

# America's New Africa Command: Paradigm Shift or Step Backwards?

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ON 6 FEBRUARY 2007, PRESIDENT George W. Bush ordered the Department of Defense to establish the United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) as America's sixth geographic unified combatant command by October 2008. However, unlike other commands that focus on fighting wars, the new structure was given a distinctly non-military mission: "to enhance our efforts to bring peace and security to the people of Africa and promote our common goals of development, health, education, democracy, and economic growth in Africa" by strengthening bilateral and multilateral security cooperation with African states and creating new opportunities to bolster their capabilities.<sup>1</sup>

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At one level, AFRICOM represents a radical shift in U.S. policy towards a new strategic paradigm characterized by a holistic approach which embraces both security and development to break through the cycle of violence by preventing conflict. Thus, AFRICOM's mandate implicitly acknowledges the primacy of "soft power" given the failure of "hard power" to deliver "victory" since 9/11. Does this newfound conviction have staying power, and will the new command work? Or will an inevitable failure of the former doom the latter?

This article will briefly explore the new command's origins, including the U.S. interests and developments in Africa motivating its establishment. While recognizing that AFRICOM is still in development stages, this article will outline its structure (including its unprecedented interagency involvement) in view of the key security and development lessons its designers seek to institutionalize. It will then examine

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reactions to the initiative and potential challenges AFRICOM will face in an attempt to determine whether the nascent command will represent an advance toward more effective peace-building or, by bringing the Pentagon's considerable resources to bear and "bureaucratically overwhelming" other actors,<sup>2</sup> actually constitute a regression to militarism, both for global security in general and Africa in particular.

### THE ORIGINS OF AFRICOM

While some of its supporters portray the creation of AFRICOM as "primarily an internal bureaucratic shift, a more efficient and sensible way of organizing the U.S. military's relations with Africa,"<sup>3</sup> there is also no denying that the initiative would not have come about in the absence of a change in the strategic calculus of U.S. policymakers. In fact, almost seven years to the day before he announced the new combatant command, Bush responded negatively to a question from PBS's Jim Lehrer about whether Africa fit into his definition of the strategic interests of the United States: "At some point in time the president's got to clearly define what the national strategic interests are, and while Africa may be important, it doesn't fit into the national strategic interests, as far as I can see them."<sup>4</sup>

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As Princeton Lyman—a former assistant secretary of state who had also served as U.S. ambassador to South Africa and to Nigeria—has observed, as galling as Bush's comment was to Africanists, it nonetheless reflected "what had in fact been the approach of both Democratic and Republican administrations for decades."<sup>5</sup> With the exception of cold war concerns about Soviet attempts to secure a foothold on the continent, U.S. interests in Africa have historically been framed almost exclusively in terms of preoccupation over the humanitarian consequences of poverty, war, and natural disaster, rather than strategic considerations. These moral impulses, however, have rarely had the staying power to sustain long-term commitments.

Broadly conceived, there are three major areas in which Africa's significance to the United States—or at least the public recognition thereof—has been amplified in recent years. The first is Africa's role in the global war on terror and the potential of the poorly governed spaces of the continent to provide facilitating environments, recruits, and eventual targets for Islamist terrorists, since, as the 2002 *National Security Strategy of the United States of America* noted, "weak states...can pose as great a danger to our national interests as strong states. Poverty does not make poor people into terrorists and murderers. Yet poverty, weak institutions, and corruption can make weak states vulnerable to terrorist networks and drug cartels within their borders."<sup>6</sup> With the possible exception of the greater Middle East, nowhere did this analysis ring truer than in Africa, where, as the document went on to acknowledge, regional conflicts arising from

a variety of causes—including poor governance, external aggression, competing claims, internal revolt, and ethnic and religious tensions—“[led] to the same ends: failed states, humanitarian disasters, and ungoverned areas that [could] become safe havens for terrorists.”<sup>7</sup> The 1998 attacks by al-Qaeda on the U.S. embassies in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, and Nairobi, Kenya—and the 2002 attacks on an Israeli-owned hotel in Mombasa, Kenya and an Israeli commercial airliner—only underscore the deadly reality of the terrorist threat in Africa. Also important has been the recent “rebranding” of Algerian Islamist terrorist organization Salafist Group for Call and Combat (usually known by its French acronym GSPC) as “Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb” (AQIM).<sup>8</sup>

