STATEMENT OF

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COMMANDER

UNITED STATES NORTHERN COMMAND

AND

NORTH AMERICAN AEROSPACE DEFENSE COMMAND

BEFORE THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

APRIL 29, 2015

Chairman Chaffetz, Ranking Member Cummings, and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me to represent the men and women of the United States Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) and North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD). I come before you today as one of many interagency partners committed to understanding and addressing potential threats from low altitude and slow speed aerial vehicles to the National Capital Region (NCR). I want to preface my comments by emphasizing the sensitive nature of much of the information surrounding this event. Discussing unclassified but extremely sensitive national security capabilities in an open forum could be exploited by potential adversaries. I am happy to provide a more in-depth analysis of this event in a closed session.

Under my command, NORAD's role is to provide aerospace warning and control to defend the United States, including the NCR, from all potential air threats. The airspace surrounding the NCR, known as the Washington D.C. Special Flight Rules Area (SFRA), is monitored by the Integrated Air Defense System (IADS), which is a vast network of radars, cameras, and other detection and warning devices. Each system is designed to detect, track, and monitor specific parameters. The fusion of data from all the systems provides a robust surveillance and track capability.

The IADS system was implemented following, and in direct response to, the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and has continued to evolve with the threat over time, to the point that we are extremely capable of identifying and tracking a wide range of potential threats to the NCR, including anything from commercial aviation down to small, single engine aircraft. However, a small manned gyrocopter or similar low altitude and slow speed aerial vehicle, despite the low threat capability associated with such a vehicle, presents a technical challenge.

The small, manned gyrocopter that departed Gettysburg, PA on April 15, 2015 flew to the NCR, landing on the grounds of the Capitol in Washington, D.C. Through post-event analysis, what we now understand is that the gyrocopter was detected by several of the integrated sensors as it approached and transited through the SFRA. However, the aircraft's flight parameters fell below the threshold necessary to differentiate aircraft from weather, terrain, birds, and other slow flying objects so as to ensure that the systems and those operating them focus on that which poses the greatest threat.

We are in the early stages of conducting a thorough reconstruction and analysis of all aspects of this incident, including timelines, communication and sensor data. Identifying low altitude and slow speed aerial vehicles from other objects is a technical and operational challenge. Our initial analysis of this event has further confirmed the need to continue to improve our ability to identify low altitude and slow speed aerial vehicles operating in the NCR. We are working with the Services on technical and procedural solutions, including integrating advanced sensors into the IADS architecture. One example of these advanced sensors is the Joint Land Attack Cruise Missile Defense Elevated Netted Sensor System (JLENS), which is currently in an operational exercise out of Aberdeen Proving Ground.

DoD's role is primarily accomplished through the Eastern Air Defense Sector (EADS) and the Joint Air Defense Operations Center (JADOC). EADS provides the NCR Coordination Center (NCRCC) with an operational air surveillance picture, intelligence, and air defense readiness posture. The JADOC, located in Washington, D.C., provides tactical level command and control for NCR Air Defense Artillery (ADA) assets as part of NORAD. These DoD activities are fused by the NCRCC, an interagency organization whose coordinated actions enhance the effectiveness of both air security and defense operations in the NCR.   Rapid

coordination and information exchange is facilitated among participating agencies to fulfill air

security and defense responsibilities in the prevention, deterrence, and where necessary,

interdiction of air threats to the NCR.

CONCLUSION

Along with our interagency partners, we are engaged in a detailed review of the event and

subsequent actions and responses to determine lessons learned and ways to improve our response

moving forward. We remain confident that the established tactics, techniques and procedures

used by all NCR entities are effective, but will share results from this review to develop short-

and long-term mitigation of low and slow threats in addition to the DoD efforts currently

ongoing. I look forward to your questions.

ADMIRAL BILL GORTNEY
COMMANDER
NORTH AMERICAN AEROSPACE DEFENSE COMMAND
U.S. NORTHERN COMMAND

Admiral Bill Gortney graduated from Elon College in North Carolina, earning a Bachelor of Arts in History and Political Science in 1977. He entered the Navy as an Aviation Officer Candidate, received his commission in the United States Naval Reserve in 1977, and earned his wings of gold in 1978.

On three different occasions Admiral Gortney commanded forces in the U.S. Central Command area of operations, providing support to Maritime Security Operations and combat operations for Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. These assignments included Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command / U.S. 5th Fleet / Combined Maritime Forces, Bahrain, 2008-2010; Commander, Carrier Strike Group 10, onboard USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75), 2007-2008; and Commander, Carrier Air Wing 7, onboard USS John F. Kennedy (CV 67), 2002-2003.

Additional command tours included VFA-106, the East Coast FA-18 Fleet Replacement Squadron, NAS Cecil Field, Florida, 1996-1997; and VFA-15, 1994-1995, onboard USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71).

Admiral Gortney's fleet assignments included VA-82, 1981-1984, onboard USS Nimitz (CVN 68); VFA-87, 1988-1990, onboard USS Theodore Roosevelt; Executive Officer, VFA-132, 1991-1992, onboard USS Forrestal (CV 59); Executive Officer, VFA-15, 1992-1994, onboard USS Theodore Roosevelt; and Deputy Commander, Carrier Air Wing 7, onboard USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69).

Other overseas assignments included Deputy for Current Operations, Joint Task Force Southwest Asia, Saudi Arabia, 1999; Chief, Naval and Amphibious Liaison Element to the Combined Forces Air Component Commander, U.S. Central Command, for the opening months of OIF at Prince Sultan Air Base, Saudi Arabia; and Chief of Staff, U.S. Naval Forces Central Command / U.S. 5th Fleet, NSA Bahrain, 2003-2004.

Shore assignments included VT-26, NAS Beeville, Texas, 1978-1980; VFA-125, NAS Lemoore, California, 1984-1988; Aide and Flag Lieutenant to the Assistant Chief of Naval Operations (Air Warfare), Washington D.C., 1990-1991; Joint Staff, J-33 Joint Operations Department CENTCOM Division, 1998-1999. A 1996 graduate of the Naval War College, he earned a Master of Arts in National Security and Strategic Studies. His first flag tour was as the Deputy Chief of Staff for Global Force Management and Joint Operations, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, Norfolk, Virginia, 2004-2006. From 2010-12 he served as Director, Joint Staff. His most recent assignment was as Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command, 2012-2014.

Admiral Gortney has flown over 5,360 mishap-free flight hours and completed 1,265 carrier-arrested landings, primarily in the A-7E Corsair II and the FA-18 Hornet. He is authorized to wear the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, Navy Distinguished Service Medal (two awards), Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit (four awards), Bronze Star, Defense Meritorious Service Medal (two awards), Meritorious Service Medal (three awards), Air Medal (three awards: Gold Numeral One, two Strike/Flight), Defense Commendation Medal (three awards), Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, Sea Service Ribbon (8 awards), and the Overseas Service Ribbon (2 awards).