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U.S. Africa Command: Challenges and Opportunities

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The decision to create the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) was more than an administrative change within the Department of Defense (DOD). It was the direct result of Africa's increasing strategic importance to the U.S. and represents responsible officials' recognition that the U.S. can no longer address the region's unique security concerns by splitting responsibility among three independent combatant commands.

American security priorities in Africa are distinct from those of other regions. As a result, AFRICOM differs from other combatant commands in both objectives and structure. The process of standing up the new command has been complicated and has involved a number of anticipated and unanticipated challenges.

The command is projected to become fully operational this October. To be effective, AFRICOM must be adequately funded and robustly staffed so that it can coordinate with and incorporate expertise from other parts of the U.S. government. AFRICOM also will need to enhance its relationships with African governments and militaries.

As the Africa Command stands up, Congress and the Administration need to work closely to ensure that these needs are addressed and that U.S. policy priorities do not suffer.

Combatant Command Plus

During the Cold War, the Department of Defense considered Africa a secondary or tertiary priority that did not merit a separate combatant command. Instead, security responsibilities in the region were

Talking Points

- The decision to create the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) reflects the increasing strategic importance of Africa to the U.S. and recognizes that a single independent command can better address Africa's unique security concerns.
- When AFRICOM officially stands up, probably by October 1, 2008, it must assume responsibility for existing military programs while undertaking new initiatives designed to cultivate partnerships, strengthen the security capacity of African militaries, and enhance regional peacekeeping capabilities.
- To succeed, AFRICOM must receive sufficient funding, must be adequately staffed by military and interagency personnel, and must enhance its relationships with African governments and militaries.
- Command leaders need to broaden communications and outreach to regional stakeholders to overcome suspicions and alleviate concerns about America's motives in creating the new command.

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split among other unified combatant commands. Since 1983, responsibility for Africa has been divided among European Command (EUCOM), Central Command (CENTCOM), and Pacific Command (PACOM).

Since the end of the Cold War, Africa's strategic importance¹ has risen, and the weaknesses of dividing the security responsibilities among three separate commands have become increasingly obvious.² As noted by General William E. Ward, commander of the new AFRICOM:

Our past command organization did not facilitate an in-depth understanding of, or attention to, African security issues. Establishing AFRICOM will enable DoD expertise and capabilities to be better applied to Africa's unique security environment, which differs substantially from that of EUCOM, CENTOCOM [sic] or PACOM.³

The new command's area of responsibility will cover the entire continent, except for Egypt, which for practical historical, military, and political reasons will remain the responsibility of Central Command. AFRICOM was launched as a sub-unified command under European Command on October

1, 2007, and is scheduled to assume its responsibilities as a stand-alone unified combatant command by October 1, 2008.

As with other combatant commands, AFRICOM will conduct military operations to address U.S. national security priorities or respond to crises. Ideally, it would undertake these actions in conjunction with regional actors. AFRICOM is envisioned as more of a facilitator than a direct actor and is expected to focus on working with African governments and regional organizations to strengthen and enhance regional stability and security through military training, capacity building, and professionalization.⁴

U.S. security goals in Africa have less to do with traditional warfare than with helping to prepare and equip African governments and militaries to prevent conflict; deal with disease, insurgencies, and natural disasters; and participate in peacekeeping and post-conflict reconstruction more effectively. AFRICOM will also help to professionalize the continent's militaries, making them more accountable and effective.⁵ However, AFRICOM will also focus on non-security factors that might contribute to instability. As President George W. Bush stated:

