

Center for Strategic and International Studies

TRANSCRIPT

Event

**“Homeland Cruise Missile Defense”**

**Video Remarks by LTG A.C. Roper**

DATE

**Thursday, July 14, 2022 at 11:30 a.m. ET**

FEATURING

**Lieutenant General A.C. Roper**

*Deputy Commander, U.S. Northern Command*

CSIS EXPERTS

**Seth G. Jones**

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Seth G. Jones: Welcome, everyone. (Laughter.) I'm Seth Jones, senior vice president and director of the International Security Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and I'm delighted to kick off today's conference, which will be a full-day discussion about a pressing topic: Homeland Cruise Missile Defense.

When CSIS stood up its Missile Defense Project in 2015, we did so with an eye toward deepening the discussion of air and missile defense. In the last seven years, the project has had tremendous success towards achieving that goal and to putting out high-impact work. The team has published a significant number of articles, reports, has a vibrant microsite with an eye toward emerging issues that weren't, at least yet, on the broader policy radar. So I encourage you to look at the comprehensive portfolio of objective analysis by the CSIS missile defense team, which includes not just ballistic missile defense but the whole air and missile defense-threat spectrum, to include UAVs and countering UAVs, hypersonic defense, and then another part of that spectrum, which is what we're going to focus on today, is the cruise missile.

Back when CSIS first announced its new project, we hosted a day-long conference. At that point we had as keynote then-Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Admiral Sandy Winnefeld. So I went back and looked at that event and what Winnefeld had to say, and as it turns out, it was interesting and very relevant for what we're going to talk about today. At that time, which was 2015, the Russians had recently invaded and occupied Crimea; they were in the early stages of the war in eastern Ukraine, largely at that point focused on leveraging Luhansk and Donetsk militia organizations, but we were beginning to realize that there was a new era of some kind that was upon us. At that conference, Admiral Winnefeld said that in his mind homeland cruise missile defense had already risen in importance over that of regional ballistic missile defense, which, as folks here may recall, was a focus of the Obama administration. Sometimes it takes the Department of Defense a bit of time to mull over and move forward on some issues and problems, but I think, as we've seen, the last two budget submissions seem to suggest that this issue is beginning to get some attention. Today you're going to hear a lot about the issue of cruise missile defense and related issues from individuals within the Department of Defense, as well as folks from industry and other subject-matter experts, and we're going to think through how to tackle this problem in a timely but also a cost-effective way.

The Missile Defense Project is also rolling out their new report on what homeland cruise missile defense might look like. I also want to thank, before we begin, the Commander's Action Groups from NORTHCOM, STRATCOM, and TRANSCOM for their cooperation leading up to today. And at some point in the near future, we will have a panel with the combatant commanders to discuss this issue.

Let me also thank those who contributed to this study that is being released today, and thank you to so many for joining us in person, also online, to take part in this important discussion.

Before we begin with our first esteemed panel, which is moderated by Lee Hudson of Politico, I want to give the floor first to Lieutenant General A.C. Roper, the deputy commander of NORTHCOM, for a brief video message, so over to Lieutenant General Roper.

(A video presentation begins.)

Lieutenant  
General A.C.  
Roper:

Ladies and gentlemen, it is an honor to join you virtually today. On behalf of General VanHerck, the commander of NORAD and USNORTHCOM, thank you for the opportunity to participate in this discussion.

As we begin, I would like to acknowledge the profound efforts of CSIS and their teams in not only bringing this event about but in working through the research and publication of the Homeland Cruise Missile Defense Report. I am very encouraged by actions like this and by the individuals who have committed themselves to taking a hard look at our homeland defense challenges. Moving forward, alignment of our efforts will be crucial to success. Together, we must develop concepts to inform credible deterrence options focused on defending critical infrastructure that, if degraded, could bring us to our knees in times of crisis or conflict. You will have the opportunity to hear from different commands who share interests, equities, and are aligned, truly focused on generating globally integrated deterrence.

To achieve globally integrated deterrence, we must understand that vulnerabilities to our homeland pose significant challenges to our respective missions. From our perspective at NORAD and USNORTHCOM, that mission includes topics such as continuity of government; nuclear command, control, communications, otherwise known as NC3; and preservation of power-projection capabilities. The challenges to homeland defense and the world's current strategic environment are dynamic and ever-changing, different from the historic strategic context we have dealt with in the past. Recent actions by the PRC and the ongoing crisis in Ukraine are slowly waking people up to the reality of today's modern strategic environment and the potential threats to the homeland. Our strategic competitors, Russia and China, possess the capability and have demonstrated their intent to hold the homeland at risk, both kinetically and non-kinetically. As a result, we must deal with compressed decision space. As global tensions increase and competitor actions turn to aggression, the risk of strategic deterrence failure increases. That same global context highlights our limited domain awareness

and outdated capabilities. It drives a sense of urgency to improve our posture to match or outpace our strategic competitors.

This context begs the question: What do we need to do to move homeland defense forward? First, I want to underscore the fact that homeland defense, or even continental defense, does not start within the NORAD and USNORTHCOM area of responsibility. Homeland defense actually starts forward through the actions of the other combatant commands, along with the support of our allies and partners. This approach uses all levers of influence, a truly whole-of-government perspective, and is executed globally across all domains, creating an integrated layered defense framework within which we execute homeland defense.

Now, I want to state that we absolutely believe that nuclear deterrence is the foundation of homeland defense. However, we also must have credible deterrence options below the nuclear thresholds, options which allow for a balanced approach of deterrence by denial and deterrence by punishment or cost imposition. Those deterrence options aid in mitigating risk and help create doubt in adversaries' minds that they are able to achieve their objectives.

One of the ways that we generate those credible deterrence options is through campaigning. Campaigning is a critical component of integrated deterrence. As detailed in the National Defense Strategy, it is focused on remaining in competition while avoiding crisis in conflict. The concept is built around credible demonstrations of will, capability, capacity, and resiliency, which are aimed at deterring adversaries, shaping their actions, and molding perceptions.

All of our mutual operations, activities, exercises, and investments must be shaped by the idea of campaigning in day-to-day competition. The Arctic provides a clear case for campaigning in competition, as we demonstrate mission-readiness and operational capability in the High North. When messaged correctly, those activities provide a deterrent effect to competitors. The Arctic is an example of where we have made incredible progress but also an area for future growth. And we have made significant progress in so many areas, ranging from the establishment of the Ted Stevens Center, our newest partner in Arctic advocacy for a region of increased strategic competition; to pending appropriations for over-the-horizon radars; and the recent announcement by our Canadian partners committing to NORAD modernization. I am encouraged by this progress and by recent policy provided on what we must defend. Such policy will inform capability development and plans for limited area defense.

Simply put: We cannot defend everything. Placing a Patriot or THAAD battery on every street corner is both infeasible and unaffordable. However, we can focus on expanding domain-awareness capabilities, beyond OTHR

and beyond sensor-to-shooter capabilities towards truly globally integrated solutions and sensor-to-decision-maker capabilities which are aimed at increasing decision space and generating credible options.

We can move past the focus on kinetic endgame defeat weapons and instead look towards resilience, redundancy, hardening, and strategic messaging to campaign. We can move faster towards JADC2-enabled decisions which enable decisions at the speed of relevance.

Thanks again for this opportunity, and I look forward to seeing the results generated by this event.

(Video presentation ends.)