

# **U.S. AFRICOM**

**Press Conference I with General David Rodriguez,  
Commander of U.S. Africa Command**

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MODERATOR: OK. Ladies and gentlemen, may I introduce General David Rodriguez, commander of U.S. Africa Command.

GENERAL DAVID RODRIGUEZ: Thanks, Ben (sp).

Can everybody hear me all right? No, push it down. How's that? First you got to understand how to operate the equipment.

Well, good morning and thank you for participating in this round-table. I know some of you have traveled a very, very long way to be here, and thanks for making that effort. I hope you have found the discussions this week valuable and made connections that will endure long after this symposium ends.

I'd like to start by acknowledging the importance of the work you do as journalists and public affairs officers to help inform and educate the public. As a citizen and soldier, I appreciate how important it is to have an informed public that helps to provide accountable governance and is also important in the preservation of the trust between a military and a society and nation it serves.

Now, this trust **undergoes (5:32)** the role of a professional military in a democratic society. And it is also essential to the public's continued support to service members and their families whose service and sacrifice around the world underwrite the security most of us enjoy every day and that we all want to see achieved in areas of current conflict.

I know Ambassador Carter has already talked to you about Africa Command strategy and our priorities. So I'll keep my remarks short and highlight just a few themes.

First is the importance of partnerships between African nations and the United States. The African continent presents significant opportunities and challenges to African and U.S. interests, including matters of security and stability. In the long term, Africa Command is supporting U.S. government efforts to deepen relationships with countries that have the greatest potential to be positive regional influencers in the future.

In the near term, we're working with multinational and interagency partners to address the immediate challenges of violent extremism and regional instability, including threats to both U.S. personnel and facilities. Key challenges include the growth of transregional networks, especially the global network of al-Qaida and its affiliates and adherents, and organized criminal networks that link Africa with North and South America, Europe, the Middle East and South Asia. Addressing these threats requires comprehensive and regional approaches. Our collaborative efforts provide opportunities to deepen these important partnerships.

In the complex security environment of the 21st century, militaries can advance national and collective security interests – (audio break) – basic ways: building partner capacity, which is our primary function; enabling allies and partners; and taking action. Most of Africa Command's efforts focus on building partner capacity and enabling allies and partners.

Our investments now will yield –greater national, regional and global security in the future. By supporting the gradual development of effective American – African security institutions and professional forces, our shaping activities also reduce the likelihood of U.S. involvement in future interventions in Africa.

Africa Command's immediate priorities are: to contour violent extremist organizations and enhance regional stability in East Africa, to counter violent extremist organizations and enhance stability in Northwest Africa, protect U.S. personnel and facilities throughout the continent, to strengthen maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea, and to support regional efforts to counter the Lord's Resistance Army.

In the past year, regional and multinational cooperation has expanded in counterterrorism, peacekeeping, maritime security, and countering the Lord's Resistance Army. African partners are increasingly leading regional security efforts. Just to illustrate, six African countries are contributing to the African Union peacekeeping efforts in Somalia. Six countries are currently supporting the African Union peacekeeping efforts in the Central African Republic. Eleven African countries are participating in the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Mali. The African Union's regional task force against the Lord's Resistance Army is another example of African leadership in addressing a regional security challenge. Tailored U.S. contributions to building capacity and enabling partners have helped to address these threats as well as other threats to peace and security on the continent.

Although these trends are positive, security threats continue to grow and outpace progress in some areas. Al-Qaida affiliate al-Shabab is regionalizing its activities in East Africa and conducting more lethal, complex and asymmetric attacks. Terrorist groups in North and West Africa are more actively sharing expertise and resources. And despite modest increases in regional capacity and cooperation, maritime crime persists at concerning rates in West Africa.

Solving these challenges will require comprehensive and long-term solutions led by regional African partners. Africa's security challenges and their associated opportunity costs make it vitally important that we align resources with priorities across the continent and globe, that we continue to strengthen and leverage partnerships and increase our operational flexibility.