1. U.S. strategic interests in Africa are varied and increasingly important. Broadly, these priorities include reducing political instability, improving poor governance, encouraging policy change to improve growth and reduce poverty, preventing conflict and instability, combating terrorism, maintaining access to natural resources, addressing humanitarian crises, helping to combat the spread of disease, reducing international crime, enhancing diplomatic relationships, and responding to growing Chinese influence. For more information, see Brett D. Schaefer, "Creating an Africa Command: Bush Administration Makes the Right Call," Heritage Foundation *WebMemo* No. 1349, February 7, 2007, at www.heritage.org/Research/Africa/wm1349.cfm, and Peter Brookes, "Into Africa: China's Grab for Influence and Oil," Heritage Foundation *Lecture* No. 1006, March 26, 2007, at www.heritage.org/Research/Africa/hl1006.cfm.
2. This arrangement presents several problems. First, the three commands never regarded the parts of Africa under their responsibility as a high priority, leaving Africa as a secondary or tertiary priority that did not receive the attention or resources necessary to protect U.S. interests. For instance, European Command regarded Europe as its primary responsibility and dedicated most of its resources to Europe rather than to the dozens of African countries in its area of responsibility. Second, dividing the region among different commands created jurisdictional seams that inhibited coordinated responses to security situations, such as in Darfur. Third, the lack of a separate Africa command led to institutional disinterest in the region, leaving the military bereft of African expertise. Finally, the problems of the region were seldom elevated within the Pentagon to a level commensurate with their importance. For more information, see Sean McFate, "U.S. Africa Command: A New Strategic Paradigm?" *Military Review*, Vol. 88, No. 1 (January–February 2008), at <http://usacac.leavenworth.army.mil/CAC/milreview/English/JanFeb08/McFateEngJanFeb08.pdf> (March 17, 2008).
3. General William E. Ward, statement before the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. House of Representatives, March 13, 2008, at www.africom.mil/getArticle.asp?art=1679 (March 17, 2008).
4. General William "Kip" Ward, testimony before the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. House of Representatives, November 14, 2007, at http://armedservices.house.gov/pdfs/FC111407/Ward_Testimony111407.pdf (February 19, 2008).
5. Ward, statement before the Committee on Armed Services.

This new command will strengthen our security cooperation with Africa and help to create new opportunities to bolster the capabilities of our partners in Africa. Africa Command will enhance our efforts to help bring peace and security to the people of Africa and promote our common goals of development, health, education, democracy, and economic growth in Africa.⁶

Mission objectives for combatant commands typically do not extend to education, democracy, and economic growth. Traditionally, these goals have been the responsibility of the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and other civilian federal agencies. As the Congressional Research Service has noted:

AFRICOM's new commander, General William Ward, views the Department of Defense's role in Africa as part of a "three-pronged" U.S. government approach, with DOD, through AFRICOM, taking the lead on security issues, but playing a supporting role to the Department of State, which conducts diplomacy, and USAID, which implements development programs. Ward does see AFRICOM playing a greater role in development activities than other commands, but has emphasized that its role will remain one of supporting USAID's development and humanitarian objectives.⁷

Many officials characterize Africa Command as a "combatant command plus"⁸ that will not only maintain the traditional military roles and responsibilities of a regional combatant command, "but...also include a broader 'soft power' mandate aimed at building a stable security environment and...incor-

porate a larger civilian component from other U.S. government agencies to address those challenges."⁹ Because of this nontraditional core mission, AFRICOM's focus and structure will differ greatly from those of other combatant commands, which focus primarily on fighting and winning wars.

An ongoing challenge will be to find qualified personnel capable of implementing the new command's broader mission. The command will need to increase staff levels from the current 350 to about 1,200, including a significant number of civilian personnel. Staffing the new command will entail two significant challenges.

Military Staff. The first challenge is to secure military personnel despite heavy demands on all the services and commands. Vice Admiral Robert Moeller, who led the AFRICOM transition team, was confirmed as Deputy to the Commander for Military Operations and will direct the command's military-to-military relationships and operations in support of U.S. government programs.

AFRICOM is currently assessing its needs and working with other arms of the military to determine its component support requirements.¹⁰ A critical concern is to ensure that the new staff's learning curve does not hinder current operations after responsibilities are transferred to AFRICOM from EUCOM, CENTCOM, and PACOM. The surest way to avoid this is to transfer personnel who are already handling these responsibilities. Other DOD commands, however, are understandably reluctant to lose capable staff, particularly CENTCOM and EUCOM, which are heavily engaged in major combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Yet these commands arguably have the most appropriate staff to transfer to AFRICOM since many were previ-

6. News release, "President Bush Creates a Department of Defense Unified Combatant Command for Africa," The White House, February 6, 2007, at www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/02/20070206-3.html (March 17, 2008).

