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**STATEMENT OF  
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AND  
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**BEFORE THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC FORCES**

**DELIVERY DATE 21 MARCH 2024**

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Chairman Lamborn, Ranking Member Moulton, and distinguished members of the Subcommittee: thank you for the opportunity to testify today and for the honor of representing the men and women of United States Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) and North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD). Since assuming command in early February, my initial actions and priorities have included maintaining our vital homeland defense mission throughout a seamless leadership transition; strengthening USNORTHCOM and NORAD's vital network of Department of Defense (DoD), international, private sector, and interagency mission partners; and conducting a thorough assessment of the Commands' personnel, missions, and resourcing. I look forward to establishing personal relationships with leaders throughout the commands' area of responsibility and across the U.S. Government as those ties are critical to the successful execution of USNORTHCOM and NORAD's no-fail missions.

It is already apparent that the strategic environment facing the United States and Canada – and our allies and partners – presents significant risks to our homeland, our citizens, and our vital national interests. Across all domains and avenues, competitors are exploiting conflicts and crises around the world to undermine U.S. global leadership and our democratic institutions. Our competitors continue to develop and deploy highly advanced kinetic and non-kinetic weapons systems capable of disrupting or defeating military and civilian targets in North America. These threats are difficult to detect and can strike with limited warning, which reduces the time and response options available to our national leaders and increases the risk of miscalculation and escalation during periods of heightened tension, crisis, and conflict.

As recent events have made clear, overseas crises increasingly carry significant implications for homeland defense. Regional conflicts routinely have the potential to expand into broader crises that directly impact U.S. and allied interests. Russia's unprovoked war

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against Ukraine and the horrific October 7<sup>th</sup> Hamas terrorist attacks against Israel demonstrate how seemingly isolated events, regardless of whether the United States and our allies are directly involved, have the potential to reach our own shores. Those ripple effects can include competitor information operations directed against the American public and civil unrest and violence within the United States, or attacks directly targeting the United States and our interests.

Competitors like the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Russia are well aware that the U.S. military is the strongest in the world and highly capable of deploying forces anywhere on the planet to deter aggression and de-escalate potential crises. Accordingly, those competitors have sought to hold defense critical infrastructure in the United States at risk with kinetic and non-kinetic systems intended to impede our ability to flow forces overseas. That strategy must be taken into account in planning for the forward deployment of U.S. forces and resources, as moving assets overseas has the potential to affect the availability of assets assigned to homeland defense or force mobilization missions.

The realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century strategic environment require a flexible, adaptive global approach that recognizes the fact that our competitors can hold the U.S. homeland – and the homelands of our allies and partners – at risk with conventional, nuclear, and non-kinetic capabilities as part of a broad effort to force the United States to accept increased risk when deploying forces in support of overseas operations. Preserving the full range of options for defending U.S. national interests requires homeland defense to remain a fundamental consideration at every stage of DOD planning, policy, and budgeting.

A globally integrated approach to planning and actions must also extend beyond the Department of Defense and should be embraced by the whole of the U.S. Government. Success in competition, crisis, or conflict continues to rely on a ready, modern, and capable joint force reinforcing the other core elements of our national power. Our diplomatic corps is essential to

shaping the strategic environment and cultivating the network of alliances and partnerships that provide the most significant U.S. advantage against isolated and authoritarian competitors seeking to expand their territory and influence at the expense of their sovereign neighbors. The successful execution of USNORTHCOM and NORAD's missions relies on cohesive strategies, integrated planning, and collaboration across the whole of government, and I look forward to working closely with the members of this Committee as we work together to meet the formidable challenges facing our nation.

### **THE THREAT ENVIRONMENT**

The threat to the homeland continues to grow in complexity. Our primary competitors are developing new ways to hold North America at risk, both above and below the nuclear threshold. Designed to constrain our options in a crisis, the capabilities our potential adversaries are pursuing will challenge strategic deterrence and erode strategic stability by limiting our ability to provide actionable warning and narrowing the decision space available to senior leaders. The conflict in the Middle East has also amplified the risk that Iran or a foreign terrorist organization will conduct attacks in the homeland, either directly or by inspiring homegrown violent extremists to act in their stead.

