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**NATIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES AND
U.S. MILITARY ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA**

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ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

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ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS

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NATIONAL SECURITY CHALLENGES AND U.S. MILITARY ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES,
Washington, DC, Tuesday, March 6, 2018.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 10:01 a.m., in room 2118, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. William M. “Mac” Thornberry (chairman of the committee) presiding.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. WILLIAM M. “MAC” THORN- BERRY, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM TEXAS, CHAIRMAN, COM- MITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

The CHAIRMAN. The committee will come to order.

While the National Defense Strategy [NDS] emphasizes strategic competition with Russia and China, it also makes clear the Department will have to maintain its focus on defeating the terrorist threat to the United States.

Many of the conditions that allow terrorist groups to proliferate, such as vast ungoverned spaces, weak governmental institutions, poor security, and struggling economies, exist on the African continent. A concern is that the terrorist threat in and from Africa will grow as ISIS [Islamic State of Iraq and Syria] is pushed out of Iraq and Syria.

At the same time, Africa has the fastest-growing population in the world, immense natural resources, and great potential. We are witnessing the strategic competition talked about in the NDS taking place there too. China established its first overseas military base in Africa last year, just a few miles from the U.S. base in Djibouti, for example.

Using a small number of U.S. military forces, AFRICOM [U.S. Africa Command] largely works by, with, and through our African partners to address threats on the continent. It also uses DOD [Department of Defense] security cooperation programs to develop African military partners capable of providing their own security. But this approach entails risk, especially given the enormous distances and lack of infrastructure on the continent.

Our witness today, General Waldhauser, Commander of AFRICOM, will provide his assessment of the threats to U.S. national security and how the recently released National Defense Strategy affects U.S. military priorities and posture on the continent. He will also help us explore the risks versus the benefits of our approach to Africa within the strategic context of our national security goals.

I understand that AFRICOM has completed its investigation into the October 2017 ambush in Niger by ISIS-affiliated fighters that

killed four U.S. soldiers. I understand that the results of that investigation and its recommendations are now being reviewed by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Dunford, and by Secretary of Defense Mattis.

In addition, the families of the fallen have not yet been briefed on the results. Accordingly, I understand General Waldhauser is not able to comment on matters related to that investigation. And I would say that is despite of some purported leaks in the press this morning.

The ranking member and I had previously requested a copy of the investigative report on behalf of the committee, and we expect to receive it right away when it is finished. We further expect that General Waldhauser and his staff will be available to the committee promptly upon request as we conduct our oversight into the issues raised by that incident.

I yield to the ranking member.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Thornberry can be found in the Appendix on page 47.]

STATEMENT OF HON. ADAM SMITH, A REPRESENTATIVE FROM WASHINGTON, RANKING MEMBER, COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I think you gave an excellent summary of the situation within AFRICOM, why this testimony is so important.

I thank General Waldhauser for being here and for his leadership in Africa.

I think it is a very important part of our national security picture that does not get as much attention as it should, in my opinion. We have certainly seen the threat from various transnational terrorist groups popping up in various places in Africa, and containing that threat is enormously important.

But, beyond that, I think there are tremendous opportunities in Africa for partnerships, as the chairman alluded. For all of the challenges that are in Africa, there is great promise, as it is a rapidly growing population and a rapidly growing economy. So building those relationships and building those partnerships is going to be important.

There obviously are a number of different aspects to that, but our military relationship with countries like Ethiopia and Kenya and Uganda and others is very important to building the strong relationship we need to make sure that our interests are protected in Africa and that we help Africa become a more peaceful and more prosperous place.

I am particularly interested in your testimony. I have been to East Africa on a number of occasions, and I think it is an excellent model for how we can work, as the chairman said, by, through, and with our local partners to achieve national security objectives.

Again, working with Ethiopia, Uganda, and Kenya, amongst others, we have been able to deal with the situation in Somalia and the threat from al-Qaida, I think, reasonably effectively in a very difficult part of the world.

I am interested in how we can replicate that a little bit better in West Africa, where, frankly, we have a tougher time finding the

partners, where you have the chaos in Libya spilling out, you have, obviously, problems in Mali and elsewhere. Who do we work with there? How do we make sure that we don't have a growing, metastasizing terrorism problem coming out of West Africa? Who are our best partners and how do we contain that, is something that I am most curious about.

Otherwise, I agree completely with the chairman's statement. And I look forward to the statement from our witness, and, again, I thank him for his service.

Thank you, General.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Smith can be found in the Appendix on page 48.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

General, thank you for being here today. Without objection, your full written statement will be made part of the record. But you are recognized at this point for any oral comments you would like to make.

**STATEMENT OF GEN THOMAS D. WALDHAUSER, USMC,
COMMANDER, U.S. AFRICA COMMAND**

General WALDHAUSER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman Thornberry, Ranking Member Smith, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to update you on the efforts of United States Africa Command, known as AFRICOM.

I would like to begin this morning by remembering the soldiers and sailor we lost on the continent during operations this past year. These brave men died valiantly in the service of our country, and we honor their dedication to duty. I offer my sincere condolences to their families.

Mr. Chairman, I have completed my review of the Niger investigation and forwarded the report to the Secretary of Defense, through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Once the Secretary completes his review and the families have been briefed, I intend to provide a comprehensive and detailed account of the investigation to you as soon as possible.

This morning, I would like to talk to you about AFRICOM's strategy for the continent, then update you on our priority regional efforts.

The U.S. interests in Africa are reflected in our mission statement: "AFRICOM, with partners, strengthens security forces, counters transnational threats, and conducts crisis response in order to advance U.S. national interests and promote regional security, stability, and prosperity in Africa."

Our mission statement deliberately highlights the importance of "with partners." In reality, very few, if any, of the challenges on the African Continent can be resolved through the use of military force. Accordingly, AFRICOM's first strategic tenet underscores that our military activities are designed to support and enable U.S. diplomatic and development efforts. We can create time and space for governments to establish effective and accountable governance while fostering conditions for economies to develop.

Our second theme describes our strategic approach of "by, with, and through." This framework emphasizes our main effort to build

capacity of our African partner nation defense forces to credibly provide for their own security.

While our African partner nations have enormous potential, they are often challenged by instability and exploitation stemming from the disruption caused by violent extremist organizations, or VEOs. These VEO groups take advantage of vast, ungoverned spaces and recruit from populations lacking economic opportunities.

We approach these security threats through our third strategic principle of keeping pressure on the networks of VEOs, such as Al Shabaab, ISIS, al-Qaida, and Boko Haram, in order to mitigate their destabilizing influence. At the same time, we remain postured and ready to respond to contingencies and to protect U.S. personnel and facilities on the continent.

These strategic themes and AFRICOM's approach are aligned with the national-level guidance. In accordance with the recently released National Defense Strategy and in the context of changes in the operating environment, we are updating our strategy and theater campaign plan to reflect the guidance provided by the Secretary of Defense.

Turning now to our regional efforts, I would like to describe for you some of our challenges we face each day on the continent.

In East Africa, AFRICOM's contributions are part of an international commitment to help Somalia implement their recently designed national security architecture. Al Shabaab remains a threat to Somalia and the region, as demonstrated by their October 2017 bombing in Mogadishu that killed over 500 people.

The challenges facing the Federal Government of Somalia are enormous. Nevertheless, they continue to slowly make progress and, by doing so, continue to maintain the support of the international community. With international partners and organizations, including the African Union and the European Union, AFRICOM's kinetic and capacity-building efforts assist the Federal Government of Somalia with their implementation of their comprehensive approach to security and sector reform.

In North Africa, Libya remains politically and militarily divided, with leaders and factions vying for power ahead of potential elections later this year. In close cooperation with the Libyan External Office located in Tunis and as part of an international effort, AFRICOM supports diplomatic objectives for political reconciliation. We will continue to work with the U.N.-established Government of National Accord and maintain pressure on the ISIS-Libya and al-Qaida networks.

The "Sahel" refers to the Sahara-to-savannah transition belt spanning the broadest part of Africa, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Red Sea. AFRICOM supports multinational efforts in the Western Sahel and in the nearby Lake Chad Basin region of West Africa. We provide training, advice, and assistance to the G5 Sahel countries and the Multinational Joint Task Force in order to help them contain violent extremism and secure their borders.

In conclusion this morning, the continued progress on the continent with our partners reflects dedicated efforts by the men and women of AFRICOM. I am proud to lead these professionals who have built strong and trusting relationships with the U.S. inter-

agency and with our international community in order to foster security, stability, and prosperity on the African Continent.

On behalf of the service members, civilian employees, and families of United States Africa Command, thank you for the opportunity to be with you this morning, and I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of General Waldhauser can be found in the Appendix on page 49.]

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you.

General, I think your statement was clear, but I just want to make sure. You commit that, when the Secretary has signed off and the families have been notified, our committee will receive a copy of the investigation of the Niger incident as well as the recommendations and that you and your staff will be available to brief and answer any questions we have. Is that right?

General WALDHAUSER. That is correct, Mr. Chairman. We definitely want to conduct a brief for you.

The CHAIRMAN. Do you have any idea when that will be?

General WALDHAUSER. I really don't. It is up to the Secretary now to review and for him to be comfortable with the information in this exhaustive investigation. So, once that is complete, then, again, our first order of business, as we have said from the outset, is to brief the families and provide them the information.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay.

You heard in the beginning Mr. Smith and I both discuss the importance of the African Continent in a variety of ways. But I would like to hear you answer the question: Why should we care? What is it about Africa, what are the national security interests that the United States has in your area of responsibility that justify sending United States military men and women in there, conducting missions, and possibly even at the risk of their lives?

General WALDHAUSER. Mr. Chairman, one of the huge challenges of the African Continent are the violent extremist organizations that I described at the outset. They permeate the entire continent in various locations. At the present time, they really do not have the capability to conduct operations, for example, in the United States, but they certainly aspire to do that.

And so one of the big things that we try to do with our efforts to build capacity inside the continent is to ensure that those violent extremist organizations who wish harm in the region, wish harm on the European continent, and ultimately wish harm on the United States, they are contained and then ultimately able to be handled by the security forces of those countries.

So that is a significant challenge that we have. In other words, we are trying to prevent something from happening before it does. That is a big part of our strategy, and I think it is very, very important.

The second thing that I would say is that, you know, you mentioned China and Russia and their ability to gather influence on the continent. And one of the things that, when we talk to our African partners all the time, is they really have a strong desire for U.S. leadership, U.S. involvement.

So it is important that in areas—as you mentioned Djibouti in your opening remarks, we have strategic interests there and that

Chinese have built a base just outside our gate. So it is important that we are there, that we are present, and the African people see our commitment to their overall desires.

And then, finally, I would just say that, you know, you talk a little bit about the population and the scale of potential problems on the continent: 1.2 billion people today in Africa; in 2050, 2.4 billion people will be the population. That is one in four people on the planet will live on the African Continent.

So any type of situation, whether it be humanitarian or security, the scale of potential problems there is really enormous. If there were, for example, outbreaks of some type of disease, Ebola, if the HIV [human immunodeficiency virus] continued to spread, the numbers that we would talk about and the scale and scope would be significant.

I mean, if you think, today, inside Somalia, as an example, with food insecurity, virtually half the population is food-insecure. Last year, it was 6 million people; this year, a little bit less, maybe around 5 million people. These are numbers of a scale and scope that, if security issues or humanitarian issues were left unchecked or if we didn't participate in trying to contain those, we would have significant challenges with large scale for a long period of time with those type of problems.

The CHAIRMAN. Just to clarify, at some point, there was great concern—in recent years, there was great concern about a terrorist threat to the United States connected to, in some way, Somalia. Are you saying that has basically gone away?

General WALDHAUSER. Mr. Chairman, I am not saying it has gone away. What I am saying is that some of the organizations in Western Africa, in the Sahel, for example, that have a flag of convenience, perhaps, with a group like al-Qaida or with a group like ISIS, they are small in number, and a lot of their activities are focused right there, direct, that have to do with regional problems, with grievances to the local governments and the like, but they aspire to the teachings of groups like ISIS.

And so, when they are supported by ISIS, whether it is financial backing and the like, then you have to assume that their desire to attack American citizens in the region, American citizens in Europe, American citizens in the home country, that still exists.