7. Lauren Ploch, "Africa Command: U.S. Strategic Interests and the Role of the U.S. Military in Africa," Congressional Research Service *Report for Congress*, updated December 7, 2007, p. 8, at www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RL34003.pdf (March 17, 2008).

8. McFate, "U.S. Africa Command," p. 17.

9. Lauren Ploch, "Africa Command: U.S. Strategic Interests and the Role of the U.S. Military in Africa," Congressional Research Service *Report for Congress*, updated August 22, 2008, p. 6, at <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RL34003.pdf> (October 27, 2008).

10. Ward, statement before the Committee on Armed Services.

ously responsible for the bulk of the new command's area of responsibility.

Despite the difficulties that such transfers may cause in EUCOM and CENTCOM, AFRICOM should draw heavily from these staffs to ensure that ongoing operations are not compromised. In a related effort, the Joint Forces Command is re-examining current operations in Africa to determine which missions should be eliminated, altered, or expanded once AFRICOM is fully operational. To compensate the existing commands for their staff losses, Congress and the Administration should ensure continuity of staffing levels.

Civilian Staff. The second challenge is to obtain the necessary civilian staff. AFRICOM will have a civilian deputy commander and a large civilian staff component of up to one-fourth of the total command staff.¹¹ Ambassador Mary Yates was confirmed as Deputy to the Commander for Civil–Military Activities shortly after the command was formally established in October 2007. Yates's primary role is to direct AFRICOM's civil–military plans and programs while harmonizing the command's activities with those of other U.S. government agencies.¹²

Other non-DOD civilian staff positions include subject-matter experts, who will work with the headquarters staff as senior advisers or liaisons. These include the foreign policy adviser, a development and humanitarian assistance adviser, and a senior representative from the Treasury Department.¹³ A State Department official from the Bureau of African Affairs is serving as the command's Foreign Policy Adviser, and an official from USAID is serving as the Development and Humanitarian Assistance Adviser. The Treasury Department and the Department of Homeland Security are also expected to provide personnel. According to General Ward:

As we continue to build our interagency team, we intend to integrate personnel from across the interagency, to include the U.S. Department of Commerce, Department of Agriculture, and Department of Energy. We are also seeking expertise from Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Customs and Border Protection, and the Transportation Security Administration. We are confident that a close partnership with [the State Department] and other U.S. departments and agencies constitutes the best means for supporting U.S. foreign policy.¹⁴

Although General Ward has stated that filling AFRICOM's interagency staff positions will not require statutory changes, finalizing agreements to facilitate the assignment of non-DOD personnel to AFRICOM has been slow, and few personnel have been permanently assigned. One of the difficulties is finding civilian personnel who can be reassigned without undermining efforts underway in civilian agencies and departments.

In addition, the State Department and USAID have exhibited an institutional reluctance to support AFRICOM where the new command is seen as infringing on their traditional responsibilities. A National Defense University conference on AFRICOM elicited concerns from attendees “that AFRICOM risked becoming simply another competitor in the interagency race for scarce resources, and part of an improper trend in the militarization of U.S. foreign aid.” One panelist observed, “We have to ask ourselves if soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines are the best people to do (development work). Should they hold a sword in one hand and a ploughshare in the other?” Another State Department representative acknowledged that “a culture of suspicion towards DoD objectives still plagued U.S. development agencies.”¹⁵

11. Ploch, “Africa Command,” p. 10.

12. U.S. AFRICOM Public Affairs, “Diplomat, Admiral Become Co-Deputies of U.S. Africa Command,” October 29, 2007, at www.africom.mil/getArticle.asp?art=1576 (February 19, 2008).

