



*JFQ: What does the overarching guidance of the Department of Defense [DOD] state about homeland defense and your command's role within it?*

**General O'Shaughnessy:** During my career, I have never seen the guidance as clear and vertically aligned as it is today. We start with the National Security Strategy, and its number one pillar is the responsibility to protect the American people, the homeland, and the American way of life. We then go to the NDS [National Defense Strategy] Objective No. 1—defending the homeland. We have this clarity in what we're supposed to be prioritizing, which again for us is homeland defense. We next look at the concept of joint operations, Joint Force 2030, which talks about how we need to integrate forward presence and ensure power protection with increased protection to the homeland and to create that depth to deter and defeat strategic attacks on the homeland. It's important to clarify that it's not an "either/or" situation; it's integration and it's complementary—we need to both defend the homeland and push forward as much as possible.

*JFQ: Where does homeland defense fall in relation to other DOD priorities?*

**General O'Shaughnessy:** Homeland defense is our top priority, and I don't think anybody really debates that, per se. For almost my entire career, however, we've had the luxury of not necessarily having to resource homeland defense to the extent that we did other missions. In the past, we've been able to spend our resources on other things because we weren't held at risk in the homeland from conventional threats. Our primary threats were limited to nuclear, ballistic missile, and [violent extremist organization] attacks. But we must reconsider that thinking; our adversaries now possess conventional capability and capacity that must be considered when we think about protecting our nations. Risk will continue to increase if we do not appropriately prioritize and operationalize homeland defense.

## An Interview with Terrence J. O'Shaughnessy

---

General Terrence J. O'Shaughnessy, USAF, is Commander of U.S. Northern Command and North American Aerospace Defense Command.

*JFQ: What did you and your command learn in the most recent globally integrated exercise?*

**General O'Shaughnessy:** I'll start by praising the Chairman's efforts to drive these exercises. It's challenging to accomplish them, it's challenging to get the time together with the Joint Staff, the Chairman, the SECDEF [Secretary of Defense], and the combatant commands. You can't do better than having the Chairman play the Chairman, the SECDEF play the SECDEF, and the combatant commanders play the combatant commanders. This particular exercise was the first time all of us actively participated in the exercise, together, so the training value was exponential.

For our NORAD and USNORTHCOM team, who are obviously focused on homeland defense, it really gave us an opportunity to highlight some of the risks and consequences of our mission. As we looked at some of the instances where we are unable to meet homeland defense objectives, repercussions for other combatant commands were highlighted. If we couldn't defend a particular area, for instance, then STRATCOM [U.S. Strategic Command] would have to take action to preserve and protect their forces. General [Curtis M.] Scaparrotti [USA], at the time the EUCOM [U.S. European Command] commander, was concerned about whether the TPFDD [Time Phased Force Deployment Data] would be able to flow, deploying the required forces to his theater—if NORAD and USNORTHCOM can't defend our ports, installations, and lines of communication, he would not be able to get the required force flow and resources to execute his OPLAN [operation plan].

We learned that we are very much interrelated and that what happens in one command certainly impacts the others. When we do an exercise, it becomes much more apparent that global integration is a critical requirement. Our ability to meet homeland defense objectives carries global implications. Quite frankly, we have made great progress, but we still have a long way to go to truly globally

integrate planning and operations. We need to acknowledge that regional conflicts will inherently have global implications.

*JFQ: What are our competitors doing that has changed how you view defending the homeland? How are we countering those activities?*

**General O'Shaughnessy:** I'm realizing that we have to see the world as it is, not as we would like it to be, and I would apply that to our adversaries—we cannot assume that our adversaries will fight like we want them to fight. Our classic exercises are designed to begin with a regional issue or conflict, then the scenario quickly fast-forwards to the forces flowing into the respective theater. We successfully set force posture, then we go forth and do great things. But we *know* our adversaries have seen this before. They've seen that movie play out over the last two decades, so they're going to try to prevent us from actually being able to get to that position of strength. They know that once we flow the forces, we will win. We have to exercise our ability to protect power projection and incorporate that into our training, with clear eyes.

[Former Acting Secretary of Defense Patrick] Shanahan has been clear that he wants us, senior [DOD] leadership, to spend our time on the most important things. But it's easy in the day-to-day grind to focus our attention on the urgent, but the urgent isn't necessarily the important. So the [former] Acting Secretary has asked us to purposely look at our calendars, look at our schedules, and drive them so we are spending our time on the most important things we need to deal with.