Today, though, specifically to your question about Al Shabaab inside Somalia, you know, I think you may be referring to the bombs, the computer bombs, if you will, that were put on airplanes and so forth. But, right now, we have had continuous pressure on the Al Shabaab network inside Somalia over the last few months, and we are working hard, in conjunction—this is all in conjunction with the Federal Government of Somalia.

I mean, one of the big changes there over the last year is President Farmajo, who has been elected and has been in office now for 1 year. And he is struggling to put together a strategy that a federal government will have a—will be a contributing factor to the federal member states. So all of our efforts kinetically with Al Shabaab are tied to his strategy.

And so I would not say that that threat has gone away, but I would say right now that, based on some of the kinetic activity we have done, in connection with international partners, has got Al

Shabaab in a situation where they are trying to control some territory.

Now, there obviously was the big bombing in October in Mogadishu. Then there was 4 months where there wasn't any. And now here in the last week in February, they had another bomb go off in Mogadishu.

So these groups never go away. I mean, you never really defeat them. But our overall intention is to get them to a situation where the Somali national security forces can handle that and then we can then leave.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay.

I might just remind all members that, after the conclusion of this open hearing, we will reconvene a classified session upstairs, as we have been doing with the combatant commanders.

Mr. Smith.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to follow up on the West Africa question. I think, as we were just talking about with Somalia, while you are correct, you can never say there is no threat, because obviously Al Shabaab is still active, there are still problems there, that threat was able to be contained, at least, as we worked with our partners over there. In West Africa, you have a far more chaotic situation, I believe, in terms of not knowing.

Can you educate us a little bit? Al-Qaida is active there. They have AQIM, al-Qaida in the Land of the Islamic Maghreb. ISIS is becoming active. You have Ansar al-Sharia in Libya. You have a really crazy mix. And part of it is terrorism. A lot of it is also organized crime, in human trafficking, drugs, a whole lot of other things.

What exactly is the threat coming out of West Africa? Obviously, this has gotten to everyone's attention after the Niger incident, but it was there before. I remember being there in 2009 when we were just trying to figure out what was going on and really didn't have many assets in that region.

What is the threat emanating out of that region, and how are we trying to confront it?

General WALDHAUSER. Thank you, Congressman Smith.

Look, there are basically two significant areas where the threat emanates. First of all, it is northeastern Nigeria, where Boko Haram and ISIS in West Africa are.

The second area in the Sahel is primarily in the northern Mali/Niger border area, where the AQIM groups have consolidated in the past year into one group called JNIM, Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam al-Muslim, a group in support of Islam and Muslims. There are a handful of al-Qaida groups who have joined together and this weekend, by the way, conducted this attack in Burkina Faso, and they have taken responsibility for that.

So inside northern Mali is a significant problem in the north, where the peace process that was agreed upon in Algeria several years ago with the federal government and various groups has not taken hold. And, meanwhile, the AQIM groups, now under the banner of JNIM, really have a lot of freedom of movement in that particular region. So there is a particular threat there.

Then inside of Nigeria, we talked about Boko Haram and ISIS West Africa. And I know over the last week or so, with the kidnaping of schoolgirls inside northern Nigeria, again, ISIS West Africa has demonstrated their ability to do these type of things.

And so, in both of these areas, this is where we work with the “by, with, and through” philosophy. And, right now, I mean, our guidance has been to contain those, contain Boko Haram and ISIS West Africa inside northeastern Nigeria, while we build up the partner forces’ ability to handle that.

Then inside in the Niger area, I mean, specifically, Niger is a country that is surrounded by problems on all of its borders. And in that northwestern part there, on the border with Mali, this is where these groups come back and forth across that border and have freedom of movement in these large, ungoverned spaces.

These countries—I think one other thing to underscore is the size of these countries. I mean, Africa, I think as we all know, is—you could fit three and a half of the United States inside that continent. So when we are talking about a country like Niger, it is almost two times the size of Texas. If you are talking about a coastline of Somalia, it is over 1,100 miles from the Kenyan border up to the northern part of Puntland. That is like from Jacksonville, Florida, up to northern New York. So it is important to understand the scale and the size of all of these situations.

And then the bottom line—so those are the two big areas there in the West.

You mentioned Libya. And we continue to work with Libya. We really have a strategic framework with four key items in mind. One of them is the counterterrorism effort, to keep that inside—keep that under control. We need to work to prevent civil war inside Libya. We need to work to support the political process. And we need to work to try to combat the migration issue, which ultimately makes its way, in many occasions, to the coast of Somalia, where these migrants move into Europe.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Wilson.

Mr. WILSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, General Waldhauser, congratulations on your service as Commander of U.S. Africa Command.

My home State of South Carolina is grateful to have a shared culture with West Africa, with Liberia having been established by freed slaves from South Carolina. When I visited Monrovia with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf at the AME [African Methodist Episcopal] University, which has been sponsored by many churches in South Carolina, I felt immediately at home. And so what you are doing there is just so important.

As terrorists flee from the Middle East because of our successful military efforts there, I am concerned about other emerging terrorist threats trying to establish operations in Africa. In order to prevent these terrorist organizations from establishing themselves, I believe that effective information operations are essential to disrupt and counter terrorist propaganda and recruitment efforts.

What capability do you have to rapidly organize and execute our information operations in Africa? When you recognize that a ter-

rorist organization is trying to establish operations in that area, are you able to utilize local nationals who speak the language and know the culture to expedite the process of standing up an operation? And, also, are you able to effectively coordinate your efforts with the Department of State?

General WALDHAUSER. Thank you, Congressman.

I would say in this session that our efforts primarily, in the information world, are at the tactical level. We have organizations that are at various locations with our partner forces on the continent, where we go—where we take the messages via social media, radio, print, billboards, what have you, to try to knock down or mitigate some of the messages that come from the terrorist organizations. I will tell you, it is a tactical-level operation.

We have been recently given authorities inside Somalia to do some other things, which we can talk about in the closed session, and they have proven to be helpful, very much, as well.

But the bottom line is we pay close attention with our partners in State. As I indicated, you know, really, our first tenet is to be in support of diplomatic and developmental efforts, because, at the end of the day, that is the long-term solution for the continent. And so we are very attuned to that. We work closely with them, and we have a very good working relationship with the interagency.

But information operations is one of the things that we primarily work at the tactical level.

Mr. WILSON. Well, this is encouraging. And I am sure that USAID [U.S. Agency for International Development] and other government agencies are helpful too.

With the recent opening of the first Chinese port near Djibouti, have you noticed any operational activities by the Chinese military in the region? Have you had to alter your approach to engage the recent establishment of their military influences?

General WALDHAUSER. China on the African Continent is a very interesting question, because, first of all, they are involved primarily all over the continent for minerals, resources, and the like. But, interestingly, in Djibouti, it is obviously, perhaps, the first overseas base that they have built.

Djibouti is a very strategic location for us. Not only AFRICOM, but CENTCOM [U.S. Central Command], Special Operations Command, EUCOM [U.S. European Command], TRANSCOM [U.S. Transportation Command], we all use that location. So it is very, very important to us.

We are not naive to think that some of the activities the Chinese are doing in terms of counterintelligence—they are taking place. But it just means that we have to be cautious, we have to be on guard for that type of situation.

Meanwhile, though, there are opportunities, especially in Djibouti, where we can work together with the Chinese. I mean, they have roughly 2,500 or so peacekeepers on the continent. Their military activity is primarily in countries that suit their needs. In other words, the One Belt, One Road concept, which has a lot of countries in the eastern part of Africa where they are located, you will see some military presence.

We have started to engage them, however, because—but it is under the rubric or the framework of our overall national strategy.

I mean, there are opportunities on the medical side, there are opportunities training-wise, that they are right there, right next door to us.

But we are working closely with OSD [Office of the Secretary of Defense] and the State Department to plot out a way that we can—we understand the nature of our overall strategy with China, but there are some unique places where we can cooperate on the continent.

Mr. WILSON. And that is really encouraging, to see it is not adversarial, that it can be, working together, mutually beneficial to U.S.-Chinese relations and then extraordinarily beneficial in the countries where you are operating.

And another point, back on countering terrorism information campaigns. Do you have the military authority that you feel sufficient to carry out the efforts you feel need to be made?

General WALDHAUSER. Yes, we do, Congressman.

Mr. WILSON. And, with that, you have answered everything.

I yield back. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Mrs. Davis.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, General, thank you very much for being here.

And, in many ways, you answered my first question, which really related to our National Defense Strategy, which states that great power competition, not terrorism, is now the primary focus.

As you allude and speak to how you are working in a positive direction with China, perhaps that answers part of how you deal with that. But what is the impact? How does that affect you and the command there?

General WALDHAUSER. Well, Congresswoman, thank you very much for the question.

You know, we read and I have read and reread the National Defense Strategy several times now since it has been out. And, obviously, there is a lot in there about China, Russia, North Korea, and the like, so I really home in on those paragraphs that talk about Africa and AFRICOM.

And on page 18 of the strategy, there is a huge paragraph in there that talks—not a huge. I shouldn't say that. There is a paragraph there that illustrates really in quite a directive manner what the Department's role is vis-a-vis Africa.

So the first piece of it is under the section that we should be engaging with partners and making relationships, enduring and trusting relationships. That is very, very important. And it is also, I think, the only place in the National Defense Strategy where “by, with, and through” is directed to us.

And if I have time this morning, either now or in the other session, I would like to spend a little time on defining what “by, with, and through” means, because it is more than just a bumper sticker.

Mrs. DAVIS. Yeah. Well, I am really glad you brought that up, sir, because I think, actually, there is a lot of concern that, due to a lack of investments in the State Department and, particularly, having people at posts that really matter with the kind of experience and background that we need, that we are—you know, we are really falling short in this regard.

How do you see that? I mean, do you have full confidence that that is not occurring? Or what role should the Congress, what should we be doing to shore up that right now? Because we are not going to have those people, those relationships that are built even in a few years from now.

General WALDHAUSER. Congresswoman, thank you.

Look, I would just go back to my first tenet again. I think that the long-term goal for AFRICOM is to support the political and the development process on the continent. That is the long-term solution.

And so, when I see cases like in Somalia, for example, on December 4, when the security conference was there, USAID signed a 5-year contract for \$309 million which gets at developmental issues—infrastructure, education, health care. And that is really a whole-of-government approach, and that is what we need. And specifically in a case like Somalia, that is what they need to keep moving forward.

So we certainly encourage that. We look for this whole-of-government approach. We advocate for the development side all the time, and it is a big part of what we do.

On the “by, with, and through,” if I may, so the “by, with, and through” essentially is an architecture or strategy that allows us—or forces us to build capacity for partner nations with the military in a support role and not in a direct combat role.

Mrs. DAVIS. Uh-huh.

General WALDHAUSER. So, in other words, the engagements or the operations are conducted primarily by the partner force, with our support in a background role.

Mrs. DAVIS. Yeah.

General WALDHAUSER. The “with” piece of this is that the things that we do to train, advise, assist and accompany and equip, those are things that we do with our partner forces—

Mrs. DAVIS. Sir, could—I hate to interrupt, but my time is running out. Could you talk a little—how do we measure the success of that “by, with, and through”?

General WALDHAUSER. This is a very difficult question, and I don’t have a good answer for that.

I mean, one of the things that we have to do is build institutions while we build the tactical level. We have to build the executing—an executive agency, in other words an OSD-like group. We have to build a generating force like a service headquarters so that we just don’t continue to train soldier after soldier after soldier, don’t know where they are, we lose track of their service.

We really have to home in on the institution side. And we have been forced by Congress to do that in the last few years. So all of this has to have that aspect to it in order to be successful.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you. Do you have sufficient tools?

General WALDHAUSER. We have sufficient tools. Our job is to do it with a small footprint. That is what—with economy of force. And our people understand that. It requires us to be innovative in how we do business. So we are fine in that regard.

Mrs. DAVIS. Thank you very much, sir.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Conaway.

Mr. CONAWAY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, thank you for being here.

You spoke about China's work on the continent. Can you speak briefly about what Russia might or might not be doing on the continent as well?

General WALDHAUSER. Thank you, Congressman.