Africa Command will continue to deepen our collaboration with international and interagency partners to mitigate risks and improve the effectiveness of our collective efforts. We will also continue to work with other combatant commands and the joint staff to provide our best military advice to support national security decision-making.

Thank you very much, and I look forward to your questions.

MODERATOR: OK. The first question comes from Togo. Mr. Tadino Kocku (sp), please.

Q: Merci. Merci, mon général. Ma question est relative au rapt de 200 jeunes filles nigérianes par le groupe terroriste Boko Haram. Une éventuelle opération militaire dans cette zone ne risque-t-elle pas de mettre en danger la vie des otages ? Merci.

GEN. RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. This is a decision that will be made by the Nigerian government. What we are doing is we have a small team down there that is working with the Nigerians as well as our international partners to help them however we can and also assess if there are any other ways we can help. So, we are supporting and responding to requests from the Nigerian government.

We are not going to do anything except what they want. And that does not include at this point any operation that we will participate in. We will help them with information and things like that. OK? Thank you.

MODERATOR: The next question comes from Benin. Mr. Marcel Zoumeinou (sp).

Q: OK, merci. Bonjour, général. Moi, c'est Zoumemou Marcel (sp), journaliste. Je viens du Bénin. Alors ma question a rapport au terrorisme par la lutte contre le terrorisme en Afrique. Et avec la chute du Président Gadhafi, nous avons constaté que il y a beaucoup d'armes qui sont tombées dans des mains des organisations terroristes. Et quels sont les efforts, et y a-t-il une stratégie que les AFRICOM développent pour que les armes ne tombent dans des – dans des mauvaises – (inaudible) – dans les – dans les mains des rebelles, des rebelles et des groupes terroristes ? Merci.

GEN. RODRIGUEZ: Well, as you said, the arms, ammunitions and explosives that were in the Libyan stockpiles have been used by many groups for anything from generating revenue to creating havoc in the region. And for Africa Command and our strategy – first, we're working with all the African nations to help build their capacity to improve their ability to control their borders. We're also working with many of the nations in the region to help build capacity so that they can interdict and limit the spread of those weapons, and we're working with all our partners in the African region there to help build the capacity of their militaries and some of their border forces to better limit the spread of those arms, ammunition, explosives from the former Libyan stockpiles. Thank you.

MODERATOR: The next question comes from one of our African Union-accredited journalists, Aaron Mashou (ph).

Q: Thank you, General. On Somalia – on Somalia, there's an offensive taking place against al-Shabab at the moment, which has largely dislodged the rebel – al-Shabab from vast swathes of land, but how much of a threat do you see this group posing on both regional countries and American interests as well as what support you're looking at providing?

GEN. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, thank you. As you know, the African Union forces there have begun an offensive a couple of months ago that has continued to decrease the area that al-Shabab controlled in the past, and that's, you know, been a positive trend for the last couple of years, where they have continued to decrease that area. The challenge that al-Shabab is now really focusing on the asymmetric attacks that they really adjusted some of their strategy to about

a year ago by conducting the sensational terrorist-type attacks into both Mogadishu. And as you can see based on the situation in Kenya, that they have started going after the troop-contributing countries who are participating in the AMISOM mission and what our efforts with all of the regional partners who are providing the forces to AMISOM is, we are supporting the State Department and working together to help train the troop contributing nations and the AMISOM headquarters prior to them going into Somalia to improve their capacity to handle the situation.

And then, we're working with each of the troop-contributing nations to help them develop the capacities to mainly share information among all their agencies to get the best intelligence picture that they can get on the threats to their nations and their homelands. Right now, the most pressing one, as I mentioned, was in Kenya because of the example of the Westgate Mall as well as several IEDs – improvised explosive devices, that have gone off, and again, this is al-Shabab's intent to disrupt the troop contributing countries who are providing the forces to al-Shabab.

We also have a small team that works with the AMISOM headquarters in Somalia to help them and to improve our support to the training of the troop-contributing nations because of the situational understanding and the work that they do with the AMISOM headquarters in Somalia. OK. Thank you.

