

**Statement before the U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform,  
Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs**

***“AFRICOM: VISION AND PROSPECTS”***

A Statement by

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Chairman Tierney, Congressman Shays, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to speak today. The Defense Department's creation of AFRICOM has raised interest among many national security stakeholders: the U.S. defense community, development experts, the diplomatic corps, Africanists and African leaders, Europeans, and even the Chinese. My particular perspective on AFRICOM is shaped by three experiences:

- As a one-time overseer of so-called “building partnership capacity” issues in the 2005 Quadrennial Defense Review and a contributor to the AFRICOM text of the 2006 Unified Command Plan;
- As a co-director, along with my colleague and fellow witness, Steve Morrison, of the CSIS Task Force on Nontraditional Security Assistance, which assessed AFRICOM as a microcosm of the broader trend toward greater military involvement in humanitarian assistance and capacity building; and
- As a contributor to the CSIS Beyond Goldwater-Nichols project and the Project on National Security Reform, both of which promote the evolution of national security structures to meet 21<sup>st</sup> century security needs.

Last week, Chairman Tierney posed a series of oversight questions for this Subcommittee. I will attempt to provide my brief thoughts on three of these questions and then of course stand ready for your questions. I wish to underscore that the following views are my own and do not represent institutional positions of either CSIS or the Project on National Security Reform.

**First, what is the strategic vision driving the creation of AFRICOM and how has it evolved?**

I believe the Department of Defense urged President George W. Bush to create AFRICOM out of a genuine concern that the military was ill-prepared for managing security-related issues on the continent. Few would argue with the fact that US security interests in Africa have long suffered from the continent's subdivision among three commands, all of which struggled to balance their piecemeal African engagement with other geographic regions in their areas of responsibility. Having been present for some of these deliberations, I can state with certainty that the Defense Department was not seeking to usurp control of US foreign policy in Africa from the State Department or the White House. I would also assert that the Department's coincident desire for more holistic interagency approach to security, well documented in the 2006 Report of the Quadrennial Defense Review and the subsequent Building Partnership Capacity Roadmap, reflected a genuine concern from the military that hard power alone is insufficient for managing potential challenges.

Equally clear, however, is that the Defense Department significantly mismanaged AFRICOM's creation. It is my belief that DoD's can-do operational culture blinded it to the need to slow down and consult with interagency colleagues, particularly in the State Department and regional specialists within the National Security Council and African leaders abroad, to shape the Command's formation from the outset. As a result, Defense has largely been reactive in evolving a vision for AFRICOM, focusing today on the seemingly unassailable goal of delivering traditional defense assistance better and more efficiently to Africa than its predecessors. I believe this more limited vision is the correct one for AFRICOM in the near-term, regardless of the circuitous path to the Defense Department took to arrive at it. The Command must lay a foundation of trust and confidence in both the rest of the U.S. Government and abroad, especially in Africa, before it can presume to expand its mission into non-traditional domains. It must crawl before it walks and walk before it runs.

**Second, what are the current and future missions planned for AFRICOM? What type of soft power mandate does it have?**

The U.S. military has a long history of supporting civilian agencies in their delivery of humanitarian and security assistance. As our Task Force on Non-Traditional Security Assistance pointed out, however, its role in these areas has expanded dramatically since September 2001, growing from just over 5% of total official US development assistance in 2002 to almost 22% in 2005. The original Department of Defense view that AFRICOM could serve as an integrated delivery mechanism for security assistance reflects this more general growth in the Department's "soft power" resources and authorities. Like other combatant commands, AFRICOM could take advantage of the proposed expansion of Commander's Emergency Response Program funds beyond Iraq and Afghanistan, the extension of Sections 1206 and 1207 of the 2006 National Defense Authorization Act authorities to expend DoD funds for counterterrorism training, and the more traditional use of military-to-military training, exercises and activities not only to improve African military capabilities, but also to promote military professionalization and effective civil-military relations.

**Third, to the extent AFRICOM is not the model for a "whole of government" approach, what is?**

It is impossible to separate DoD's growth in undertaking "soft power" missions from the absence of adequate funds and flexible powers for civilian agencies to do the same. Herein lies the dilemma for architects of future security. The Defense Department is uniquely able to garner requisite resources and authorities needed to tackle many of the problems we are likely to face, yet the responsibility and expertise for many of these missions lie in civilian agencies. Moreover, the continued growth of military capability in these areas is self-reinforcing, accelerating the downward spiral of civilian capacity in favor of more expedient military solutions.

By allowing and even enabling the disparity in our instruments of national power, this nation is jeopardizing its long-term security posture. Challenges such as disease, terrorism, nuclear

proliferation, and state failure require the coordination of multiple U.S. government departments and agencies, not to mention non-governmental organizations, the private sector, allies and partners abroad, and even states and localities. A “model” American approach would not place these instruments under the auspices of a military organization, as AFRICOM’s detractors might fear. Rather the White House must exert civilian control to integrate defense concerns into a broader foreign and security policy framework. Some options for achieving this unity of effort at the regional level might include:

- The creation of Standing Regional Security Councils, composed of senior representatives from all of the national security departments and agencies, to coordinate U.S. policy execution on a day-to-day basis and seek approaches to shape the regional environment in favorable ways, as discussed in the Beyond Goldwater-Nichols Phase 2 Report.
- The transition of Defense Department combatant commands into unified U.S. Government political-military organizations, operating under civilian leadership while retaining operational chain of command from a commander in the field to the secretary of defense and the president.
- The creation of regional super ambassadors with clear authority to integrate all US Government activities in a region, coordinating closely with the secretary of defense for the operational employment of military personnel.

Each of these potential solutions merits further investigation.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, for those of us contemplating interagency national security reform, AFRICOM’s conceptualization and launch are cautionary tales. Nevertheless, AFRICOM can and will play an important and positive role in improving delivery of military and non-military assistance in Africa. The Command is attempting to recalibrate its role after wisely tempering initial enthusiasm for a broad and currently unsupportable mandate. Given its staffing difficulties, it will need time to absorb EUCOM and PACOM missions and to gain its proverbial sea legs for security cooperation activities. For crisis response, the maturation process may be even longer. I thank you for inviting me to share these perspectives, and I look forward to your questions.