### **People's Republic of China (PRC)**

The PRC remains the Department's pacing challenge as identified in the 2022 National Defense Strategy (NDS). Beijing has embarked on a wide-ranging military modernization program that is advancing the PRC's homeland-threatening capabilities at an urgent pace. At the strategic level, the PRC is pursuing a rapid quantitative and qualitative expansion of its nuclear arsenal, which now numbers over 500 operational warheads and is on pace to exceed 1,000 by the end of the decade. The PRC probably intends to place a significant portion of these weapons

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– including over 300 newly constructed intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) silos – in a launch-on-warning posture that could increase the risk of miscalculation in a crisis or conflict.

Beijing’s strategic modernization program includes a variety of novel weapons designed to bolster the credibility of the PRC’s strategic deterrent by ensuring its ability to overcome U.S. missile defenses and retaliate following a strike. These weapons include ICBMs equipped with hypersonic glide vehicles, whose high speed, low trajectory, and maneuvering capabilities challenge our ability to detect, characterize, and warn of inbound threats. The PRC is also developing a fractional orbital bombardment system, designed to further challenge our early warning radars and ballistic missile interceptors.

The Department of Defense’s annual report to Congress on PRC military developments states that the PRC may also be exploring the development of conventionally armed intercontinental-range missile systems that could allow Beijing to strike targets in Alaska and the continental United States without crossing the nuclear threshold. Such systems, if fielded, would further erode strategic stability by challenging our ability to characterize an inbound attack and complicating our decision-making about an appropriate response.

Turning to the maritime domain, in the last two years, the PRC has launched the first two hulls of its new Shang III class of nuclear-powered guided-missile submarines (SSGN). If the PRC arms the Shang III with land-attack cruise missiles, the new SSGNs could provide Beijing a clandestine land-attack option beyond the Indo-Pacific region, potentially holding at risk critical infrastructure in Alaska and the U.S. West Coast. While Beijing’s intent for employing these long-range conventional strike capabilities is not fully known, in a future crisis, the PRC could use these weapons – along with its world-class offensive cyber capabilities – to threaten or attack our critical defense infrastructure in an attempt to dissuade or frustrate our force flows across the Pacific and degrade the effectiveness of our forward combat operations.

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Meanwhile, the PRC continues to expand its influence and activity in the Arctic. Last summer, Beijing again employed its Xue Long 2 ice-hardened research vessel to conduct the country's 13<sup>th</sup> scientific expedition to the Arctic. During its voyage, the vessel deployed autonomous underwater vehicles, floating ice stations, and an acoustic monitoring buoy system in waters off Alaska and Canada to collect data that could inform future PLA Navy deployments to the region. Concurrently, the PRC and Russia conducted their second combined naval patrol to the Bering Sea in as many years. More than 10 vessels – including cruise missile-capable surface combatants – participated in the patrol, which included anti-submarine exercises and other combat training near the Aleutian Islands.

### **Russia**

While the PRC's strategic capabilities are growing quickly, Russia remains the greatest military threat to the homeland today. Despite the degradation of its ground forces resulting from two disastrous years of combat in Ukraine, Russia seeks to rapidly rearm and retains the world's largest arsenal of strategic and non-strategic nuclear weapons and a still formidable capability to threaten North America with precision-strike conventional weapons. Russia has gained extensive operational experience with its most advanced non-nuclear weapons in Ukraine, and has had the opportunity to refine tactics, techniques, and procedures that it could employ in a direct conflict with the United States or our NATO allies. Moreover, Russia's illegal and unprovoked full-scale invasion of Ukraine and irresponsible nuclear rhetoric have demonstrated to like-minded autocrats that nuclear coercion remains a tool of statecraft in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Russia's leaders regularly exercise strategic conflict with the West and are investing heavily to develop new weapons to ensure their ability to hold our nation at perpetual risk. In the last year, Russia has expanded its force of ICBMs armed with the Avangard hypersonic glide vehicle, designed to evade missile defense radars and interceptors. It is also preparing to deploy

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the Sarmat heavy ICBM, which Vladimir Putin has claimed will feature a fractional orbital bombardment capability that could enable it to approach North America via a nonstandard trajectory over the South Pole. Russia also continues to develop and test novel experimental weapon systems, like the nuclear-armed Poseidon transoceanic weapon and the Burevestnik nuclear-propelled cruise missile. Russia intends for these systems to challenge US defenses and guarantee Russia's ability to retaliate after a first strike.