From the AFRICOM perspective, our concern in Russia, at least at the moment, has to do with the northern part of Africa and the eastern Mediterranean. I am specifically referring to Libya.

I think that the Russians are looking to have influence on the continent through weapons sales, through some of the agreements with Libya, for example, that were in place prior to the Gaddafi departure. Our concern would be their ability to influence and be on the southern flank of NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization], and also them to kind of squeeze us out, if you will, by them taking a prominent role.

So Russia, to a large degree, is all about influence. And their weapons sales don't come with a lot of strings attached. That is how they make their—you know, make some revenue from that. But, again, it is about influence, and that is what our concern is.

Mr. CONAWAY. Thank you.

The water crisis in South Africa, particularly Cape Town, is that something that your guys look at, in terms of not necessarily solving it, but the potential for unrest within a population of 4 million people who run out of water and the impact it would have on the stability of the government and the ability to maintain the rule of law?

General WALDHAUSER. So that is one of the places where—what is unique about the AFRICOM staff, when it was first built 10 years ago—we are in our 10th-year anniversary—is that we have a very, very highly skilled and are very much represented by inter-agency partners.

So our State Department and USAID people track that. I mean, we don't really have any direct involvement in it. But we have had exercises and we do military engagements with South Africa. But we pay attention to that, watch that, and see how it may impact various aspects of our engagement.

Mr. CONAWAY. And then on counternarcotics, obviously, the drug routes coming out of Venezuela, across West Africa. Could you speak about any particular drug routes for drugs coming out of South Asia, going into Kenya, Tanzania, and the impact it might have on corrupting those already-fragile governments?

General WALDHAUSER. Right. I guess I would have to say that my knowledge and interest in the drug trade primarily comes from Western Africa, as it moves in through Mali, moves in through Niger, moves up through into Libya, on into the European continent and perhaps even into the United States.

There is no doubt about it, I mean, a lot of these terrorist groups, they call themselves terrorist groups, but to a large degree they are heavily involved in criminal activities—trafficking weapons, people, drugs—and that is how they make their livelihood. That is how they tap in to recruit young men of this youth bulge that is on the continent, to give them a livelihood, give them a better life. There

is no doubt about the fact that this drug-smuggling piece is a big part of what goes on.

And that is why one of the challenges, I think, that we have as AFRICOM is to try—when someone—when one of these groups labels themselves as ISIS or al-Qaida, you have to really look closely at their ties to historic cattle and livestock raiding and those type of things and just try to see and get an understanding as to what they are trying to do vis-a-vis carry out the ISIS, let's just say, norm of trying to attack the West.

These are all very complex problems, but many of them are rooted in things just as you described—drug trafficking, weapons trafficking, and the like.

Mr. CONAWAY. All right. General, thank you for your service.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Courtney.

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you, General, for your testimony this morning.

I understand that, again, the report on the ambush is still a little bit on hold until, again, you clear it with the families, and that certainly makes sense. I wanted to ask you a question, though, that is somewhat related to it and I don't think really, you know, delves into the specifics of that incident.

I received an email from a constituent who is serving in Niger in December, who asked what I thought was a pretty good question, which is why people serving over there don't receive imminent danger pay [IDP]. And, again, he looked on the chart, and there are countries in Africa like Algeria, Chad, Egypt, and Kenya that currently qualify for IDP, but folks who are serving in Niger and Mali don't.

And, you know, we know enough about the incident from public hearings in this committee, that it was a particularly violent and vicious event. And I want to ask your opinion. Should our service members who are serving in Niger qualify for IDP?

General WALDHAUSER. Congressman, thank you.

The short answer is yes. And we submitted that, with Niger and other countries in the area where it is dangerous, several months ago to OSD. My understanding is it is at OMB [Office of Management and Budget] for reconciliation, but we have made that request a while back.

Mr. COURTNEY. Well, thank you. And, again, that is something that I think a lot of Members might be interested in, following up with OMB to make sure that they do the right thing.

Again, just wanted to sort of spend a minute on Djibouti and China's, you know, presence there, which is pretty close, physically, to our, you know, installation that is there. I mean, are there any steps being taken in terms of just, you know, worries about surveillance or, you know, intelligence gathering, that there might be some vulnerabilities, again, given the proximity?

General WALDHAUSER. Well, first of all, you are absolutely correct, it is right next door. I mean, there have been rumors that the Chinese military wanted to come over and use our PX over at Djibouti. There is engagement periodically. I mean, these individuals come to, let's just say, events over on Camp Lemonnier. So there is a lot of interaction there, a lot of contact there.

We have taken—we are taking significant steps on the counter-intelligence side so that we have all the defenses that we need there. There is no doubt about that.

But I think that one of the challenges that we are going to have is things like this: I mean, the Djiboutian Government is probably over \$1.2 billion in debt to the Chinese. At some point in time, that money needs to be collected. The Chinese have built infrastructure, which is good. They have built buildings and roads inside Djibouti and other places on the continent. But this continues to pile up the debt in countries like Djibouti.

And so what is of concern to us here last week is a small item I am sure probably didn't hit your radar screens, but the Djiboutian Government took over the main port in Djibouti from a company that is in UAE [United Arab Emirates]. And the Djiboutians have told our country team there that there is no intent to have the Chinese run that port, there is no intent to give that over to the Chinese. But the bottom line is they took it over because this is another way for them to gain revenue in order to pay back this debt.

So we are going to watch that very close. Because if, in the worst-case scenario, if it happened, if the Chinese did take over that port—and, again, we have assurances from the Djiboutians they won't, but if they did, I mean, down the way, that restricts our access. That restricts the Navy's ability to get in there and just simply offload supplies and the like. So there are challenges with this.

So, when we talk about influence and access, this is a classic example with regards to China of how we have to proceed and how we have to be careful as we move forward.

Mr. COURTNEY. Thank you.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Hunter.

Mr. HUNTER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, Mr. Waldhauser, or General Waldhauser, for being here. You have a lot of fans up here, and you have a lot of fans in the crowd too, as evidenced by some older Marines of notoriety that came to be with you and show their support. So thank you very much for being here.

I guess the one thing I would like to touch on is: You are in Germany; that is where you are stationed at. You own Africa. That is your area of operations. And the movement of transnational criminals and terrorism to Europe and then making its way here to the U.S., would you just touch on that?

General WALDHAUSER. Thanks, Congressman. Appreciate it. And I won't identify who those older Marines are off to my side. They—whatever.

So we have—so, for example, we talked about in Libya one of our tasks is to try to help mitigate the migration issue. Our presence in Libya at the moment is small in numbers. We are heavily involved in a counterterrorism piece, and we are heavily involved with support to our State Department to be able to get them into Tripoli on a predictable basis.

Do you know that today inside Tripoli there are 24 embassies that have predictable presence? Sixteen are full-time. They include

Turkey; they include China. There are eight that are part-time at the moment, initial operating capacity: EU [European Union], U.K., France, Germany, and Russia.

I met with Ghassan Salame, who is the U.N. Special Representative to Libya, here about a few weeks ago at the Munich Security Conference. He indicated to me that the main effort or the center of gravity now is moving into Tripoli to try to get these things done, to try to get—there are many meetings that take place there. And so we are working closely with our—and we support our State Department to try to help them get in there full-time—not full-time initially, but at least episodic presence, in order that they can make a difference.

So, with regards to the—but one of our tasks in Libya is the migrant issue. And we do that, to a large degree, indirectly. I mean, really, you need a functioning federal government. And even then there is no guarantee the trafficking and the migrant issue will go away, but at least it would be a start. But where we help is kind of indirectly, where, in Niger, for example, we have some partner forces who are there specifically to train Niger forces on the policing, if you will, of the migrant problem.

But the bottom line is the migrant problem is not going to go away until there can be a livelihood replaced for the money that these individuals all across the chain make on the migrant issue. The migrant issue is a livelihood, it is a way of life, it is a business case. This is how many of these small villages, many of these individuals, this is how they make their money.

Because the migrants, to a large degree—our statistics will show that a good majority of them will come from countries that they are able to pay to do this, whether they sell all their belongings to make it happen or whether family members will garner the money that will get an individual up into Libya, across the coast, into Europe, and ultimately bring more family members on. It is a livelihood, it is a business. And so this is really the heart of the problem.

So we deal, at the moment, indirectly with helping and assisting our partners who train police forces to try to get after this thing. But the bottom line is this will not go away until there is a developmental side of this, where there is a livelihood that can take the place of the money that is supplied by the migrant problem.

Mr. HUNTER. Who is the number one agency that you work with that tries to track the bad guys that have moved in with the good guys just trying to make a better living? Who is tracking that on our side with you?

General WALDHAUSER. Well, I would just say that we work in conjunction with Special Operations Command, who has global interest in that. We work with our other agency partners on the intelligence side to do that. Maybe in closed session we could talk in a little bit more detail, but—

Mr. HUNTER. And the German authorities and the European authorities obviously push back to you, and you give them information, they give you information, and that helps you operate in Africa? Or do you have that kind of back-and-forth crosstalk?

General WALDHAUSER. I would have to say that, working with the Germans in that regard, we probably don't work in that level

of detail. I mean, we have FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation], we have those individuals on the staff. I would have to get back to you on if we are doing anything specifically with the European countries. For the most part, I would say that it is probably very, very little, if any.

Mr. HUNTER. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. O'Rourke.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, General.

I understand your comments about the report on Niger. And I think we all want to respect the process and the investigation and certainly want to respect the ability for those families who lost a service member to learn the findings of the report first.

But I also want to make sure that, you know, given the importance that Africa has for United States national security, our growing presence there, that there is a full hearing on what we find in that report. And I hope that this committee and you will appear before us in the future so that we can have that appropriate oversight and accountability, lessons learned, so we can apply them going forward. I think we all want that.

And so I appreciate your willingness to share that information with us at the appropriate time and then also make sure the broader public has the benefit of understanding that as well.

Wanted to ask you a couple questions about Somalia. My understanding is that we are engaged there under the legal auspices of the 2001 authorization for the use of military force. Having connected Al Shabaab with al-Qaida and the perpetrators of the 9/11 attack, that allows us to use military force there, to have U.S. service members there.

Is that—and, functionally, I would argue, we are at war in Somalia. Is that an accurate reading of the situation there?

General WALDHAUSER. Congressman, I would say it is an accurate reading. I wouldn't say—I wouldn't characterize it that we are at war. I mean, it specifically is designed for us not to own that.

And I think that one of the things that gets lost sometimes is the overall international effort that is ongoing there that we are a part of. So, for example, the European Union trains institutional-level, Turkey trains there, the UAE trains there, the U.K. [United Kingdom] trains there. And we have a part of that as well.

And I think the second thing I would point out is that, you know, our authorities come from execute orders that come from the Secretary of Defense. And so what we do there kinetically and what our niche is there in terms of building partnership capacity all comes from those authorities.

And I think the other thing I would just mention is that it is important to understand that we are just not there just plinging targets on a daily basis—

Mr. O'ROURKE. But, if I could interrupt you—

General WALDHAUSER. Sure.

Mr. O'ROURKE [continuing]. Just because I want to make sure that I get these questions answered. And I apologize for the interruption. But we are taking the lives of enemy combatants there under that authority. Is that correct?

General WALDHAUSER. We are conducting direct action strikes inside Somalia, yes.

Mr. O'ROURKE. And what other countries under your command are we doing that in right now?

General WALDHAUSER. We have the authority to do so in Somalia and in Libya.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Okay.

And I wanted to ask you a follow-up question to some of the other questions that were asked about complementing resources with the State Department, diplomatic resources, economic resources, to complement the military presence that is there.

And, also, the human rights dynamic of this. There was a report this last summer about a raid in Somalia that was supported by the U.S. military, as reported, and reported that 10 civilians, including 3 children, were killed there. The followup from the Pentagon was that you all were investigating—or that the Pentagon was investigating that attack.

Can you tell us a little bit about the repercussions of that, what your findings have determined, and how that affects your mission in that country, and what we can do on the diplomatic side to complement the military side of this.

General WALDHAUSER. Thank you.

I am sure you are referring to the incident in Barire, where, immediately upon—and where our forces were not involved in direct combat, but there were casualties there. And immediately it became very unclear, as happens almost every time when there is a strike in Somalia with regards to an IO [information operations] campaign from the enemy.

