire Fighting. In August 2003, at the request of the NIFC, we established Task Force Steel Dragon to support fire fighting efforts in Montana. We deployed an Army Battalion of fire fighters (over 500 soldiers) and a medical evacuation helicopter, as well as a Defense Coordination Officer with a Defense Coordinating Element and a Liaison Officer to NIFC Headquarters.

Support to Operation IRAQI FREEDOM. USNORTHCOM has protected critical defense infrastructure and air and seaports of interest for units deploying and redeploying in support of Operation IRAQI FREEDOM.

Organizational Refinements. We are reorganizing our forces to improve our ability to defend and protect American citizens. This spring we will stand down the Joint Force Headquarters Homeland Security (a provisional unit) and establish a Standing Joint Force Headquarters North (SJFHQ–North). SJFHQ–North will be a full–time, trained and equipped, joint command and control element collocated with USNORTHCOM. It will operate as an integrated part of USNORTHCOM's planning and operations, but will focus on potential near–term trouble spots. SJFHQ–North is projected to achieve full operational capability by 1 October 2004.

We are working with the interagency to transform Joint Task Force Six in El Paso, Texas into Joint Interagency Task Force North to engage transnational threats against our Nation. In doing this, we are leveraging 14 years of expertise of providing support to federal, state, tribal and local counterdrug law enforcement agencies.

Efforts to Share Intelligence with Federal, State and Local Officials. To perform our mission, we rely on the sharing of actionable intelligence among federal, state and local agencies. Our Combined Intelligence and Fusion Center coordinates the acquisition, analysis and fusion of intelligence, counterintelligence and law enforcement information for the USNORTHCOM area of responsibility and shares that information with organizations at the national, state and local levels.

We have made significant progress in improving the exchange of threat information. During the 2003–2004 holiday season, the entire homeland security and defense community pulled together, with time–sensitive information moving quickly from intelligence and law enforcement agencies to the decision–makers who were challenged with mitigating various threats.

Maritime Interception Operations. USNORTHCOM supports the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in maritime homeland security, as needed. The U.S. Coast Guard has primary responsibility for maritime security in the approaches to the United States. USNORTHCOM is tasked with identifying and intercepting maritime threats as far from our shores as practical. In coordination with interagency partners, we conduct maritime interception operations to degrade and disrupt terrorist acts, collect intelligence and prevent attacks against the U.S. and its allies.

Exercises. USNORTHCOM sponsors two large–scale exercises annually:

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DETERMINED PROMISE and UNIFIED DEFENSE. Our exercise scenarios have involved air, maritime and port threats; consequence management operations; protection of critical infrastructure; maritime interception operations; bioterrorist attacks; weapons of mass destruction and natural disasters. To date, over 57 state and federal agencies have participated in our exercises. We continue efforts to increase international participation with Canada and Mexico. In February 2004, Canadian representatives observed Exercise UNIFIED DEFENSE at Headquarters NORAD-USNORTHCOM; representatives from Mexico observed the exercise at Headquarters, Fifth Army, Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

National Exercise Program. We have worked with the DHS to synchronize our exercise program with the national homeland security exercise program, which will exercise the National Response Plan and the National Incident Management System. When fully implemented, the national homeland security exercise program will consist of one large-scale exercise per year, alternating between TOP OFFICIALS in odd years and UNIFIED DEFENSE in even years. NORAD-USNORTHCOM will continue to conduct the DETERMINED PROMISE exercise series each year.

Theater Security Cooperation with Canada. USNORTHCOM has developed objectives, tasks and milestones to expand defense cooperation with Canada in the maritime, land and civil support domains. We look forward to having a series of shared contingency plans and cooperative procedures for bi-national defense and support to civil authorities with Canada.

Theater Security Cooperation with Mexico. We are leveraging existing relationships with the Mexican military and are pursuing efforts to expand assistance to Mexico using counterterrorism and counterdrug funding. In addition, we are working with the National Guard to develop new training opportunities with the Mexican military in a variety of areas, such as biohazard and weapons of mass destruction incident management.

Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response. USNORTHCOM has the capability to assist local, state and federal authorities with planning and exercising to improve response to a bioterrorism attack. We provide trained experts in the areas of chemical, biological and radiological incidents at the request of a lead federal agency to help prevent or contain an epidemic and respond to an actual attack.

USNORTHCOM'S RELATIONSHIPS

Interagency. We have increased our level of commitment and involvement with interagency partners over the past year. Our Joint Interagency Coordination Group (JIACG) continues to be a force multiplier for the Command across the board. The JIACG is comprised of 46 DoD and non-DoD agency representatives that include the Department of State, Department of Transportation, Central Intelligence Agency, FEMA, National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, U.S. Coast Guard, FAA, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, U.S. Army Corp of Engineers, U.S. Geological Survey and Sandia National Laboratories.

Other Combatant Commands. We have established the framework for a layered defense of the homeland in coordination with U.S. Joint Forces Command, U.S. Pacific Command, U.S. Southern Command, U.S. Special Operations Command, U.S. Strategic Command and U.S. Transportation Command. We are also working with the other regional combatant commands to eliminate threats to our homeland from outside our area of responsibility. Our focus is to address and resolve gaps in coverage, as well as any overlapping responsibilities. In addition, strengthening these relationships further facilitates time-sensitive information exchanges to ensure emerging threats are

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visible to intelligence and law enforcement officials.

National Guard Bureau. We have a strong relationship with the National Guard Bureau to execute homeland defense and homeland security missions, and we continue to seek ways to make it better. For instance, in order to improve awareness of our state of readiness and response, we are working on a robust information sharing network.

POTENTIAL FUTURE MISSIONS AND CAPABILITIES FOR NORAD AND USNORTHCOM

Integrated Missile Defense. As the combatant command tasked with defense of our homeland, USNORTHCOM will be responsible for execution of the Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD). In coordination with the Joint Staff, U.S. Pacific Command, U.S. Strategic Command and the Missile Defense Agency, we are refining operational concepts, command and control structures and establishing command relationships to ensure the effective employment of the GMD system when it becomes operational.

High Altitude Airship Advanced Concept Technology Demonstration. The Office of the Secretary of Defense, NORAD, the U.S. Army, and the Missile Defense Agency are teamed to demonstrate the technical feasibility and military utility of an unmanned, untethered, long-duration High Altitude Airship (HAA). The HAA will allow NORAD to look over-the-horizon throughout North America and out from our coastal waters for air, ground and maritime-based threats.

Full Spectrum Wide Area Surveillance. The current homeland air surveillance system consists of multiple independent ground-based radar systems that are approaching or have exceeded their life expectancy and require modifications for continued operations. We are working to address sustainment issues to maintain the current capability until advanced technologies are available to improve our ability to detect, identify and track threats.

Our ultimate objective is to field a wide area surveillance capability in the air and maritime domain that seamlessly connects all NORAD and USNORTHCOM command elements with DoD, Canada and other agencies. This objective system will reduce gaps in coverage and allow the sharing of surveillance data among pertinent U.S. and Canadian authorities.

Homeland Security/Homeland Defense Command and Control Advanced Concept Technology Demonstration (HLS/HLD C2 ACTD). USNORTHCOM is sponsoring the HLS/HLD C2 ACTD. We are working with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense to identify DoD and non-DoD participants who can benefit from demonstrated information sharing technologies. Solutions showcased during this venue will provide the homeland security and defense communities with cutting-edge technologies that improve information sharing, collaboration and decision making in a trusted information exchange environment.

CONCLUSION

The defense of our homeland depends on the dedication, professionalism and sacrifice of the men and women in our Commands. We appreciate what the members of this Committee have done to improve the quality of life for our service members. The FY04 National Defense Authorization Act reflects your concern for the members of our Armed Forces. We are grateful for your support. With your help, we will continue to strengthen our ability to protect our Nation's citizens where they live and work.