

UNCLASSIFIED

# NORAD and USNORTHCOM



## Command Narrative

*February 27, 2017*

UNCLASSIFIED

### ***Two Commands... Common Purpose***

***“We Have the Watch.”*** NORAD and USNORTHCOM’s motto highlights the sacred obligation of both commands: the common defense of Canada and the United States. Each day, NORAD and USNORTHCOM defend our nations, our peoples...our families. Our shared purpose of common defense is the very reason our governments founded these two commands: NORAD, during the Cold War, and USNORTHCOM following the September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 attacks. The commands are proud of their histories, but the preservation of freedom demands that we not rest there. Looking to the future, we will continue to adapt and evolve to meet ever-changing threats.

Together, NORAD and USNORTHCOM, in collaboration with key partners, defend Canada and the United States through a flexible, and resilient defense enterprise. Underpinning our success are strong relationships, ready commands, and responsive capabilities, fulfilling the commands' roles in the shared responsibility of the defense of our nations.

### ***Strategic Environment***

The U.S. Department of Defense has identified five principal threats that represent varying security risks: Russia, China, North Korea, Iran and terrorism. Canada and the United States continue to work together to ensure the defense of our two nations. NORAD and USNORTHCOM must partner globally and be prepared to defeat both nation-state and terrorist threats.

The Arctic is of national security interest to both the U.S. and Canada. Changing Arctic conditions - receding seasonal sea ice and increased military and non-military activity - necessitate a measured and responsible approach to enable routine and contingency operations in the region across NORAD and USNORTHCOM mission sets.

Americans expect that their military will support them during their time of need. USNORTHCOM’s civil support missions involve a complex mixture of state and federal interagency organizations, all with different missions, authorities, and cultures. In this domestic mission space, the Department of Defense and USNORTHCOM play a supporting role to civil authorities. It is essential that members of USNORTHCOM understand the complexities of this domestic environment and our unique roles, authorities, and limitations as a supporting mission partner.

Our other USNORTHCOM regional partners, Mexico and The Bahamas, face the shared challenges of illicit trafficking and criminal violence. The large and capable organized criminal networks that drive these activities challenge regional security and stability. While the focus of our near-term security cooperation efforts with Mexico and The Bahamas address these challenges, longer-term goals seek to enable those partners to increase their contributions to regional security.

### ***Strategic Framework***

NORAD and USNORTHCOM’s strategic framework — **Roles, Relationships, Readiness, and Responsiveness** — is a way of thinking about our missions. The four components of the framework provide focus and direction to both commands and leverage the strengths of an integrated and combined headquarters.

**Roles:** NORAD and USNORTHCOM's defensive missions are complementary. NORAD defends Canada and the United States against air-breathing aerospace threats, and conducts Integrated Tactical Warning and Attack Assessment (ITW/AA) for all aerospace threats. NORAD also warns each nation of potential maritime threats. USNORTHCOM's defense responsibilities focus on countering ballistic missile threats and threats in the maritime and land domains. Together, these commands contribute complementary, multi-domain defensive capabilities towards the defense of Canada and the United States. There is, however, complexity in this two-command structure in that many of us have both distinct NORAD and USNORTHCOM roles. Consequently, we must approach our defense responsibilities with precision and a clear understanding of what command authority we are leveraging to accomplish the mission. In addition to its defensive mission, USNORTHCOM conducts Defense Support of Civil Authorities and Theater Security Cooperation missions.

**Relationships:** NORAD and USNORTHCOM maintain relationships to enable accomplishment of our missions. The NORAD and USNORTHCOM defensive missions closely align with those of our Tri-Command partner, the Canadian Joint Operations Command. The commands' relationships with other geographic and functional combatant commands enable a defense in depth that further protects Canada and the United States. USNORTHCOM's relationships with key interagency partners enables whole of government approaches both to protect the United States and to respond in crisis. USNORTHCOM's increasingly robust relationships with Mexico and The Bahamas enhance each country's capacity to contribute to regional security.