We did conduct an inquiry into that. And, you know, some of the issues that were brought up, with children and women and that, just didn't happen. I mean, the investigation, the facts just weren't there.

We had received—there were several media articles on that particular topic, and I just decided at that point in time—so it is kind of a dilemma. I mean, if you react to every item that shows up on social media, we would spend our entire day trying to hit back things that weren't true. But there were several media articles, and in this particular case, in order to demonstrate transparency, I just decided to have an investigation take place. And there is one ongoing right now by NCIS [Naval Criminal Investigative Service] to do that.

So we just said—we looked into it. The facts, as we have known them, don't support some of the things that were out there, so let an agency take care of it. But we are confident that our case is going to be accurate, but if it is not, we will take other appropriate action.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Thank you. Appreciate that. I just feel like, as we work with these partner countries, we then become connected with their actions. So it is great that there is an investigation, and look forward to seeing the results of that.

General WALDHAUSER. If I may say, if I could, I would just add that, look, the dynamics of the clans in Somalia are something that is very, very complex. I mean, President Farmaajo, who was a U.S. citizen and lived in Buffalo, New York, got his master's degree at

the University of Buffalo, his master's thesis was on the fact that the United States does not understand the clan dynamics in Somalia. I made that required reading for our team, and even after reading it, we still probably don't.

But the bottom line is the clan dynamics, the information campaign from Al Shabaab into social media is something that is very, very difficult for us. And we have to be aware of it, we have to combat it all the time, because they have an inordinate amount of just false information that they put out all the time as part of their strategy.

Mr. O'ROURKE. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Mrs. Hartzler.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Thank you.

General, you have a very large job, and I appreciate all your efforts.

In your written testimony, you discuss the importance of increasing partner institutional capacity in Africa. So can you discuss the benefits and shortfalls and give us an example of progress that you have made in this region?

General WALDHAUSER. Thank you very much.

As I perhaps alluded to earlier, perhaps one of the cornerstone or keys to any of these building-partnership-capacity programs is development at the institutional level. You have to have an executive organization who has strategy. You have to have an operational organization who takes care of training, organizing, equipping, paying, and the like. And then, of course, the tactical areas.

And I think that, you know, we have plenty of examples on the continent where this has not gone well, where we have trained, advised, and assisted and we have given all kinds of numbers and all kinds of dollars, in conjunction with State Department, and yet we still don't have a good accountability. So one of the things we are trying to do is work at the institutional level to make sure that is there.

It is very difficult in some of the nations where it is a fledgling democracy and there are all kinds of issues with regards to education and the like. But I would say one of the places where it is a success story is Tunisia, where, really, this whole thing all started.

We have been working extremely close with the Tunisians on a whole host of activities. But I think at the institutional level, the development of their intelligence service, an overall, comprehensive intelligence service that has the ability to synthesize, gain information, and then disseminate that information on a strategic and operational level, is a success story.

And when you look at some of the factors that go into that, you look at a government that supports it, a government that works, and you have an educational level and you have the ability for them to absorb that type of capacity.

So that would be an example of something that has gone very well.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Very good.

Several years ago, I read an article that was new to me and pretty shocking, just talking about—and, at that time, the article was

about Sudan and the reality that there is slavery going on there today. This was 20 years ago. But how people from the north were coming down, were capturing young men from their huts, taking them, selling them, and, you know, piercing their ear, and they became basically owned by that person.

Is there still—well, I believe it still is going on. But could you articulate more what countries there is slavery going on? And are we doing anything in this regard to stop this?

General WALDHAUSER. Congresswoman, I really couldn't say what countries where slavery is going on. I mean, there certainly are fragile states that have histories, as you described, in those type of activities. And, I mean, you mentioned Sudan, and also the problems, obviously, today with South Sudan, in terms of that particular challenge there, with a government that continues to use military force to beat back an opposition.

Look, I would answer that question by saying that all the training that we do has a human-rights aspect to it. I mean, we train militaries to adhere to the laws of armed conflict. We train them on laws of war, and we try to make sure there is a humanitarian side to that.

But as far as which countries right today have slave trades ongoing, I mean, I wouldn't—I would have to get back to you on that.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Uh-huh.

As we have worked hard to increase and pass a bipartisan budget to help address some of the readiness shortfalls, could you articulate some of the concerns that you have in your command with readiness issues and what you need to address that? And do you feel like the increased resources that we have given you in this past budget will help meet those shortfalls?

General WALDHAUSER. Congresswoman, thank you very much.

The budget is certainly something that is a big—that we are very happy about. And the resources that we have are adequate for what we do.

AFRICOM, historically, in the 10 years it has existed, has always been an economy-of-force organization. I mean, we have said time after time, commanders before me, some of the things with regards to personnel evacuation and MEDEVAC [medical evacuation] and then ISR [intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance] support, those are things that we would like to have more of. And I don't think there is any COCOM [combatant commander] who would sit before you—in fact, I think General Votel, the other day, talked about how no COCOM would say that he has adequate ISR.

But the bottom line is we know we have adequate resources to do what we are supposed to do, and we have to work within those right and left limits. We have to be innovative, we have to be creative, we have to coordinate.

But I think the overall budget certainly gives us what we need. And my job at AFRICOM is to continue to advocate for those assets that we need, but then, when we have some or if we buy them as a result of OCO [overseas contingency operations] funding and the like to fill some of those gaps, like in the MEDEVAC arena, then that is how we will attack the problems of adequate resources.

Mrs. HARTZLER. Thank you very much.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Brown.

Mr. BROWN. Thank you very much.

General, thank you for being here today. Thank you for your leadership at AFRICOM. And I want to recognize that, in a few months, in October, you will be celebrating the 10-year anniversary of AFRICOM, so congratulations.

I wanted to ask a question—it has been asked before, perhaps a little bit differently—about the allocation of national resources to different lines of effort, both military and nonmilitary, on the continent.

I have information, you know, that shows that from fiscal year 2012 to 2017 our aid to Africa, USAID and the State Department, has been pretty level, \$7 billion to \$8 billion, but in recent requests that level has—the request has been cut by \$3 billion. Now, that hasn't been approved by Congress, but that is a request that is in by the administration. And that \$3 billion is a cut, essentially, to two programs. One is development assistance, and the other is Food for Peace.

Also, I notice that from fiscal year 2013 to 2015 the title 10 security assistance, which includes train and equip, has gone from about \$100 million a year to closer to \$600 million, almost a half-a-billion-dollar increase.

You had mentioned at the outset of your testimony that the national security interests in Africa were threefold: one, to fight violent extremism, particularly those who aspire to strike the United States; the other—and this is my paraphrasing—is to sort of check Chinese or China—encroaching by China and Russia; and the third, you referenced that one-quarter of the global population and the needs that that population has.

It seems to me that if we don't address the needs of that population, that those are the underlying causes that fuel that first concern you have, which is the violent extremism. No jobs, no housing, no opportunities tends to drive people or draw people to extremist-type activities.

So my question is, given those trend lines and the request for a decrease in development assistance and the increase in title 10, train and equip, do you see a disconnect there? And does that create any additional challenges for you in what you are trying to accomplish?

General WALDHAUSER. Thank you very much, Congressman Brown.

First of all, I would just like to say that, with regards to the funding piece, we have to be cognizant and be a good partner and good steward of those funds.

So, for example, recently, a month or so ago, inside Somalia, State Department and the chargé down there stopped some of the equipment coming to the Somalia National Army because their ability to account for it was not there. And so we told them, "You need to account for this. You need to be responsible for this. And we are not going to continue just to give you equipment that we don't know where it went." So we have to be responsible for that.

Secondly, in order to have development, you have to have a secure environment, and so they go hand in hand. And we certainly are very cognizant—we get this question a lot, is, have we milita-

rized our policy on the African Continent. And that is not what we want to do. But we have to have a secure environment, so we have to build partner capacity so that they can—so various countries can secure their borders from these violent extremist organizations who want to have freedom of movement, who want to essentially overthrow some of these governments. So you do need to have security.

But, on the other hand, and the bottom line is, the development side is the long-term solution. And with the youth population that we have talked about today—I don't know if we have mentioned these, but you know, over 40 percent of the population is under the age of 15. If you take it up to 24, you are somewhere over 60 percent of the population is under the age of 24. Niger, for example, 19 million people in that country. The average age is 15. Fifty percent of those people are 15.

So you can see that the requirement for education, the requirement for job skills, the requirement to have a livelihood to give these individuals a better life is certainly a developmental issue that needs to be addressed.

And so, even though if the trend lines may be in the direction of perhaps more for DOD with regards to building capacity, it is necessary. We have to have security. But, at the same time, you have to have development. Otherwise, you are not going to get to where you need to be.

Mr. BROWN. I just also want to point out that there are a few unfilled positions at the State Department. One is the Ambassador at Tanzania and Congo. Both are on the State fragility index as either high at risk or very high alert. Is that creating more challenges for you to be able to accomplish your mission?

General WALDHAUSER. Congressman, so, look, I would support that—you know, we work closely with the chargés. They are very, very good. But I would support any nominations and securing of ambassadorships to these countries, because it is very, very important.

Mr. BROWN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Scott.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, thank you for being here.

I spent a week last year with General Furness in Camp Lemonnier and went into many of the various countries over there. And it is not possible to explain to people just how vast that territory is unless you actually get to see it from an airplane or a helicopter.

And there are tremendous sums of ungoverned territory out there. We have seen in the past where China has attempted to actually purchase land, in areas like Iceland. Are we seeing the Chinese try to actually purchase land, significant amounts of acreage, in Africa?

General WALDHAUSER. Well, Congressman, I would just say that the port in Djibouti is not the last port that China will build on the continent. There are some indications of looking for additional facilities, specifically on the eastern coast, because, again, it ties into the Belt-Road concept. So they have access to move their goods in and out.

But, you know, again, this is their plan, it is out there, and they are really executing it. So Djibouti happens to be the first. There will be more.

Mr. SCOTT. One of the things that I remember from that trip is that the Chinese actually had a hospital ship in the Port of Djibouti.

And of all the things that I heard from General Furness and the other people that we met with over there, the one thing that surprised me the most was to actually see a hospital ship where they are now delivering services to these citizens. And certainly happy that the citizens are getting that, but that seemed to be a marked change in the Chinese approach to influence in a country.

Is the—you mentioned the ISR and the lack thereof. The JSTARS [Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar] fly out of Robins Air Force Base. It is a platform that we have spent tremendous sums in development of, and now we are ready to purchase the new JSTARS platform. And the Air Force did not include it in its budget this year because of the shift towards—the National Defense Strategy shift towards China and Russia.

The potential loss of those ISR platforms, because of the shift toward China and Russia, what impact would that have on a continent like Africa and on the AFRICOM mission?

General WALDHAUSER. Congressman, one of the things that, from our ISR perspective is we desire—and I continue to advocate for—access to all of the intelligence capabilities, signals intelligence, ground movement, for example, video, signals, and the like. That is how you put a picture together.

So the JSTARS does play a place in that—it has a piece in that. And so, from our perspective—interestingly, the National Defense Strategy does talk about readiness in China and Russia. But the specific parts about Africa, though, still deal with by, with, and through and this terrorist-type threat.

Now, we know where the priority is, and we know when it comes to making hard decisions on assets, we understand that. But I would just say that, from our perspective, that any intelligence from the various levels, as I just described, are helpful to us.

Mr. SCOTT. It seems to me that if we—that stopping the procurement at this stage to develop another system might actually delay the ability—we simply won't have the platform or a platform to develop the—to deliver the ISR to you if we delay the purchase in hopes of being able to buy another system in the future.

Any information that you could give us about the links between the terrorist organizations inside the continent of Africa and links to terrorist organizations inside the U.S.?

General WALDHAUSER. Congressman, in this session what I would say is that the links that we see deal more directly with ISIS core, deal more directly with AQ [al-Qaida] core at this point in time.

Mr. SCOTT. I have no further questions, Mr. Chairman, so I will yield the remainder of my time.

General, thank you.

General WALDHAUSER. Thank you.

Mr. SCOTT. And I look forward to seeing you in the next session.

General WALDHAUSER. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Panetta.

Mr. PANETTA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, good morning. Thank you for being here.

