

**STATEMENT OF
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PRINCIPAL DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR POLICY
BEFORE THE HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
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Introduction

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak to you about the creation of the newest U.S. regional command – U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM).

The increasing importance of Africa to the United States is undeniable. Linked to the U.S. historically, economically, culturally, and politically, security and stability on the continent are of critical interest to the United States. The reorganization of the Defense Department's approach to the continent through the creation of AFRICOM is simply a recognition of this fact.

Commonly associated with intractable conflicts and humanitarian disasters, Africa is increasingly a place of opportunity and hope. The last decade has seen advances in conflict prevention and institution-building on the continent. Africans have begun to demonstrate the initiative and limited ability to stabilize volatile situations. The African Union is energized and through its plans for an African Standby Force seeks to be able to provide security to troubled corners of the continent.

Despite such progress, serious challenges persist. Poverty, lack of economic opportunity, deficiencies in military and government capacity, conflict, terrorism, and disease continue to jeopardize the future for all Africans. Currently, the United States is in a unique position to enhance our assistance to African nations in developing the capacity to address these challenges. As such, the creation of AFRICOM will strengthen that position by creating an economy and unity of effort in the execution of the U.S. government's security programs and policies.

Defense Policy and Security Cooperation in Africa

The stand-up of AFRICOM is just part of our government's overall strategy to develop, in partnership with and in support of Africans, a more democratic, peaceful,

stable, and economically strong Africa. In pursuit of this strategic goal, the U.S. government presently spends approximately \$9 billion annually on programs that promote health, development, trade, and good governance across the continent. Such programs form the fundamental building blocks of U.S. foreign policy towards Africa and are administered primarily through the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development. U.S. defense policy supports our national strategy outlined in National Security Policy Directive 50 (NSPD-50, “U.S. Strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa”), by emphasizing three objectives: civilian control of the military and defense reform, military professionalism, and security capacity building. By contrast, U.S. programs in support of security objectives amount to about \$250 million annually, less than three percent of the total U.S. investment. Roughly half of this goes to support the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS), meaning that a little more than one percent is spent on discretionary security activities – clearly not a militarization of foreign policy as it is a comparatively small investment. Our current security cooperation programs support national and regional African capacity to participate in sub-regional peacekeeping operations. We work with African partners to improve counter-terrorism capabilities and cooperation. We work to ensure African militaries adhere to democratic principles of civilian control of the military, respect for human rights and the laws of war. We alert leaders and soldiers to the dangers of HIV/AIDS and actively work to slow and stop its spread. All of these efforts are undertaken in partnership with the host African governments, institutions, and organizations. By providing a more focused and sustained Department of Defense (DoD) effort in the area of security capacity building and ensuring we are fully integrated with the broader programs, AFRICOM will take these efforts one step further.

Why AFRICOM?

First and foremost, AFRICOM is the result of a realignment of the unified command structure to match the priorities and realities of the twenty-first century. Prior to President Bush’s initiative to create AFRICOM, Central Command handled countries in the Horn of Africa; European Command was responsible for northern and sub-Saharan Africa; and the handful of island nations off Africa’s eastern shore fell to Pacific

Command. This splintered approach created inefficiencies and often stymied our ability to understand emerging Continental issues. A single command, headed by a four-star general, will harmonize our efforts, sharpen our coordination, and improve our ability to effectively influence change in Africa. Additionally, AFRICOM re-configures DoD's approach to addressing African security problems as Africans do – from a continental perspective.

Although the creation of AFRICOM is a logical step forward, its establishment is a bold departure from how the U.S. has traditionally established commands. Historically, national crises or disasters have been the catalysts for change. The Iranian hostage crisis, for example, drove the U.S. to create Central Command. Most recently Northern Command was established after the tragedies of September 11, 2001. AFRICOM's inception is different. We are not, and do not plan to be, at war on the continent. Rather, AFRICOM is a recognition that the approach to Africa left over from the Cold War was not only outdated, but potentially damaging to our national security interests. The unprecedented conditions of the Command's creation afforded us an extraordinary opportunity to start from scratch and tailor AFRICOM differently.

AFRICOM's Innovative Approach

AFRICOM's principal innovations are three-fold. First, unlike most unified commands, AFRICOM's focus is **not** on war fighting, but rather, as articulated in the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review, to “prevent problems from becoming a crisis and a crisis from becoming a catastrophe.” AFRICOM endeavors to assist African nations in building the capacity to address emerging security issues on their own before they require international intervention. **U.S. security is enhanced most not when American boots are on the continent, but when Africa's indigenous governments and militaries can operate effectively and efficiently without putting our men and women in harm's way.** By and large, Africans have the drive and initiative to take charge of their own security; more often than not, they lack the means. AFRICOM endeavors to build capacity, so African nations can solve African problems before they erupt into regional or international catastrophes.

