

STATEMENT OF
GENERAL DAVID M. RODRIGUEZ, USA,
COMMANDER, UNITED STATES AFRICA COMMAND
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UNITED STATES AFRICA COMMAND 2016 POSTURE STATEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Chairman, Ranking Member, distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to update you on the efforts of United States Africa Command. For the past three years, I have been honored to command the men and women of Africa Command. Since its inception in 2007, the command continues to pursue the objectives of strengthening democratic institutions, spurring economic growth, trade, and investment, advancing peace and security, and promoting opportunity and development throughout Africa.

Africa is an enduring interest for the United States, and its importance will continue to increase as African economies, population, and influence grow. Relatively small but wise investments in African security institutions today offer disproportionate benefits to Africa, Europe, and the United States in the future, creating mutual opportunities and reducing the risks of destabilization, radicalization, and persistent conflict. Our engagement now can assist our African partners in realizing their potential and gaining the capability to solve African problems. African solutions to African problems are, in the long run, in the best interest of Africans, Americans, and indeed the world.

In an effort to produce the greatest impact with the available resources, this year we updated the command's Theater Strategy and Theater Campaign Plan. Our approach employs security force assistance and exercises as decisive efforts to build partner capacity. We use military operations to create the conditions for our partners to develop the capacity they need, and we use engagements across the continent as well as our posture, presence, and agreements to sustain our efforts in Africa. These efforts expose our African partners to our values and

capabilities, model military professionalism and proficiency, and inspire them to pursue excellence in their own institutions.

Our command approach is synchronized and focused, relying upon regional cooperation and close coordination with a host of partners. United States Africa Command, along with our diplomatic, defense, and development partners is helping to build African institutions capable of deterring the spread of extremism, protecting their populations, enabling economic prosperity, and expanding the rule of law and human rights.

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

Africa is complex and dynamic. In 2010, the United Nations estimated Africa's population at 1 billion, predicting a growth to 1.6 billion by 2030 and more than 2 billion by 2050. This population increase is coupled with urbanization and a youth bulge. Africa's increase in its youth demographic, combined with other historic challenges, has led in some cases to unemployment and wide-spread disenfranchisement from already over-taxed governments. With national systems for basic public services, security, and infrastructure under increasing stress, criminal and terrorist networks can exploit fissures between the marginalized masses and the ruling elites, taking advantage of ungoverned or under-governed areas.

Many African populations have an understandable fear and distrust of predatory governments or security forces and limited access to democratic participation and employment. This creates an environment ripe for the expansion of violent extremism, and require a comprehensive approach employing diplomacy, defense, and development to address the root causes of extremism. Our effectiveness is strengthened by close coordination with interagency partners, including the Department of State and United States Agency for International

Development (USAID), who possess a strong understanding of African political dynamics, cultural contexts, and long-standing strategic partnerships.

Across Africa, the protection of United States personnel and facilities and the operational requirements of the command and the component commands have increased over the past year. In Fiscal Year 2015, we conducted 75 joint operations, 12 major joint exercises, and 400 security cooperation activities. In comparison, we conducted 68 operations, 11 major joint exercises, and 363 security cooperation activities in Fiscal Year 2014. With requirements increasing faster than resources, we use innovative ways to mitigate capability gaps, including sharing forces with other combatant commands and complementing the capabilities of multinational and interagency partners.

EAST AFRICA

The Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa leads the command's efforts in East Africa. They work to complement and build the capability and capacity of our East African partners. The International Peace Support Training Center in Kenya conducts applied research, training and education for Africans in peace operations. The United Nations Signal School in Uganda conducts standardized training for signal units deploying in support of United Nations peacekeeping missions. The United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre in Djibouti serves as a model for regional efforts on counter-illicit finance, improve border security, and development of counter-terrorism strategy.

Security in Somalia has generally improved. Although, African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) forces in southern and central Somalia seized significant territories from al Shabaab last year, weakening the group and reducing its ability to generate resources, al Shabaab continues to pose a threat to United States and allied interests. Recent AMISOM operations,

however, have been limited due to overstretched AMISOM forces and endemic deficiencies within the Somali National Army. The Somali National Army remains dependent on foreign forces to conduct operations and is challenged by leadership, logistical support, and clan factionalism.