The second important consideration is Africa's resource wealth, particularly in its burgeoning energy sector. In his 2006 State of the Union address, President Bush called for the United States to “replace more than 75 percent of our oil imports from

the Middle East by 2025” and to “make our dependence on Middle Eastern oil a thing of the past.”<sup>9</sup> Last year, according to data from the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration, African countries accounted for more U.S. petroleum imports

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than the states of the Persian Gulf region: 969,722,000 barrels (19.8 percent) versus 791,928,000 barrels (16.1 percent).<sup>10</sup> Moreover, most of the petroleum from the Gulf of Guinea off the coast of West Africa is light or “sweet” crude, which is preferred by U.S. refiners because it is largely free of sulfur. While production fluctuates, the significance of Africa for the United States' energy security cannot be underestimated. And it goes without saying that U.S. strategic planners have factored into their calculations the fact that other countries, including China and India, have likewise been attracted by the African continent's natural wealth and recently increased their own engagements there to historically unprecedented levels.<sup>11</sup>

The third area of the United States' strategic interest in Africa remains the humanitarian concern for the devastating toll that conflict, poverty, and disease, especially HIV/AIDS, continue to exact across the continent. Africa boasts the world's fastest rate of population growth: by 2020, Africa's population will increase by 300 million to reach 1.2 billion—more than the combined populations of Europe and North America. The dynamic potential implicit in these demographic figures is, however, constrained by the economic and epidemiological data. The United Nations Development Programme's *Human Development Report 2007/2008* determined that all 22 of the countries found to have “low development” were African states.<sup>12</sup> While Sub-Saharan Africa is home to only 10 percent of the world's population, nearly two-thirds of the 24.7 million people infected with HIV are Sub-Saharan Africans, with an estimated 2.8 million

becoming infected in 2006, more than any other region in the world.<sup>13</sup> While the Bush administration's 2003 *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism* argued that terrorist organizations have little in common with the poor and destitute, it also acknowledged that terrorists can exploit these socio-economic conditions to their advantage.<sup>14</sup> The administration, working with Congress, has consolidated the comprehensive trade and investment policy for Africa introduced by its predecessor in the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) of 2000, which substantially lowered commercial barriers with the United States and allowed Sub-Saharan African countries to qualify for trade benefits. It has also made HIV/AIDS on the continent a priority, with 12 of the 15 focus countries in the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) located in Africa, including Botswana, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia. With a five-year, \$15 billion price tag, PEPFAR, announced in 2003, has been the largest commitment ever by any nation for an international health initiative dedicated to a single disease. That was before Bush, in his final State of the Union address, called for doubling its funding to \$30 billion over the next five years.<sup>15</sup>

A category all its own must be reserved for the complex humanitarian emergencies of which Africa has perhaps more than its share. The ongoing campaign of ethnic cleansing in the western Sudanese region of Darfur—whether or not one calls it a “genocide,” as both President Bush and Congress have—has already taken a toll of at least 250,000 victims and more than two million displaced; a hybrid United Nations–African Union peacekeeping force (UNAMID) is both undermanned and lacking basic resources. In the same country, the fragile peace that has existed between the regime in Khartoum and the government of South Sudan since the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement brokered by the United States shows signs of unraveling. Somalia, with the exception of the self-declared “Republic of Somaliland”<sup>16</sup> in the northwest, has remained without an effective government for over a decade and a half as a growing Islamist and clan insurgency threatens not only the current interim authorities (and their Ethiopian backers), but the stability of the entire subregion as waves of civilians flee the conflict (more than 300,000 people became refugees and a staggering one million became internally displaced last year alone).<sup>17</sup>

Thus, it is not surprising that the 2006 *National Security Strategy* announced, “Africa holds growing geo-strategic importance and is a high priority of this Administration.”<sup>18</sup> It is within this strategic context that the decision to create a new unified command is to be understood. Created during the cold war to coordinate military forces more efficiently, whether territorially or functionally, the United States' combatant commands (COCOMs) are led by a four-star general or admiral who has authority over all uniformed U.S. personnel—Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines—in the area