13. Ploch, “Africa Command,” p. 8.

14. Ward, statement before the Committee on Armed Services.

15. National Defense University, “Transforming National Security: AFRICOM—An Emerging Command Synopsis and Key Insights,” February 19–20, 2008, at www.ndu.edu/ctnsp/NCW_course/AFRICOM%20Summary%20Notes.pdf (March 17, 2008).

The new command leadership has repeatedly addressed those concerns with assurances that AFRICOM will play a supporting role and that the final authority for foreign policy and foreign aid will remain within the purview of the civilian departments and agencies, the ambassador, or the chief of mission as appropriate. Regrettably, these concerns are unlikely to be fully resolved until practice and precedent render them moot, but State and USAID could help to ensure this eventual outcome by willingly participating in the new command while it is being formed. AFRICOM's success in carrying out its mission will depend in great part on securing expertise from civilian agencies and departments, and Congress and the Administration should take the steps necessary to ensure such participation.

Seamless Transfer of Operations

AFRICOM must assume responsibility for existing military programs while undertaking new initiatives to cultivate partnerships, strengthen the security capacity of African militaries, and enhance regional peacekeeping capabilities. According to General Ward:

AFRICOM's theater strategy will be based on the principle of Active Security. Active Security is defined as a persistent and sustained level of effort oriented on security assistance programs that prevent conflict and foster continued dialogue and development. The goal of Active Security is to enable the work of Africans to marginalize the enemies of peace and prevent conflict, thereby enabling the growth of strong and just governments and legitimate institutions to support the development of civil societies. Societies require security to flourish, for security provides the foundation for political, diplomatic, and economic development, which is essential to building long-term stability. AFRICOM will contribute to this goal by employing a wide range of tools at its disposal—from conducting security cooperation activities to

prosecuting combat operations—to promote security.¹⁶

The command will support broader U.S. national security priorities in coordination with other U.S. government agencies and will focus on developing the capability of African countries and regional organizations to “provide for their own security and contribute to security on the continent” and “mitigate the threat of violent extremism.” The command will also help “African countries [to] maintain professional militaries responsive to civilian authorities and that respect the Rule of Law and international human rights norms.”¹⁷ This will require, in addition to establishing or expanding operations and procedures similar to those of other commands, new operations to meet the unique challenges of the region.

As officials work to organize, staff, and officially stand up the command by October 1, 2008, one of their greatest tasks will be to ensure a smooth transition of ongoing missions to AFRICOM control. Current missions include the Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership (TSCTP); Theater Security Cooperation programs, such as military-to-military programs and humanitarian assistance; the African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance Program; International Military Education and Training; the Safe Skies for Africa Initiative; and the U.S. Naval Forces Europe's African Partnership Station.

Perhaps the most important current mission is Combined Joint Task Force: Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA). Established in October 2002, this joint task force of approximately 1,500 short-term rotational U.S. military and civilian personnel is charged with combating transnational terrorist groups operating in the region. Task force personnel work to train the region's various security forces in counterterrorism and intelligence operations and participate in various humanitarian missions, such as those in Ethiopia and Kenya. The Djiboutian government recently renewed the CJTF-HOA's lease for its Forward Operating Site for five more years, with an option to renew for two more five-year periods.¹⁸

16. Ward, statement before the Committee on Armed Services.

17. *Ibid.*

18. Ploch, “Africa Command,” p. 9.

The Trans-Sahara Counter-Terrorism Partnership, which was launched in 2005 to bolster the counterterrorism capabilities of African militaries. The DOD component of TSCTP, Operation Enduring Freedom–Trans Sahara, will become the responsibility of AFRICOM.¹⁹ The command will also be tasked with overseeing initiatives similar to the African Partnership Station, which was launched in October 2007. As part of this mission, the USS *Fort Henry* recently deployed to provide assistance and training to Gulf nations. Partnered with six European countries and various U.S. government agencies, the ship has acted as a delivery tool for assistance to West and Central Africa.

The 2006 *Quadrennial Defense Review* places importance on “prevent[ing] problems from becoming crises and crises from becoming conflicts.”²⁰ Pentagon leaders believe that the Africa Command can advance this agenda by focusing on conflict prevention—“phase zero” operations—as its primary mission in a continent laden with fragile governments and a myriad of other potentially destabilizing problems.

