

PRESS RELEASE

House Armed Services Committee Duncan Hunter, Chairman

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OPENING REMARKS OF CHAIRMAN DUNCAN HUNTER

Full Committee Hearing on U.S. Northern Command and U.S. Strategic Command

This morning, the committee continues hearings on the posture of our Unified Combatant Commands. As we discussed yesterday, the 2002 Unified Command Plan made major changes to the missions and responsibilities to our Unified Combatant Commands. Nowhere are those changes more apparent than in the commands represented here today.

With the creation of U.S. Northern Command last year, the United States has, for the first time in its history, a Unified Combatant Commander whose sole responsibility is defense of the homeland. Northern Command's primary focus is on military threats emanating from outside the United States. However, NORTHCOM is also charged with providing military support to civil authorities and conducting emergency preparedness to support the President and Secretary of Defense in the case of a designated National Security Emergency.

All these missions require NORTHCOM to interact on a daily basis with multiple Government agencies. Chief among these is the new Department of Homeland Security, an organization that, like NORTHCOM, was only recently created. General Eberhart, the committee is interested in hearing what progress has been made in standing up your command, and how your interaction and coordination with other government agencies is progressing as we move to improve homeland defense.

In addition to creating NORTHCOM, the Unified Command Plan made major changes to U.S. Strategic Command. Not only did STRATCOM absorb all the missions of the now defunct U.S. Space Command, but STRATCOM was also assigned the additional missions of global strike, C4ISR, integrated missile defense, and information operations. In addition, last year's Nuclear Posture Review altered the concept of the traditional nuclear triad, changing the way we think about our nuclear deterrence.

Admiral Ellis, the committee looks forward to receiving a report on the progress STRATCOM is making in integrating all the various mission areas that are now your responsibility.

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