

STATEMENT OF
ADMIRAL WILLIAM E. GORTNEY, UNITED STATES NAVY
COMMANDER,
UNITED STATES NORTHERN COMMAND
AND
NORTH AMERICAN AEROSPACE DEFENSE COMMAND



**BEFORE THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
STRATEGIC FORCES SUBCOMMITTEE**

APRIL 14, 2016

INTRODUCTION

Chairman Rogers, Ranking Member Cooper, and distinguished members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the posture of United States Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) and North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD). I am here representing the Commands' Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen, National Guardsmen, Reservists, and civilians safeguarding our nation amidst the most diverse and challenging security atmosphere in our history. Brave men and women are confronting this rapidly changing defense environment head-on. It is an honor and a privilege to serve alongside them and I am grateful to the Committee for the support you provide.

North America is increasingly vulnerable to a vast array of evolving threats--from highly capable, national powers to disaffected individuals who act in response to extremist propaganda. These threats are growing and becoming much more diffuse and less attributable. Moreover, I believe that many of the crises originating as regional conflicts elsewhere in the world are rapidly manifesting themselves here at home and they continue to challenge our ability to warn and defend.

The complexity and volatility of our strategic environment demands that we advance and sustain the capabilities to protect our Homelands. I believe the President's FY17 budget represents a balanced approach to maintaining our strategic advantage within the realities of a fiscally-constrained environment. We are still feeling the impacts of sequestration, primarily because the majority of the Services' cuts were from the operations and maintenance accounts, which directly impedes their ability to provide trained and equipped service members to

Combatant Commands. I thank the Committee for your support in passing the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2015, which represents another important step toward permanent relief from the sequestration caps in the Budget Control Act of 2011.

We are resolute in our commitment to deter, prevent, and defeat attacks against the United States and Canada. We stand ready to provide rapid and robust support to the primary lead agencies responding to domestic disasters and the law enforcement agencies (LEAs) charged with combating transnational organized crime. And we continue to strengthen our regional and homeland partnerships; they are our center of gravity.

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

The expansive complexity of the contemporary security environment makes defending the Homeland a continual challenge. The spectrum of threats to our national security ranges from traditional nation-state military capabilities to individuals with access to increasingly destructive technologies. The diffusion of capability, the inexact art of predicting intent, and the complications of attribution all contribute to a blurring of lines between traditional military threats and asymmetric threats that trigger military support or response. Technological advances and proliferation coupled with pockets of instability will generate a growing array of potential threats against which we must posture ourselves. Many of our potential adversaries are pursuing advanced weapons development not seen in decades. Individually, they pose serious concerns to our national security and the international community. Collectively, they represent a vast spectrum of complex and volatile threats that I believe will only continue to grow and threaten the homeland if we hesitate to act decisively.

RUSSIA

A resurgent Russia continues to assert itself on the world stage. No longer content merely to pursue primacy within its near abroad, Russia's forays into Syria highlight Vladimir Putin's willingness to employ military power to advance his agenda outside Russia's near abroad. Last year I stated that Russia is progressing toward its goal of deploying long-range, conventionally armed cruise missiles comparable to Western systems. In 2015 these efforts came to fruition, as Russia employed heavy bombers, surface vessels, and a submarine to launch advanced conventional cruise missiles at targets in Syria. These operations served as a proof-of-concept for weapons systems and tactics ultimately intended to provide flexible deterrent options in a future crisis.

Russia's strategic nuclear forces remain the only foreign military threat that could imperil our nation's existence, and Moscow continues to spend significant resources to modernize its nuclear arsenal and delivery systems. While Russia seeks to avoid a strategic conflict with the United States, Moscow perceives itself to be threatened by a coordinated Western effort to erode its sovereignty, weaken its economy, and undermine its regime. I am concerned these threat perceptions could prompt Russia's leaders to misinterpret our intentions in a crisis, leading to inadvertent escalation.

CHINA

As part of its long-term, comprehensive military modernization program, China continues to modernize and expand its strategic forces with a focus on improving its ability to survive a first strike and penetrate United States' missile defenses. Concerned that that United States precision strike and missile defense capabilities undermine its strategic deterrent, Beijing is

working to improve the survivability of its nuclear force to ensure a credible second-strike capability.

China continues to supplement its modest silo-based intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) force with a growing number of road-mobile ICBMs and is now in the process of operationalizing its first viable class of ballistic missile submarines, which, if successful, would be China's first sea-based strategic nuclear deterrent. China is also developing a range of anti-access and area-denial weapons which, along with its cyber, counter-space, and strategic nuclear capabilities, are designed to discourage United States intervention in a regional crisis.