Al Shabaab remains a continuing threat to U.S. persons and Western interests, and is conducting almost daily lethal asymmetric attacks in Somalia against AMISOM troops. Under-governed areas outside the reach of the Federal Government of Somalia will continue providing al Shabaab with territory in which it can evade security forces and continue targeting East African regional governments and security interests as well as European and American interests. Al Shabaab's efforts will be aimed at removing external influence from Somalia and compelling troop contributing countries to re-evaluate their involvement in AMISOM. In the future, al Shabaab may seek to adapt to financial and territorial losses by broadening its terrorist agenda throughout East Africa.

Political tensions within the Federal Government of Somalia will probably increase leading up to federal elections which have been delayed and are now scheduled for August, 2016. Tensions may be exacerbated if the government falls further behind on the key transitional benchmarks of constitutional reform, federal state creation, and the establishment of technical commissions to oversee the electoral process, or if it tries to exert its authority outside of a federally-styled government.

Wide-spread deterioration of security situations due to contested elections and constitutional referendums in East Africa will continue to challenge the region. As seen in Burundi, election protests can lead to politically motivated violence between the opposition, security forces, and civilian militias.

NORTH AFRICA

In North Africa, our priority is to contain Libyan instability and to counter violent extremist organizations. The post-Arab Spring transitions have fundamentally altered the regional security landscape. Terrorist groups like the Islamic State-Libya (IS-Libya) have exploited this instability and have expanded their training and operations. Furthermore, our European allies are deeply concerned about the migrant crisis and view it as their preeminent security issue within the Mediterranean Sea and along Europe's southern flank.

Libya's insecurity, combined with porous land and maritime borders, has negative consequences for its people, its neighbors, Europe's southern flank, and our peace and security objectives in Africa and the Middle East. Foreign fighters, arms, and illegal migrants are flowing through Libya, supplying fighters to the Syrian and Iraq conflicts, and threatening our North African partners and Southern European allies. The December 2015 agreement to form a Libyan Government of National Accord (GNA) is an important step toward stabilizing the country. Even with the support of the international community, the GNA will likely struggle for the foreseeable future to establish its authority and secure Libya's territory, borders, resources, and people. The continued absence of central government control will continue to perpetuate violence, instability, and allow the conditions for violent extremist organizations to flourish until the GNA and appropriate security forces are operational within Libya. In the interim, the political situation will complicate national and international efforts within Libya.

IS-Libya represents a serious and growing threat to U.S. persons and interests throughout the region. Since mid-2014, IS-Libya has subsumed existing violent extremist organizations and continues to attract new fighters. Foreign fighters returning from Syria and Iraq reinforce IS-Libya's ranks with battle-experienced fighters. This situation allows for IS-Libya to expand its

presence, co-opt existing organizations and militias, and incorporate more tribal and sub-national groups.

The absence of a functional government in Libya creates a favorable environment that threatens to export instability across Africa and threatens our European allies. Currently, we are engaged with our European partners in planning and intelligence sharing for the Libyan International Assistance Mission (LIAM), an international security effort to assist the newly established Government of National Accord. Improving regional security requires a coordinated multinational approach to support improvements in governance, security, and development.

In Mali, security has become more tenuous as terrorist organizations carry out deadly attacks in the north against Malian, French, and United Nations forces and take advantage of a smaller military presence, the flow of arms from Libya, and the inability of the Mali government to find a political solution to its domestic security situation. Increasingly, we are seeing terrorist elements launch attacks in central and southern Mali against civilian targets, which will add increased stress to security forces that lack the training and experience with counterterrorism to combat the threat effectively. While the situation remains challenging, the international community's coordination in addressing regional security challenges has improved. United States Africa Command supports the Department of State in preparing partners with non-lethal training and equipment for deployment to multilateral peacekeeping operations in Mali where eleven African countries are contributing to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stability Mission in Mali mission. We continue to provide support to partners and allies operating in Mali and neighboring countries, including enabling assistance to French forces in the Sahel, a relationship viewed as extremely effective and mutually beneficial.