Meanwhile, Russia continues to hone a wide range of non-nuclear capabilities – including cyber weapons and conventionally armed air-, sea-, and ground-launched cruise missiles – to provide options below the nuclear threshold. Russia plans to use these non-nuclear capabilities to strike Western economic and military infrastructure in an attempt to degrade our political will and compel negotiations to terminate an escalating conflict. Russian public statements and military deployments near North America over the last several years make clear that, in the event of war with the United States, Moscow's targeting strategy for these weapons would include critical infrastructure in the homeland.

Despite the heavy commitment of its aviation forces in Ukraine, Russia has continued to fly regular out-of-area patrols with its heavy bombers and other military aircraft in multiple areas around the globe – including numerous flights into the North American air defense identification zone since February 2022. Meanwhile, the Russian Navy has increased its long-range operational deployments of cruise missile-capable surface and subsurface vessels above pre-February 2022 levels. In January, Russia deployed a Gorshkov-class frigate to the western Atlantic, where the Russian Defense Ministry claimed the crew rehearsed “delivering a missile strike against an enemy surface target” using its Tsirkon hypersonic missiles. In September, the Russian Pacific Fleet conducted its Finval-2023 exercise, which demonstrated Moscow's ability to control access to the Arctic through the Bering Strait and included live cruise missile launches

by coastal defense units as well as surface and subsurface vessels operating within the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone off Alaska.

Finally, in late 2022, the Russian Pacific Fleet received its first Severodvinsk-class nuclear-powered guided missile submarine (SSGN), introducing a land-attack cruise missile threat to the U.S. West Coast similar to that faced by the East Coast since the first Severodvinsk entered service in the Russian Northern Fleet in 2014. Russian media indicates that Moscow now plans to field a total of 12 Severodvinsk hulls, split evenly between the Atlantic and Pacific, enabling the Russian Navy to pose a persistent conventional threat to critical infrastructure throughout most of North America. The threat will only become more acute later in the decade when Severodvinsk SSGNs are armed with the Tsirkon hypersonic missile.

#### **The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)**

Over the last two years, the DPRK has conducted nearly 100 ballistic missile tests, including 13 ICBM flight tests, as well as three space launch attempts using ICBM-class boosters. Its most recent space launch in November successfully placed a rudimentary intelligence satellite into orbit – capabilities that could advance quickly if Moscow were to offer space cooperation in exchange for North Korean arms deliveries for the war in Ukraine. Ballistic missiles that the DPRK has successfully tested since 2022 include a new and more capable liquid-propellant ICBM as well as the country's first solid-propellant ICBM, which will further compound warning challenges due to its smaller logistical footprint.

Both systems likely have sufficient boost to deliver a nuclear payload to the entire United States. The DPRK's closed society and robust security apparatus make it one of our most vexing intelligence challenges and prevent us from confidently assessing the number of ICBMs in its inventory. Nonetheless, I am concerned that Kim Jong Un's growing ICBM stockpile could approach our capacity to defend North America – a challenge that will only expand in the



coming years if Kim Jong Un looks to add multiple reentry vehicles to his missiles and transition his ICBM program from research and development to serialized production and deployment.

