

Statement of Stephen D. Mull
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Mr. Chairman, Congressman Hunter and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the State Department's involvement in, and views on, the establishment of U.S. Africa Command, or AFRICOM.

My bureau, the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, is the State Department's principal institutional link to the Department of Defense (DoD). In this role, we have been working closely with the Bureau of African Affairs and a host of other bureaus and offices within State and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to help DoD develop and establish U.S. AFRICOM. This collaborative process began over a year ago, and I am pleased to update you today on our achievements thus far, and on the work that remains yet to be done. I will organize my remarks around three topics. First, I want to share with you the compelling reasons why the State Department supports the creation of this new military command. Second, I would like to address and dispel a few common misconceptions about AFRICOM. And finally, I will highlight some of the many details and decisions that remain to be addressed as we move forward with AFRICOM's development.

National Security Policy Directive-50, the U.S. Strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa, notes that the African continent is a place of promise and opportunity, linked to the United States by history, culture, economics and geo-strategic significance. In the present era of globalization, these linkages and interdependencies are growing, and will continue to do so. Juxtaposed with Africa's promise and opportunity, however, are such severe challenges as poverty, disease, conflict, and political instability. These challenges, combined with our longstanding and growing ties to Africa, bear on our values as a nation, and our national interests. The State Department and USAID are working hard to help African nations and regional organizations address these challenges. Effective and efficient U.S. Government engagement, however, requires a coherent and

coordinated effort by all relevant arms of the U.S. Government, including the Department of Defense.

For over twenty-five years, the responsibility for U.S. military engagement in Africa was divided among three unified commands – the U.S. European, Central, and Pacific Commands. This division of responsibilities made sense during the Cold War period, but not today. Now, DoD will have a structure that institutionalizes regular, comprehensive consideration of the African continent’s increasing strategic importance, its challenges, and the DoD’s role in supporting U.S. government efforts to address them. We also believe that placing AFRICOM under the command of a four-star officer – co-equal with the U.S. military’s other combatant commands – will help bring the level of attention and focus to African security issues that our national values and interests dictate. And I would like to digress just long enough to say that we are especially encouraged by the selection of GEN Ward to be AFRICOM’s first commander. We are confident that GEN Ward’s longstanding experience with African security issues, and his excellent reputation in multinational and interagency settings will enable him to establish this new command on a strong foundation of professional excellence, coupled with sensitivity to the needs and concerns of our African partners.

Another reason the State Department supports and welcomes the establishment of AFRICOM is the inclusive approach that DoD has taken in the development of the command, as well as the frank and open nature of our discussions. From the initial establishment of DoD’s AFRICOM Implementation Team in November 2006, State, USAID and other USG agencies were invited to temporarily assign full-time, senior representatives to that team. This allowed us to take part in the initial deliberations and conceptual development of AFRICOM. When that team completed its work early this year, State and other civilian agencies were invited to join DoD’s AFRICOM Transition Team. This team, which began its work in Stuttgart in February 2007, conducted the very practical work of taking AFRICOM from the conceptual stage to the point of initial operating capability, which was achieved last month.

Meanwhile, AFRICOM’s conceptual development and implementation has also obviously required significant outreach and coordination with our international partners –

a process in which we have also engaged along with DoD. Over the past five months, delegations of senior officials from DoD, State, and USAID have conducted two extensive trips to the region to discuss AFRICOM and other security cooperation issues. We also held consultations with senior African military leadership in Washington in late September. Our outreach has also included several of our European allies who have a strong interest in security cooperation with Africa, as well as various international and non-governmental organizations. These trips and engagements have demonstrated the importance of explaining our concept and intentions in establishing AFRICOM, and of listening carefully to African perspectives. We have found that in many cases, these discussions helped to clarify the mission of AFRICOM, and dispel some of the initial apprehensions about its purpose and focus. But more needs to be done. Building on this proactive approach, the State Department has also begun taking steps through our embassies in Africa and elsewhere to better communicate AFRICOM's mission, structure and intended impact on the continent. We have also emphasized that African input will help us shape the mission and structure of a successful command.