Again, our homeland defense mission is our top priority, and we're making sure that we are laser-focused on that mission, and the [former Acting] Secretary is holding himself to the same standard, and he has changed his battle rhythm. He's changed the meeting schedules that we have with him to ensure that we are focused on threats as directed within the NDS and that we as combatant

commanders, Service chiefs, and the Joint Staff are spending the appropriate amount of attention on those most important issues.

*JFQ: As the commander responsible for homeland defense, what areas are you focused on to continue to ensure proper defense of the homeland?*

**General O'Shaughnessy:** We cannot fight tomorrow's conflict with yesterday's weapons and equipment. As we look at the classic areas we need to defend, then of course, missile defense is important—that's ballistic missiles, cruise missiles—to ensure our ability to protect the homeland from the hypersonic capability our adversaries are developing.

We have also increased our focus on the Arctic. During the Cold War, the Arctic was a significant area of defense for us, where we were well postured to defend against the Soviet Union, its bombers, and its nuclear capability. But we kind of got out of that business—at least a little—so I think it's time to rethink our approach to defending the Arctic. Advancing our ability to maintain all-domain awareness and maintaining the ability to command and control our forces in the Arctic is critically important.

There are also other significant emerging threats to homeland defense. Counter-UAS [unmanned aerial systems] is an area that we really have to focus on, and proliferation of that threat does have us concerned. We're already working closely with nontraditional partners on this issue. Homeland defense and homeland security missions are inseparable, so the multiple organizations within the Department of Homeland Security have been great partners as we consider the counter-UAS threat. As the proliferation of this threat has become significant for us, we're exploring ways to defend against it.

Then there's the cyber domain. If we look at what our adversaries are doing in cyber, we find that they do not view warfare as binary, or ones and zeroes. (We in the West think of warfare as a zero is peace and one is war.)

Our adversaries tend to see a spectrum. Cyber is the perfect example of this concept. As we sit here today, we are in conflict with multiple adversaries in the cyber domain. Yet these conflicts do not necessarily rise to the threshold of serious public discussion, even though the consequences for our nations are significant. We're working closely with the Department of Homeland Security and CISA [Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency, a component of DHS] on protection of critical civilian and defense infrastructure. We also know we need to expand our relationships within the civilian and commercial sectors to develop mission partnerships with the shared interest of defending our homelands from the current and future cyber threat. I do have a great partner in [General] Paul Nakasone [USA] at [U.S.] Cyber Command, but clearly this is an area where we need to make sure that we are postured to defend.

*JFQ: What are some no-fail requirements we must stay ahead of, particularly in the Arctic?*

**General O'Shaughnessy:** Much like any other area, we want to ensure that freedom of navigation is available to all and that rules based on international order are adhered to. When we see the Russians controlling the Northern Sea Route, for instance, we have concerns. For us to be able to respond to a situation involving something to that end, or whether it be something more like a search and rescue mission, we need a couple of key things. One is to maintain domain awareness—we need to understand what is happening at sea, in the air, and on land in the Arctic region and that's something we need to continue to work on. Second, we need to be able to communicate; our traditional communications methods, unfortunately, don't always work within the Arctic. For example, north of about 65°, our satellite communication is significantly degraded and even traditional navigation methods are hindered.

*JFQ: What resources are required to maintain an appropriate homeland defense posture in response to adversarial preparations?*

**General O'Shaughnessy:** The rapidly changing environment that we see in both international security and technology makes it ripe for innovative approaches to the way we do things in the Arctic, in particular. As we look at a way ahead, I don't think, in the words of General [David] Goldfein [Air Force chief of staff], "approaching things with just *new-old*"—in other words, applying new technology to the old way of doing business—is going to get us where we want and need to go.

A clear example of this is found as we prepare to defend against hypersonic weapons. We could put a lot of time, money, and effort into the land-based radar solution that will never get us where we need to be to detect and track a hypersonic weapon; we have to track the weapon throughout its path, from launch to intercept. So this leads us to a *new-new* approach—solving problems in new ways with new technology. But how do we combine these? In many ways it will depend on commercial industry. While certainly our defense industry partners can give us great capability, I think watching what's happening in the commercial world is relevant to our future, especially, again, within the Arctic.