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of responsibility (AOR). Before the creation of AFRICOM, U.S. efforts in Africa were handicapped by an antiquated structural framework inherited from times when the continent was barely factored into the United States' strategic calculus. For defense planning purposes, most of Africa—42 of the continent's 53 countries<sup>19</sup>—fell under the aegis of the Stuttgart, Germany-based U.S. European Command (EUCOM), with the rest being the responsibility of the Tampa, Florida-based Central Command (CENTCOM),<sup>20</sup> or even that of the Pacific Command (PACOM), based in Hawaii.<sup>21</sup>

With new command slated to embrace all of Africa except Egypt, which will remain with CENTCOM due to the country's importance to the Middle East, U.S. military planners clearly hope to move beyond the disjointed approach which has hindered their engagement with Africa to date. But the provision of "better focus and increased synergy in support of U.S. policy and engagement"<sup>22</sup> by the new entity, is only part of the picture.

#### **A NEW SECURITY PARADIGM**

U.S. strategic doctrine usually divides conventional military campaigns into distinct phases, sequential stages during which a large proportion of forces and capabilities will be focused on a specific operational objective. Traditionally the four phases have been denominated by Roman numerals: I, deter/engage; II, seize initiative; III, dominate; and IV, transition. Recently, however, leading military thinkers have introduced a "Phase Zero" which, according to General Charles Wald, then deputy commander of EUCOM, includes "everything that can be done to prevent conflicts from developing in the first place," the goal being to "promote stability and peace by building capacity in partner nations that enables them to be cooperative, trained, and prepared to help prevent or limit conflicts."<sup>23</sup> General Wald's successor, General William "Kip" Ward, who was subsequently appointed the first commander of AFRICOM, has advocated "deliberate efforts to stabilize, reconstruct, and rebuild the country, concluding with the transition to an effective and stable society."<sup>24</sup> Both "Phase 0" and "Phase IV" have been incorporated into the most recent iteration of the U.S. military's doctrine for planning joint operations.<sup>25</sup>

As operations in Afghanistan and Iraq have shown, while achieving security is a precondition for development, progress on development is integral for security. Hence, as the Pentagon has formally recognized, "stability operations" now ought to "be given priority comparable to combat operations" with the short-term goal of providing the local populace with security, essential services, and meeting its humanitarian needs and the long-term objective of helping to "develop indigenous capacity for securing essential services, a viable market economy, rule of law, democratic institutions, and a

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robust civil society.”<sup>26</sup> The most recent Quadrennial Defense Review emphasized that “by alleviating suffering and dealing with crises in their early stages, U.S. forces help prevent disorder from spiraling into wider conflict.”<sup>27</sup>

In Africa, these realizations mean that just as the humanitarian-only approach was unsustainable, a military-only approach is likewise counterproductive. While traditional “hard power” operations remain a responsibility of the new combatant command, the implication is clear that “soft power” instruments,<sup>28</sup> including diplomatic outreach, political persuasion, and economic programs, are also part of the package, alongside

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military preparedness and intelligence operations. As a result, both policymakers and defense and regional experts expect that AFRICOM will pursue more extensive interagency cooperation with the

State Department, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and other government agencies than do other regional combatant commands. In addition to a military deputy commander, AFRICOM has a civilian deputy to the commander for civil-military affairs, who is responsible for the command’s cooperation with the various agencies and directs its health, humanitarian assistance, and security sector reform programs. The current civilian deputy, Ambassador Mary Carlin Yates, a career foreign service officer who previously served as U.S. envoy in Burundi and Ghana, has explained to Congress that AFRICOM “does not make U.S. foreign policy;” rather, its “efforts represent the security dimension of the foreign policy set forth by the Department of State.”<sup>29</sup> However, because the Africa Command’s activities affect those of other government agencies, Principal Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Ryan Henry has noted that while AFRICOM will “be a Department of Defense organization,” it “would explore different ways to do the manning, both within the U.S. government and perhaps participation from other governments.”<sup>30</sup>

Its overall objectives, focused on the nexus between security as a prerequisite for development and development as a preventer of insecurity, dictate that AFRICOM will focus on working with African nations to build their regional security and crisis response capacity. Senior Pentagon officials have emphasized that “AFRICOM will promote greater security ties between the United States and Africa, providing new opportunities to enhance our bi-lateral military relationships, and strengthen the capacities of Africa’s regional and sub-regional organizations.”<sup>31</sup>

