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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

STATEMENT OF

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DEPUTY TO THE COMMANDER FOR CIVIL-MILITARY ACTIVITIES
UNITED STATES AFRICA COMMAND

AND

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CHIEF OF STAFF
UNITED STATES AFRICA COMMAND

BEFORE THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY AND FOREIGN AFFAIRS

ON

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Thank you for the opportunity to address this Committee on the establishment of the United States Africa Command (USAFRICOM), especially its interagency component. As senior leaders of USAFRICOM, we are deeply involved in building the command into an effective interagency team in support of the U.S. Government (USG) policy to assist the continent of Africa and its island nations in establishing and maintaining their own security and stability. Thus far, the level of participation in USAFRICOM from across the USG has been excellent, and we look forward to discussing in detail the nature of this participation.

As we assess the security challenges facing the continent of Africa and its island nations - such as terrorism, enduring conflicts, trafficking, poverty and natural disasters - few are military in nature. Throughout Africa, security and development are intertwined and equally vital in helping the Africans achieve their goals. This is one area where we and our African partners are in strong agreement.

In the United States, we have a clear dividing line between issues that belong within the realm of the military, and those that belong to other security organizations such as the police, border security, customs and immigration, emergency response, etc. For many African nations, the greatest threats are internal and we should not expect that Africans organize their security apparatus the same way that we do in the United States. Our primary military threats - terrorism, WMD, and the like - are external. In addition, certain capabilities that we find in our military (counterterrorism, for example) reside in non-military ministries.

Therefore, building security capacity in Africa presents a broader challenge. We must build this capacity as an interagency team, one that works with mutual trust, confidence, and support. Those activities we undertake must have positive effects on the activities of others, and need to be informed by the totality of the security environment. When assisting in non-military activities like humanitarian assistance, we will do it in support of another USG agency so we ensure we meet their requirements and achieve their desired effects.

The USAFRICOM mission is "United States Africa Command, in concert with other U.S. Government agencies and international partners, conducts sustained security engagement through military-to-military programs, military-sponsored activities, and other military operations as directed to promote a stable and secure African environment in support of U.S. foreign policy."

We would like to highlight three key elements of this statement.

"In concert with other USG agencies and international partners:" This emphasizes our role as the military component within the context of the broader USG effort. We will conduct all our activities as part of the interagency team.

"Sustained security engagement:" At USAFRICOM, we have committed ourselves to the delivery of effective security assistance programs and ensuring programs achieve their desired effects in the long run.

"In support of U.S. foreign policy:" Our efforts represent the security dimension of the foreign policy set forth by the Department of State. USAFRICOM does not make U.S. foreign policy.

In building the command, we determined that it was very important to have, within the headquarters, relevant subject matter expertise from the broader security and development domains. These experts would be integrated into the development and planning stages of our activities. Identifying these staff positions and placing them appropriately throughout the command has been a deliberate process that is progressing well through the full support of many USG agencies. By employing permanent and temporary interagency personnel and through increased partnerships with key agencies across the USG, our capabilities as an interagency command are growing.

These partnerships are vital to U.S. Africa Command's mission accomplishment. USAFRICOM will contribute to the harmonization of U.S. Government efforts to maximize the effectiveness of our nation's resources being dedicated to Africa. In doing so, we add value to the U.S. Government programs already underway on the continent, and expect to develop and implement more effective programs in the future.

On 30 September 2008, USAFRICOM will become the sixth geographic combatant command in the Department of Defense. We anticipate the USAFRICOM interagency team will foster closer collaboration within the USG and more effective military-to-military partnerships with African nations that will bring greater stability and enhanced security capacity. We are a listening, growing, and developing organization dedicated to partnering with African governments, African security organizations, and the international community to achieve U.S. security goals by helping the people of Africa achieve the goals they have set for themselves.