## **Iran**

Iran's materiel support to Russia's war in Ukraine and political support to Hamas before and following its October 7<sup>th</sup> attack on Israel, along with Iranian support to Houthi forces challenging commercial shipping, underscore Tehran's entrenched hostility to the Western-led international order. Iran remains committed to retaliating for the January 2020 death of former IRGC Qods Force Commander Qassem Soleimani, potentially with attacks against current and former senior U.S. officials. Iran also poses a growing cyber threat to U.S. and allied networks and critical infrastructure. Last November, Iranian cyber actors targeted several U.S. water and wastewater facilities, likely in response to U.S. support for Israel. In the last two years, the FBI has disrupted two Iranian plots inside the United States to kill U.S. citizens of Iranian origin that have criticized the regime's autocracy and disregard for human rights. Finally, Iran continues to invest in its nuclear energy and space launch programs, which could provide a potential breakout option should Iran's leaders decide to pursue a homeland-threatening ICBM.

## **Violent Extremist Organizations**

The likelihood of a significant terrorist attack in the homeland has almost certainly increased since the beginning of the Israel-Hamas conflict. Multiple terrorist groups – including ISIS and al-Qa'ida – have leveraged the crisis to generate propaganda designed to inspire followers to conduct attacks, including in North America. The increasingly diffuse nature of the transnational terrorist threat challenges our law enforcement partners' ability to detect and disrupt attack plotting against the homeland and leaves us vulnerable to surprise. Commercial and general aviation likely persist as preferred targets due to the disproportionate economic and

psychological impact such attacks would generate. I also continue to watch the Israel-Hamas conflict for signs that escalation is expanding beyond the region and remain concerned with the threat from Lebanese Hizballah – a group with international reach and a history of conducting attacks in the Western Hemisphere that continues long-term contingency planning in the homeland.

### **Regional Security Threats**

Transnational criminal organizations in Mexico and elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere continue to foster instability and challenge the rule of law, creating potential opportunities for our state and non-state adversaries to expand their access and influence along our southern approaches. Irregular migration through Mexico reached record levels in the last year, and drug-related violence has escalated as rival cartels fight for control of lucrative drug and human trafficking routes. Cartels have also demonstrated a growing willingness to directly engage Mexican military, security forces, and government officials, highlighting the need for continued theater security cooperation with our partners in Mexico.

### **Small Unmanned Aircraft Systems (sUAS)**

We continue to see a rapid proliferation of sUAS technology and usage in the homeland, including near our military installations. While most of this activity can likely be attributed to hobbyists, sUAS could be exploited by nefarious actors for surveillance, illicit trafficking, or—in a worst case – attacks on domestic critical infrastructure. Unauthorized sUAS flights over government installations and civilian infrastructure have the potential to disrupt critical services and threaten force protection and mission assurance. Given the growing prevalence of sUAS available for military, commercial, and recreational use, NORAD, USNORTHCOM, and our

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interagency partners face mounting challenges in early detection and threat characterization, owner and operator attribution, and – when necessary – mitigation and interdiction.

By all indications, sUAS will present a safety and security risk to military installations and other critical infrastructure for the foreseeable future. Mitigating those risks requires a dedicated effort across all federal Departments and agencies, state, local, tribal and territorial communities, and Congress to further develop the capabilities, coordination, and legal authorities necessary for detecting, tracking, and addressing potential sUAS threats in the homeland.

### **USNORTHCOM and NORAD PRIORITIES**

Against the backdrop of expanding and expansive threats, USNORTHCOM and NORAD remain dedicated to defending the U.S. and Canadian homelands today and well into the future. My key priority remains improved domain awareness in the approaches to North America and around the globe. The ability to detect, classify, and track potential threats to the homeland from the seafloor to space and in the cyber domain is a critical need for USNORTHCOM and NORAD – and for my fellow combatant commanders and international partners. Our core missions, to include defending critical defense infrastructure, require USNORTHCOM and NORAD to see and respond to threats through a globally integrated layered defense extending as far from our shores as possible. That capability is needed to ensure national leaders have as much time as possible to decide the best course of action for deterring, de-escalating, or defeating potential hostile acts.