You talked about you have the authority to take lives in Somalia and Libya. Doesn't the AUMF [authorization for the use of military force] give you authority to carry out those actions throughout the country—throughout the—excuse me, throughout the continent?

General WALDHAUSER. Well—right. The authorities that we work under are title 10 authorities that come from execute orders from the Secretary of Defense to go ahead and do those direct-action-type missions.

Mr. PANETTA. Right. I traveled with Representative Scott to Africa and those countries, and I completely agree with him that it is very vast, very big, but that also leads to the problems of having timely QRFs [quick reaction forces].

If you could, give us a sense of the current QRFs and if you have any recommendations to how you improve having QRFs in that area.

General WALDHAUSER. So let's talk about the MEDEVAC, the PR piece of this, in terms of being able to react. In—so we talked about the size and scope of the Somali seaboard, for example, 1,100 miles.

And so what we have to do is we have to be innovative, and we have to be agile. So we have to move damage control surgery units, roll-to units, as we call them, move them around to where the operations are so we are closely linked to that.

We have to move the aircraft along—helicopters, for example, move them around to be positioned where they can support the ongoing operations, all designed to be as quick as we can.

And that is really how we get after that. We have to, you know, be methodical. We have to be tied to the operations. And we have to make sure that our assets and the way we think about it, our medical planners and the like, and our operational planners, how they think about it so we are able to accommodate a faster response time.

Mr. PANETTA. In regards to the operation that took place in Niger, what was the nearest QRF?

General WALDHAUSER. Congressman, we made a commitment to the families, and I think that particular question, we would like to have them get the information, and we will be happy to answer that when we come back to brief you.

Mr. PANETTA. Understood.

Right now, there are about 5,000 to 6,000 troops on the continent, U.S. troops?

General WALDHAUSER. You know, on any given day, there is about 6,500 troops and about 1,000 contractors for about 7,500 troops in the continent. The bulk of those troops are in two places: The first one is on the eastern part, as you are probably well aware; Djibouti, Somalia, and Kenya is where a huge number of those—over probably 4,000 of those troops are there. Then the other places where there are large—are in the west. And, you know, some of the countries are a little bit—do not want us to make a big deal out of the numbers that we have there, and I respect that. But the bottom line is they are in the west, and these

problems with the G5 Sahel and these problems in Lake Chad is where the bulk of our people are there.

What I think it is important to underscore, though, is that when it comes to issues like QRF and MEDEVAC and, you know, and so forth, is this size is huge for us; in other words, you know, three and a half times the United States inside the African Continent. And then you have small pockets of people distributed in many different places.

So our challenge, QRF, MEDEVAC-wise, is significant. And as I described earlier, that is how we accommodate. And we use—I would also add that we use agreements with our partner nations to include their medical facilities, to include their helicopter and airplane facilities. We work—so by, with, and through with partner forces, in our case, we are encouraged by the National Defense Strategy to work and support those partners. And so we leverage what they bring as well in order to get at some of these issues we talked about.

Mr. PANETTA. You are based in Stuttgart, correct? How often are you on the continent of Africa?

General WALDHAUSER. Me, personally, it—probably, once, twice, a month. It just depends on the travel schedule.

Mr. PANETTA. Okay. Thank you, General.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Byrne.

Mr. BYRNE. Thank you, Chairman.

General, good morning.

I know you have answered a number of questions about Djibouti, but if you don't mind, I would like to go back. Obviously, it is an important country, where the Gulf of Aden flows in with the Red Sea, a very narrow body of water there, right across from Yemen.

The reports that I have heard about the actions of last week were that Djibouti actually illegally seized control of the Doraleh Port. And reports that I have read say that they didn't seize it for purposes of operating it for profit but that they actually intend to gift it to China.

So my first question to you is, is it your information that the port was illegally seized? And then, secondly, have you heard reports you think that are valid that there is some intent to gift it to China?

General WALDHAUSER. Well, what I can tell you, Congressman, is I do know from the open sources that Dubai Port World is taking this to court, I believe, in London. They are going to challenge this activity in London. The Djiboutians believe that they have the inherent right to nullify the contract, so it will have to be taken care of in court.

Now, with regards to the future, again, our country team, our Ambassador there talked with senior officials. They were assured by senior officials that there is no intention to eventually give this over to China.

We will have to wait and see. I mean, whether the Djiboutian country is able to run—they are going to run the port, as I understand it, for the next 6 months and then maybe transition it to someone else, another company. The key at that point would be is

who owns those companies and how that works. That is something—so that is my information on the port.

Mr. BYRNE. Well, let's look out there. Suppose that they did gift that port to China, what would that mean to the United States interest in that region?

General WALDHAUSER. Well, the consequence is—if the Chinese took over that port, then the consequences could be significant if there were some restrictions in our ability to use that. Because, obviously, the supplies that come in and not only take care of Camp Lemonnier and other places inside the continent—it is a huge place—it is a huge activity there. Moreover, I believe our U.S. Navy ships come in and out of there to refuel and whatnot. So there could be some consequences. That is why it is important to watch this. And—

Mr. BYRNE. Go ahead.

General WALDHAUSER. If I might say, I mean, talking about Congressman Scott's question about visibility and the Chinese and the like, this is why our—your visits there are very, very important. This is why our visibility there is very, very important.

The Chinese there are building facilities. They are building a shopping mall. They built a soccer stadium. They have changed—they have built the infrastructure for communications in Djibouti.

Now, Djibouti is a small country, and there are not a lot of resources there. They sell—there is a strategic geography situation. But when you have a hospital ship that is serving Djiboutians, they see that. And that enhances—and that is good, but it enhances the Chinese's view from the Djiboutian population.

And so it is important that we are visible there. It is important that, when we tell Djibouti we are their best partner, that we back that up with visits, with training that we do with Djiboutian Armed Forces. Small investments and small items, but it is an effort to let our Djiboutian partners know that we are a serious partner. I mean, our lease there is a 30-year lease. I think we are, I don't know, 6, 7 years, 8 years into the 30-year lease. And so it is a strategic geography location for us, and we need to keep it.

Mr. BYRNE. Well, the Chinese aren't there for purely charitable reasons; we all would recognize that. They obviously believe it is a strategic location.

Look out 10 years: Where do you see China in that area, not just Djibouti but that entire region? Where do you see the United States?

General WALDHAUSER. Well, I think, in 10 years, if—the Chinese involvement and engagement on the continent is certainly on an upward arc. If we don't—you know, if we don't—I won't say challenge that, but if we don't go with that, then, at some point in time, our—we have a very high approval rating by the—most places in Africa.

But as I've said, when you see visible signs, soccer stadiums, shopping malls, and the like, they know that the Chinese have built that for them. So, unless we are—we need just to continue to do small things. I think small—you know, small things go a long way in the African Continent. They want to know that we are trusting partners. They want to know that we are engaged. They want to know that we are there to assist them, in our case, build

capacity for their security. If we continue to do that, we can—we may not keep pace with the Chinese in terms of what they are doing, but at least our influence and our involvement there will not go away.

Mr. BYRNE. Well, I thank you for your service. I just want to register my concern watching the events, particularly of the last week, that things are moving perhaps faster and in a different direction than we may have thought.

And remember: If this was an illegal seizure of that port, what is to say that that government wouldn't illegally terminate our lease before its term is up? So I just register my concern. And I know that you are monitoring it; we will as well.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. O'Halleran.

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Thank you—oh, there it goes.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would appreciate—I am going to follow up on the China issue also. You know, in the South China Sea, we are looking at their expansion, and we have kind of a strategy that is pretty public there as far as how we are going to address it.

When we look over to Africa, we see the cuts potentially to U.S. aid. We see cuts to other programs. We see cuts to the State Department. And I am just trying to understand, what is our strategy over there?

And your latest answer was, basically, we don't have to outdo the Chinese; we just have to make sure that we are incremental in keeping what we do. But as far as a whole-of-government approach, I don't see that at all going on in the African Continent.

General WALDHAUSER. So, thank you, Congressman.

Look, we will never outspend the Chinese in the continent, and that is, I guess, the point I was trying to make. But I think our involvement and our contributions there can be made, and I think they will be noted.

I think that one of the things that which I mentioned in my opening remarks about how, as a result of the National Security Strategy and the National Defense Strategy, how we are rewriting our theater strategy and theater campaign plan. And one of the elements in this is the China piece. China has been on the African Continent for quite some time, but we as a combatant command have not dealt with it in terms of a strategic interest. And we are taking baby steps in that regard.

I mean, we have to understand that there is a global strategy for China. You mentioned the South China Sea and what goes on there. But it is a little bit different context inside Africa, but that context inside Africa has got to be folded underneath our overall strategy.

And so we are in the initial stages trying to at least get Africa and China in the same sentence and that we are going to try to make progress with them in a way that, you know, that they are not an adversary, but there are some ways that we can work together.

And so that is kind of where we are. But we are trying to move that ball down the court with the rewrite of our theater strategy, to include China.

Mr. O'HALLERAN. I guess, China, we don't have to build islands in China. The Chinese don't have to build islands. They are doing that in the South China Sea for a purpose. But they are doing this African process to develop the—and get—capture natural resources. They are building infrastructure to transport those resources. They are having tremendous influence, moneywise, as you indicated.

How do we—how with the incremental approach, it appears, do we get this to the point where we are competing on the same playing field at least with the Chinese on both investment, getting aid out there, and having a posture of the military?

General WALDHAUSER. Well, I think, from the military perspective, the hospital ship was mentioned. I mean, these are areas, medical engagements, medical exchanges, with the Chinese would be something that would be beneficial. It is very easy. It has a humanitarian piece to it, and it is something that we are going to try to pursue.

With regards to our business aspects or—in terms of development, in terms of money, you know, some of the issues in—the Chinese don't have to deal with some of the situations that we do with regards to money and human rights and the like.

I mean, they go into areas where it suits them. They go into areas that—they are concerned with minerals, for example, and a potential market of a consumer class. They are not bound by any particular laws or rules. And so they have kind of free rein to go where—in these kind of gray areas where we probably wouldn't venture.

Mr. O'HALLERAN. Thank you. I just want to stress that I feel that there is a critical need to have an overall whole-of-government approach, strategic plan. And I don't know if there is one yet, but I would sure like to see one.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. Stefanik.

Ms. STEFANIK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Waldhauser, thank you for being here today.

I am concerned about our long-term counterterrorism strategy and what we are doing to make sure that that is sustainable. For example, we make tactical gains in Libya and even in Somalia, but oftentimes, we see those hard-earned gains rolled back because we lack a larger strategy and diplomatic approach to realize those tactical gains.

Can you provide your assessment on how we improve this and how we ensure that we are building on our tactical gains to achieve a long-term strategic approach when it comes to our CT [counterterrorism] efforts?

General WALDHAUSER. Thank you.

I mean, that is really one of the pillars of what we try to do, is our tactical gains to buy time and space for governance to take hold. And this is where we get into this idea of us supporting political efforts.

This is why we, in DOD and AFRICOM, in particular, have devoted significant energy and resources to assist State Department to get back into Tripoli, for example, on an episodic basis. That is where the activities are taking place these days.

Is Tripoli totally safe? No. But more meetings, as I said, Salame, the U.N. Representative there, more meetings are taking place there. We realize this. And so, when the State Department—when I worked with the LEO and the charge, the LEO being the Libyan External Office in Tunis, when I work with them and they come to us and say, “Hey, we want to, you know, get our security people in there to do the reconnaissance to see if it is safe,” then we work really hard—and I work with the Secretary, who supports this—that military assets are devoted to that because, at the end of the day, that is where the political process will begin to take over and leverage the CT effort that is ongoing in Libya.

The final thing on that is one thing for sure in Libya: They don’t agree on much, but they do agree on a counterterrorism strategy, whether you are LNA [Libyan National Army], GNA [Government of National Accord], or any tribe in between, is a counterterrorism piece is something they all agree on.

Ms. STEFANIK. Shifting gears here, my next question deals with how we counter adversarial propaganda and disinformation efforts. From your perspective, what do you think is your most effective tool as a combatant commander to counter adversarial information operations, for example, those used by al-Qaida, ISIS, or even broadly by China and Russia?

