



NORAD AND USNORTHCOM

STRATEGY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



MARCH 2021

TO COMPETE GLOBALLY, WE MUST BE STRONG AT HOME



PURPOSE

The North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) and United States Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) are separate commands. Both leverage the commander's singular vision and guidance; develop plans to meet challenges in the same strategic and operational environments; build complementary mission approaches; and share a common goal of defense of the United States and Canada. This NORAD and USNORTHCOM Strategy is a combined strategy that aligns with objectives identified in the *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance*, *National Defense Strategy*, and Canada's *Strong, Secure, Engaged* policy.

PROBLEM STATEMENT: Over the last three decades, our nations' competitors and potential adversaries have watched Canada and the United States and our way of deterring, competing, and conducting war. They have adapted and developed advanced capabilities in all domains challenging us at home and across the competition continuum, and holding at risk our people, our critical infrastructure, and our power projection capabilities.



THEORY OF SUCCESS: A capable and persistent defense at home is a prerequisite to projecting power to a **globally integrated** forward fight. Our ability to **deter in competition, de-escalate in crisis, and deny and defeat in conflict** requires **all-domain awareness, information dominance, and decision superiority**. We must improve critical infrastructure resiliency, strengthen partnerships, and provide rapid flexible options and decision space in support of civil authorities.



Nuclear deterrence remains the bedrock of the United States' defense. In this deterrence by punishment approach, we depend upon our competitors fearing the prohibitive costs of reprisal. However, we must also bring deterrence by denial into our planning calculus. Reliance on nuclear deterrence alone leaves a gap for competitors to exploit if they believe they can achieve their objectives below the nuclear threshold ranging from cyberattacks to conventional weapons. NORAD and USNORTHCOM will close this gap by further developing flexible, responsive options that complicate a potential adversary's decision calculus. The American and Canadian people are safe and secure today but, without intentional efforts to counter our competitors' fast-paced advances, our competitive advantage will erode.





STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

For decades, our nations enjoyed the benefits of dominant military capabilities in all domains and we relied on our geography to serve as a barrier to keep our nations beyond the reach of most conventional threats. Our ability to project power forward along with our technological overmatch has allowed us to fight forward and focus our energy on conducting operations overseas. However, our competitors have analyzed our ability to operate overseas and have invested in capabilities such as ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, hypersonic weapons, small unmanned aircraft systems, artificial intelligence, cyber capabilities, and delivery platforms to offset our strengths while exploiting our perceived weaknesses. These advancing capabilities embolden competitors and adversaries to challenge us at home, looking to threaten our people, our critical infrastructure and our power projection capabilities. As a result, the stakes are higher than they have been in decades and, for NORAD and USNORTHCOM, successful continental defense is the only option.



Whether the threats come from China, Russia, Iran, North Korea, violent extremist organizations, or transnational criminal organizations (TCOs), significant challenges persist.

This environment requires a culture change that factors in homeland defense, from a global perspective, into every aspect of operational plans and strategies, decisions, and budgeting choices resulting in the sustained successful defense of our two nations.



The Arctic provides a good example of the changing physical and strategic environment and is a zone of international competition. Both Russia and China are increasing their activity in the Arctic. Russia's fielding of advanced, long-range cruise missiles capable of being launched from Russian territory and flying through the northern approaches and seeking to strike targets in the United States and Canada has emerged as the dominant military threat in the Arctic. Additionally, diminished sea ice and competition over resources present overlapping challenges in this strategically significant region. China is not content to remain a mere observer in the growing competition, declaring itself a "near-Arctic state," and has taken action to normalize its naval and commercial presence in the region to increase its access to lucrative resources and shipping routes.



MISSIONS AND VISION

NORAD conducts aerospace warning, aerospace control, and maritime warning in the defense of North America.

USNORTHCOM defends our homeland - deters, detects, denies, and defeats threats to the United States, conducts security cooperation activities with allies and partners, and supports civil authorities.