AFRICOM's unique mission merits a unique make-up. Its creation provides an opportunity to capitalize on some of the lessons learned from our experiences over the last decade and a half in Africa, the Balkans, Afghanistan, and Iraq. We have learned that security must be defined broadly and approached holistically. We have learned that the actual lines dividing military and humanitarian missions in the field are less concrete than the bureaucratic lines in Washington. AFRICOM's staff composition reflects these lessons. By incorporating interagency personnel into the Command, AFRICOM's structure will stimulate greater coordination among U.S. government entities. The Command's leadership will include the first civilian Deputy to the Command for Civil-Military Activities, Ambassador Mary Carlin Yates. Interagency personnel detailed from State, USAID, Treasury, Commerce, Energy, and other agencies significantly enhance the command's expertise by importing knowledge that enables AFRICOM to better execute its mission in support of overall U.S. government policy. It also creates organic mechanisms for continuous cooperation and collaboration.

The integration of interagency personnel requires the support of all relevant U.S. departments and agencies. We have engaged in considerable outreach to our interagency partners and the response has been overwhelmingly positive. In order to facilitate interagency participation in the Command, Secretary Gates has authorized that AFRICOM interagency billets be offered on a reimbursable basis.

Finally, in addition to the command's mission and make-up, we are taking an entirely different approach to the organizational structure of the command. Traditional organizational frameworks are being eschewed in favor of a tiered approach that will better position the Command for theater security cooperation. As such, AFRICOM will be a staff headquarters, not a troop headquarters. The staff headquarters will be supported by substantial reach-back capabilities. Additionally, we envision a distributed presence on the continent in locations that best facilitate partnership with African nations and institutions. This structure is the result of extensive dialogue with continental experts and African governments themselves. In the last seven years DoD has engaged in major global force restructuring involving the transition to an expeditionary force vice our former assigned approach to overseas presence. The creation of AFRICOM is consistent with that process.

The location of these AFRICOM elements is still being discussed and debated within the department, within the interagency, and with our partners abroad. One thing is for sure, an AFRICOM presence on the continent is imperative for the successful implementation of its mission. However, AFRICOM will not be accomplishing its mission if the physical presence of the Command itself becomes a burden to host nations. For that reason, as well as for force protection considerations, AFRICOM's footprint in any given location will be relatively small and discrete.

AFRICOM Consistencies

Although in some respects AFRICOM represents a departure from the traditional way we approach the continent, many aspects of U.S. defense engagement with African nations will remain the same. Foremost, AFRICOM will not change U.S. defense policy toward Africa. Rather, it is an opportunity to better coordinate all the tools of security cooperation in a holistic approach that assures sustained and steady engagement. Likewise AFRICOM will not change the State Department's lead role in U.S. foreign policy. Chief of mission authorities will be preserved. Furthermore, AFRICOM will not change USAID's role as the lead USG agency responsible for development and humanitarian assistance. The creation of AFRICOM does not foreshadow a militarization of foreign policy or foreign assistance toward the continent. AFRICOM's creation is rather intended to create greater efficiency and effectiveness in DoD's approach toward the continent, thereby allowing DoD to be a better supporting partner to other agencies in furtherance of U.S. national security objectives in Africa.

Although AFRICOM will allow the Department to be better engaged in African security challenges, Africans will still lead efforts to address those challenges. The Department recognizes and applauds the leadership role that individual African nations and multi-lateral organizations are taking to promote peace, security, and stability in Africa. The U.S. military supports this initiative through myriad capacity-building programs, activities, and exercises. AFRICOM will continue to conduct these activities in support of African leadership.

Outreach and Engagement

Although AFRICOM is a U.S. government initiative, it has not been developed in a vacuum. Our outreach campaign has comprised over 150 separate engagements with officials from various U.S. departments and agencies, Congress, non-governmental organizations, the media, multi-lateral institutions, and numerous foreign governments. These include monthly roundtable discussions with Congressional staff and multiple consultation trips abroad.

Constant and continuing dialogue with our African and European partners has profoundly influenced the mission and organization of the Command. I have personally been to the continent twice to dialogue with top African government leaders and the African Union.¹ My staff's interactions with their African counterparts continue on a regular basis. Further, we recently hosted over 35 African countries and multilateral organizations at a two-day dialogue outside of Warrenton, to discuss AFRICOM and hear their concerns. Despite some public accounts to the contrary, most African nations privately express their appreciation of greater U.S. engagement with Africa, their support for our desire to work closely with the African Union, and their feeling that some small AFRICOM presence on the continent is necessary. Overwhelmingly, once people are educated about the Command, their fears subside and their interest is piqued.

Way Ahead

Although we have come far in the development of the Command, we do not presume to have all the answers yet. We have endeavored to take an approach that is innovative, yet humble. We are fully cognizant that the AFRICOM of today may not be the AFRICOM of the future. We aim for a command that is as dynamic as the continent itself. Issues of presence on the continent, the integration of foreign allies, and the extent of interagency involvement will all receive continued examination and consideration and be adapted to a changing security environment. Our dialogue continues – with you, here today, with our interagency partners, with our African and European allies, and with the public. Achieving results on the continent requires sustained and active engagement.

¹ Countries visited include: Algeria, Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Libya, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, and Tunisia.

America has the will; our government and military have the capability; and now AFRICOM will help provide the means.

Thank you for your time and attention. We look forward to your continued support as we work to stand up this historic command and integrate and coordinate the efforts of our government.