General WALDHAUSER. Well, first of all, at the larger level, our actions on the continent go a long way to combat that. So we can talk about tactical things, social media, and the like, but our actions, our commitment to—and our face inside and our leadership inside these African countries can go a long way to counter that, that we are actually there backing up some of the things that we say. That is very, very important.

Our developmental efforts are very, very important. It is like I have said: There are many polls that we look at. And so, for example, in places like Djibouti, where the Chinese have built things and the citizens can see these things, they have a very high rating.

A place like Somalia, where when people think of the U.S., to a large degree, they think of the kinetic activity, our rating is not—it is not that good. It could be better.

So, in sum, we need to make sure our actions back up our words, and then, at a tactical level, we use those assets and authorities that we have to get a message out there that is one that is—it throws back or mitigates what the terrorists are trying to espouse to.

Ms. STEFANIK. So drilling down a little bit into specifics, how you work with the State Department, specifically the Global Engagement Center—which, for the record, I am deeply concerned that the funding hasn’t been spent in terms of our efforts to countering disinformation from our adversaries and from our terrorist organizations—are we doing enough? Are we effectively working with the Global Engagement Center and the State Department, from your perspective?

General WALDHAUSER. Well, I mean, I am not sure I can really answer that. I mean, we work overall with State. The first thing we do at any time—whether it is, what does the country team think, what does the Ambassador think—we have a great relationship there.

One of the unique things about AFRICOM is I have two deputies, one of whom is a former ambassador and can speak the language with his colleagues, and we utilize that line of communication a lot. So we have very good relationships on the continent, and we also have a good relationship with our AFRICOM components at the State Department.

I really couldn't say at this point—I can get back to you with details, but I don't really have anything other than that on that particular question.

Ms. STEFANIK. Do you—from your perspective, what role should DOD play here compared to the State Department?

General WALDHAUSER. In respect to?

Ms. STEFANIK. Countering disinformation.

General WALDHAUSER. Well, we have a big part. I mean, we have authorities, and we have capabilities that we need to coordinate with State Department on, and we do that all the time, to be honest. It is more of a tactical level.

But, again, many of these places in Africa, we are not talking about high end, let's just say, activity. We are talking social media. We are talking newspapers, radio, billboards. And we work closely with our partners to try to make that happen, especially where we have specific units in specific embassies to do that type of thing.

Ms. STEFANIK. Thank you. My time has expired.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Khanna.

Mr. KHANNA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, thank you for your leadership and service to our country.

My questions are similar to Representative Scott and Representative O'Halleran about China. I have read that they are spending about \$60 billion in Africa, and most of this isn't direct aid. It is predatory lending where they are still charging interest rates.

They are fully aware that many of these countries aren't going to be able to repay those loans. They are engaged in extraction of countries without a respect for their sovereignty. Our aid is less, but our aid doesn't come with strings attached, and we don't engage in those kinds of predatory behaviors.

And then, as you know, the African Union building was bugged by the Chinese. Now, when you look at history and you look at the East India Company, they went with commercial interest that led to imperialism and colonialism. And my concern is, would you—do you believe that China is engaged in a new form of colonialism on the African Continent?

General WALDHAUSER. Congressman, I believe that China is engaged on the African Continent for their self-interest. I think the minerals and the markets, the potential there, I think, it is all about being able to have access to those resources, and it is all about their interest.

The One Belt, One Road strategy, which takes into consideration 60-some-odd countries, 40 percent of the GDP [gross domestic product] arrangement, it is all designed to enhance their global posture down the road.

And, look, the way they—one of the reasons, I think, why some of these countries go ahead and sign on for some of these loans that are going to have to come back at some point in time is, I mean,

they are hedging their bets in terms of they don't want to put their eggs in one basket of one particular country, the United States, for example. I mean, they want to—it is in their interest to have flexibility and so forth.

So, when they are offered situations where building of infrastructure or perhaps loans that can help aid the country, I mean, they have a tendency to go in that regard, especially if they are a fragile state.

Mr. KHANNA. What would your recommendation be, in general, your recommendation of how we counter that strategy from China? Because I do believe our country, we have never had an imperialist or colonial aspiration. We—you know, we may not have a perfect policy, but we don't seek to make these states just client states for self-interest, what it seems like China is doing. And so we have a very different moral and philosophical outlook on the world than China. And what would you recommend our strategy be to counter that?

General WALDHAUSER. Well, I think, you know, first of all, from a holistic point of view, you have got to look at what the vital strategic interests are on the continent and what that means to us in terms of our engagement and in terms of our resources and how much we put into that.

Africa, over—for some time, has been—I refer to as economy of force, but I think I go back to one of my questions early on about why is it important. And I think this issue of failed countries and a failed continent and the impact that could have, whether it was a humanitarian issue, whether it was a medical-type issue, whether it was a security issue, today and in the future, the scope and scale can be so great that it will—it could overwhelm not only our resources but the resources of the rest of the people, you know, the rest of the countries on the planet. So we have to stay engaged, but we have to do that, I think, with an open eye of what our vital interests are and what our other priorities are.

Mr. KHANNA. Well, I would just echo the comments of my colleagues that I hope we can continue to have a strategy in Africa that looks not just at our interest but also makes sure that we stand up for the sovereignty of these countries and not have improper influence by China in the region.

Thank you.

General WALDHAUSER. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Ms. McSally.

Ms. MCSALLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General Waldhauser, my last assignment in the Air Force was standing up AFRICOM in those early days, and then I was the J-33 until I retired. So I feel personally vested in your mission succeeding. I have got a lot of memories, good and bad, about those experiences.

But my questions are kind of formed and shaped from my experiences there, many of which were very frustrating. Part of my responsibility was overseeing our counterterrorism operations, time-sensitive targeting on the continent.

And what we saw was, you know, in Somalia, for example, at the time, we would watch hundreds, probably thousands of Al Shabaab, you know, trainees being trained and graduated. We had a

number of approved terrorists that we could have schwacked, that we went through the whole process that you are very familiar with of PID [positive identification] and collateral damage, and we had all the authorities. And we would ramp up time and time and time again on days and nights and weekends and holidays, only to have to do a VTC [video teleconferencing] with political appointees who then would tell us that we had no permission to execute.

That is a perfect example of how not to do time-sensitive targeting, when you have got to put PowerPoint slides together and brief, you know, Washington, DC, on it every single time, as you know, because all that is fleeting.

I think of one in particular who was involved in the Embassy bombings in Africa in 1998, and we were asked the question, well, what have they done bad lately, as if they were now a Sunday schoolteacher or a Boy Scout leader. So it was extremely frustrating.

We were only ultimately allowed to shwack one terrorist while I was there, while we worked up for dozens, and we watched hundreds and maybe thousands be trained by Al Shabaab.

Similarly, AQIM just continued to grow and metastasize to the west, and we just were unwilling or unable as a government to do anything about it while they continued to build their war chest and, as you know, get ransom money, and all that type of things.

I saw last year there were 30 strikes in Somalia. And as you know, we are not going to kill our way out of this. But you can certainly help create the space for opportunities for there to be stability there and to make sure these terrorist organizations don't export their terror to Europe and to America.

So it seems like things are ramping up and that you have been given some greater decision-making authority. I just was wondering if you could share if something has shifted as far as decentralizing the decision making so that you can actually go after some of these terrorists when they do pop up so we can take them out.

General WALDHAUSER. Well, thank you very much, Congresswoman. I appreciate it.

And just, by the way, we have commissioned a study on the 10 years of AFRICOM to see if, in fact—what was envisioned 10 years ago, how we are making progress today. And so hopefully we will get something on that to see if we are carrying out the vision that you were part of 10 years ago.

In this session, what I can tell you is things have changed significantly from what you just described. Today, as a result of the principal standards and procedures and the operating principles that we have, we have authority. And we do not have to go through the process that you described.

I will tell you that one of the things that is very, very interesting to watch is those who have been delegated the authority to actually conduct these strikes, the efforts they go through to make sure that the levels of certainty of civilian casualties, noncombatants are taken care of, and moreover, the NGOs [non-governmental organizations].

Ms. MCSALLY. It is extraordinary, as you know.

General WALDHAUSER. It is extraordinary. As well as the NGOs, because in places like Somalia, when you have the food insecurity and you have NGO organizations working around the battlefield, it is important that we know where they are.

But the bottom line is we have the authorities that we need. The scenario you just described is not the way it is today, and I am very comfortable with how this is being done.

Ms. MCSALLY. And has that been—and I don't want you to, you know, have to make political statements here, but has some of that shifted with the new administration, that you have had additional authorities in decentralization over the last year?

General WALDHAUSER. Well, to be honest, we had some authorities under the previous administration but they were for a specific period of time. What we have now, we have authorities that aren't bound by time. There are some bounding of geography and that type of thing, but we have the ability—and, again, to support not just on our own but support of strategy for our Federal Government and a President that we are trying to assist.

Ms. MCSALLY. Great, thank you. I appreciate it.

I think it is important for the American people to know the extraordinary measures that our warfighters go through in order to make sure we hit exactly the bad guy and nobody else around it.

But you cannot, unless you are given the decision-making authority, that intelligence is fleeting and the situation changes quickly. So it is good to hear that you now have the decision-making authority that you need.

Similarly, there is a challenge, as you know, with the geography and the lack of resources and sharing resources—some of that has already been brought up today, but from airlift, ISR, QRF, other issues, have you had any issues with the sharing of resources where you just did not have it when you needed it based on the arrangements that we have?

General WALDHAUSER. One of the things we have done—we do very, very well is share with CENTCOM, share with EUCOM. It is just how we all conduct operations these days. We have very good, close working relationships.

But our commanders are—with the philosophy in AFRICOM in terms of by, with, and through, they know that if they don't have what they need, we are going to have to come back another day. But that is usually not the case. And we plan so that we can share assets with our fellow combatant commanders, and we plan our operations that way.

Ms. MCSALLY. Great. Thanks. I am out of time.

General WALDHAUSER. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Gallego.

Mr. GALLEGO. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

General, it has been 5 months since we had a briefing on what happened in Niger. And I appreciate what you are saying in regards to needing to inform and brief the family. So when is that going to happen? When are we going to get our briefing so we could do our due diligence and jobs as oversight?

Because 5 months is a long time. And it is insulting that I am hearing things getting leaked through the press before we get briefings, again, as HASC, which has oversight over DOD. So when is

it going to happen? And when are you going to come back and brief us?

And I would like to make sure also that OSD is there also when you come back and brief us about what occurred. And I am not asking for anything that is classified. I just want to know a general timeline, and we could take anything classified in our next meeting.

General WALDHAUSER. So thank you.

Let me just kind of give you an overview of what the game plan is and kind of how—you know, you mentioned the timeline. I want to give you some appreciation for that. The investigation was exhaustive. It took really almost 3 months for the investigating officer to complete his work.

He went into the chain of command that is in Germany, the chain of command that starts in Niger, the chain of command that was in Chad, all part of the component who runs special operations. Moreover, he went to Burkina Faso to talk with the French and obviously spoke with senior officials inside Niger. The investigation is exhaustive and very, very detailed.

The investigation now is with the—I have reviewed the investigation, and I have signed off on the investigation and provided it to the Secretary of Defense. The Secretary of Defense will go through it, and when he is done, at that point in time, the intention is to brief the families.

That has been kind of DOD's position from the get-go. Once the families are briefed, we intend, we fully intend to bring myself, the two-star investigating officer, and a senior representative from OSD to provide you a detailed briefing and answer all of your questions.

We have made an animated video that we will be able to show you, which kind of gives—which is a good way to illustrate what happened. We will answer all the questions that you have. And if you have some that we can't, we will go back and try to find those.

Now, you know, so timelinewise, just to be very honest, the timelinewise depends on the Secretary's becoming comfortable with it and him going ahead and giving the red light.

At that point in time, we will brief the families. The families—there are four families. That briefing schedule will take a couple of weeks because we need to get them into certain places, make sure they are there. There is a recess on the calendar for a couple weeks that are in there.

But we are prepared, once the families have been briefed, to come here the next day, literally, and brief you all, as I just described, in a closed session. That is the plan: The various committees get that brief, and that is our plan.

Mr. GALLEGO. General, and part of this briefing will also include a mortuary affairs report. I requested that in the last hearing, and I assume that will also be included when you come and brief us whatever months from now?