**Readiness:** NORAD and USNORTHCOM must have the right mix of trained and ready forces and capabilities available on timelines to meet our mission requirements. Appropriate access, basing, and infrastructure further enable readiness. Integrating our planning with mission partners readies NORAD and USNORTHCOM for defensive missions and USNORTHCOM for civil support missions. Realistic training and exercises prepare staffs and units to execute their missions in the ambiguity of a crisis.

**Responsiveness:** In addition to trusted relationships and high readiness, NORAD and USNORTHCOM require appropriate command authorities and the ability to anticipate requirements in order to respond. Although not all authorities will be available pre-crisis, we must establish processes that enable rapid approval at the time of need. For our defense missions, we must anticipate actions based on an understanding of the threats and the environment. For USNORTHCOM's civil support and security cooperation missions, we can anticipate the needs of our partners by developing a clear understanding of what they aim to achieve and how we can contribute to their success.

### ***Strategic Approach***

**Deter and counter nation-state threats and enhance the commands' ability to defend:** NORAD's and USNORTHCOM's nation-state security challenges are exceptional in that the threat scenarios we face would likely start as regional conflicts in other theaters and subsequently escalate to the point that they threaten Canada and the United States. This reality demands strong partnerships with other commands to create the depth necessary to defend successfully. Combined and complementary NORAD and USNORTHCOM

defensive capabilities must counter threats across multiple domains, with a critical focus on ballistic missile defense, aerospace defense, maritime defense, and land defense. As threats continue to evolve, we must pursue innovative ways to defend our nations.

Partner to counter threat networks: As threat networks continue to evolve, so too must the commands' approach to countering them. Building friendly networks – with other Department of Defense, federal interagency, and regional partners – to identify, illuminate, and disrupt threat networks will be vital. Although the primary aim of these activities is to protect Canada and the United States from terrorist threat networks, they also include providing support for regional partners to mitigate the adverse effects of transnational organized criminal networks whose size, scope, and capabilities threaten security interests. In the majority of scenarios, the commands provide timely and effective support to mission partners to enable them to counter terrorist or transnational organized criminal networks and enhance regional security. NORAD and USNORTHCOM must also be prepared, if directed, to counter terrorism directly. In this circumstance, USNORTHCOM will counter terrorist threats on land or at sea and NORAD will counter them in the air.

Respond to crisis in support of mission partners: Manmade and natural disasters pose significant threats to the population and infrastructure of the United States. USNORTHCOM's civil partners are directly responsible for domestic crisis response. To provide timely support to response efforts, USNORTHCOM must maintain trusted partnerships, integrate planning, and rapidly source and deploy capabilities. As a supporting partner in the whole of government response, USNORTHCOM must understand partner authorities and concerns, and create streamlined structures and processes that simplify the delivery of capabilities to our mission partners.

Continue to strengthen regional partners and relationships: The shared interests of Canada and the United States have enabled the development of a security partnership of extraordinary strength. The bi-national ties between the two countries form the foundation for the combined defense of Canada and the United States. Maintaining the strength of this security relationship among NORAD, USNORTHCOM, and Canadian Joint Operations Command is paramount. USNORTHCOM must also continue to strengthen cooperative efforts with Mexico and The Bahamas. Mexico is a trusted and growing partner demonstrating an increased desire to contribute to cooperative defense and regional security. Bahamian capacity building and dedication to regional integration are instrumental in securing maritime approaches to the United States.

### ***Conclusion***

NORAD and USNORTHCOM — two distinct commands with common purpose — fulfill complementary roles to **deter and counter nation-state and terrorist threats**. The relationships of each command help **support security partners** and **strengthen partnerships and security** throughout the region. As NORAD and USNORTHCOM increase readiness, the ability to support security partners and **respond to crises** also increases. This further enhances each command's ability to **deter and to defend**, and empowers NORAD and USNORTHCOM's capability to protect Canadian and American citizens, their values, and their interests against malign behavior and aggression.

Together, **"We Have the Watch."**