MODERATOR: The next question comes from Guinea – Mr. Isidore Ganona Nanamu (ph).

Q: Merci, mon général. Moi, c'est Isidore Nanamu (ph) de la télévision guinéenne.

Mon général, si mes souvenirs sont exacts, en juin 2007 le magazine américain Time titrait à sa une, Guinée-Bissau est country – est cocaïne-country. Aujourd'hui, la région ouest-africaine, connue pour être une plaque tournante de la résine de cannabis et de l'héroïne, est devenue une zone de transit pour la cocaïne latino-américaine vers l'Europe et les Etats-Unis. Concrètement, est-ce que, mon général, USAFRICOM compte mener une lutte dans ce sens ? Si oui, comment ? Et si non, pourquoi ?

GEN. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, as you mentioned, that criminal drug network that is really broader than just that network, but as I mentioned, the network from South America that comes through West Africa and up into Europe – unfortunately, there is also a growing network that comes from East Africa and comes across and now goes into North America as well as Europe all the way from South Asia is a challenge for all the nations of Africa and really, you know, fuels corruption, fuels crime and fuels instability. And yes, AFRICOM supports the efforts to limit that and works with partners in – for us in SOUTHCOM and CENTCOM and EUCOM, who also have a part of that solution, and as examples of what we do to help that effort, we conduct multinational exercises in the Gulf of Guinea to try to disrupt and help the countries build a capacity to disrupt that flow.

We also have a maritime law enforcement program where we work with the maritime law enforcement capabilities of each of the nations. We have helped our partner nations build capacity in maritime operations centers to coordinate their efforts, and in the last exercise that we just finished this past month, we actually had a South American country participating – Brazil participated as well as six of the European Nations, because everybody is concerned about this

because of the negative impact it has on both economies as well as stabilities, and where we work most in that area is building the partner capacity so that they can help themselves there. Thank you.

MODERATOR: OK. The next question comes from Gabon, Mr. Christian Jemaine Krieger (ph).

Q: Oui. Bonjour, mon général.

Mon général, parmi les missions assignées à AFRICOM, il y a aussi celles qui consistent à mener des actions militaires. En République Centrafricaine, des populations innocentes sont massacrées chaque jour. Les droits de l'homme, dont votre pays est un des fervents défenseurs, sont également bafoués. Ma question est celle-ci : Est-ce que – (inaudible) – à ce jour quelle a été la nature de l'accord des Etats-Unis pour aider la force française Sangaris à juguler cette crise ? Sinon, que peut vouloir faire les autorités centrafricaines pour susciter la sensibilité des Etats-Unis ?

GEN. RODRIGUEZ: For us in the Central African Republic, we have done a couple of things to support that mission there. First, as that crisis became worse, we moved two nations' forces into the Central African Republic as fast as we could – both Burundi and Rwanda. So that was what was requested, so we moved both of them in. We also have a small team that comes in and out of the Central African Republic to help with the transportation and the movement of troops and material to help support the effort there, and we are continuing to support with strategic lift with intelligence and with planning efforts to support the effort there as it will in the future – transition to a U.N. mission.

And then for all the African nations, they have been making their requests for support through the African Union, and then the U.S. coordinates with the African Union how to best support those efforts. Thank you.

MODERATOR: The next question comes from Burkina Faso, Mr. Sigué Sheikh (ph).

Q: OK. Merci.

Mon général, à force de refuser de s'engager militairement sur – (inaudible) – opérations dans des pays où les droits de l'homme sont bafoués, les Etats-Unis ne risquent-ils pas de perdre le leadership militaire et moral à long terme ? Merci.

GEN. RODRIGUEZ: Our policies throughout the region are led by our State Department. And that is a strong, strong effort and intent for the U.S. to support human rights and to support the humanitarian treatment of all the people of Africa. As I said, what we really focus on is trying to build the capacity, build an organization in their militaries where they perform their role as a military properly – the role of a military and a democratic society, where they serve their nation and their people properly.