In fact, even before the announcement of AFRICOM, the United States was conducting a number of security cooperation efforts across Africa, responsibility for which will be assumed by the new command. In late 2002, the State Department launched the Pan-Sahel Initiative (PSI), a modest effort to provide border security and

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other counterterrorism assistance to Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger. Funding for PSI was modest, amounting in 2004 to under \$7 million, most of which was spent on training military units from the four partner countries. U.S. Marines were also involved with certain aspects of the training and Air Force personnel provided support, including medical and dental care for members of local units as well as neighboring residents.<sup>32</sup>

As a follow-up to the PSI, as well as to overcome what Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for African Affairs Theresa Whelan called its “Band-Aid approach,”<sup>33</sup> the State Department–funded Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative (TSCTI) was launched in 2005 with support from the Department of Defense. TSCTI added Algeria, Nigeria, Morocco, Senegal, and Tunisia to the original four PSI countries. The new initiative was inaugurated in June 2005 with an exercise dubbed “Flintlock 05,” whose goal was to help “participating nations to plan and execute command, control and communications systems in support of future combined humanitarian, peacekeeping and disaster relief operations.”<sup>34</sup> The training was “to ensure all nations continue developing their partnerships” while further enhancing their capabilities to halt the flow of illicit weapons, goods and human trafficking in the region; and prevent terrorists from establishing sanctuary in remote areas.”<sup>35</sup> Funding for TSCTI has increased steadily from \$16 million in 2005 to \$30 million in 2006, with incremental increases up to \$100 million a year through 2011. In addition to the Pentagon-led efforts, as part of TSCTI (which was renamed the “Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Program,” TSCTP, in late 2007), the Sahel countries have also received support from State Department programs and other U.S. government agencies, including USAID and the Department of the Treasury.

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While the United States has historically deployed naval forces to Africa only to rescue stranded expatriates, EUCOM’s naval component, U.S. Naval Forces Europe (NAVEUR), has taken the lead in maritime engagement in the Gulf of Guinea. In late 2004, EUCOM hosted the first-ever “Gulf of Guinea Maritime Security Conference” in Naples, Italy, headquarters of the U.S. Sixth Fleet. The three-day meeting brought together African diplomatic and naval officials from Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, Nigeria, the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), São Tomé and Príncipe, and Togo, as well as representatives from the United States, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom. The conference participants pledged to continue dialogue and cooperation to combat common threats like piracy, smuggling, drug trafficking, and terrorism.

As an immediate result of the Naples conference, at the beginning of 2005, the submarine tender USS *Emory S. Land* deployed to the Gulf of Guinea with some 1,400 American sailors and Marines for a two-month training operation involving officers and sailors from Benin, Cameroon, Gabon, Ghana, and São Tomé and Príncipe.<sup>36</sup> Between

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May and July of that year, the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter *Bear* was deployed to the same waters on a similar training mission.<sup>37</sup> Subsequently, in late 2007, the dock landing ship USS *Fort McHenry* was stationed in the Gulf of Guinea until the spring of 2008 as part of a multinational maritime-security-and-safety initiative that partners with West African countries, helping them to build their security capabilities, especially in maritime domain awareness. Admiral Henry G. “Harry” Ulrich III, characterized the *Fort McHenry*’s mission as within “the spirit of AFRICOM and the initial operating capacity of AFRICOM” and as “the tipping point for us [which will] move this whole initiative of maritime safety and security ahead.”<sup>38</sup> The *Fort McHenry*’s West Africa deployment, where it was joined by the *Swift*, is a new international interagency effort known as African Partnership Station (APS), in which European and African sailors join their U.S. counterparts to bolster maritime security and law enforcement.

Targeted grants from the State Department’s International Military Education and Training (IMET) program have also been effective in building the capacities of America’s African partners. The most significant program is the Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI), which in 2004 subsumed the Bush administration’s earlier Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance Program (ACOTA) as well as the Clinton administration’s African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI). It aims at training and equipping 75,000 military troops, a majority of them African, for peacekeeping operations on the continent by 2010.<sup>39</sup> The five-year, \$660 million GPOI program is especially important not only because of the general reluctance of the American public to deploy troops to African conflicts, but also because it responds to Africans’ aspirations to build continental security institutions.

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### THE SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME?

The Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA), established in 2002 under the aegis of CENTCOM, is presently the largest U.S. military operation in Africa. In many respects, this unit represents a template of what one might come to expect to see, on a larger scale, in AFRICOM’s future efforts to employ indirect means to counter terrorism and build capacity, including having military personnel undertake humanitarian and development activities as they try to win the “hearts and minds” of Africans in their area of responsibility.

Headquartered in Djibouti at Camp Lemonier, the only permanent U.S. base on the African continent, CJTF-HOA has approximately 2,000 sailors, soldiers, airmen, and Marines, as well as civilian government employees and contractors. The personnel of the CJTF-HOA have seen their mission evolve considerably since its initial inception as a kinetic anti-terrorism operation. While U.S. special operations forces (SOF) are

present and actively engaged in action against terrorism in the Horn of Africa, CJTF-HOA's mandate focuses on indirect activities, aimed at denying extremist ideologies as well as individuals and groups the ability to exploit the vulnerabilities of the nations and societies in the subregion. To this end, CJTF-HOA's command element stresses the importance of interagency collaboration in its "area of interest" as the key to success in achieving U.S. strategic objectives as well as those of other members of the Coalition and other partners.<sup>40</sup> To this end, CJTF-HOA's function is to be the defense element of the

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"3-D" approach to U.S. foreign policy (defense, diplomacy, and development), using civil-military operations, civil affairs, and military-to-military training to strengthen security and stability across the AOR.<sup>41</sup> Hence its operational concept includes a number of measures to foster interagency integration, including close coordination with U.S. diplomatic missions throughout the AOR via intensive communications among diplomats at embassies, military officers at the U.S. Mission to the African Union, and CJTF-HOA personnel.

In addition to U.S. personnel, CJTF-HOA embeds military personnel from a number of partner countries, including Djibouti, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Kenya, Pakistan, Romania, Seychelles, Mauritius, South Korea, Uganda, Yemen, and the United Kingdom in its staff, involving them in all operational phases, including strategic and operational planning and execution. The commander of CJTF-HOA until February 2008, Rear Admiral James Hart hosted conferences with his counterparts from some of the United States' longtime allies, including France and Great Britain. CJTF-HOA has carried out an extensive series of regional senior-level engagements on both a bilateral footing and on multilateral bases as when, in September 2007, it organized East Africa and Southwest Indian Ocean (EASWIO) Maritime Security Conference and Port Security Seminar in Mombasa, Kenya.

CJTF-HOA has worked closely with African subregional institutions. In fact, the recent inclusion of Rwanda in its activities is a purposeful attempt to align the AOR with the frontiers of African subregional self-organizations, in this case the East African Community (EAC),<sup>42</sup> with which the Task Force collaborates in the biennial "Natural Fires" joint exercise. CJTF-HOA has moved beyond traditional bilateral security cooperation to work closely with the Eastern Brigade (EASTBRIG) of the AU's African Standby Force, especially its coordinating element, strategic planning cell, and training organizations. CJTF has also cooperated with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) initiative to establish a Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism (CEWARN) for the IGAD countries.<sup>43</sup> According to Lange Schermerhorn,

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who served as U.S. ambassador to Djibouti and later as political advisor to CJTF-HOA, the establishment and ongoing mission of the task force “acknowledged the potential for terrorism both within and infiltrating into the area, demonstrated a commitment to deal with it aggressively, and provided a focus around which the efforts of nations in the region could coalesce on a regional and cooperative basis, rather than on a bilateral basis”<sup>44</sup>—objectives which have subsequently echoed on a continent-wide basis by the Africa Command.

In addition to training with partner militaries in the region, CJTF-HOA personnel have been involved in the building or rehabilitation of schools, clinics, and hospitals; conducted medical civic action programs (MEDCAPs), dental civic action programs (DENCAPs), and veterinary civic action programs (VETCAPs); drilled and refurbished wells for communities; and assisted in nearly a dozen major humanitarian assistance mis-

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sions. Funding for humanitarian assistance programs comes under the aegis of Overseas Humanitarian Disaster and Civic Aid (OHDACA), generally local contracts, and Humanitarian Civic Assistance (HCA), carried out by U.S. and coalition personnel, with the

balance favoring the former. As of early 2008, some fifty humanitarian projects were being implemented by CJTF-HOA.