AFRICOM’s mission may also be guided by a newfound emphasis on helping to prepare and train African militaries for transition and stability operations. This will entail working with African militaries to identify personnel and equipment shortages and address them. For example, in 2007, U.S. Air Forces in Europe hosted air chiefs from African nations in Germany to discuss the air assets needed for African missions and conducted more than 200 humanitarian outreach and military-to-military exchanges in Africa.²¹ This focus is consistent with both National Security Presidential Directive 44, which recognizes the importance of reconstruction and stabilization operations, and DOD Directive 3000.05, which defines stability operations as a “core U.S. military mission.”²²

Congress has a critical role to play in ensuring that AFRICOM has the funding and staff that it needs to carry out these operations effectively. Congress also needs to respect the complex nature of standing up a new command and allow AFRICOM leaders the flexibility to ensure that the rush to stand up the new command does not compromise ongoing operations. While the timeline may have various pragmatic benefits, meeting the deadline should not be allowed to compromise current counterterrorism operations. If General Ward does not believe that AFRICOM can complete an orderly transition of operations by this date, then Congress should allow him to adjust the timeline.

Communications and Outreach

AFRICOM is not envisioned as a means for establishing a strong U.S. military presence on the continent. On the contrary, it is envisioned as a relatively small organization with no American forces permanently deployed in the region, no new military bases, a light footprint limited to regional offices and possibly a headquarters, and a small budget relative to other commands.

AFRICOM is intended to enhance U.S. security relationships with African governments, their militaries, and related regional organizations and to expand their capabilities to address regional instability, crises, and concerns. The idea is not to dictate U.S. demands to African governments or to inject large numbers of U.S. military personnel into the region, but rather to work with leaders to improve their capabilities and coordination to address mutual concerns, such as instability and bad governance, to reduce the need for the U.S. and the international community to intervene directly.

Considering this focus, AFRICOM will depend significantly on building partnerships with African governments, African militaries, and multinational and regional organizations. Regrettably, U.S.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 21.

20. U.S. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review Report*, February 6, 2006, p. 17, at www.defenselink.mil/pubs/pdfs/QDR20060203.pdf (March 17, 2008).

21. “USAFE to Resurrect 17th AF,” *Air Force Magazine Daily Report*, December 17, 2008, at <http://dailyreport.afa.org/AFA/Reports/2007/Month12/Day17> (March 17, 2008).

22. McFate, “U.S. Africa Command,” p. 17.

efforts to explain the need for the new command and its role in existing foreign policy relationships have been inadequate, creating confusion and contributing to misunderstandings in the U.S. and in Africa.²³

Governments and nongovernmental organizations have misinterpreted AFRICOM's purpose in a variety of ways, including as a militarization of U.S. foreign aid and foreign policy toward Africa, a signal of an "imperialist" or "neocolonialist" U.S. agenda, a threat to the sovereignty of African states, a U.S. agenda to ensure access to the region's mineral and energy resources, and a response to China's growing influence on the continent.²⁴

Although exaggerated or inaccurate, these assertions contain enough truth to give them undue currency.

- The U.S. is clearly interested in enhancing stability, human rights, and democratic government in Africa, and these concerns have led the U.S. to intervene frequently in the region both diplomatically and militarily.
- The U.S. is also increasingly reliant on Africa for mineral and energy resources and therefore has a direct interest in ensuring continued access to those resources.
- Finally, expanding Chinese diplomatic and economic relationships with African countries (e.g., Angola, Sudan, and Zimbabwe) have under-

mined U.S. and European efforts to bolster good governance, improve respect for human rights, and reduce corruption.²⁵

However, these interests are only a few of the many that led the U.S. to establish AFRICOM. Paramount among U.S. interests is the objective of enhancing regional capacity to address instability, humanitarian crises, interstate and intrastate conflict in Africa, and post-conflict reconstruction and institution building. As General Ward has stated, "AFRICOM's number one theater-wide goal is to promote security and stability within its Area of Responsibility."²⁶