And that's really how we work our primary effort to support the U.S. interests in that area. And we have many times supported the interventions of both partner African nations as well as partner allies, as an example the French, and we will continue to do that to support both the U.N. and African Union missions, as well as some just bilateral operations. Thank you.

MODERATOR: The next question comes from Cote d'Ivoire. Mr. Pascal Soro (sp).

Q: Bonjour, mon général. Je suis Pascal Soro (sp). Je viens de Côte d'Ivoire. Mon général, je voudrais savoir l'analyse que vous faites de la présence de la Chine en Afrique. Merci.

GEN. RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. The presence of China on the African continent – first, in the security realm, they participate in a couple of the U.N. peacekeeping missions in Africa. And then most of the Chinese participation and role in the African continent is based on economics and their interest in the minerals and the – you know, the economic support to their economy.

And they do a lot of – a lot of work in that area. We don't see that their efforts are contradictory to ours. They are working to help support the African nations. And we do it in different ways as well as, you know, however their interests are arrayed. But that's what we see as far as the Chinese participation on the African continent.

MODERATOR: The next question is from Senegal, Mr. Mamadou Dief (sp).

Q: Mon général, l'USAFRICOM a été mis en place il y a sept ans – il y a sept ans. Au début il y avait beaucoup de réticence, beaucoup de suspicion sur la mise en place de cette USAFRICOM. Aujourd'hui, quel bilan faites-vous de vos actions ? Et quelles sont les perspectives pour le commandement des Etats-Unis pour l'Afrique ? Je vous remercie.

GEN. RODRIGUEZ: Well, the – I think that the creation of Africa Command– as you mentioned, a few years ago was all based on the realization and the understanding of the rising importance of Africa to the world. And you know, there's a little bit of a misperception that the United States didn't do anything in Africa before AFRICOM was there. And that's not true. EUCOM ran all of Africa and European Command. And because of that span of control and because of the rising importance, the U.S. decided to separate that so they could have the one command focus on Africa.

I think that AFRICOM, since its inception, has done a good job picking up – the efforts that EUCOM was making to continue to build the capacities of the African nations or to improve security and stability in the region. And we continue to do that. Many of our efforts have had a huge positive impact. But most importantly, the – you know, the growing capacities of the African nations.

And that's why when I talked about the number of African nations that were helping each other – so when you look at the challenges that occurred in Mali and the speed with which, 11 African nations helping each other to solve the security problems has been really the biggest change since Africa Command was established. And I think that's been a result of the entire not only U.S. government but international community to build the Africans capacity to handle African challenges themselves. Thank you.

MODERATOR: Next question is from Sierra Leone. Ms. Samata Abaa (sp).

Q: Thank you very much, General. Mine is, is there any other reason for the location of the United States African Command in Africa apart from financial resources challenges? Or could it be you don't want the world to see you as colonizing the African military?

GEN. RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. That – the decision on where to put that, you know, was made several years ago. And we foresee that – staying in that location for the foreseeable future. I think that they made a lot of – a lot of decisions and looked at what the best situation – how it was best be able to do for both fiscal challenges as well as the political challenges that it would be if we put it one place in Africa.

So I think, they made a good decision back then. And we're going to stay where we are for the foreseeable future. It provides great access to the continent. Also, we are able to coordinate a lot of the efforts with our European partners who also help in the continent. So I think we'll stay where we are for the foreseeable future. Thank you.

MODERATOR: The next question is from Niger. Mr. Ibrahim Monzondialo (sp).

Q: Merci, mon général. Ma question est la suivante. Parmi les objectifs non déclarés d'AFRICOM, est-ce qu'il n'y a pas une visée de création de bases américaines dans le Sahel – plus précisément Agadez au Nord-Niger ? Cette question, elle en appelle à une autre, c'est celle – la suivante : Avec l'installation des drones Reaper au Niger, est-ce – (inaudible) – envisage des frappes au sud libyen devenu le nouveau sanctuaire des terroristes ? Merci, mon général.

