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HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF
MAJOR GENERAL RICHARD J. ROWE, JR, USA
DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS
BEFORE THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
ON
USE OF THE NATIONAL GUARD TO SUPPORT BORDER SECURITY
24 MAY 2006

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Chairman Hunter, Congressman Skelton and Members of the Committee:

The men and women of U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) are dedicated to defending our homeland against all threats. We appreciate this opportunity to describe our role in securing the nation's borders.

The Homeland Security Act of 2002 assigns the Secretary of Homeland Security the responsibility for security of our nation's borders. USNORTHCOM's role in the border security mission is to provide support to civil authorities, principally the Department of Homeland Security, when directed by the President or Secretary of Defense. Under Chapter 18 of Title 10, the Secretary of Defense may provide support for the activities of law enforcement agencies. This support has historically been along our borders in support of the U.S. Border Patrol in counterdrug operations. Whatever the mission, USNORTHCOM's involvement in border security operations is always in support of civilian law enforcement agencies.

On 15 May 06, President Bush announced a plan for governors to deploy up to 6,000 National Guardsmen to support the Department of Homeland Security's efforts to secure our nation's southwest border. At this time, we do not anticipate that USNORTHCOM will have a significant role in supporting the Department of Homeland Security as we see few, if any, Title 10 forces that will be necessary to assist the Department of Homeland Security in their efforts to secure the U.S.-Mexico border. Military support for this effort will be provided primarily by National Guard forces operating under the command of the governors. USNORTHCOM and the National Guard Bureau (NGB) will establish a coordinating relationship whereby the NGB and USNORTHCOM will provide each other with situational awareness of ongoing missions

through designated liaison officers. If directed by the President or the Secretary of Defense, USNORTHCOM will provide Title 10 forces in support of the Department of Homeland Security.

Over its 17-year history, USNORTHCOM's subordinate organization, Joint Task Force North (JTF-N), has developed a unique relationship with federal, state and local law enforcement agencies, and has operated as a coordinating authority for DoD support to these agencies in numerous operations. JTF-N will continue to support law enforcement agencies in the war against illegal drugs and other transnational threats through the application of DoD capabilities.

Among these capabilities is intelligence support, which includes employing military intelligence analysts to develop operational intelligence products that we can share with our interagency partners for their use in early cueing, warning and interdiction operations. JTF-N also provides operational support which includes detection missions using a variety of sensors that are unique to the DoD in order to improve a supported law enforcement agency's ability to detect, monitor and interdict transnational threats. These missions have included, and may continue to include, construction of roads, bridges and fences, as well as installing area lighting to improve the ability of law enforcement officers to move, identify and respond to threats crossing the border.

Through JTF-N, USNORTHCOM has employed unmanned aerial systems along the southwest border in support of U.S. Customs and Border Protection. While obtaining unmanned aerial system training, these flights greatly assisted civilian law enforcement agencies to detect and apprehend those engaged in illegal drug trafficking and alien smuggling in New Mexico and Arizona.

Over the past two years, JTF-N has supported U.S. Customs and Border Protection on border security operations in numerous Northern and Southern Border Patrol sectors. In each operation, JTF-North served as a force multiplier to federal law enforcement agencies by enhancing their effectiveness. As directed by the Secretary of Defense, JTF-N has and will continue to coordinate the use of DoD capabilities to include unmanned aerial systems, limited visibility optics, ground-based radars, and tunnel detection technology in support of U.S. Customs and Border Protection. The deployment of these assets provides additional means for detection and surveillance along our borders in order to enhance U.S. Border Patrol's interdiction capability. JTF-N's efforts have led to a significant expansion of the partnership among active duty forces, the National Guard and Reserve, the nation's law enforcement agencies, and partner nations in securing our nation's borders.

As we act to support civil authorities in responding to natural disasters and securing our borders, we will maintain focus on our primary mission of homeland defense. One fact remains constant—our enemies should make no mistake about our resolve or our capabilities. We thank the Members of the House Armed Services Committee for their unwavering support of America's military. I look forward to your questions.