Investments in capabilities such as Over-the-Horizon Radar (OTHR) and the Integrated Undersea Surveillance System (IUSS) will significantly enhance domain awareness in the air and maritime domains while limiting competitors' ability to approach North America undetected. Likewise, USNORTHCOM and NORAD's ability to track and defeat inbound DPRK long-range ballistic missiles will be significantly enhanced with the Long-Range Discrimination Radar

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(LRDR), currently planned for integration into the United States' ballistic missile defense architecture in the near future. I remain grateful to this Committee for your support of these important initiatives, and I urge continued emphasis on improving our nation's ability to find and monitor potential aggressors well before they could target our homeland.

The rapid pace of change in the strategic environment, to include advancing kinetic and non-kinetic threats and the increasing exploitation of the information space, give reason to believe that successful defense of the homeland tomorrow requires new approaches, technologies, and perspectives. As competitors increasingly focus on holding the homeland at risk in an effort to influence U.S. and allied decision-making and limit our options for intervention in overseas crises, USNORTHCOM and NORAD are taking active measures today to ensure the ability of the commands to defend the homelands in the future.

The United States retains the world's most powerful military and a global network of immensely capable allies and partners. However, information flow between organizations and commands remains stifled by technological and institutional barriers, which too often results in delayed delivery and processing of critical information. Improving global domain awareness is absolutely necessary, but the Department must also expedite the processing and sharing of information between combatant commands, allies, partners, and the interagency community. The Department's prioritization of the Joint All-Domain Command and Control concept highlights the increasing importance of quickly sharing information between sensors, decision makers, and effectors. For USNORTHCOM and NORAD, the ability to detect potential threats, make well-informed recommendations to leaders, and take appropriate defensive measures is vital, and I will work closely with the Department and the Services to develop this critical capability.

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Our nation must also continue to invest wisely in the military and civilian personnel responsible for planning and executing every one of USNORTHCOM and NORAD's no-fail missions. The demands of defending the homeland are significant and require an experienced and innovative professional workforce from a broad range of experiences and backgrounds. Our commands continue to prioritize recruiting and retaining exceptional talent from a broad and deep talent pool. Just as our nation makes substantial investments in cutting-edge technology to outpace our competitors, we must also invest in the dedicated service members and public servants who stand watch over our nation.

### **HOMELAND DEFENSE DESIGN NEXT**

In recognition of the multi-domain threats to North America, USNORTHCOM and NORAD have prioritized operationalizing the commands and institutionalizing active campaigning in the homeland. Homeland defense begins well beyond our shores and relies on a layered, integrated defense conducted in full cooperation with our fellow combatant commands and our allies and partners. Rather than simply reacting to the actions of our competitors, USNORTHCOM and NORAD are taking active measures to assess the emerging threats and associated requirements of the near future in to ensure our ability to defend critical assets and safeguard the nation's ability to project forces forward.

The actions and ambitions of our competitors require the United States and Canada to demonstrate the capability to fight in and from North America, and the commands' homeland defense design will ensure our ability to defend the homeland in the coming decades. USNORTHCOM and NORAD's focus on campaigning and operationalizing the commands reflects competitors' growing capability and capacity to hold targets throughout North America at risk and to force U.S. and Canadian leaders to defend the continent while projecting forces overseas.

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It is a near certainty that homeland defense in the coming years will rely less on point defense and traditional kinetic defeat mechanisms in favor of area defense and left-of-launch effects that take full advantage of multi-domain capabilities. While the future of homeland defense may look vastly different than the current architecture, it will continue to depend on the pillars USNORTHCOM and NORAD use today – all-domain awareness; information dominance; decision superiority; and global integration. I look forward to working with the Department and Congress on these pillars.

The necessity of campaigning in and from North America has been made clear in recent years as competitors have repeatedly demonstrated the capability, capacity, and intent to hold the homeland at risk. USNORTHCOM and NORAD will continue to advance the commands' ability to conduct globally integrated joint operations in defense of the homeland. The commands will also benefit from the recent transition from the legacy USNORTHCOM and NORAD Command and Control Center (N2C2) to a Joint Operations Center (JOC) that mirrors the capabilities of fellow geographic combatant commands and allows for real-time, all-domain communications and coordination with the commands' DOD and interagency partners.