United States Africa Command is assisting in broader regional security and stability in numerous ways. We continue to collaborate with the Sahel Multilateral Planning Group—United States, United Kingdom, France, Canada, and Italy—to synchronize allied activities in the Sahel Maghreb region to strengthen multilateral relationships in the fight against violent extremist organizations. In Tunisia, we are supporting counterterrorism training and increasing Tunisia’s aerial support capability and focusing on improving Tunisia's counterterrorism, intelligence, and border security capabilities. We are also assisting Tunisia in installing an electronic surveillance system along key portions of the border with Libya to help stem the illegal flow of people, arms, and contraband. In Algeria, U.S. Army Africa is providing counter-Improvised Explosive Device (IED) and forensic training. This training provides Algerian troops expertise in analyzing post-blast sites to determine types of IEDs used and adjust plans and tactics to better counter threats.

WEST AFRICA

In West Africa, containing and degrading Boko Haram (Islamic State-West Africa Province (ISWAP)) remains the top priority as Boko Haram conducts increasingly complex and lethal attacks aimed at terrorizing civilians and destabilizing governments. We are watching carefully for signs that the threat posed by Boko Haram to U.S. persons is growing as a result of the group’s alignment with ISIL. In 2015, the African Union authorized a request from Benin and the Lake Chad Basin Commission nations (Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Nigeria) to form the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) to counter-Boko Haram. Countering adaptive threat networks, like Boko Haram, across a transnational battle-space, requires this type of regional approach. The African Union, France, the United Kingdom, the European Union, and the United States have all pledged financial support to the MNJTF partner nations to support their counter-

Boko Haram efforts. With the assistance of the Department of State, United States peacekeeping operation funds are providing support to the MNJTF Headquarters partners, including a project to link the MNJTF headquarters to the African Union's and regional economic communities' command and control systems, while additional funds will be used to train and equip forces and to enable airlift support.

Last year, Nigerians brought about a largely peaceful transition of executive power. Since the election, President Buhari and his administration have focused on anti-corruption programs, counter-Boko Haram efforts, and rebuilding Nigeria's socio-political and economic systems. However, after decades corruption at the highest levels of civil and military leadership and a history of human rights abuses by security forces, Nigeria will require a comprehensive effort and support from partners such as the United States to reform and fully capitalize on its role as a leader on the continent. Nigeria must continue to improve the security services' behavior toward the civilians they are obligated to protect. To assist Nigeria, we are expanding security cooperation engagements and providing counter-IED support; intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance assessment teams; and advisors to support Nigeria's military at both the tactical and operational levels. We are also working with the Department of State to respond to the Nigerian Air Force's request for equipment and aircraft. Information sharing agreements are in place between the United States and Nigeria as well. We also facilitated the provision of excess defense article Mine Resistant Armored Personnel carriers to Nigerian forces.

Also, in support of the counter-Boko Haram effort, the United States provided assistance to the adjoining countries of Niger, Chad, and Cameroon. In October 2015, the United States began providing security assistance training in Agadez, Niger, with 21 U. S. Soldiers and Airmen providing training to 250 Nigerian troops in support of the counter-violent extremists

organization fight. In Chad, we have trained approximately 2000 members of the Special Anti-Terrorism Group, and in Cameroon we have provided small unit tactics training and assistance to six Battalions from the Rapid Intervention Brigade that are engaged in counter-Boko Haram efforts.

The Gulf of Guinea is rich with resources and significant development potential for energy, shipping, transportation, food, and tourism; however, it is also an area of insecurity. Piracy, armed robbery, illegal fishing, and kidnaps-for-ransom are pervasive off of Africa's west coast, and these problems have global implications. Lack of a regional coast guard presence to patrol waters allows criminal groups to operate and prey on tankers and commercial shipping. Through U.S. Naval Forces Africa, we support regional maritime security activities and complement civilian initiatives that address the root causes of maritime crime by strengthening governance and promoting economic development. Ongoing cooperation efforts between regional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States and the Economic Community of Central African States, are yielding results in implementing maritime codes of conduct, like the Yaoundé Code of Conduct, an information sharing and maritime security agreement to counter illicit trafficking and piracy. For instance, as pirates took the motor tanker Mariam west across the maritime boundaries of Nigeria, Benin, Togo and finally into Ghanaian waters, it was tracked and monitored through the increased capabilities of the Maritime Operation Centers we helped build. Ultimately, it was interdicted and boarded by Ghanaian naval forces resulting in the arrest and prosecution of the pirates.