In recent years, the international community and the U.S. have faced increasing calls to intervene in Africa to address these issues. A majority of current U.N. peacekeeping operations are in Africa.²⁷ Since the end of the Cold War, the U.S. has increasingly been drawn into regional conflicts, conducting over 30 operations in Africa involving U.S. armed forces since 1990, roughly half of them since 2000.²⁸ Since 2001, EUCOM has conducted 14 exercises and seven operations in support of African nations. These included short-term medical assistance operations, earthquake relief operations, and military-to-military operations.²⁹

Military operations to address instability are often difficult, expensive, and extended. AFRICOM's primary purpose is to defuse and prevent crises on the continent by increasing regional capa-

23. For more information, see Brett D. Schaefer and Mackenzie M. Eaglen, "Clarifying the Future of AFRICOM," Heritage Foundation *WebMemo* No. 1644, September 27, 2007, at www.heritage.org/Research/Africa/wm1644.cfm.

24. For more information, see Joshua Kurlantzick, *Charm Offensive: How China's Soft Power Is Transforming the World* (Binghamton, N.Y.: Yale University Press, 2007).

25. This effort is being driven by China's demand for oil and other natural resources. Dependent on oil to fuel its economic growth, China currently imports 30 percent of its oil from Africa and has sought to negotiate exclusive access to these energy resources by offering aid without preconditions. The devastating results of this policy can be seen in Sudan, which is a major source of oil for China and has received over \$80 million of Chinese military supplies and equipment during the height of the government-backed genocide in Darfur. China has also shielded Sudan from U.N. sanctions and military action. McFate, "U.S. Africa Command," p. 14.

26. Ward, statement before the Committee on Armed Services.

27. U.N. Department of Public Information, "United Nations Peacekeeping Operations," *Background Note*, December 31, 2007, at www.un.org/Depts/dpko/dpko/bnote.htm (March 17, 2008).

28. Ploch, "Africa Command," Appendix 2.

29. Major Robert Manson, "Do We Want to 'Kill People and Break Things' in Africa? A Historian's Thoughts on Africa Command," *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Spring 2008), p. 103, at www.maxwell.af.mil/au/ssq/2008/Spring/munson.pdf (March 19, 2008).

bilities, thereby reducing the need for U.S. or multilateral military intervention. As Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense Ryan Henry has noted, an important measure of AFRICOM's success will be "if it keeps American troops out of Africa for the next 50 years."³⁰ However, the Administration's failure in the early stages to communicate clearly the purpose and reasoning behind establishing AFRICOM created an information vacuum, which critics filled.

This problem is being addressed. The Department of Defense has been briefing African military officials aggressively, including holding extended conferences in Washington to answer questions and provide additional information on AFRICOM. During his recent trip to Africa, President Bush clarified and reiterated that AFRICOM's establishment is not a backdoor plan to create permanent military bases on the continent.

Regrettably, these efforts were too late to mitigate all of the suspicions cultivated by AFRICOM critics, as illustrated by the controversy over the location of the headquarters for the Africa Command.³¹ The United States originally planned to locate AFRICOM headquarters in Africa and held extensive discussions with African nations concerning its location. Some nations, including Libya and South Africa, have publicly stated their deep apprehension about the command, while Liberia and other countries have expressed interest in hosting the headquarters. However, public backlash and suspicions about a new American base on the continent led AFRICOM officials to announce that the headquarters would remain in Stuttgart, Germany, for the foreseeable future. The issue was put on hold because the discussion "has been so animated and

apprehensive that it is getting in the way of [AFRICOM] programs."³²

The delay in moving the headquarters to Africa is prudent considering the African governments' concerns about AFRICOM.³³ The delay should affect operations only minimally. Current plans focus on "working with our embassies, country teams, and offices of defense cooperation to strengthen existing bilateral military-to-military relationships."³⁴ Eventually, AFRICOM will have five regional offices—in northern, southern, eastern, western, and central Africa—to lead these efforts.

