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CANADA - UNITED STATES DEFENCE RELATIONS

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NORAD

Background

The North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD) is a binational military organization formally established in 1958 by Canada and the United States to monitor and defend North American airspace. NORAD monitors and tracks man-made objects in space and detects, validates and warns of attack against North America by aircraft, missiles or space vehicles. NORAD also provides surveillance and control of the airspace of Canada and the United States.

The NORAD Agreement was first signed by the governments of Canada and the United States on May 12, 1958, and has been renewed for varying periods since that time. Although there have been eight NORAD renewals since 1958, the basic text of the Agreement has been revised substantially only three times -- in 1975, 1981 and 1996.

The Commander-in-Chief of NORAD is appointed by, and is responsible to, both the Prime Minister of Canada and the President of the United States. Headquarters NORAD is located at Peterson Air Force Base, Colorado Springs, Colorado. NORAD command and control is exercised through the Cheyenne Mountain Operations Center, located a short distance away. Cheyenne Mountain serves as a central collection and coordination facility for a worldwide system of sensors designed to provide NORAD with an accurate picture of any aerospace threat.

Operations



NORAD uses a network of ground-based radars, sensors and fighter jets to detect, intercept and, if necessary, engage any threats to the continent. These fighters consist of Canadian CF-18s and U.S. F-15s and F-16s. NORAD also receives surveillance data from the U.S. Space Command on potential threats from outer space.

Canadian NORAD Region

NORAD's surveillance and control responsibility for North American airspace is divided among three NORAD Regions -- one in Canada, one in the continental United States and one in Alaska. Data from radars and sensors based in Canada are compiled and analyzed at an underground complex located at Canadian Forces Base North Bay, Ontario, then forwarded to Canadian NORAD Region Headquarters at CFB Winnipeg, and the NORAD command and control centre in Colorado, as necessary.

North Warning System

The North Warning System (NWS) provides surveillance of potential attack routes via Arctic airspace. The NWS consists of 15 long-range radars (11 in Canada, four in Alaska) and 39 short-range radars (36 in Canada, three in Alaska) along the northern edge of North America. The state-of-the-art radars form a 4,800-Km-long and 320 Km-wide "tripwire" stretching from Alaska to Newfoundland.

E-3 Airborne Warning and Control System (AWACS)

Airborne radar coverage is provided by the E-3 AWACS aircraft when necessary. Canada contributes military personnel to AWACS operations. The United States Air Force AWACS provides a significant improvement over ground-based radar stations, and extends the perimeter radar system in times of increased alert. AWACS





aircraft can detect targets from about 580 Kms, then guide Canadian or U.S. aircraft to visually identify unknown aircraft.

Two Canadian bases provide designated support to AWACS operations when required: CFB Cold Lake, Alberta, and CFB Bagotville, Quebec.

Air Defence

1 Canadian Air Division is the military organization responsible for providing combat-ready air forces to meet Canada's commitments to the defence of North America and to maintain the sovereignty of Canadian airspace.

Canadian air defence forces assigned to NORAD include 441 and 416 Tactical Fighter Squadrons at CFB Cold Lake, Alberta, and 425 and 433 Tactical Fighter Squadrons at CFB Bagotville, Quebec. All four squadrons fly the CF-18 Hornet fighter aircraft.

Counter Drug Mission

Since 1991, NORAD has assisted in the detection

and monitoring of aircraft suspected of illegal drug trafficking. In cooperation with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and U.S. drug law enforcement agencies, the Canadian NORAD Region monitors all air traffic approaching the coast of Canada. Any aircraft that has not filed a flight plan may be directed to land and be inspected by the RCMP and Customs Canada.

Canadians Assigned To U.S. Bases

There are currently 283 Canadian personnel based at various locations in the U.S. However, the actual number of Canadians assigned to designated NORAD positions constantly changes to reflect the current needs of Canadian defence policies.

On Alert

NORAD has served the citizens of Canada and the United States as the first line of defence against an air attack on their homelands since 1958. NORAD has also acted as a clear deterrent to any aggressor through its space warning capabilities. Through outstanding cooperation and cohesiveness, NORAD has proven itself effective in its roles of watching, warning and responding. By adapting to the changing world, NORAD will continue to play an important role in the defence of Canada and the United States.

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