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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TERRORISM AND
UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS AND CAPABILITIES

STATEMENT OF
GENERAL VICTOR E. RENUART, JR., USAF
COMMANDER
UNITED STATES NORTHERN COMMAND
BEFORE THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TERRORISM AND UNCONVENTIONAL THREATS AND CAPABILITIES

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Chairman Smith, Congressman Miller and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for this opportunity to discuss the role of United States Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) in homeland defense and civil support operations.

USNORTHCOM anticipates and conducts homeland defense and civil support operations to defend, protect, and secure the United States and its interests. We collaborate closely with our interagency and international mission partners to sustain continuous situational awareness and readiness to anticipate, deter, prevent, and defeat a range of symmetric and asymmetric threats in that are directed at our homeland. When directed by the President or the Secretary of Defense, USNORTHCOM will support Federal primary agencies in responding quickly to natural disasters, catastrophic incidents, and the effects of terrorist attacks.

USNORTHCOM primarily provides defense support to civil authorities through our subordinate and Service component commands in accordance with the National Response Framework and applicable laws, including the Stafford Act and the Economy Act. We always coordinate with other Federal agencies and have strong working relationships with State partners, including the National Guard, whether acting in a State active duty or operational Title 32 status.

In addition to our steady-state exercise, intelligence, and operational mission support of interagency homeland defense and security efforts, we maintain a "family of plans." These plans present a flexible and scalable approach to support the national response to natural and man-made disasters of varying characteristics and severity.

USNORTHCOM maintains plans and identifies capabilities to support and complement a civil response. In the event of a natural or man-made disaster, military forces are part of a collaborative and sequentially-layered response. Normally, local first responders are augmented by State resources, either within their State or via the Emergency Management Assistance Compact

(EMAC) with other States, to include the employment of National Guard forces operating under the authority of a governor. USNORTHCOM remains ready to augment response efforts as part of the overall Federal support, if resources at the State and local levels are insufficient and Federal assistance has been requested by the appropriate State authorities.

While most incidents are resolved at the local or State level without Federal involvement, a catastrophic event would likely exceed resources normally available to Local, State, and Tribal authorities, as well as private-sector partners in the impacted area and result in sustained national impacts. Disasters of this magnitude have the potential to significantly interrupt governmental operations and emergency services to such an extent that national security could be threatened. In these cases, a significant Federal response, including active duty military forces organized under USNORTHCOM, may be requested by a governor and directed by the Secretary of Defense to support local and State response efforts to save lives and protect property and critical infrastructure.

The employment of a large-scale Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, or High-yield Explosives (CBRNE) device in the homeland has the potential to incur significant loss of life, cause mass panic, inflict large-scale physical and economic damage, and present consequence management challenges greater than those resulting from previous disasters.

Accordingly, USNORTHCOM must anticipate the full spectrum of CBRNE incidents that could occur domestically. This could include the potential for release of toxic industrial materials as a result of a natural disaster, accident, or terrorist attack. The far edge of this spectrum deals with low-probability catastrophic events that have the potential to temporarily interrupt or incapacitate designated civil response leadership. When directed, USNORTHCOM will execute DOD responsibilities outlined in the National Response Framework. Critical to our response will be the

satisfaction of all Secretary of Defense-approved Requests For Assistance. USNORTHCOM, in conjunction with a Joint Task Force Headquarters and leaders within the Joint Field Office, will recommend additional missions that are required to save lives, mitigate human suffering, and facilitate recovery operations to robustly support civil authorities in the most catastrophic circumstances. USNORTHCOM consequence management operations conclude when the immediate effects of the disaster are contained and civil authorities no longer require assistance.

To effectively provide consequence management for a CBRNE incident in accordance with the National Response Framework, USNORTHCOM maintains specific plans for CBRNE Consequence Management that command and control Title 10 forces, and also account for the operations of National Guard forces under the command and control of a governor.

A variety of specialized military forces and capabilities are available to support the designated primary Federal agency in all phases of incident assessment, operations coordination, logistics, health services support, hazardous material containment and decontamination, and safety and risk assessment. These forces provide the requisite flexibility to appropriately respond to each disaster, emergency, incident, or event, and have a wide variety of potential response actions based on the incident severity, duration, location and the capabilities or needs of local, State, tribal, or Federal authorities. These forces include the following:

Joint Task Force Civil Support (JTF-CS). JTF-CS is a subordinate command of U.S. Army North, a Service component command of USNORTHCOM. JTF-CS plans and integrates DOD support to the designated primary Federal agency for domestic CBRNE consequence management operations. When directed by the USNORTHCOM Commander, JTF-CS will deploy to the incident site, establish command and control of designated DOD forces and direct military consequence management operations in support of civil authorities.

Weapon of Mass Destruction Civil Support Teams (WMD-CSTs). WMD-CSTs are National Guard forces that reside in each State and report to the governor. WMD-CSTs consist of approximately 22 personnel who support local and State authorities at domestic CBRNE incident sites by identifying agents and substances, assessing current and projected consequences, advising on response measures, and assisting with requests for additional military support.

CBRNE Enhanced Response Force Packages (CERFPs). CERFPs are currently established in 17 States. They are made up of approximately 200 National Guard personnel who provide a regional CBRNE response capability. CERFPs perform mass casualty decontamination, triage and emergency medical treatment, and location and extraction of victims from the affected area in support of civil first responders.

