

## NORAD and USNORTHCOM Prepared to Engage Threats

Press Release

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The Department of Homeland Security raised the U.S. terror threat level from yellow (elevated) to orange (high) Sunday, warning of possible terrorist strikes more devastating than 9/11 attacks.

As a result of the warning, the North American Aerospace Defense Command, NORAD, and U.S. Northern Command are taking appropriate action to protect Canadians and Americans where they live and work, said Mike Perini, director of Public Affairs for NORAD and USNORTHCOM.



Situational Awareness Room

Photo credit: SSgt. Larry Holmes, USAF

We are adjusting our alert levels and irregular air patrols, Perini said. We remain at a high level of readiness, prepared to engage a variety of threats.

NORAD and USNORTHCOM maintain flexible alert posture and response options and are continually planning and executing prudent measures to deter, prevent or defeat those who would wish to do us harm.

For operational security reasons, we will not discuss details that could be useful to our enemies, Perini said.

In an increased threat environment, we may take actions such as increasing our fighter presence, both alert and airborne around the nation; layering our air defenses with both ground and air assets; and deployment of other people and assets as directed by the President or Secretary of Defense to support lead federal agencies, said Perini. We are coordinating our activities closely with the Department of HLS and other federal agencies.

Force Protection Condition (FPCON) levels at military installations within the United States is the responsibility of the individual services and will be implemented by installation commanders.

We will not discuss specifics of our installation security measures as disclosure could put service members and families at risk, Perini said.

NORAD and USNORTHCOM are but one part of a multi-layered, local, state, federal and military effort. The men and women of both commands stand ready, in this increased threat environment, to do our part, said Perini.

Since 9/11, NORAD has scrambled fighters or diverted air patrols more than 1,600 times to respond to possible air threats, and have combined with Airborne Warning and Control Systems (AWAC) and air-to-air refueling tankers to fly more than 32,000 sorties.

NORAD is a bi-national Canadian and American command that is responsible for the air defense of North America. NORAD has jet fighters on alert throughout North America, supported by air-to-air refueling tankers, airborne and ground-based radar, surveillance systems and satellites.

USNORTHCOM, a combatant command, deters, prevents and defeats threats and aggression aimed at the United States and its interests within its assigned area of responsibility – generally the North American continent and maritime approaches out to approximately 500 nautical miles from the coastline. As the command in charge of providing military assistance to civil authorities in the United States, USNORTHCOM

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provides "one-stop shopping" for federal agencies when directed by the President or Secretary of Defense to lead efforts to mitigate disasters and their after-effects.