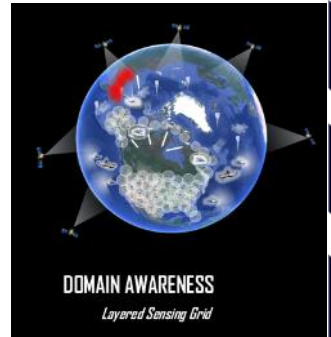
OUR VISION is to outpace global competitors, deter adversaries, deny and defeat threats through all-domain awareness, information dominance, decision superiority, and global integration.

STRATEGIC PRINCIPLES

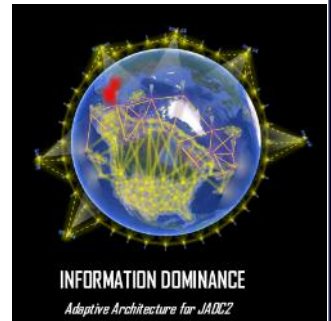
The four **strategic principles** used to achieve our priorities are building blocks under an umbrella of Global Integration (GI). All-Domain Awareness (DA) is the first step in pursuit of Information Dominance (ID), which is used to reach Decision Superiority (DS) in competition and crisis. Applying these strategic principles positions the commands further “left of launch” not just in crisis, but also during competition in order to get inside the adversaries Observe-Orient-Decide-Act (OODA) loop and complicate their calculus.

Global Integration (GI) in order to achieve a Globally Integrated Layered Defense: Our adversaries operate globally, across all domains and organizational boundaries. Use of a global framework, rather than regional, to synchronize global all-domain operations is paramount to success. A globally integrated layered defense consists of layers in terms of geography (forward regions, approaches, and the homeland layers), domains (air, land, sea, space, cyber, electromagnetic spectrum, and cognitive), and whole-of-governments/nations. The **forward layer** consists of forward-deployed Canadian and U.S. forces integrated with allies and partners. The **approaches layer** consists of joint force capabilities integrated with capabilities from Canada, Mexico, and The Bahamas. The **homeland layer** consists of joint force capabilities integrated with the whole-of-government/interagency and strategic private sector partner capabilities. GI must guide force allocation, future acquisition, and budgeting choices. Additionally, we must coordinate globally focused planning with other combatant commands (CCMDs) and Canadian Joint Operations Command (CJOC) to create a layered defense approach to protect our nations.

All-Domain Awareness (Observe): DA is a layered sensing grid that provides persistent battlespace awareness from the seabed to space and to cyberspace. As our competitors' capabilities continue to improve, we require timely and accurate information across all domains to counter their malign influence and actions. We are advocating and supporting cultural change within the Department of Defense (DoD) and the Department of National Defence (DND) to advance DA, through investment in service-life extensions of still-viable but aging capabilities, development of new capabilities, and inclusion of non-DoD/DND capabilities.



Information Dominance (Orient): We will achieve ID by connecting data from DA sensors to DS options. This involves advocating for joint force requirements and integrated capabilities. The Joint All-Domain Command and Control (JADC2) concept will overcome Service, interagency, and international stovepipes to ensure we control the information space in future information-centric warfare. We will support the Services as they advance capabilities and systems that rapidly ingest, aggregate, process, display, and disseminate data through artificial intelligence and machine learning. We are platform agnostic as to how the Services provide this capability.



Decision Superiority (Decide and Act): We will place influence mechanisms, forces, or weapons systems at decisive points during day-to-day competition, in crisis, and in conflict, in advance of our global competitors' or adversaries' actions. Using our understanding of data delivered through DA and ID, we will send strategic messages, set our posture, advocate for and create flexible response options at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels in order to increase our decision space and disrupt our competitors' decision cycles and actions. Our options will be designed with affordability in mind, and include multiple levers to deter, detect, deny, and if necessary, defeat any threat to our nations. We are placing significant emphasis on a left-of-launch framework that will provide decision space, enabling deterrence and de-escalation options, vice end game defeat.