This year, Operation UNITED ASSISTANCE, the operation to combat Ebola in West Africa, concluded. The USAID-led effort, with the Defense Threat Reduction Agency, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and U.S. Army Africa supporting, focused on

building partner capacity of Liberia and the region. Our efforts are guiding partners to lead their own responses to the next outbreak by updating regional and national disaster preparedness and management plans based on lessons learned from the Ebola crisis. Recognizing the need to achieve sustainable capacity to preempt and respond to future crises, we initiated the African Partner Outbreak Response Alliance. This African-led, USAFRICOM-supported program develops military capabilities to support responses to an infectious disease outbreak. Complementary to this is the Disaster Preparedness Program, which provides funding to build national response plans which the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) used as a template for regional response plans.

CENTRAL AFRICA

In Central Africa, in addition to those states engaged in Gulf of Guinea cooperation, the command's efforts have focused on working with the African Union Regional Task Force to counter the Lord's Resistance Army. Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, and South Sudan have contributed forces to the African Union Regional Task Force, which has led military efforts to reduce the group's safe havens, capture key leaders, and promote defections.

While Joseph Kony remains at large, the African Union Regional Task Force, with advice and assistance from U.S. forces, has had considerable success reducing the threat posed by the LRA. Through the combined efforts of military forces, civilian agencies, and non-governmental organizations, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) no longer threatens regional stability, and its capacity to harm civilian populations has diminished. Today, we estimate less than 200 Lord's Resistance Army fighters remain, and communities are better prepared to protect themselves. While continuing to work to eliminate the threat posed by the LRA, United States

Africa Command can also now begin to focus on countering illicit activities that support the LRA and other destabilization influencers in the region.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Southern Africa remains relatively stable. The region fields some of the most professional and capable military forces on the continent. South Africa continues to contribute to regional and continental security, including participation in United Nations peace operations in Darfur, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Despite its relative stability, the region faces economic and social challenges that include poverty, crime, social inequality, and corruption. Future leadership challenges in countries such as Zimbabwe may increase the risk of regional instability.

STRATEGIC RISKS

Other nations continue to invest in African nations to further their own objectives. China is focused on obtaining natural resources and necessary infrastructure to support manufacturing while both China and Russia sell weapon systems and seek to establish trade and defense agreements in Africa. As China and Russia expand their influence in Africa, both countries are striving to gain “soft power” in Africa to strengthen their power in international organizations.

Non-allied and non-state actors are demonstrating increasing agility and sophistication in the information environment. They exploit vulnerabilities in partner, allied, and U.S. government networks and invest heavily in internet and social media expertise to spread ideology and reach perspective recruits.

Elections and transitions of power remain both a source of and catalyst for political instability in many African nations. Challenges to the electoral process and to peaceful, democratic transfers of power threaten both new and established governments. Protests in

response to irregular or unfair voting too easily devolve into violence or violent responses from security forces.

OPPORTUNITIES

United States Africa Command and our component commands collaborate with the African Union, European allies, the European Union, the United Nations, and other organizations to further the common objective of a safe, stable, and prosperous Africa. We also work in concert with international and interagency partners to build defense capabilities, respond to crisis, and deter transnational threats. The ability of our African partners to sustain the capacity they gain through security force assistance is dependent upon our collective efforts with allies, international organizations, and the African partners themselves. African nations are working together to develop solutions to the threats and challenges confronting them, and our allies and partners will continue to support their efforts.

COMMAND APPROACH

THEATER STRATEGY (5 – 20 Years)

Our strategy articulates a long-term, regionally focused approach that seeks to establish, with partners, a strategic environment in which African nations are willing and capable of addressing security threats, not solely from a military perspective, but from the foundations of governance, security, and development. The 2015 National Security Strategy mandates that we train and equip local partners and provide operational support to confront terrorist groups. It includes developing the ability to direct, manage, sustain, and operate a ready and able organization over time. These sustainable defense institutions promote governmental stability, respect for the rule of law, democracy, and human rights, and help to sustain broad-based

development, all of which address the root causes of violent extremism and mitigate the need for costly international intervention.

THEATER CAMPAIGN PLAN (1 – 5 Years)

The United States Africa Command operational approach seeks to disrupt and neutralize transnational threats by building African partner defense capability and capacity, as directed in the 2015 National Security Strategy, in order to promote regional security, stability, and prosperity, while always protecting U.S. personnel and facilities and United States' access on the continent.