General WALDHAUSER. Well, Congressman, what I can say on that is I know that the briefing—the investigating team worked with those individuals, talked with those individuals. That is part of the investigation. Whether or not that is in the—our overall investigation, I am not sure. I will look into that. But—

Mr. GALLEGO. I am requesting, as part of my job as oversight, that there is included a mortuary affairs report.

General WALDHAUSER. We—

Mr. GALLEGO. That—it will be a failure if you come back without that.

General WALDHAUSER. Right. I think that what—I think we will be able to clear all that up for you with our brief and the investigation.

Mr. GALLEGO. Thank you, General.

I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Russell.

Mr. RUSSELL. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, General Waldhauser, I want to extend my personal thanks to you for the great support that you extended and also the special operations leaders and commanders when I went to Niger and some of the other regional countries a couple weeks ago.

Mr. Chairman, I guess, you know, there was an earlier thing brought up about the point on State Department experience. You know, I would like to point out that the Ambassador Whitaker in Niger was the former deputy chief of mission to Niger and that he has also served in 10 African countries. He is homegrown. He is not a political appointee. I can't think of anybody perhaps more qualified than he is.

And in the Lake Chad Basin, we see a similar story. For example, Ambassador Barlerin in Cameroon, he also served in Chad and Mali, which are areas there. And it just speaks to the great cooperation, I think, at least my own observations, that the military and the Department of State have.

Perhaps if our colleagues in the Senate would confirm appointments faster, we might be able to alleviate that. But I realize that that is probably out of the scope of this committee.

General Waldhauser, can you speak to the impacts that shutdowns have and CRs [continuing resolutions] have on the 127 Echo Program and how they affect partner forces?

General WALDHAUSER. Congressman, it is not clear. On the shutdowns of—

Mr. RUSSELL. When we shut down the government or we do very late funding as we are want to do, can you speak to the impacts that that has on the 127 Echo Programs and how that affects our partner forces?

General WALDHAUSER. On the 127 Echo Programs, really, I would have to say, there is really a negative—there is no impact on the shutdown. The shutdowns have been relatively few days, hours, et cetera, and so I can't say that there has been an impact on that.

With regards to equipment, though, I mean, our ability to source equipment in these 2282 programs or 333 programs, as they are called, is certainly something that we would like to see go faster.

Many times, the equipment lags behind and so forth, and this is something that is frustrating to those who are training and equipping, and it is frustrating to those gaining partner nations. That would be helpful if that was—if that process was expedited.

Mr. RUSSELL. And you had made mention earlier about working with the G5. Could you speak to why the G5 is a better approach

to partnership and stability than, say, a U.N. mission or a U.N.-sponsored Africa partnership?

General WALDHAUSER. So, Congressman, I would probably answer that two ways. First of all, it is an African solution, which is what we want. And by the way, we have bilateral engagements with those individual countries, the five countries who are part of the G5 Sahel. So the fact that it is an African solution is good.

But it is important to, I think, understand, again, we are talking about 5,000 people that will operate in an area, someone told me, twice the size of the State of Minnesota. So this is an extremely large area, but, nonetheless, it is an effort by Africans to try to solve an African problem.

And then—I am sorry—the second part of that?

Mr. RUSSELL. Just why that would be better than, say, a U.N. mission?

General WALDHAUSER. Because, frankly, this organization has the ability to conduct offensive operations. The arrangements they have made is they can go cross border within those countries. And so there have been, I think, three operations thus far, primarily in the Mali, Burkina Faso, and Niger area.

So they have the authorities to cross into, I think it is—they have—there is some limitations, but they have the ability to cross into various countries to pursue the enemy. And the fact that they can conduct offensive operations is a big plus.

Mr. RUSSELL. And I have to totally agree with regard to the statements on vital strategic interest. These are fragile economies. If they were to fail, if the firewall in the sub-Saharan Africa were to break, it would have implications that we really can't fathom.

And every time we have seen an abandonment or have cared to abandon places, and especially places like sub-Saharan Africa, where we have actually worked for decades, then we will see disease, we will see famine, we will see human suffering on a massive scale, and it will be much more costly to try to repair that coming back.

So I really appreciate all that the AFRICOM does and FSOC [Financial Sector Oversight Council] and everything else that goes on there on a day-to-day basis. And hopefully we can dissuade some of the, I guess, desire of people to want to abandon some of the efforts there.

And thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Bacon.

Mr. BACON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, General, thank you for being here.

I just want to echo something you were talking about with the timeline for investigations. I was a flag officer in the Air Force, had to do two of them myself. It took us about 5 months from the time of the incident to briefing the families and putting out the report. So I just wanted to reinforce some of the comments you were making there.

I wanted to ask you about Ebola in Africa. We had an outbreak in 2014. It was very tragic. The University of Nebraska is now the world center of excellence for Ebola treatment, the movement of Ebola victims, and containment.

Do you have any indications of any Ebola breakout right now in Africa, and do you feel prepared or do you have the resources available to respond? Thank you.

General WALDHAUSER. Congressman, thank you very much, and thank you for your thoughts on the timeline of the investigation. Again, our job was to try to be as thorough as possible, and we wanted to get it right.

With regards to Ebola, I am not aware at the moment of any significant issues there. I mean, we keep a close eye on things like malaria, the PEPFAR [President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief] program we are engaged with, the Walter Reed project that works in these various countries. In places like Nigeria, for example, where the military medicine has tenants into the civilian community, we work closely with them.

But, again, I think, just to get back to Congressman Russell's question is that what we are trying to do there is prevent something from happening before it does.

Mr. BACON. Right.

General WALDHAUSER. And sometimes that is a hard sell. But, again, I go back to, if you look at the scale and scope that could happen as a result of some of these epidemics, that we would have some significant issues.

So that is why continued engagement, small amounts of resources that can try to keep these problems where they are, are very, very beneficial and a big part of the development piece on the continent.

Mr. BACON. You talked a little bit about Chinese presence in Djibouti. What are some of the other one or two other countries that China is very active in right now?

General WALDHAUSER. Well, I think Angola is one of them. They get a lot of their oil from Angola. They have had some peacekeepers in various locations.

But I would just say that, as a rule or in the main, that I watch closely what they are doing in the eastern part of the African Continent, those various countries there, the Tanzanias, the Kenyas, the Ethiopias.

Because this is tied—I just—this is tied to the One Belt, One Road strategy—

Mr. BACON. Right.

General WALDHAUSER [continuing]. And so that is what kind of watches my—keeps my attention. They are all over in various countries, minerals, and markets. But for what I do on a daily basis, I am interested in that part about their development of future ports and infrastructure in the eastern part of Africa.

Mr. BACON. I would like to ask you briefly about the air support you are receiving. When I was the commander at Ramstein, we had the 17th Air Force that was dedicated towards AFRICOM; the 3rd Air Force dedicated towards USAFE [United States Air Force in Europe—Air Forces Africa] and EUCOM.

We have merged those two organizations together, and that one organization is providing support to both now. Are you getting or feel like you are receiving adequate and responsive air support from the Air Force?

General WALDHAUSER. Well, Congressman, I am. You know, our components—several of our components are dual-hatted. So we have a four-star U.S. Air Force Africa component who is dual-hatted with EUCOM. Very good relationship, close, personal friend, and we find ways to share the assets.

As you well know, there have been opportunities over the last year and a half. We have used B-2 bombers. We have used other aircraft from the Air Force that have been provided for.

And every once in a while, my component commander, who wears two hats, I have to remind him that AFRICOM has priority over EUCOM, and once he gets that information, it is usually no problem. But the bottom line is we are getting very good support from the Air Force.

Mr. BACON. Good to hear.

In your comments, you talked about the increasing appetite for democracy and free enterprise in Africa. Can you give us one or two countries that are showing this promise and then maybe one or two that are showing the most lack of promise?

General WALDHAUSER. Well, there are probably many examples, but I will go back to Tunisia. You know, Tunisia, interestingly enough, if you are in the military in Tunisia, it is my understanding they are not allowed to vote. That is just the way it is there. That is not a judgment. It is just how it works.

But this week or in the very near future, there are going to be municipal elections inside Tunisia. And this is the first time the military will be able to vote in municipal elections. So they are going to see how that works. But the bottom line is Tunisia is a—I just think it is a wonderful story of how they are trying to make progress inside the democracy piece.

Look, the easy example in terms of the other side of that coin is South Sudan. South Sudan was a promise 5, 6 years ago, but today, it is not. And our engagement there is—from the military's perspective, is none. We keep a close eye on it from the standpoint of protection of U.S. citizens and property in terms of whether we have to evacuate out of there, but that is an example where it is just not working at all.

Mr. BACON. I appreciate your insight there.

One last question. We have a lot of temporary facilities there that give us access. Do you—are you comfortable with the level of access you have down in Africa? Do we need more permanent basing? I would just like to get your sense. Do you have what you need to do the operations that are required?

General WALDHAUSER. The short answer is, yes. We are trying to develop what is called the West African Logistics Network, which works in those countries and allows us to make more efficient use. But access is important because that is how you mitigate the time and space issues, especially if you have warnings that an embassy, for example, may be potentially under siege; we have got to move to locations close to that embassy in order to cut down on the time and space, if we would have to do something.

Mr. BACON. Thank you, General.

And thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Langevin.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

General, good to see you again. And thank you both for your testimony here today and your service to the Nation.

So, with respect to Somalia, it would appear that we have significantly ramped up our targeting efforts in Somalia. And partner-assisted operations and other actions seem to be dismantling the terrorist networks, leadership networks.

But, you know, we have seen this before in Iraq and in Afghanistan, Syria, and elsewhere. And can you tell us what else you are doing in Somalia and throughout the AFRICOM AOR [area of responsibility] to ensure that we are not just playing whack-a-mole and instead creating lasting stability in the region?

And I know you talked about coordination with USAID, but also what other State Department assets are you working with that—directly interacting with the local tribes or entities in the region?

General WALDHAUSER. Thank you, Congressman.

I say, just by chance, but I think it is important to note that Secretary of State Tillerson is going to be on the continent this week. And I think that sends a very, very strong signal, and it backs up this issue of our support for diplomacy.

I think, you mentioned about what we are doing inside Somalia with regards to kinetic activities, which we have turned up the heat in the last few months. That is not to say that Al Shabaab is on the ropes, but it supports the federal government strategy.

President Farmaajo has been in power now for a year. If you look at where he came from, there was no federal government for 25 years. If you were 25 years old in Somalia, you don't know what a federal government is supposed to do. The ability just to create a state along federal lines is a significant challenge.

So the ability to have influence, the ability to work with the federal member states who they need—you know, they need to see why a federal government is helpful to them. Moreover, you have to generate revenue for tax bases and so forth.

So it is important that, as long as Somalia continues to make progress—and our kinetic activity is allowing that to happen. It is going to be slow; there is no doubt about it. I mean, I have said on several occasions: You measure progress in Somalia by eighths of an inch, not by yardsticks or rulers. That is just how it goes. But as long as they are making progress, they are going to maintain the support of the international community. And then the end game of these types of insurgencies, if you will, if you want to call Al Shabaab an insurgency, the end game will be, is the Somalis are going to need to decide for themselves what the arrangement will be at the end of the day.

Will it be a political arrangement? Will it be some kind of a power-sharing arrangement? The majority of these types of events, meaning Al Shabaab in this particular case, usually end in some type of negotiated settlement.

And this is Farmaajo's strategy is to try to continue to beat Al Shabaab back to the point where defections, especially of leadership, become the order of the day and some type of negotiated settlement with the national government is—probably takes place.

Mr. LANGEVIN. So the United Nations has cited climate change-related conflict cropping up in various parts of Africa, largely related to decreasing access to water resources. So can you discuss

what you are seeing across the AOR regarding resource scarcity as a result of changing climate and how it is affecting social, economic, and security stability across the continent?

General WALDHAUSER. Well, I think one of the ways to answer that question is we have talked about the Sahel this morning. And the Sahel with the grassland side, you know, on the southern part, on the savanna side, the Sahel has been receding by X amount of inches a year over the last decade or so.