CBRNE Consequence Management Response Force (CCMRF). CCMRF is a task force (approximately 4,700 people) that operates under the authority of Title 10. CCMRFs are self-sustaining and may be tailored to any CBRNE event. A CCMRF is composed of Army, Marine, Navy and Air Force units with unique CBRNE training and equipment and general purpose units trained to operate in proximity to a hazardous or contaminated environment. CCMRF capabilities include event assessment, robust command and control, comprehensive decontamination of personnel and equipment, HAZMAT handling, air and land transportation, aerial evacuation, mortuary affairs, and general logistical support to sustain extended operations.

An important element of the CCMRF is the unique capabilities provided by the Chemical Biological Incident Response Force (CBIRF). CBIRF is a single U.S. Marine Corps unit consisting of about 400 personnel that assists local, State, or Federal agencies and designated combatant commanders in the conduct of CBRNE consequence management operations. The CBIRF maintains capabilities for agent detection and identification, casualty search, rescue,

and personnel decontamination, and emergency medical care and stabilization of contaminated personnel. Current planning construct has CBIRF responding as part of the lead element of the first of three CCMRFs.

The CCMRF augments the consequence management efforts of State and local first responders, National Guard forces, and Federal agencies by providing complementary and unique capabilities when the effects of a CBRNE event exceed State civilian and National Guard capabilities.

The Secretary of Defense established a requirement for three CCMRFs to be trained and ready to respond to requests from civil authorities. The DOD, through USNORTHCOM, currently has one CCMRF trained and ready to support the Federal response to a CBRNE incident. USNORTHCOM will have a second CCMRF on 1 October 2009 and a third CCMRF projected by 1 October 2010.

On 1 October 2008, the Secretary of Defense assigned CCMRF 1 forces to the Commander, USNORTHCOM. In September 2008, prior to mission assumption, CCMRF 1 participated in a Command Post Exercise at Fort Stewart, Georgia during Exercise VIBRANT RESPONSE to verify operational capability. Beginning 1 October 2009, CCMRF 1 and CCMRF 2 forces will be allocated rather than assigned to USNORTHCOM. Command and control elements from both CCMRFs will exercise at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, early next month to confirm mission readiness. All of CCMRF 1 will exercise in a field training environment in early November in Indiana.

While CCMRF 1 is comprised predominately of active duty forces, the second and third CCMRFs will be comprised almost entirely of Reserve and National Guard forces. USNORTHCOM is working closely with the U.S. Joint Forces Command, the National Guard Bureau, the military Services and the States on sourcing solutions, training, equipment, readiness, and exercise of those forces identified to fulfill CCMRF requirements.

Because the mission of the CCMRF is disaster response and not law enforcement, it complies with the restrictions placed on the use of Federal

military forces by the Posse Comitatus Act. Per Posse Comitatus, Federal military forces generally cannot provide direct support to law enforcement, but are not restricted from providing disaster relief to civilian authorities. The CCMRF's mission, training, and equipment are intended to provide unique CBRNE disaster response assistance to our citizens in their time of greatest need, not for law enforcement.

The ability of our active and reserve component forces to surge to initiate and sustain CBRNE consequence management operations is affected by other concurrent, competing steady-state and surge operations. These operations include: large-scale irregular and conventional military campaigns, lesser contingency deployments, post-conflict operations, homeland defense missions, and other civil support operations. In supporting CBRNE consequence management operations, our forces must be able to mitigate the impacts of CBRNE effects; maintain survivable critical infrastructure and continuity of government; and support integrated, cooperative interagency response efforts. To achieve these goals, tailored CBRNE response forces must be able to conduct missions day or night, in all weather conditions, on rural or urban terrain, and in a chemical, biological, and radiologically-contaminated environment. They need to be able to sustain themselves and not further burden State and local responders.

USNORTHCOM has made significant strides in preparing the CCMRF for success, to include developing Joint Mission Essential Tasks, which are integrated into the Defense Readiness Reporting System, as well as developing a CCMRF Phased Exercise Plan. Nonetheless, the current state of overall military CBRNE response force training and equipment resourcing is less than optimal. As it stands now, additional identified, trained, and equipped forces from the active and/or reserve component are required to effectively respond to multiple, near-simultaneous domestic CBRNE events as directed by the Joint Chiefs of Staff CBRNE Consequence Management Execution Order.

Whether deliberate or inadvertent, CBRNE events are one of the greatest challenges facing our nation today and require appropriate resourcing. As the Commander of USNORTHCOM, I am committed to ensuring that CBRNE consequence management forces are trained and ready to deploy into this challenging environment. I appear before you as a strong advocate for all DOD capabilities, to specifically include the Reserve Component as an integral partner in CBRNE response.

As we act to support civil authorities in responding to natural disasters or the effects of acts of terrorism, we never lose focus on our primary mission of homeland defense. We thank the Members of the Subcommittee for your unwavering support of USNORTHCOM. We are grateful for all that you have done to ensure our men and women in uniform have the tools and training they need to keep our nation and the American people safe and free. Thank you for your time. I look forward to your questions.