Meanwhile, Beijing's diplomatic strategy appears to be focused on limiting U.S. options by denying physical and political access in key regions around the globe.

NORTH KOREA

North Korea's recent hostile cyberspace activity, nuclear testing, and continued ballistic missile development represent a dangerous threat to our national security. North Korea's recent nuclear test and satellite launch demonstrate Kim Jong Un's commitment to developing strategic capabilities, as well as his disregard for United Nations Security Council resolutions. The regime's efforts to develop and deploy the road-mobile KN08 ICBM have profound implications for homeland missile defense, primarily because the missile obviates most of the pre-launch indicators on which we have traditionally relied to posture our defenses. While the KN08 remains untested, modeling suggests it could deliver a nuclear payload to much of the Continental United States. We assess Kim Jong Un is unlikely to attack our Homeland unless he perceives an imminent threat to his regime's survival. However, we are concerned the possession of a nuclear ICBM could embolden the regime's intransigence below the nuclear threshold and complicate our response to a crisis on the peninsula. While I do not believe that

North Korea's efforts to develop a submarine-launched ballistic missile represent a near-term threat to the U.S. Homeland, the program underscores the level of effort and resources the regime is willing to devote to developing advanced weapon systems. As the combatant commander charged with defending the homeland, I take this threat very seriously, particularly in light of North Korea's unpredictable leadership.

IRAN

Iran poses multiple significant security concerns to the United States, and I remain wary of its strategic trajectory. Last year's conclusion of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action was a welcome development, but, Iran's continuing pursuit of long-range missile capabilities and ballistic missile and space launch programs, in defiance of United Nations Security Council resolutions, remains a serious concern. Iran has successfully orbited satellites using a first-generation space launch vehicle and announced plans to orbit a larger satellite using its ICBM-class booster as early as this year. In light of these advances, we assess Iran may be able to deploy an operational ICBM by 2020 if the regime chooses to do so. Additionally, Iran has invested in developing advanced offensive cyberspace capability and has demonstrated cyberspace operations that could threaten our critical civil infrastructure.

LINES OF OPERATION

In my statement last year, I described the unique aspects of USNORTHCOM as the nation's homeland geographic combatant command (GCC) and NORAD as the nation's oldest bi-national

USNORTHCOM and NORAD Lines of Operation

- Defense of our Homelands
- Defense Support of Civil Authorities
- Homeland Partnerships
- Regional Partnerships
- The Arctic
- Professionalism and Excellence
- Warfighters and Families

command. I explained the importance of prioritizing our complementary and individual functions with a focus on our shared end states. Our key Lines of Operation are more critical than ever to our mission success. We map all of our activities to these Lines of Operation, which shape our activities and effort.

DEFENSE OF OUR HOMELANDS

As the Commander of USNORTHCOM and NORAD, my primary task is to defend the homelands. *Defense of our Homelands* is our dominant line of operation, and it is the core focus of USNORTHCOM and NORAD primary missions. We are ever mindful of the supreme responsibility we have of defending the security of the United States, our citizens, and our allies and partners. In 2015, we celebrated NORAD's 57th year defending North America against attack through our no-fail aerospace warning and aerospace control missions. NORAD was born in the Cold War and expanded to an internal threat focus after 9/11. By contrast, USNORTHCOM was born in the aftermath of 9/11 and shaped by the seminal nature of those attacks. Both Commands are ever-adapting within the strategic environment, and we work hard to develop our capabilities to outpace threats.

MISSILE DEFENSE

USNORTHCOM's most prominent homeland defense mission is *Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD)*. Currently, our BMD architecture is designed primarily to defend against limited long range ballistic missile attacks from North Korea and Iran. In light of an evolving threat and the increasingly enigmatic and unpredictable nature of North Korea's dictator, Kim Jong Un, I believe it is imperative that the United States continue to develop more capable forces and broader options for effective ballistic missile defense. Our BMD architecture is comprised of a group of independent, yet interrelated components that form a complex and unified

defensive network. This system of systems cannot be modernized and maintained sequentially; each component must be improved concurrently to outpace the evolving threat. I agree with and support the modernization priorities set by Vice Admiral Jim Syring and his team at the Missile Defense Agency (MDA), including improvement in our discrimination sensors, lethality of our kill vehicles, sustainment of the BMD architecture, and development of our kinetic and non-kinetic options. I am grateful to this committee for your support and commitment to modernizing our Ballistic Missile Defense System (BMDS).