This approach includes five lines of effort:

- Neutralize al Shabaab and transition the African Union Mission in Somalia to the Federal Government of Somalia
- Degrade violent extremist organizations in the Sahel Maghreb and contain instability in Libya
- Contain and degrade Boko Haram
- Interdict illicit activity in the Gulf of Guinea and through central Africa with willing and capable African partners
- Build African peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, and disaster response capacity.

Sustainable security requires effective and enduring institutions, both civilian and military, that are guided by the rule of law and a merit-based promotion system. We provide direct support to strengthening defense institutions and indirect support for governance reform and economic development, primarily led by the Department of State and USAID. Diplomatic, defense and development efforts continue to reinforce each other to promote stability in both conflict-affected and steady-state environments to build resilient democratic societies.

The Theater Campaign Plan, along with the efforts from our component commands, develops a balanced approach that strengthens institutions and conducts counterterrorism operations with African regional partners, international allies, such as France and the United Kingdom, to disrupt, degrade, and eventually defeat terrorists. Recent operations in East Africa removed Abdirahman Sandhere, a senior leader of al Qaeda-affiliated al Shabaab, responsible for terrorist activities in Somalia. His removal from the battlefield represents a significant blow to al Shabaab and demonstrates that the United States will continue to use all tools at our disposal—diplomacy, information, military, and economic—to dismantle al Shabaab and other terrorist groups who threaten our partners, our allies, and the United States. In North Africa, recent airstrike operations removed Abu Nabil, an Iraqi national who was a longtime al Qaeda operative and the senior IS-Libya leader. In West Africa, we provide enabling support to the African-led Multinational Joint Task Force in their operations against Boko Haram. In the Gulf of Guinea, our cooperation with Benin, Ghana, Nigeria, and Togo led to enforcement of the Yaoundé Code of Conduct and increased their capacity to counter illicit trafficking and piracy. These efforts have achieved an unprecedented level of collaboration, and their operations are shaping the campaign plan, which provide time and space to increase partner capacity within defense and government institutions.

SYNCHRONIZATION WITH PARTNERS

The Africa Strategic Dialogue, an annual meeting of United States Africa Command and our interagency partners facilitated by the Africa Center for Strategic Studies, is intended to foster a shared strategic situational understanding and a common strategic approach. This collaborative forum fosters a comprehensive approach by including Assistant Secretary-level leaders in the Department of Defense, Department of State, and USAID and provides the

guidance to improve the alignment of resources to the U.S. strategy and informs our annual budget planning cycles.

We recognize that defense is only one component of the African security sector, and it is equally important to address the law enforcement and judicial systems. United States Africa Command and the Department of State are supporting partnerships with Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Tunisia to strengthen governance across the security sector with the Security Governance Initiative (SGI). SGI is a collective approach to strengthen African partners' security institutions' capacity to protect civilians and confront challenges, with integrity and accountability. Key to the success of this initiative is the demonstrated willingness and ownership of our partners to tackle security sector governance issues.

The Counter-Terrorism Partnership Fund (CTPF) is a mechanism to develop the counterterrorism capacity of African partners, as well as nations within the USCENTCOM area of responsibility. CTPF proposals, totaling \$465 million in Fiscal Year 2015 and \$420 million in Fiscal Year 2016, are designed to strengthen those nations' defense institutions. For Fiscal Year 2017, the President's budget requested \$1 billion for CTPF for AFRICOM and CENTCOM. AFRICOM anticipates using its FY 2017 CTPF allocation for crucial airlift, ISR, command and control systems, sustainment training, and force structure development of African partners.

Programs such as the Security Governance Initiative and the Counter-Terrorism Partnership Fund provide an opportunity to further our relationships with African partners while improving the security environment and fostering governmental progression toward inclusive democracy. Strong institutions that are fashioned and perform their duties in accordance with the rule of law protect the people and provide inclusive opportunities which will sustain our efforts and ultimately determine if building partner capacity succeeds.

Our security cooperation activities are aligned with our Theater Campaign Plan objectives and account for what our partner nations can absorb, with the complementary objective of aligning resources to our strategy. For example, Tunisia, our newest major non-NATO ally, has developed a three-tiered approach to building military intelligence capacity, affirming that Tunisian and U.S. strategic goals for counterterrorism and the promotion of democracy are aligned. Through this approach we developed a plan that will provide capabilities such as the Scan Eagle unmanned air system, for integration into the Africa Data Sharing Network, and build a military intelligence training program at the generating force level which complements Tunisian executive direction reforms to create a fusion center between the Tunisian Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior. These efforts help to foster security, governance, and economic development and are a model for sustainable security force assistance.