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In their personal capacity, some CJTF-HOA personnel based in Djibouti have also initiated a number of innovative, individual-level engagement programs, including English discussion groups, whereby off-duty personnel volunteer to help lead conversations at local English-language schools to facilitate practice for the students, many of whom go on to responsible positions in both the public and private sectors of the country. Some of the chaplains at CJTF-HOA have also begun to engage religious leaders, both Muslim and Christian, in the AOR, a singularly important initiative given that no other agency of the U.S. government, especially in theater, is equipped to handle relations with this sector which is highly influential in most societies, and especially so in Africa.<sup>45</sup>

It is, of course, too soon to judge whether the approach pioneered by CJTF-HOA—inverting the military’s strategic paradigm by prioritizing non-combat mission over traditional kinetic operations—achieves the desired objective, the bilateral and multilateral approach to security, concentrating on the “root causes” of conflict rather than reactive, force-driven solutions. Nonetheless, it is an innovative development, one that is not only likely to be replicated on a larger scale with AFRICOM, but which contains the promise of transforming mere engagement *of* African regimes to strategic partnerships *with* Africans in an attempt to secure U.S. interests while bolstering the capabilities of the continent.

## REACTIONS TO AFRICOM

The response to the new command, especially in Africa, has been very mixed. To some, with memories of liberation struggles still fresh, it smacks of a neocolonial effort to dominate the continent anew. Others, recalling the rather episodic history of U.S. commitments to Africa, questioned the sustainability of the new effort. Still others, noting the increased attention paid by U.S. analysts to China's role in Africa, worry about "possible great-power of militarization of the continent."<sup>46</sup> Moreover, U.S. counterterrorism efforts are viewed by many Africans with skepticism, with critics contending that the American agenda "offers little but mounting expense and new dangers for African security. The urgent question...is not how to join that war, but how to help protect Africa from it."<sup>47</sup> Critics also believe that the focus on military establishments on "tends to erode, if not crush, civil liberties, and those governments on the continent that already show little inclination to support democratic freedoms will almost certainly use 'security' as an excuse to clamp down on things they don't like."<sup>48</sup>

Consequently, despite the collaborative experience of recent U.S. military engagement across the continent, many still find it "deeply disturbing."<sup>49</sup> Last year, South African Defense Minister Mosioua Lekota, for example, did not respond to a formal request from the U.S. Embassy to meet with General Ward, who was in Johannesburg at the time.<sup>50</sup> Lekota subsequently took his opposition to AFRICOM even further. Not only did the South African defense chief state publicly that Africa should "avoid the presence of foreign forces on her soil," but he went on to lecture his subregional counterparts during their annual meeting in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, to the effect that "the interests of unity of African nations supersedes any individual view of a constituent member," and threatening that would stifle cooperation efforts.<sup>51</sup> Albeit more diplomatically than the South African defense chief, both the Algerian and Libyan governments have also voiced official opposition to the creation of AFRICOM and even Morocco, long one of America's closest allies on the African continent, has expressed misgivings about being asked to host any part of the command.<sup>52</sup> Members of the Pan-African Parliament, the legislative organ of the African Union, passed a non-binding motion asking member governments "not to accede to the United States of America's Government's request to host AFRICOM anywhere in the African continent."<sup>53</sup>

Opposition to the new command has also come from non-governmental organizations, both in Africa and the United States. An apposite coalition, Resist AFRICOM, has even been formed by Africa Action, the African Faith and Justice Network, the Hip Hop Caucus, and the Institute for Policy Studies (with its subsidiary, Foreign Policy in Focus). These critics argue that the result of the initiative would be the "militarization of foreign aid" which would "shift humanitarian resources away from civilians

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to the military” at the expense of “peace, justice, security, and development.”<sup>54</sup> The fear is that not only will AFRICOM somehow morph into the leading U.S. government interlocutor with African countries, usurping the chief-of-mission authority of America’s ambassadors, but that the command’s superior resources will enable it to also take control of issues that are the responsibility of Africans themselves, including their nascent regional security structures.