ENDURING CONDITIONS

NORAD and USNORTHCOM's strategic approach focuses on achieving four **enduring conditions** (ECs) through the lens of the strategic principles. Because the nature of continental defense is not conducive to achieving a traditional "end state," the ECs drive us to continually evaluate the efficacy of operational planning and execution. This ensures our efforts, priorities, and resources are driving towards NORAD and USNORTHCOM's top priority - defending our nations. The four ECs serve as guideposts to drive efforts throughout both commands:

ENDURING CONDITION #1: Homelands defended from threats and adversary influence countered. NORAD's and USNORTHCOM's primary missions are to defend the United States and Canada against aggression. To be successful, we continue to globally integrate our defense with supporting CCMDs, CJOC, allies, and mission partners across all domains throughout competition and into crisis. A central aspect of our capable defense is a ready, credible deterrence to dissuade adversaries from threatening North America. NORAD's and USNORTHCOM's combined deterrence posture is part of a globally integrated approach, incorporating deterrence by denial at home, deterrence by punishment coordinated with our partners, and strategic application of all instruments of multi-national power through our governments.



Compete and deter aggression. Our primary role in the globally integrated layered defense is deterrence by denial. Our competitors know that we are always prepared to defend our nations. The central effect in our deterrence by denial strategy is to make our potential adversaries understand that the advancing capabilities of the United States and Canada will deny their ability to achieve their objectives.



If deterrence fails, detect, then deny and defeat threats. We must defend our nations should deterrence fail and our adversaries attack. Our surest path is through a globally integrated and resilient all-domain awareness infrastructure that is processed, synchronized, and presented to create information dominance, resulting in decision superiority over adversaries. Embracing these strategic principles requires a fundamental change of culture for NORAD and USNORTHCOM and our mission partners.



Enhance National resiliency. Equally as important as defeating threats is the hardening of critical infrastructure and promoting domestic resilience in order to mitigate the consequences of attacks, both kinetic and non-kinetic. Our demonstrated ability to respond to diverse attacks with a whole-of-government response is a strong deterrent to our adversaries. Protecting our nations is a prerequisite to projecting power abroad.



ENDURING CONDITION #2: United States and Canada outpace competitors to ensure our military advantage is expanded and not eroded. In order to maintain and increase our lead, we need to identify areas of competitive advantage, invest in them, and continually assess their effectiveness to ensure we are outpacing our adversaries.

Outpace our competitors through innovative concepts and technology. In order to achieve decision superiority, we must move past relying on complex, unique, and unaffordable defeat mechanisms. We will continue to modernize by working with industry partners to develop innovative approaches/systems and improve infrastructure in support of our strategic principles.



Outpace our competitors through global integration of strategies, plans, and operations between CCMDs, allies, and interagency organizations. We need to shift away from a regional planning process, because today's competition and any future conflict with peer adversaries will be global in scope. We are pursuing a global framework to synchronize activities across CCMDs prior to conflict, while working closely with allies and partners.



ENDURING CONDITION #3: U.S. and Canada's national security enhanced and regional stability maintained through strengthened partnerships. Aligned with the *Interim National Security Strategic Guidance* and *Strong, Secure, Engaged*, we will revitalize our unmatched network of alliances and partnerships. In this era of great power competition, robust relationships with our international and interagency mission partners, the Services, other CCMDs, industry, the private sector, and academia are key to expanding the competitive space and enabling a layered defense of North America across the competition continuum.

Develop and strengthen mission partnerships. NORAD and USNORTHCOM promote and actively engage with value-added mission partners such as NATO and Five-Eye partners (Canada, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand and the United States), both Canadian and U.S. Services, Canadian and U.S. interagency partners, private industry, and academia to accept, promote, refine, and expand upon the strategic principles. Adoption of the strategic principles by our partners will foster greater innovation and synergy and will promote interoperability.



(USNORTHCOM) Develop and strengthen mission partnerships with allies and partner nations, interagency organizations, other CCMDs, Services, CJOC, and the private sector. Canada is a critical mission partner and ally in the defense of North America and a strategic partner with the United States in meeting broader regional and global security challenges. USNORTHCOM will continue to seek opportunities with Canada to enhance our ability to act in a timely fashion to defend both countries.