Finally, the success of homeland and continental defense requires capability and capacity to conduct sustained multi-domain operations in the Arctic. The challenges associated with communicating, operating, and surviving in the Arctic are well documented, and investment by the U.S. Government, the Department, and the military Services reflect the need to compete in the region now and well into the future. I am encouraged by national-level commitments to improving the Port of Nome and building the U.S. Coast Guard's icebreaker fleet; both efforts are visible signs of the U.S. commitment in the region that will support the economic and national security interests of the United States. The DoD and Services have readily acknowledged the importance of operating in far north in their respective Arctic strategies, and

further emphasis and investment is necessary to field the Arctic-capable platforms, properly trained and equipped forces, and infrastructure necessary to succeed in a region of enormous strategic consequence. USNORTHCOM's Special Operations Command-North (SOCNORTH), has demonstrated both the value and challenges associated with Arctic operations through Combined and Joint Operations, activities, and investments in the High North. Most recently, SOCNORTH executed Exercise ARCTIC EDGE 24, readily integrating over 600 USSOF, Partner Nation SOF, and LEAs across the entire North American Arctic.

## **SECURITY COOPERATION**

Global alliances and partnerships based on mutual trust and interoperability provide the United States and our allies with a distinct advantage over our competitors. Our competitors continue their relentless efforts to increase presence, economic leverage, and influence in our region, proving the necessity of security cooperation with USNORTHCOM's exemplary military partners time and again. USNORTHCOM's relationships with military partners in Mexico, Canada, and The Bahamas boost our ability to operate, communicate, and share information for common benefit and are integral to homeland defense.

The reputation of the United States and the Department of Defense as steadfast and reliable partners is critical to each of those relationships, and USNORTHCOM security cooperation efforts continue to generate significant benefits for regional security and burden sharing with our neighbors. As instability and conflict arise overseas, it is essential to safeguard the security cooperation investments that have an outsized role in defending our homelands and vital interests, including through continued attention to the thriving strategic, economic, social, and defense partnerships close to home.

### **Mexico**

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It is already apparent the military-to-military relationship between the United States and Mexico is robust and expanding as both nations address the challenges posed by common threats to our citizens and shared interests. The bonds between USNORTHCOM and our Mexican military partners are broad, resilient, and focused on expanding our combined capability to defend and secure North America from myriad state and non-state threats. Countering competitor influence in the region remains a key priority for USNORTHCOM and our Mexican military partners, and as a direct result, the U.S. and Mexican militaries are more operationally compatible than at any point in our shared history.

This burgeoning bilateral defense relationship is a result of focused, direct, strategic-level defense engagement and confidence building measures, to include routine senior-leader dialogues such as the North American Defense Ministers conference, combined training like we have witnessed at the U.S. Army Joint Readiness Training Center, exercises such as EXERCISE AZTEC ALLIGATOR, and longstanding efforts to promote shared strategic interests.

Assisting our partners in meeting shared security challenges will require modernizing Foreign Military Sales and Direct Commercial Sales (FMS/DCS) by improving institutional responsiveness to partner requests and demonstrating greater agility in fulfilling those requests. The demonstration of timeliness and strategic responsiveness serves to reinforce lines of effort in my campaigning while simultaneously presenting opportunity to outcompete revisionist and revanchist powers present throughout the region.

The growing strength of this vital defense relationship has been made evident through our collaborative approach to common defense challenges, and I am extremely proud of USNORTHCOM's bilateral defense partnership with our Mexican military partners. Those efforts and investments have simultaneously strengthened our common security while helping to



reduce Mexico's reliance on Russian and PRC equipment and contracts that often come with costly strings attached.

### **Canada**

As has been made clear by the unique NORAD relationship, Canada has been a steadfast ally for decades and remains our essential security partner in the defense of North America. Canadian investments in domain awareness capabilities, advanced air and maritime platforms, and the Canadian Armed Forces' routine participation in multinational efforts such as Operation NOBLE EAGLE and Exercise ARCTIC EDGE provide an unmatched continental defense architecture. This unique and steadfast partnership, based on common ideals and interests, continues to gain strength and will serve both the United States and Canada for generations to come. Canadian commitment to robust support to NORAD and meeting shared security challenges with the United States and our allies, along with investments in a robust continental defense is key to the success of the bi-national alliance that has successfully deterred aggression against the United States and Canadian homelands for over 65 years.