GEN. RODRIGUEZ: For as far as our locations and where we support from, you know, the locations that we work from in Africa are all very, very temporary. And we, again, are supporting the African nations to best support their security operations. As you said, we have some drones in Niger. And again, we use those to support our African partners to improve their surveillance and reconnaissance, and always to support their efforts to build that stability.

As far as – no, there are no plans – to conduct raids in southwestern Libya at this point in time. And again, what we really do is provide that information to our African partners so that they can improve and support the effectiveness of their operations. Thank you.

MODERATOR: Next question is from Mauritania. Mr. Iselmu Salehi (sp).

Q: Mon général, merci d'être venu répondre à nos questions. Mon général, la lutte contre le terrorisme a beaucoup été axée sur les conséquences. Peu de chose est fait sur les sources du terrorisme. Pourquoi la stratégie partout dans le monde se limite à couper les branches et à laisser les racines ? Merci.

GEN. RODRIGUEZ: That's a great question. And thank you. We could not agree more that the real answer is in getting at the roots of terrorism and instability. And you know all the things that go into that between, you know, education, lack of economic opportunities, weak governance and some of those challenges. And that's really the long-term objective of

everything. And you know, for us, we're just – for the military, we're just conducting stopgap, immediate things to prevent the humanitarian crisis and slaughter, but that's not the long-term solution. The long-term solution is great governance and great economic activities and – and a stable country – that the government and the security forces properly serve and take care of their people. And that's – that's really the long-term effort.

That is led by the State Department, and they have a huge, significant amount of building-partner-capacity efforts to do just that. But we're just an emergency short-term thing that does not – and again, there's no military solution to counterterrorism. It's a whole-of-government approach that's very comprehensive and long-term, and we're just a very, very small part of that and ours is only – it's an emergency-type thing. Thank you.

MODERATOR: OK, I'm happy to note we've gone through the list of countries and we're making great time and getting some good information here, so I'm going to start from the top again. I'm not sure if you want to alternate and let the other journalists from your country maybe now ask a second question, so I'm just going to announce the country and then leave it to you to decide who's going to ask the second question.

So to Togo please.

Q: Oui. Merci, mon général. La question que je voudrais poser c'est l'autre aspect de la question concernant le groupe terroriste Boko Haram. Bon, est-ce que l'USAFRICOM accepterait intervenir au Nigéria si le gouvernement nigérian le lui demandait ?

GEN. RODRIGUEZ: That would be a U.S. policy decision that would be determined by our, national leadership. For us, that's outside the realm of our decision-making authority. So we will continue to work with the Nigerian government to see how we can best support them. And right now, like I said, that is to help provide them, you know, situational understanding as best we can. And that's where it sits right now. Thank you.

MODERATOR: The next question from Benin.

Q: Oui. Merci, mon général. Je m'appelle Thibault Nayaho (ph). Je suis journaliste. Je viens du Bénin. Merci.

Ma question est relative à la lutte contre la criminalité dans le Golfe de Guinée. Vous venez de souligner que – (inaudible). Je voulais savoir, autre les appuis en renforcement de capacité de ces pays du Golfe de Guinée, n'est-il pas plus utile, hein, que l'USA – les USA – (inaudible) – matériel militaire pour leur permettre de mieux se débrouiller dans la lutte contre cette criminalité, hein, qui comme vous le désignez menace l'économie et la stabilité dans cette région de l'Afrique de l'Ouest ? Merci.

GEN. RODRIGUEZ: Yes, that's a part of the solution and we – we do provide a significant amount of equipment to the countries that surround the Gulf of Guinea there.

But, from my experience, the first thing that people ask for is equipment, and that's not the whole story in what they need. Part of it is about the capacity building and the concept and the understanding of how to use that equipment properly. And sometimes even more important than that is how to maintain that equipment, because the equipment itself doesn't solve the problem itself. It has to be, you know, a comprehensive effort on training and education and maintenance that is a part of the solution, as well as developing many of the law-enforcement capacities and capabilities, which are, again, the long-term way for each of those nations to take care of their – and protect their coasts – coastline as well as – their territorial waters.