Whether it's One Web or Starlink, the proliferation of LEOs [low-Earth orbit satellites] is something our military needs to take advantage of because of not only space access but also the significant decrease in the cost to reach space. We can also take advantage of the capability that's going to be in LEOs for communications down the road. An intuitive sensing grid—from undersea, to maritime, to terrestrial, to air, to a space-based layer—can ultimately lead to a system of systems. But we have to bring it all together in a resilient, redundant architecture where we can effectively command and control those networked capabilities. I look forward to the day when we have an established, all-domain sensor network, where anything can sense anything. Information

could be brought into a central data bank where that data could ultimately be used to come up with a defeat solution and that solution could be put independently out to a capability to defeat a threat.

On that front is another area where I think we have to find new ways of doing business. Right now, we are on the wrong side of the cost-curve. In other words, we spend millions of dollars per interceptor to defeat either a ballistic missile or a cruise missile and, in the future, hypersonics. We have to flip that cost-curve. Whether that be with direct energy or another emerging technology, we have to find ourselves in a position where we have multiple response options, affording us the flexibility to defend across North America, not just in a point-defense role.

*JFQ: You have been forward leaning in your comments about the Arctic. As others talk about cooperation, you have used phrases like "frontline in defending the homeland." Why?*

**General O'Shaughnessy:** First, we must have domain awareness and understand what is happening within that battlespace. This is not only critically important but also something that is very challenging, given the geography and harsh operating conditions there. Second, as I mentioned, we have to be able to communicate. Third, we must have a persistent presence and then, ultimately, the infrastructure to support that presence in the region.

As access to the Arctic is becoming more prevalent, through both commercial and potentially adversarial ways, we see a lot more activity there. This brings to mind how things have been traditionally done in the region, for example, with the Arctic Council, which has been a forum for cooperation. How does this forum play in the future with potential competing interests? We are a proponent for cooperation to the extent that we can, but we must be clear-eyed as we look at what our international partners are doing and understand their motives—and ensure that we're in a position, as we are around the globe, to be advocates for and enforce the rules based on the international order.



Marines conduct joint live-fire training exercise at Fort Greely, Alaska, March 15, 2018, as part of U.S. Army Alaska–led Joint Force Land Component Command in support of exercise Arctic Edge 18, conducted under authority of U.S. Northern Command (U.S. Air Force/Virginia Lang)

*JFQ: Your article in this journal on strategic shaping [JFQ 90 (3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2018)] has been one of our more popular in recent years. Does this concept have application to your new commands? If so, how?*

**General O’Shaughnessy:** Absolutely. First, let’s start with the obvious part: Regional conflicts have global implications. The second part is the generation of new thinking through writing. As we began putting pen to paper, our thinking was clarified and we saw seemingly disconnected things come together. For example, when we looked at the actual application of strategic shaping, some characteristics being considered in the Pacific also applied in the NORTHCOM area of operations—especially in terms of instilling doubt in the political leadership of an adversary. We specifically look at defending our homelands and want to ensure that we can instill that same doubt, for different reasons perhaps, as to the value of an adversary attacking the

homeland. We also want to make sure that as we work with our global partners and the other combatant commands, we are part of shaping those strategic dilemmas. So, yes, that thinking is still in play within this command, and we’re using some of the aspects that we used in drafting that article in the same way here at NORTHCOM and NORAD.

*JFQ: Let’s shift topic a bit and discuss an important part of professional development. What impact did joint professional military education [PME] have on your joint and international assignments after your graduation from the Industrial College of the Armed Forces [now the Dwight D. Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy]?*

**General O’Shaughnessy:** PME in general gave me the opportunity to get out of the normal grind and think. Often, we are

so overtasked and just want to get done what we can and move on to the next day. Having the opportunity to actually sit and think and allow my mind to go after some of the issues, whether that was through writing or discussion, was really good.

I also think PME allows students to be exposed in their traditional path, as rising officers in the ranks, to industry. It provided me insight not only to the defense industry but also to the commercial industry. In looking for solutions to some of our homeland defense challenges, I look as much to the commercial industry as I do within the defense industry or traditional DOD means—and I think that seed was planted during my time at ICAF. In some of the partnerships that we’re looking at with commercial industries, we’ve been able to make some advancements by looking at things differently because of what was taught to us through PME. JFQ