

NORAD and U.S. Northern Command support for STS-116 (Forwarded)

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North American Aerospace Defense Command

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NORAD and U.S. Northern Command support for STS-116

PETERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Colo. — North American Aerospace Defense Command and United States Northern Command provide support to NASA and the shuttle program's mission with distinctly different but important missions.

NORAD — the bi-national command responsible for air defense of the North American air space — is ensuring airspace safety and security for the STS-116 launch and landing, providing irregular air patrols to enforce the FAA's Temporary Flight Restriction zones over the space shuttle and along its flight path. NORAD support will consist of USAF F-15 fighter planes and USCG helicopters enforcing the TFR.

The FAA flight restriction is depicted to the right [http://www.norad.mil/newsroom/news_releases/2006/120606_a_clip_image001.gif (10KB)], and the associated Notice to Airmen can be viewed in its entirety by linking to the FAA's Web site at www.faa.gov, and by clicking on the state of Florida link at the top of the Web page.

NORAD is also prepared to respond to any shuttle emergency by securing the airspace over necessary Launch Abort Sites should emergency landing be required.

The safety and security of North American airspace remains NORAD's prime mission. The command retains a robust air defense posture to maintain air sovereignty over the continental U.S., Alaska and Canada. Since Sept. 11, 2001, NORAD fighters have scrambled or diverted more than 2,200 times in response to air events, and NORAD aircraft have flown more than 44,000 sorties (refueling, AWACS, etc.) in support of Operation Noble Eagle.

U.S. Northern Command is the lead U.S. Department of Defense organization responsible for military incident support to the space shuttle. Support includes astronaut rescue and recovery and orbiter recovery. USNORTHCOM, established in 2002 and fully operational Sept. 11, 2003, coordinates U.S.

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military for the Department of Defense efforts to assist the space shuttle astronauts in the event of an emergency. USNORTHCOM will command and control DoD forces in the event of an emergency mainly through Joint Task Force-116 under the authority of U.S. Navy Capt. Mike Tillotson.

JTF-116 is made up of operations, information command and control specialists, and support personnel who understand, focus and employ DoD's unique capabilities. The JTF works with NASA, DoD installations, the U.S. military services and other U.S. government agencies like the Department of Homeland Security and the Coast Guard to accomplish the mission. More than 400 DoD personnel are ready to support the shuttle mission, with 14 members of JTF-116 on location in Florida monitoring and providing command and control of DoD forces. A complete list of DoD forces tasked to JTF-116 can be obtained from the NORAD-USNORTHCOM Public Affairs Office personnel, who are located in the NASA Media Services Center for the launch.

The mission of USNORTHCOM is homeland defense and civil support. The command conducts operations to deter, prevent, defeat and mitigate threats and aggression aimed at the United States, its territories and interests within the assigned area of responsibility and, as directed by the President or Secretary of Defense, provide military assistance to civil authorities including consequence management operations.

A fact sheet about NORAD and USNORTHCOM support to the STS-116 mission is available at

http://www.norad.mil/newsroom/news_releases/2006/120606_e.html