A key part of this outreach, clearly, has been the need to clarify AFRICOM's intended mission. AFRICOM will be one of six Geographic Commands. In contrast to the traditional mission of a geographic command, however, AFRICOM's primary focus will *not* be on preparation for combat. In practical terms, its focus will instead be on security cooperation – helping our African partners build the capacity to deal with African security concerns. Security cooperation is already an important component of U.S. engagement in Africa and can take several forms, including advice and training for partner nations' military forces, assistance with maritime security and border control, schooling and mentorship to help professionalize military personnel, instruction and advice on defense management, and capacity-building for peace support operations. We encourage AFRICOM's engagement in these areas, undertaken in support of our foreign policy priorities, which are being implemented each day by Chiefs of Mission and embassies in the field. When coordinated and nested in this manner, AFRICOM's contributions can help African countries effectively address such threats as political instability, terrorism, human rights abuses, cross-border trafficking and international crime. Furthermore, by helping address the security issues that impede economic

development, AFRICOM's mission will support and complement the lead role that the State Department and USAID play in promoting development and effective governance.

A final, unique attribute of AFRICOM that the State Department welcomes is the role we and other agencies have been invited to play in providing key personnel to the AFRICOM headquarters. Most visible among those positions is the Deputy to the Commander for Civil-Military Activities, or DCMA. This position is one of two deputies working directly for the AFRICOM commander. DoD has agreed that this position will always be filled by a senior civilian officer, with the candidates nominated by State. We are very pleased that this position was recently filled for the very first time by Ambassador Mary Yates, a career Foreign Service Officer with considerable African experience. The DCMA is responsible for directing command activities related to security cooperation, capacity building, and strategic communications. The other Deputy to the Commander, a uniformed three-star officer, is in charge of AFRICOM's more traditional military tasks.

In addition to the DCMA, DoD has invited State to nominate officers for other senior- and mid-level positions, in order to provide expertise in such areas as regional political affairs, public diplomacy, and programming for security cooperation. I should also note that, in light of the valuable foreign policy expertise these individuals will contribute, DoD has kindly offered to reimburse the State Department for the salary and benefits associated with these detailees. Our Department's leadership is currently giving very serious consideration to the number of personnel State might detail to AFRICOM, and for which positions. Finally, as with all unified commands, we plan to assign a Foreign Policy Advisor (POLAD), who will perform the more traditional role of providing policy advice to the commander – a function that will be especially important in such an interagency endeavor. We are excited at the prospect that these substantive, senior- and mid-level detailees from State and other agencies will provide valuable experience and perspective to AFRICOM as it works with the rest of the USG to build the security capacity of our African partners.

In this context, I would also like to briefly address a few common misconceptions about the division of authorities and responsibilities between State and DoD as they relate to AFRICOM. As I've already mentioned, AFRICOM is "new" and "different" from

other military commands in terms of both its mission focus and because State and other agencies have been asked to detail a number of officers to its staff in positions of line responsibility within the command. These non-traditional attributes, however, do not indicate a change in the roles and responsibilities performed by the State Department in our relationship with Africa. The State Department – led by our Africa Bureau – continues to bear primary responsibility for the development and execution of U.S. foreign policy in Africa. Likewise, we and DoD have agreed that the Chiefs of Mission in Africa will continue to exercise the authorities and responsibilities that are assigned to them in the President’s Letter of Instruction. This includes the responsibility to review and approve peacetime DoD-sponsored activities conducted in or with the host nation. While we have achieved this agreement in principal with DoD, however, we also believe further discussions are needed to address in detail just how these authorities will be implemented on a day-to-day basis. Resolving these complicated institutional issues will provide a solid basis for effective collaboration with AFRICOM, as well as addressing the apprehensions expressed by some that AFRICOM could lead to a “militarization” of U.S. foreign policy in Africa.

Finally, I would highlight that AFRICOM remains very much a work in progress, with several important details and key decisions yet to be worked out. These include the proposed, eventual location of AFRICOM elements on the continent, consistent with existing Unified Command and Chief of Mission authorities. As I alluded to earlier, we are also continuing to work out AFRICOM’s mission statement, final structure and manning roster, including the exact number and responsibilities of civilian agency detailees. Finally, our outreach and discussions with partners both on and off the continent, including Congress, will remain a fixture of AFRICOM’s day-to-day existence even long after the command has achieved full operational capability. It represents a particularly vital aspect of our efforts, and one that truly impacts our decision-making as we continue to refine our concept for AFRICOM’s presence and engagement on the African continent.

In sum, the Department of State views AFRICOM as an important step forward in the coordination of U.S. *military* engagement, and in supporting the overall U.S. *government* engagement with Africa. It is the right step at the right time to help African

countries address security challenges that threaten both their interests and our own.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide you with this update today.