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SENATE

{ REPORT  
118-58

**NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION  
ACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024**

**R E P O R T**

[TO ACCOMPANY S. 2226]

ON

TO AUTHORIZE APPROPRIATIONS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024 FOR  
MILITARY ACTIVITIES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, FOR  
MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, AND FOR DEFENSE ACTIVITIES OF  
THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY, TO PRESCRIBE MILITARY PER-  
SONNEL STRENGTHS FOR SUCH FISCAL YEAR, AND FOR OTHER  
PURPOSES

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COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
UNITED STATES SENATE



JULY 12, 2023.—Ordered to be printed

### **Comptroller General Review of North American Aerospace Defense Aerospace Warning and Control**

The United States and Canada have operated the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) to protect North America from airborne threats for 65 years. Over time, those threats have evolved from Soviet strategic bombers outside our airspace to terrorist threats inside that airspace. In the last decade, the airborne threats posed by a resurgent Russia and an increasingly aggressive China have further evolved in number and technological complexity. Whether from traditional aircraft or novel systems, such as the recent experience with high altitude surveillance balloons, the threats pose challenges to NORAD's ability to detect and respond effectively. The committee needs a better understanding of the NORAD operating situation.

Therefore, the committee directs the Comptroller General of the United States to conduct a review of the NORAD's aerospace warning and control mission and procedures. The review should include an assessment of NORAD's procedures to:

- (1) Intercept known adversary aircraft as such aircraft approach or enter United States airspace;
- (2) Intercept known adversary aircraft, if such aircraft are first detected within United States airspace;
- (3) Deal with simultaneous incursions into United States airspace by hostile aircraft that are geographically separated;
- (4) Manage command and control systems to determine the capacity for dealing with multiple airspace incursions of unknown or hostile aircraft;
- (5) Authorize engagements and the criteria for delegating engagement authority to various levels of command;
- (6) Interrogate, identify, and interact with unidentified aircraft on approach to, upon entry into, and within United States or Canadian airspace including conventional aircraft and air vehicles with low-closure rate, such as helicopters, small drones, and high-altitude balloons;
- (7) Deal with incursions into airspace over military installations, and coordination and information sharing, both in near-real time and after the fact, between military installations regarding airspace incursions of all types;
- (8) Transfer responsibility for aircraft of interest from NORAD to other geographic combatant commands;
- (9) Other related matters the Comptroller General deems appropriate.

The committee also believes the Comptroller General should review and report on the history of air defense procedures and how they compare across NORAD regions and in restricted or military airspace, and the extent to which NORAD and the Department of Defense have assessed the effectiveness of NORAD's aerospace warning and control capabilities and operations.

The committee further directs the Comptroller General to brief the congressional defense committees on the preliminary observations of the review not later than January 15, 2024, and to provide final results to the congressional defense committees in a mutually agreed upon format and timeframe.

Finally, the committee notes that the Comptroller General's statutory right of access encompasses the information required for this review, including operational plans and policies, guidance, and other documentation. Accordingly, the committee expects the Secretary of Defense and the relevant Department of Defense components and commands to provide the Comptroller General full cooperation and access to the information and documentation related to this review, including relevant operational plans and policies.

**Comptroller General review of special operations intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance**

U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) is in transition as it increases its focus on strategic competition while also maintaining responsibility for the counterterrorism and countering violent extremist organization mission set. Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities are essential to USSOCOM's ability to conduct its missions. However, not all ISR assets are appropriate for all missions, and both USSOCOM and the military services intend to divest of ISR assets that special operations forces (SOF) have previously relied upon.

The committee is concerned about how planned divestments will affect SOF operations and whether USSOCOM has planned to maintain an effective suite of ISR capabilities. Therefore, the committee directs the Comptroller General of the United States to assess USSOCOM's plans for its ISR capabilities including:

- (1) The effect that divestments of USSOCOM and service ISR capabilities may have in terms of cost and the capabilities available for operations and the risks USSOCOM may incur as a result of these divestments;
- (2) The investments USSOCOM intends to make in its ISR capabilities, the alignment of those investments with projected ISR requirements for SOF, and the risks these investments are intended to mitigate;
- (3) A comparison of the planned divestments and investments to USSOCOM and departmental strategic guidance for ISR and future operating environments; and
- (4) Any other matters the Comptroller General deems appropriate.

The committee further directs the Comptroller General to provide a briefing to the Committees on Armed Services of the Senate and the House of Representatives, not later than March 1, 2024, and to provide final results to these committees on a mutually agreed upon date.

**Comptroller General Review of Theater Special Operations Command Sensitive Activities**

As the Department of Defense's (DOD) Theater Special Operations Commands (TSOCs) focus more on integrated deterrence and irregular warfare capabilities, sensitive activities and related operational preparation of the environment and intelligence activities will likely assume even more importance. The committee has previously identified concerns with the growth of special operations sensitive activity capabilities and the DOD's efforts to oversee and manage these capabilities, and remains concerned as DOD and