We are on the right path to improving our sensors through the development and deployment of the new Long Range Discrimination Radar (LRDR). This critical midcourse sensor is expected to provide persistent sensor coverage and vastly improve our target tracking and discrimination capability. The LRDR will help us evaluate our countermeasure options and increase the capability of our Ground-based Midcourse Defense (GMD) interceptors.

We remain on track to deploy the final 14 interceptors in Alaska, which will give us 44 missiles in the ground by the end of 2017. Finishing the inventory is a big step toward the robust BMDS of the future, but it is critical that we not stop there. We need to continue working on enhancements to the current Exo-atmospheric Kill Vehicle (EKV), and investments in the future Redesigned Kill Vehicle (RKV). We need to invest in the lethality of our kill vehicles, and in ways to get us to the right side of the cost curve. Our adversaries are developing relatively inexpensive technologies, which we assess can reach the homeland. By contrast, our interceptors are vastly more expensive. Today, our BMDS is investing in new technologies and adapting current technologies to new purposes which will enable us to meet the advancing threat and lower the cost per round.

I believe that homeland defense is fundamentally an “away game”, and missile defense is no exception. Today’s GMD system is designed to intercept incoming threats after the launch is initiated. While that approach offers us sufficient decision space, we need to augment our defensive posture with one that is designed to defeat ballistic missile threats in the boost phase as well as before they are launched, known as “left of launch.” In concert with our public and private stakeholders, MDA is working on an emerging technology that will enable us to employ non-kinetic methods to defeat ballistic missile threats when we receive indications that a launch is imminent. I believe this technology will reduce the overall cost of engagement-based missile defense and provide us options to defeat ballistic missiles that continue to proliferate around the world.

We work closely with other GCCs, functional combatant commands, and partner nations to leverage capabilities that enable us to protect the Homeland. Thanks to agreements with the government of Japan, United States Pacific Command (USPACOM) was able to deploy a second Army Navy/Transportable Radar Surveillance and Control Model 2, or AN/TPY-2 to Japan, which dramatically improved our ability to “defend forward.”

In addition to the proliferation of ballistic missile threats, I am deeply troubled by the development of advanced long-range cruise missiles and the growing threat they represent to North America. Russia possesses both conventional and nuclear cruise missiles with the range to reach North America and it has proliferated some advanced cruise missile technologies to other actors. This threat is real and it is imperative that we develop effective response options to outpace the threat and enhance our deterrence. We are working with the Joint Integrated Air and Missile Defense Organization (JIAMDO), MDA, and other stakeholders to improve our *Cruise Missile Defense (CMD)* capabilities.

Effectively countering and defeating cruise missiles requires a layered and integrated architecture that can defend across the full spectrum of the engagement sequence. Cruise missiles represent a real operational challenge because of their increased standoff capability, low altitude and small radar signatures. Although no single system can counter all cruise missiles, we have confidence in our layered architecture to defend the homeland. To defeat this more capable threat, we are working on enhancements to each of the individual systems, including our Indications and Warnings capabilities, wide-area-surveillance, and advanced fire control infrastructure.

We are in the first segment of our three-phase Homeland Defense Design (HDD) effort, which will improve our capability to find, fix, track, target, and engage growing air threats, such as those posed by cruise missiles, low-slow aircraft, and long-range aviation. In this first phase, we are testing and evaluating advanced sensors as well as integrated command and control capabilities. In addition to the new STateside Affordable Radar System (STARS), we had begun a three-year operational exercise of the Joint Land Attack Cruise Missile Defense Elevated Netted Sensor System (JLENS). This exercise had been an opportunity for us to see how well JLENS can fit into the existing Integrated Air Defense System (IADS) of the National Capital Region (NCR), including deployment of a JLENS Fire Control System aerostat, which is designed to work in tandem with the surveillance aerostat.

Unfortunately, on October 28, 2015, the JLENS Fire Control System aerostat detached from its mooring station on Aberdeen Proving Ground, Maryland, and eventually grounded in a wooded area in northeast Pennsylvania. The Army is now finishing up the last of their investigations to determine the root causes of the incident. However, with the recent congressional disapproval of the FY16 above-threshold-reprogramming request, termination of

the JLENS operational exercise is now underway and the Department is working to determine the way ahead.

CONCLUSION

We are very fortunate to be able to depend on the brave men and women who choose to wear the cloth of their nation and defend their fellow citizens, despite what is likely to be an onerous fight against increasingly diffuse threats. We embrace our no-fail mission at a time when our unique capabilities are needed most, and with your support, together with the exceptional men and women of USNORTHCOM and NORAD and our trusted partners, we will remain the greatest force for freedom, safety, and security for North America. I look forward to your questions.