So that's really the long-term effort to build that capacity writ large, and equipment is just one part of it, but equipment's not just the sole answer, from my perspective, OK? Thank you.

MODERATOR: Next question from one of AU accredited journalists.

Q: Hi. Thank you. My name is Marta (sp). The question was kind of asked, but I was wondering if you could be a bit more specific about the threats that al-Shabab is to the region, and also specifically to U.S. interests, and also specifically what targets they might look at, at the moment after the AMISOM offensive that has been going on?

GEN. RODRIGUEZ: OK, the –as you know, al-Shabab has made threats to the U.S. interests, both in the region and threats of aspirations to go after U.S. interests in both Europe as well as in the homeland, and we continue to watch that very, very carefully. But in the wake of their offensive – and which has kind of slowed up right now because of the rainy season – we think that they're going to continue to go after the troop-contributing countries to try to disrupt and frustrate the populations of those countries so that the support to the AMISOM effort is limited from those nations, OK?

So what they want to do is get those nations out of Somalia. And they're going to threaten them; they're going to go after their homelands to show and to demonstrate to the populations of those countries that it's not worth the continued effort to support AMISOM. Many of that, as I mention, were about the IEDs and the explosive bombs that they have already set off in several places, or the mass casualties such as was inflicted at the Westgate Mall in Kenya.

So those are threats – and they've made threats against all the troop-contributing countries, and that's what we're watching very carefully and trying to best support our neighbors in that area.

Q: OK.

GEN. RODRIGUEZ: Thank you.

MODERATOR: The next question from Guinea?

Q: Mon général, je suis le seul journaliste guinéen ici, alors je vais mettre un accent particulier sur mon pays, la Guinée, où les Etats-Unis sont présents. La Guinée est dans une

phase de réforme de son secteur de défense et de sécurité. Quelle évaluation faite-vous, mon général, de cette perspective en Guinée ? Et comment voulez-vous – comment comptez-vous accompagner la Guinée dans ce cadre-là précis ? Merci

GEN. RODRIGUEZ: First of all, we think that their effort to improve and build and reform the security sector writ large – is a great effort. We continue to advise them on that and are looking at which programs and how we can best support that. That effort to support that security sector reform is really, again, the long-term solution to ensuring that their security forces really do serve the nation and the people, and we'll continue to support those efforts and build that partner capacity.

We have a couple of programs that work those efforts right now and we're going to continue those. And again, if they ask to adjust those or work in other places, we'll do that also because, like I said, it's a great effort and it's really the long-term effort to solve the challenges and improve that military's security. Thank you.

MODERATOR: The next question comes from Gabon.

Q: Mon général, je suis resté un peu perplexe sur votre argument quant à la lecture que vous faites de la Chine. Je parle ici de l'intérêt chinois pour l'Afrique. Et devant votre argument, vous vous êtes tu sur le vôtre. Ainsi je me permets de vous poser la question de savoir quels sont vos intérêts pour l'Afrique.

GEN. RODRIGUEZ: Our interest in Africa is to continue to build the capacity of the African nations to improve their stability. And with that stability provides the opportunity for improved governance and improved economic development. And that way the African nations will be able to be stable governments that are well-governed, that take care of their people and are part of an international community of stability. Thank you.

MODERATOR: The next question from Burkina Faso?

Q: Si j'ai bien compris, les Etats-Unis ont une base en permanence à Djibouti, voilà, qui les aide à soutenir les pays de la Corne de l'Afrique. Pourquoi ne pas envoyer également des troupes en permanence dans la zone du Sahara pour soutenir également peut-être les troupes de ces pays-là à lutter davantage contre les terroristes ? Merci.