Two regional offices are scheduled to open in 2008, and the President's fiscal year (FY) 2009 budget request includes funding for them. Each office will be lightly staffed with approximately 20 individuals.

Concern over the location of the headquarters should not delay establishing the command's five regional offices. These regional offices will go a long way toward building the types of relationships that are critical to AFRICOM's success, particularly in the absence of an African-based headquarters. However, a more aggressive diplomatic and communications strategy prior to launching AFRICOM might have forestalled these concerns.

For AFRICOM to carry out its mandate and missions effectively, the DOD and other elements of the U.S. government, particularly the Department of State, must increase their efforts to communicate AFRICOM's objectives and benefits to the region, build close working relationships with regional militaries, develop the expertise to assess needs and weaknesses to focus AFRICOM's resources and programs effectively, and secure reliable access to sea-

30. Ploch, "Africa Command," p. 6.

31. Maintaining a headquarters on the African continent would have many benefits. In addition to the relationships that would be built and strengthened through a physical presence, interaction between command staff and their African counterparts, as well as with civilian employees and nongovernmental organizations, would be significantly enhanced due to close geographic proximity. For example, the flight time from Germany to South Africa is approximately 11 hours. However, reducing this tyranny of distance, although beneficial, should not take precedence for AFRICOM.

32. Associated Press, "U.S. AFRICOM Headquarters to Remain in Germany for 'Foreseeable Future,'" *International Herald Tribune*, February 19, 2008, at www.ihf.com/articles/ap/2008/02/19/africa/AF-GEN-US-Africa-Command.php (February 19, 2008).

33. See Schaefer and Eaglen, "Clarifying the Future of AFRICOM."

34. Ward, statement before the Committee on Armed Services.

ports and airports throughout the continent. Achieving these goals will require a strong communications and outreach effort, which was lacking in the lead-up to establishing AFRICOM.

What the U.S. Should Do

To address African regional issues and crises in a timely and effective manner, Congress, the Administration, the Defense Department, and relevant federal agencies should:

- **Clarify the interagency role in the new command.** AFRICOM's interagency structure presents both a challenge and an opportunity in the future evolution of regional combatant commands. Civilian and military leaders alike have looked to AFRICOM as a pioneer project. Indeed, ideas are already afoot for applying a similar approach to other commands.³⁵ However, the State Department and USAID have been reluctant to support AFRICOM in areas where the new command is seen as infringing on their traditional responsibilities, despite repeated clarifications that civilian authorities will have the final say in foreign policy and foreign aid and that AFRICOM will play only a supporting role.

The State Department and USAID could help to ensure this outcome by actively participating in the new command while it is being formed. The DOD should increase efforts to address concerns in the State Department, USAID, and the various other participating agencies. Because AFRICOM's success in carrying out its mission will depend largely on securing expertise for civilian agencies and departments, Congress and the Administration should take the steps necessary to ensure such participation.

- **Fully fund the President's 2009 budget request for AFRICOM.** The Defense Department's FY 2009 budget request includes \$389

million to stand up and operate AFRICOM, including intelligence and special operations capabilities, and to open two of the five regional offices.³⁶ The majority of the request will fund the AFRICOM headquarters in Stuttgart, operational support aircraft, a Joint Intelligence Operations Center, training exercises, and theater security cooperation activities.³⁷

Congress should continue its strong support for this nascent command and fully fund the FY 2009 AFRICOM budget request, understanding that future budget requests will be higher after the command is fully operational and fully assumes responsibility for new operations and for operations currently conducted by other commands.

- **Enhance AFRICOM's communications and outreach efforts.** The U.S. government must continue to reach out to African officials and African citizens to explain AFRICOM's mission, purpose, and relationship to Africa's governments, militaries, and regional organizations. Africa Command's success will depend on working with African nations. Building and maintaining trust among these actors will be essential and will facilitate the process of establishing a headquarters in Africa down the road.