On the other hand, some African leaders, like Liberia’s President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, have noted that U.S. interests in advancing the security of the critical region and assuring its access to vital natural resources complement their own priorities. Not only did she offer her Liberian territory as a potential host for the headquarters of the new Africa Command,<sup>55</sup> Johnson Sirleaf even took the unusual step of publishing an op-ed welcoming the creation of the new structure. She argued:

[W]e all must acknowledge that security and development are inextricably linked. There is no greater engine for development than a secure nation, and no better way to build a secure nation than through building professional militaries and security forces that are responsible to civilian authorities who safeguard the rule of law and human rights... AFRICOM is undeniably about the projection of American interests—but this does not mean that it is to the exclusion of African ones.<sup>56</sup>

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Given the desultory results of African Union peacekeeping efforts to date, Wafula Okumu, head of the Security Analysis Program at the Institute for Strategic Studies in

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Pretoria, told a U.S. congressional hearing on AFRICOM that helping Africa bolster its own continental security force is a critical measure. Thus, a point of entry for AFRICOM will definitely be its potential to support the well-articulated desire of African leaders themselves to enhance their own capacity to deal with the continent’s myriad security challenges. In addition to the African Union missions in Somalia (AMISOM) and Darfur (UNAMID), there are currently nine international missions in Africa overseen by the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). Together, the nine DPKO missions have more than 55,000 personnel, representing two-thirds of the peacekeepers deployed worldwide by the international organization. The DPKO African operations have a budget for the current fiscal year of some \$3.4 billion, and the hybrid UNAMID mission has an estimated cost of at least another \$1.4 billion. Yet less than one-third of the international peacekeepers deployed across Africa actually hail from the continent.

At the very least AFRICOM would bring focused attention to the need to support Africans’ aspirations of building regional peacekeeping capacity by removing

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some of the institutional obstacles that have previously hindered U.S. efforts to engage consistently with African partners. Assuming adequate funding, the new command would also bring greater financial resources to assist in African capacity-building and perhaps more uniformed personnel to collaborate in training missions and other similar activities, thus fulfilling the Pentagon's assurances that AFRICOM's purpose "is to encourage and support African leadership and initiative, not to compete with it or to discourage it."<sup>57</sup>

Senior AFRICOM commanders have also crisscrossed the continent in an effort to allay concerns of African leaders about "militarization" as well as false alarms raised by some media outlets about "huge military bases." They have also sought to squelch rumors about bases by emphasizing that to facilitate the transfer of missions and other logistical concerns from EUCOM, even AFRICOM's headquarters would remain outside Africa for the foreseeable future.<sup>58</sup> The headquarters itself will be staff headquarters, rather than a troop headquarters, since the new command will not have any combat military personnel assets of its own other than those already deployed in the two largest initiatives already in Africa which AFRICOM will subsume, the CJTF-HOA and Operation Enduring Freedom-Trans Sahara. Further down the road, officials anticipate establishing small regional offices in Africa, possibly co-locating them with the continent's regional and subregional organizations, along the lines of the military liaison officers currently posted to headquarters of the AU in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in Abuja, Nigeria. Efforts will also continue to negotiate with African governments for U.S. military access to air bases and sea ports in the event of future emergencies.<sup>59</sup> While the decision to locate the headquarters outside the continent allays the concerns of some Africans, it also means that it will be that much harder for the new command's personnel to develop greater cultural awareness and operational familiarity with their area of responsibility.

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## CONCLUSION

AFRICOM represents not only a new institutional framework for U.S. engagement with Africa, but also a significant shift in the United States' strategic paradigm from military reaction to threats to a preventative approach that fosters human security by privileging conflict prevention and, where necessary, post-conflict stabilization operations. Will it ultimately work? Can a military culture which has traditionally emphasized spearheading combat operations adapt to working in a cooperative interagency process? Is it possible to shift from longstanding U.S. preferences for bilateral partnerships to work with multilateral regional and subregional partners, many of which will have limited capacity? Is it even feasible to build a single organization that "will benefit the

citizens of the United States and the people of Africa, and provide a model that advances interagency cooperation in conducting security assistance”<sup>60</sup> all at once? Time will tell, but given the high stakes involved, it is an effort certainly worth undertaking. 

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Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe in addition some fifty Eurasian countries.

20. CENTCOM's African AOR included Djibouti, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Seychelles, Somalia, and Sudan, as well as the waters of the Red Sea and the western portions of the Indian Ocean not covered by PACOM.

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to include the Comoros, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Mauritius, Madagascar, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda, as well as Yemen for geographical and operational reasons.

42. EAC's members are Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda,

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