GEN. RODRIGUEZ: Our efforts on the African continent are all about creative and innovative ways to have small – very small elements to advise and assist and support the African nations doing that. So right now we don't see it in our interest to have a significant amount of U.S. forces stationed permanently on the African continent. And for the most part, that's not what our African partners want. They want the assistance and the help in the areas that they need it most so they can do it themselves. And I think that's – you know, every nation wants the same thing. They want peace, they want stability, they want economic opportunities, and they want the ability for their children to grow up in a safe and secure area.

And so what we're trying to do is trying to help them build that capacity so they can do it for themselves. And that's the way they want it. And again, we respond and support to both the leadership of the State Department as well as the African nations on how to best do that. Now, I've said in most cases that's about providing specific equipment, providing specific training, and providing specific capabilities that they need to best support their efforts. Thank you.

MODERATOR: The next question from Côte d'Ivoire.

Q: Bonjour, mon général. Je suis Bonika Bié (ph) de la radio des Nations Unies. Mon général, que fait USAFRICOM et – ou que peut faire USAFRICOM pour éviter des pertes en vies humaines en terme de – d'immigration clandestine vers l'Europe ?

GEN. RODRIGUEZ: I didn't get that. Could I have that question repeated? I'm sorry.

MODERATOR: Could you repeat the question, please?

Q: Alors je voudrais juste savoir, mon général, que fait USAFRICOM ou que peut faire USAFRICOM pour éviter l'immigration clandestine vers l'Europe ?

GEN. RODRIGUEZ: Great question. I think, as you know, there are about 400,000 illegal immigrants that move from Africa to Europe every year. What we're doing is we're working with those African nations along the northern part of Africa to improve their ability to manage their borders. And then the rest of the effort that gets done, which is mainly around the Mediterranean Sea is a EUCOM mission. And they do that by helping to provide maritime security in that region and work with a whole host of partners to help that challenge.

That is, the whole movement of illegal immigrants – or as we talked about earlier, the movement of arms and ammunition and explosives, as well as the movement of terrorists – throughout the region is a big challenge for the region. And we work mainly with our interagency partners to help build that capacity, because much of that is a law-enforcement function as well as a border control function that is provided by mostly minister of interior forces as well as other interagency partners. So – that effort in the security realm is a part of what we do, but most of that is done by other interagency partners. Thank you.

MODERATOR: The next question from Senegal?

Q: Merci, mon général. Je m'appelle Cher Diabé (ph), journaliste dans une télévision au Sénégal qui s'appelle la (2STV ?). Alors, mon général, je voudrais juste savoir qu'est-ce que l'AFRICOM attend de ses alliés ? Je fais allusion donc à la CEDEAO et à l'Union Africaine. Je vous remercie.

GEN. RODRIGUEZ: From the African Union and ECOWAS, what we see is them improving their ability to coordinate and to synchronize and to support the efforts of their nations to build international or regional cooperation, to improve the stability and security of the region. So great examples, of course, of that are the effort in Mali, where ECOWAS brought those 11 nations together to work the challenges that they had there. And also, ECOWAS works very

hard in the Gulf of Guinea to bring together partner nations. They have built a Gulf of Guinea code of conduct where they've brought all the nations together to come up with standards and agreement on how to operate together in the Gulf of Guinea. So we think that the regionalization of the security challenges and how ECOWAS as well as the African Union bring those things together are hugely important. As you know, the African Union also works hard with the United Nations and with other external countries to funnel and channel the support where it's best needed. And we think that those organizations are doing a good job and continue to improve as they build their capacity to do just that. Thank you.

MODERATOR: The next question is from Sierra Leone.

Q: Thank you very much. My name is Ahmed Sisay (ph). I just want to follow the question on regional and subregional organizations, that's African Union and the ECOWAS. How can you assess, when you're looking at the gap, why do you think the gap is in AU or ECOWAS effectively responding to a crisis in its member states, and in specific areas that you can support to, you know, increase their effectiveness?

GEN. RODRIGUEZ: Well, the – every regional or international endeavor and everything, each of the nations have their own personal – or, their own national interests in how they want to conduct themselves. So those regional economic coordination elements are working together with those nations to bring those common interests together as best they can. When they have to execute and support in a crisis, the big challenges that they normally need help with are in things like command and control, intelligence, sustainment and logistics and mobility. And those are the things that are most requested by our African partners to help with when they are responding to a crisis.