Senior officials should continue to travel to Africa, meet with civilian and military officials, and engage with regional and international print and television media to communicate and clarify the objectives, operations, and intent of the command. Conferences like the one hosted in Virginia in September 2007 and the one scheduled for March 2008, attended by African Union members, regional security organizations, and African government representatives, are examples of ways to build trust.³⁸

35. Commander John M. Myers, "Singular Vision: A Plan to Enable CentCom and State to Work Together," *Armed Forces Journal*, March 2008, p. 43.

36. Carlo Munoz, "Pentagon Recommends Providing \$389 Million for AFRICOM in FY-09," *Inside the Pentagon*, February 7, 2008.

37. U.S. Department of Defense, "DoD FY 2009 Budget Request Summary Justification," February 4, 2008, at www.defenselink.mil/comptroller/defbudget/fy2009/Summary_Docs/FY2009_Special_Topics.pdf (February 19, 2008).

38. Ploch, "Africa Command," p. 23.

General Ward should regularly convene similar fora for African officials and the press in the U.S., at AFRICOM headquarters in Germany, and in Africa to facilitate understanding, dialogue, and the flow of accurate information about the command to regional stakeholders. These efforts should continue until General Ward and his deputies feel that their intentions are sufficiently well understood.

- **Explore basing alternatives.** African concerns over U.S. military bases in Africa, regardless of their merit, are a continuing public relations problem. The U.S. should explore basing alternatives that provide the command with sufficient access to the continent without establishing an unwelcome presence.

Besides CJTF-HOA, the Pentagon's most promising approach to maintaining access for military personnel is cooperative security locations (CSLs). General Ward recently endorsed the value of CSLs in testimony before the House Armed Services Committee.³⁹ One major advantage is that CSLs' light footprint allows for the subtle management of African relationships.⁴⁰ Until African governments and the broader public become more informed about AFRICOM and understand the benefits of the command to the region, the command must give exaggerated care to being unobtrusive and considerate of African sensibilities.

Conclusion

The President's decision to establish AFRICOM recognized the rising strategic importance of Africa to U.S. interests. The U.S. has a strong interest in bolstering peace and stability in the region, increasing regional capacity to address crises and deter

aggression, expanding and ensuring America's access to energy resources, preventing the spread of terrorism in weak or broken states, and addressing transnational concerns. Africa is distinct from other regions in the nature and variety of its challenges, and an independent command dedicated to the region will allow America to give Africa the attention it merits.

To carry out its mandate and missions effectively, AFRICOM must overcome significant challenges in staffing, stand up the command while maintaining ongoing operations, and expand the command's communications and outreach to regional stakeholders to overcome suspicions and alleviate concerns about the motivations behind the new command.

Congress has a critical role to play in providing Africa Command with the resources to partner with African governments to increase their capability to respond to humanitarian crises, participate in peacekeeping operations, and bolster peace and stability and to encourage their militaries to adopt traditions and practices that increase their professionalism and accountability to the citizens of their countries. These objectives are clearly in the interests of the United States and of Africa's nations and their citizens.

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39. Ward, statement before the Committee on Armed Services. Often located at a civilian airport, CSLs are owned by the host country and rented and managed by private contractors that serves as go-betweens. Instead of a permanent troop presence and a complicated Status of Forces Agreement, CSLs give the U.S. military flexible access. In the event of a crisis, CSLs can be used as logistics hubs, as they were in South Asia after the 2004 tsunami, or can be expanded to a Forward Operating Site with a limited U.S. military presence. When not in crisis mode, CSLs are often used for training exercises with the host countries' militaries. In return, the U.S. undertakes civil affairs projects in the nearby area that help to generate positive publicity. The U.S. currently maintains CSLs in Algeria, Botswana, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Namibia, Sao Tom and Principe, Sierra Leone, Tunisia, Uganda, and Zambia. See Ploch, "Africa Command," p. 10.

40. For more information, see Robert Kaplan, *Hog Pilots, Blue Water Grunts: The American Military in the Air, at Sea, and on the Ground* (New York: Random House Publishing Group, 2007), and "How We Would Fight China," *The Atlantic*, June 2005, at www.theatlantic.com/doc/200506/kaplan/4 (February 19, 2008).