United States Africa Command is working with international partners to synchronize security efforts. The United Kingdom has recently increased its presence and commitment in Africa, and we are synchronizing efforts to increase efficiencies and provide greater collective effects. In North Africa, the Libyan International Assistance Mission (LIAM), an international security effort to assist the newly established Government of National Accord, is our main planning focus with European partners. In West Africa, through an international cooperation and coordination liaison cell, U.S. assistance is synchronized with international partners from France and the United Kingdom to build interoperable and sustainable partner defense institutions. With the support of France, the United Kingdom, and the United States, the African Union hosted the African Logistics Forum that brought together thirty-eight nations to discuss African logistical challenges and opportunities.

THEATER POSTURE

Having an appropriate posture on the continent facilitates building partnership capacity, executing joint operations, and protecting U.S. personnel and facilities. We maintain 15 enduring locations on the African continent which give the United States options in the event of crisis and enable partner capacity building. Additionally, the command designated nine new contingency locations as part of the Theater Posture Plan for 2016 focused on access to support partners, counter threats, and protect U.S. interests in East, North, and West Africa. These contingency locations strive to increase access in crucial areas aligned with the Theater Campaign Plan. Flexible and diverse posture facilitates operational needs and the protection of U.S. personnel and facilities.

RESIDUAL RISK

We are helping to set the conditions for the eventual transition from the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to the Somali National Army and the Federal Government of Somalia. If the Somali National Army fails to form the defense institutions required to generate and sustain new forces and equipment, then AMISOM troop contributing countries—Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda—may reach donor fatigue levels, threatening current troop contributions levels. Recent United Kingdom commitments are encouraging, and we are complementing their efforts to neutralize the threat that al Shabaab poses to regional security. Strengthening the Somali National Army requires a coordinated international effort.

We strongly support the formation of an international coalition to counter-IS-Libya and to support a functional Government of National Accord; otherwise, we risk the expansion of IS-Libya that further degrades stability in North Africa and threatens U.S. interests. Stability in Libya is a long-term proposition that will require strategic patience as the GNA forms and

develops. Our approach allows time for the Libyan government to develop by providing support to regional partners Chad, Niger, and Tunisia, as well as Egypt (in cooperation with United States Central Command); offers support to international partners such as the Italian-led Libyan International Assistance Mission; and directs counter-IS-Libya operations.

We are mitigating risk to US military and civilian personnel with regard to intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) requirements and personnel recovery (PR) assets through cooperation with our allies and partners. Most operations in our Area of Responsibility occur as advise and assist missions. This requires a serious evaluation of vulnerabilities, which can be mitigated by ISR and PR. Integrating personnel recovery and surgical stabilization capabilities are a moral obligation and essential for the proper care of U.S. service members who risk their lives to protect our nation.

Flexible posture through cooperative security locations and contingency locations, complemented by the Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force-Crisis Response (SPMAGTF-CR) at Moron Air Base, Spain and the East Africa Stand-by Force in Djibouti provide the appropriate level of responsiveness during crisis and are strategically positioned to enable U.S. and partner operations against terrorist threats. Completion of our Cooperative Security Locations, coupled with accurate indications and warnings, will ensure swift crisis response to all fifteen high threat/high risk embassy locations in Africa.

LOOKING TOWARD THE FUTURE

The President has stated that Africa—its growing economies, its emerging middle class, its rising geo-political influence—is more important than ever to the security and prosperity of the international community and to the United States. Modest investments, in the right places, go a long way in Africa. Maximizing our energies today with African partners, allies, the

interagency, non-governmental organizations, and international organizations will strengthen democratic institutions, spur economic growth, boost trade, enhance investment, and advance peace and security. These efforts will assist in making African nations strong, stable, and reliable strategic partners in the future, a future in which Africa will play an increasingly prominent global role. While the continent offers a challenging and complex strategic environment, the command approach is synchronized and focused, and capitalizes on regional cooperation and close coordination with our African and international partners.

As the Department of Defense makes difficult decisions about strategic risks and associated tradeoffs, United States Africa Command will continue to provide the foundation on which to build, shape, and pursue our shared interests across Africa. Thank you for your continued support to our mission and to the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen, civilians, contractors, and their families as we continue to advance our Nation's defense interests in Africa.