



Highlights of [GAO-08-947T](#), a testimony to the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, House of Representatives

## Why GAO Did This Study

In February 2007, the President announced the U. S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), a Department of Defense (DOD) geographic combatant command with a focus on strengthening U.S. security cooperation with Africa, creating opportunities to bolster the capabilities of African partners, and enhancing peace and security efforts on the continent through activities such as military training and support to other U.S. government agencies' efforts. DOD officials have emphasized that AFRICOM is designed to integrate DOD and non-DOD personnel into the command to stimulate greater coordination among U.S. government agencies to achieve a more whole-of-government approach.

This testimony is based on the preliminary results of work GAO is conducting for the Subcommittee on the establishment of AFRICOM. GAO analyzed relevant documentation and obtained perspectives from the combatant commands, military services, Joint Staff, Department of State, USAID and non-governmental organizations. GAO plans to provide the Subcommittee with a report later this year that will include recommendations as appropriate. This testimony addresses (1) the status of DOD's efforts to establish and fund AFRICOM and (2) challenges that may hinder the command's ability to achieve interagency participation and a more integrated, whole-of-government approach to DOD activities in Africa.

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on [GAO-08-947T](#). For more information, contact John H. Pendleton at (202) 512-3489 or [pendletonj@gao.gov](mailto:pendletonj@gao.gov).

## FORCE STRUCTURE

### Preliminary Observations on the Progress and Challenges Associated with Establishing the U.S. Africa Command

#### What GAO Found

The Department of Defense has made progress in transferring activities, staffing the command, and establishing an interim headquarters for AFRICOM, but has not yet fully estimated the additional costs of establishing and operating the command. To date, AFRICOM's primary focus has been on assuming responsibility for existing DOD activities such as military exercises and humanitarian assistance programs, and DOD plans to have most of these activities transferred by October 1, 2008. DOD has approved 1,304 positions for the command's headquarters, and by October 1, 2008, plans to have filled about 75 percent, or 980 positions. Also, DOD plans to have 13 other positions filled by representatives from non-DOD organizations, such as the State Department. DOD is renovating facilities in Stuttgart, Germany, for interim headquarters and plans to use these facilities for the foreseeable future until decisions are made regarding the permanent AFRICOM headquarters location.

The initial concept for AFRICOM, designed and developed by DOD, met resistance from within the U.S. government and African countries and contributed to several implementation challenges. First, DOD has had difficulties integrating interagency personnel in the command, which is critical to synchronizing DOD efforts with other U. S. government agencies. DOD continues to lower its estimate of the ultimate level of interagency participation in the command. According to DOD, other agencies have limited resources and personnel systems which have not easily accommodated DOD's intent to place interagency personnel in the command. Second, DOD has encountered concerns from civilian agencies and other stakeholders over the command's mission and goals. For example, State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development officials have expressed concerns that AFRICOM will become the lead for all U.S. efforts in Africa, rather than just DOD activities. If not addressed, these concerns could limit the command's ability to develop key partnerships. Third, DOD has not yet reached agreement with the State Department and potential host nations on the structure and location of the command's presence in Africa. Uncertainties related to AFRICOM's presence hinder DOD's ability to estimate future funding requirements for AFRICOM and raises questions about whether DOD's concept for developing enduring relationships on the continent can be achieved.