### **The Bahamas**

The Bahamas is a growing and willing partner in maritime security and associated intelligence and information sharing, and USNORTHCOM's programs with The Bahamas improve disaster response and climate resiliency for both nations. The USNORTHCOM bilateral frameworks with the Royal Bahamian Defence Force (RBDF), and with other U.S. partners such as the United States Coast Guard and the Rhode Island National Guard are important to advancing mutual defense and security objectives. USNORTHCOM will continue to work closely with the RBDF to enhance shared maritime domain awareness and cooperation, and I look forward to building further on an already strong and beneficial relationship.

### **DEFENSE SUPPORT OF CIVIL AUTHORITIES (DSCA)**

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USNORTHCOM's support of lead federal agencies in the aftermath of a natural or human-caused disaster remains a core mission that directly bolsters our homeland defense enterprise while delivering rapid relief to American citizens in times of great need. USNORTHCOM works year-round with our interagency partners to ensure plans, communications, and interagency relationships are always ready to deliver the right military-unique capabilities at the right time and place. Whether providing military personnel to supplement Department of Homeland Security and Customs and Border Protection's mission along our southwest border, assisting U.S. federal law enforcement agencies efforts to illuminate illicit trafficking networks, or speeding military-unique capabilities to support Federal Emergency Management Agency-led disaster relief, USNORTHCOM is always ready to support our lead federal agencies. I look forward to establishing and maintaining partnerships with the National Guard Bureau, state, local, tribal, and territorial partners in support of vital DSCA roles.

In addition to delivering life-saving capabilities and resolute support to our fellow Americans and interagency partners in times of crisis, USNORTHCOM's DSCA mission also routinely demonstrates a degree of resilience and well-exercised cooperation that should cast serious doubt in the minds of potential aggressors who may be considering kinetic or non-kinetic attacks against U.S. critical infrastructure. Over many years and multiple significant events, USNORTHCOM and our federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial partners have proven the ability of communities and agencies across the United States to recover quickly from major disasters. The same lessons learned in those diverse scenarios would apply following an attack against the United States, and competitors must know that an attack would be certain to fail and result in only limited disruption.

As multi-domain threats to critical defense, transportation, and commercial networks and facilities continue to mount, the United States and Canada will face a growing need for resilient,

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defensible infrastructure. Following the release of the Department's policy guidance regarding defense of critical infrastructure, USNORTHCOM and NORAD have worked with a host of intergovernmental and industry partners to capture the capabilities and relationships necessary to safeguard national infrastructure from attack. This vital effort will continue to present a significant challenge that requires a whole-of-government approach and strong cooperation with Congress and the interagency community to ensure our national ability to deter, defend, and, if necessary, recover quickly from attacks against key infrastructure.

### **CONCLUSION**

USNORTHCOM and NORAD's activities, operations, and investments directly reflect the reality of the strategic environment and the threats and challenges that will continue to face our homeland into the foreseeable future. Based on my ongoing initial assessment of the commands and the challenges we must face, I am confident in our Commands' ability to defend North America, but I am extremely mindful of the mounting threats and challenges presented by determined and well-resourced competitors.

It is a profound honor to lead the extraordinary U.S. and Canadian Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Guardians, Coast Guardsmen, and civilians of USNORTHCOM and NORAD in defense of our great nations. Those dedicated men and women continue to work tirelessly to defend our Constitution, our citizens, and our shared values. In return, our warriors rely on the resources and support necessary to succeed in their no-fail missions. There should be no doubt that the United States military is the strongest, most capable professional force in history, and that our men and women stand ready today to vigorously defend our nation against any threat.

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Thank you for your support and for the opportunity to serve alongside them. I look forward to your questions.