Within its area of responsibility (AOR), USNORTHCOM continues to advance and strengthen relationships with Mexico and The Bahamas. Mexico's leadership throughout Central America serves as a bulwark against the corrosive effects of revisionist powers and ultimately improves the collective defense of North America. Cooperating with The Royal Bahamian Defence Force will result in better domain awareness in the region and thus strengthen North American defense in that critical portion of the AOR. Security cooperation with Mexico and The Bahamas, while focused on traditional military roles and missions, also enhances their ability to disrupt, degrade, and defeat TCOs. TCOs create opportunities for exploitation by our competitors who employ unrestricted warfare.

The U.S.-Mexico Bilateral Military Cooperation Roundtable (BMCR) and the U.S.-Bahamas Bilateral Security Cooperation Framework (BSCF) are the key mechanisms through which USNORTHCOM will continue to collaborate with our partners in the areas of domain awareness, domain control, and institutional strengthening in support of bilateral strategic objectives that contribute to globally-integrated cooperative defense.



(NORAD and USNORTHCOM) Develop and strengthen Arctic partnerships. We will defend the United States and Canada in and through the Arctic, with allies and partners, including Indigenous peoples and governments, by building Arctic awareness, enhancing Arctic operations, capabilities, infrastructure, and ensuring a credible defense presence. Improving our DA, polar communications capability, and ability to conduct sustained multi-domain operations are priorities.



ENDURING CONDITION #4: (USNORTHCOM) Civil authorities provided rapid flexible response options to improve collective resiliency. We will continue supporting when requested, both in response to natural or manmade disasters and in countering TCOs. Our ability to support our civil authority partners for large-scale incidents and national special security events (NSSEs) requires detailed integrated planning.

As the supported command for the Defense Support of Civil Authorities (DSCA) mission and the DSCA synchronizer within the USNORTHCOM AOR, we proactively plan and respond with key enabling capabilities to requests for assistance from interagency partners during incidents. Catastrophic disasters require an extraordinary level of synchronization among Federal, State, Tribal, local, private sector, and nongovernmental organizations. COVID-19 has reinforced the importance of our Pandemics and Infectious Diseases (P&ID) responsibility for the planning of DoD efforts and the need to coordinate across the whole-of-government.



In support of civil authorities, manage the catastrophic consequences of kinetic and non-kinetic attacks by peer competitors. Our commands will leverage all elements of national power and partner with other Federal departments, Indigenous governments, agencies, and the private sector, to plan for an integrated response to national security emergencies, including peer adversary attacks. This integrated planning will identify more effective uses of our capabilities to provide the greatest effect with the smallest number of forces, which will be critical in a resource-constrained environment.





RISKS TO THE STRATEGY

Our adversaries have made capability advancements and modified their strategic approaches. If left unchecked, this produces two types of risk that this strategy seeks to address. First, there is physical risk to our nations posed by adversary weapons if we lack conventional capabilities to deter and defeat them. Second, such attacks on our nations imperil our ability to project power and therefore effectively respond and prevail abroad. This strategy is a means to mitigate these risks. We must have a globally integrated approach to continental defense. Successful execution of this strategy including continued development of necessary information and protection capabilities will mitigate risk not only to those at home, but also our ability to protect our allies and advance our interests abroad.

“We need to protect in order to project”



CONCLUSION

NORAD and USNORTHCOM must always plan, exercise, and operate as a combined force in all aspects of our collective mission to defend North America and protect our nations' critical infrastructure. We will preserve our nations' ability to generate and deploy forces from North America. We must also adopt new ways of thinking that ensure we outthink and outpace our adversaries. We will apply the strategic principles of all-domain awareness, information dominance, decision superiority, and global integration as we seek to achieve our enduring conditions in support of our nations' interests. We must accelerate efforts to transform our culture and factor homeland defense into every acquisition, budget, force design, and management decision. In doing so, we can more effectively posture our commands and shape operational conditions that favor success in meeting future challenges. I am optimistic that we are going in the right direction, we must continue on this path.

“To compete globally, we must be strong at home”



GLEN D. VANHERCK
General, USAF
Commander

