

QUICK IMPACT



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Facts about NORAD

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The Canadian Government is continuing to review fighter capabilities. I am confident they are taking NORAD requirements fully into account. I would point out that fighter jets are only one component of NORAD's layered continental defence system.

Air-to-air refuellers, airborne early-warning platforms, and surveillance systems in all domains are equally essential. NORAD's strength lies in the integration of these capabilities.

For more than 67 years, NORAD has served as the first line of defence for both Canada and the United States. The F-35s represent just one tool among many used to deter and respond to threats from states such as Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea — countries that possess the capacity to strike North American targets, including major U.S. population centres.

Domain awareness remains NORAD's first priority and Canada is making critical contributions. Today this is supported by the North Warning System across Canada, the future Arctic Over-the-Horizon Radar in southern Ontario, and space-based assets including Canada's RADARSAT constellation. Canada's geography provides thousands of kilometres of additional detection and reaction time —time that protects both nations.

Canada's contributions also include strategic basing. Forward Operating Locations in Inuvik, Iqaluit, and Yellowknife, along with the Deployed Operating Base in Goose Bay, offer essential northern reach and are being modernized with the F-35 in mind. Equally important are the NORAD personnel: Canadians and Americans serve side by side in Colorado Springs, Fairbanks, Tindall, Winnipeg, North Bay and other key locations. On 9/11, it was the Canadian NORAD Director of Operations, MGen Eric Findley, RCAF, who oversaw the clearing and protection of U.S. airspace while Canada absorbed the risk of accepting hundreds of diverted aircraft and caring for thousands of passengers.

Throughout periods of political disagreement between our governments, NORAD personnel have consistently maintained continental security with professionalism and unity. That example should guide us. Public political disputes risk creating the appearance of discord, which can weaken the credibility of our shared deterrence in the eyes of our adversaries. NORAD has the watch. We should trust the professionals who protect North America every day to defend the continent.