As you know, the African Union has been working hard for many years to come up with the African Standby Brigades, and now they have another immediate response capability at the African Union that they're trying to build. And we continue to support those efforts, but I think as they look to the future, it'll be about marshaling the political will and the interest of all the countries to contribute to those capabilities that will determine how successful they are in the future. Thank you.

MODERATOR: The next question is from Niger.

Q: Merci. Ibrahim Mosajallo (ph), Radio Sahara FM, Agadez, Niger.

Ma question, mon général, est la suivante. On sait que la plupart des crises on Afrique résulte des problèmes politiques et de la malgouvernance. Et il est connu de tous que plusieurs pays occidentaux apportent ou retirent leur caution aux régimes selon qu'ils soient de leur obédience ou non. Ils accueillent ainsi les milliards des francs CFA, de argent détourné dans leur banque qu'ils refusent de restituer des fois ou donnent asile à ces (présidents ?) qui ont violé ou détourné l'argent de leur pays. Je voudrais savoir : Quelle est votre lecture de cet état de fait ? Et est-ce possible qu'ils soit institué le respect de la bonne gouvernance, le respect des (cautions ?) par le forceps, c'est-à-dire par la force ? Merci.

GEN. RODRIGUEZ: Yes – we discussed earlier about the root causes of terrorism, and most of that goes back to the challenges of governance, as you mentioned. That effort to develop good governance and to support the – holding those leaders accountable to their people is an effort that is led by our Department of State, and that is in the diplomatic realm, and that’s really a question of – to the Department of State, not to the military. For our part of that, what we try to do is build and improve the security forces so that they properly perform the role of a military in a democratic society. And those important things are about serving the government and the civilian control of the military. It’s about service and taking care of the people, and also, as you mentioned, to be upright citizens and do the right thing so that corruption does not become a pervasive challenge in the military. And that’s our role in that effort about the governance. But that’s led by our Department of State. Thank you.

MODERATOR: OK, we still have time for a last question from Mauritania.

Q: Je m’appelle – (inaudible). Je travaille dans un quotidien. Ma question, je vais un peu prendre sur l’immigration clandestin – l’immigration clandestine vu qu’il y a aussi un défi aussi important que le défi sécuritaire. Je voudrais savoir concrètement ce que fait USA AFRICOM des pays de passage comme la Mauritanie, par exemple, d’une manière très concrète. Est-ce qu’il y a – (inaudible) – relations sur le plan (national ?) ou bien est-ce qu’il y a en place un programme de lutte contre l’immigration clandestine à travers les pays de passage ?

GEN. RODRIGUEZ: For AFRICOM and the security part of that, it’s about – for us, it’s about the building the partner capacity of those nations to control their borders in a security fashion. So in Mauritania, for example, both the United States as well as, in the case of Mauritania, the French have built and worked with about six of the units that are now protecting Mauritania’s eastern border, and we have continued to train and support those efforts, and they’re doing a pretty good job on that eastern border out there, and we continue to help train them to do that. And that’s where the Mauritanian leadership has asked us to help them, and that’s what we’re doing. So again, that illegal immigration is really an interagency partnership that has to be done by all the nations because a lot of it is law enforcement as well as other civil security institutions and policies that will save that problem. But what we’re doing is helping to train the forces that are manning the border for security. And like I said, we’ve done three battalions that are on the border right now in the eastern part of Mali – of the Malian border, and we’ll continue to support the efforts that Mauritania asks us to train and support. Thank you.

MODERATOR: That concludes – the media round table, and we’re now going to go on a break for 15 minutes, then General Rodriguez will be meeting with the public affairs officers from Africa. Journalists, please come back at 11:00 for the end-of-symposium discussion and survey, and we look forward to hearing what you’ve liked and about the survey. Thank you.

GEN. RODRIGUEZ: Good. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

(END)