This has a significant impact on those groups, like the Fulani, who are called the Peul, or the Tuaregs who have made it—who their history is of pastoralists. They are herders. They move to where the water and the grasslands are for their livestock and cattle. This is having a significant issue on them. This causes them to have problems in terms of security. This causes disagreements in terms of who owns or who can use these—the water rights for livestock.

So, from a climate change perspective, all of these things, you know, when it comes down to it, all of these things that impact the livelihood of these particular tribes or groups have a significant impact on security.

Mr. LANGEVIN. And you may have to answer this one for the record, but since Operation Odyssey Lightning, the air operation which enabled the Libyan Government of National Accord forces to recapture Sirte, it seems as if ISIL has moved more inland.

Has the move away from larger cities coupled with changes in priorities post operation hindered your ability to pursue this threat? And can you speak to how Libya—Libyan, Tunisian, and other partnerships in the region support your efforts against ISIL in Libya?

General WALDHAUSER. Congressman, as you well know, Sirte was an effort of several months starting in August of 2016. We conducted over 500 strikes in support of the Government of National Accord that liberated that city where the militias that were loyal to the GNA really did the bulk of the fighting.

Shortly after, in January of 2017, we continued to watch ISIS as they evolved in the southern part of the country, and we had a significant strike that put them in a situation where they were in a survival mode.

So, if you look at the number of strikes, Somalia is like 40 today; Libya is like 8. We continue to monitor that though. They still are there. They are still active. They have, to a certain degree, moved to other locations, but ISIS remains one of our major efforts because CT is still one of our major efforts inside Libya.

Mr. LANGEVIN. Thank you, General.

Thank you, Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Hice.

Mr. HICE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And, General, thank you very much for being here.

You mentioned in your written testimony as well as in discussion here today that the poor governance, instability, lack of economic opportunity, and so forth provide a hotbed for recruits, fighter recruits that end up attacking us and our allies.

And you mentioned earlier regarding the terror groups how they are trafficking drugs, people, weapons, whatever. And there is eco-

conomic benefit for them to be involved in that and, as well, for recruiting purposes.

So, I guess you would agree that economic development would be a significant factor in reducing potential—a potential pool of recruits for VEOs. Is that correct?

General WALDHAUSER. I do, Congressman, absolutely.

Mr. HICE. Okay. So how do we, as the U.S., help increase the capacity of the partner countries to help address that issue?

General WALDHAUSER. So one of the issues that is tied to this is governance. And in many cases, these individuals who are recruited by some of the leadership of these ISIS, GS, or JNIM organizations, yes, it is livelihood issues; yes, it is about a better life; yes, it is about being able to make money; but, also, there is a piece in there about grievances with either local governments or federal governments, or perhaps grievances with the military forces that have perhaps been working in that area.

So it is important, then, that, from a training perspective as we work to build partnership capacity, that law of war, battlefield ethics, and all those type of things are important with that training. Because you don't want the military to drive youth to the VEOs.

I mean, we kind of say this tongue in cheek, but if you wanted to have a measuring stick of a partner force that is operating in an appropriate manner, if they are walking through a village, if the women and children go run inside and shut their doors, that says something; if the women and children come and want to shake hands with the military force, that says something as well.

So the bottom line is, yes, many of these factors are absolutely true, livelihood, money, status, and the like, but, again, quality and accountable governance and an accountable military is part of it too.

Mr. HICE. Seems to me that that is a critical issue, and when you have the corrupt governments and so forth that you have there, it is a difficult hurdle to overcome. And yet it seems to me that it is best if it comes from those partnering countries rather than us somehow trying to enhance the economic opportunity. And I don't know how you do that.

But in addition to the economic outcomes, if we were able to find solutions in that regard, what else can we do? Be it through AFRICOM's effort or using whole-of-government approach, how do we reduce, apart from the economic side of things, the likelihood of violent extremists continuing to be recruited?

General WALDHAUSER. Well, Congressman, one of my favorite items there is just simply education. I mean, education and literacy in some of these fragile states is very, very important, and that is for the women as well.

I mean, Niger is a classic example: 7.5 children per female is the birthrate inside that country. And so we know that education will allow females, for example, to have a better livelihood. We know that the childbearing will go down as a part of their education.

But, I mean, it just sounds simple, but simple education, literacy rates that can give opportunities for some of these youth are very, very important.

Mr. HICE. Long-term solutions, I agree with you, but those things don't happen overnight.

General WALDHAUSER. They don't.

Mr. HICE. And yet, the problem is increasing, it seems, overnight. And so I would love to be able to explore further solutions, not only for the long term but for more immediate solutions that can help slow down, rein in the recruiting process. But thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Dr. Wenstrup.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Thank you, General, for being here today. Appreciate it.

Let's use, again, Djibouti for an example where China has showered gifts upon the country, if you will, when you talk about shopping malls, et cetera. And shopping is nice, but it isn't nice if you don't feel that you are secure.

And you talked about doing the little things. I guess my question there, and maybe other countries around Africa, do they feel that their relationship with the U.S. is a valuable and important part of their security and, as you just mentioned, opportunity? Is that where we are going? Are those the things, the small things you were talking about that we do that really leave an impression on them towards the U.S. favorably?

General WALDHAUSER. Congressman, thank you.

In my travels and my discussions with senior leaders, to include the presidents of these countries, they all want U.S. involvement. They all want U.S. leadership. And it doesn't have to be large. It doesn't have to be grand. But they want to know that they have our support. They want to have our leadership, and they want to have a relationship with us. They really do.

Now, that is not to say that that means that they shouldn't find other avenues. I mean, they certainly will do what is in their best interest. But there are very few, if any, countries in the continent who would not welcome U.S. engagement and U.S. leadership.

Dr. WENSTRUP. I guess, part of my question would be, do they look at these advances from China, do they look at them cautiously? Do they look at them suspiciously? Or is it just a great relationship?

General WALDHAUSER. Well, in this forum, what I would say, Congressman, is that they appreciate our frankness. They appreciate our openness. They appreciate our ability to go back and forth with them in a transparent way.

And if we do what we say we are going to do, if we abide by certain constraints or rules, they appreciate that. I am not sure they can say that about their Chinese counterparts.

Dr. WENSTRUP. I visited Chad a couple years ago, and this was a place where we had embedded U.S. troops, training them. And I can tell you to a person they were thrilled that we were there. Those types of actions, I mean, is that still the same in Chad, for one? And are we trying to build those types of relationships to make them more independent in their defenses?

General WALDHAUSER. Well, obviously, we are trying to make them more dependent on their own capabilities. That is why we are doing this. We still have a relationship with Chad. There are some issues there that perhaps we could talk about in another session.

But Chad is a member of the G5 Sahel. We have engagements with Chad. We work with their troops. But they are part of an overall effort that is tied to the ISIS AQIM nexus in that region.

I will say that Chad is very concerned about their border with Libya in terms of AQIM, ISIS, and others coming through there. It is a big concern of theirs. But countries in that particular area, Chad, Niger, Mali, extremely poor.

But Niger, for example, I mean, it is a country that has got threats on all sides. It is a democratic government. They have asked us to come to support them. We have been there, in some ways, since the 1990s, and, again, we are trying to prevent a problem from happening.

They have the opportunity in Niger, for example, President Issoufou, when his second term is up, they have the opportunity, I believe, to be the first country in Africa to have a democratic transition in governance.

And so, again, we are trying to support a country and make sure that they are not taken over by violent extremist organizations who would take over those ungoverned spaces and, you know, turn and make plans to do things outside the region into Europe and perhaps in the United States.

Dr. WENSTRUP. Well, listen, I appreciate all your efforts. It is a large continent, a lot of different nations and strategies. A little bit different everywhere you turn. And I appreciate you taking on the challenge. Thank you.

General WALDHAUSER. Thank you.

Dr. WENSTRUP. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. We will give General Waldhauser 5 to 10 minutes to stretch his legs, and then we will reconvene upstairs in classified session. For now, this public hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:02 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

A P P E N D I X

MARCH 6, 2018

PREPARED STATEMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

MARCH 6, 2018

**House Armed Services Committee
Chairman William M. “Mac” Thornberry
Opening Statement - Prepared
Full Committee Hearing on
National Security Challenges and U.S. Military Activities in Africa
March 6, 2018**

While the National Defense Strategy emphasizes strategic competition with Russia and China, it also makes clear that the Department will have to maintain its focus on defeating terrorist threats to the United States.

Many of the conditions that allow terrorist groups to proliferate, such as vast ungoverned spaces, weak governmental institutions, poor security, and struggling economies, exist on the African continent. A concern is that the terrorist threat in and from Africa will grow as ISIS is pushed out of Iraq and Syria.

At the same time, Africa has the fastest growing population in the world, immense natural resources, and great potential. We are witnessing the strategic competition talked about in the NDS taking place there too. China established its first overseas military base in Africa last year, just a few miles from the U.S. base in Djibouti, for example.

Using a small number of U.S. military forces, AFRICOM largely works “by, with, and through” our African partners to address threats on the continent. It also uses DOD security cooperation programs to develop African military partners capable of providing their own security. But this approach entails risk, especially given the enormous distances and lack of infrastructure on the continent.

Our witness today, General Waldhauser, commander of AFRICOM, will provide his assessment of threats to U.S. national security and how the recently released National Defense Strategy affects U.S. military priorities and posture on the continent. He will also help us explore the risks versus the benefits of our approach to Africa within the strategic context of our nation’s security goals.

I understand that AFRICOM has completed its investigation into the October 2017 ambush in Niger by ISIS-affiliated fighters that killed four U.S. soldiers. I understand the results of that investigation and its recommendations are now being reviewed by both the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Dunford, and Secretary of Defense Mattis. In addition, the families of the fallen have not yet been briefed on the results. Accordingly, I understand that General Waldhauser is not able to comment on matters related to that investigation today.

The Ranking Member and I have previously requested a copy of the investigative report on behalf of the Committee, and we expect to receive it right away when it is finished. We further expect that General Waldhauser and his staff will be available to the Committee promptly upon request as we conduct our oversight of these issues.

**Statement of Ranking Member Adam Smith
House Armed Services Committee Hearing on:
National Security Challenges and U.S. Military Activities in Africa
March 6, 2018**

Thank you Mr. Chairman for hosting today's hearing. General Waldhauser, I want to welcome you as well. I'm looking forward to your insight into the security situation and military activities on the African continent. In light of recent events, I'm particularly pleased that we are having this timely and topical hearing in addition to our regularly held round table.

The National Defense Strategy summary released in January highlights the critical importance of partners and allies. Perhaps no other combatant command is more cognizant of the importance of partners and allies than AFRICOM. In Africa, the United States military works primarily "by, with, and through" its partners to achieve objectives.

Relatedly, this committee took a hard look at the Department's security cooperation authorities in the FY2017 NDAA and, working with the Senate, passed a set of comprehensive reforms to streamline and make building partner capacity authorities more flexible for end users such as AFRICOM. I'd like to know how those reforms have affected your command, particularly the most well-known of the changes, the broad "train and equip" "333 authority" that built on existing authorities like the former 2282 authority for counter-terrorism.

Not only does AFRICOM's toolkit rely heavily on security cooperation but cooperative efforts cannot be successful without significant interagency coordination and substantial investments in other departments and agencies like the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development. For example, addressing the problem set in Somalia cannot be resolved with a military-only solution. Long-term stability will require not just security but sustainable reforms in governance and institution building. That is one reason why this committee pushed for a whole-of-government strategy for Somalia to be included in the final FY2018 NDAA that passed into law last December.

Finally, our thoughts and prayers remain with the families of the Navy SEAL killed in Somalia in May and the four soldiers that were killed in Niger last October. Many questions remain unanswered with regard to Niger and, while I acknowledge that the investigation has not been finalized, this committee needs to carefully examine the authorities, command and control procedures, and risk management practices that are applicable to the AFRICOM area of responsibility.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I look forward to receiving the General's testimony.

**United States Africa Command
2018 Posture Statement**

INTRODUCTION

Chairman Thornberry, Ranking Member Smith, distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to update you on the efforts of U.S. Africa Command to protect and promote U.S. vital interests in Africa. At the outset, I want to remember the soldiers in Niger and Navy SEAL in Somalia we lost during operations in the past year. These brave men epitomize the U.S. Africa Command standard to which we all strive in the service of our country. I offer my sincere condolences to the families for their losses. I have reviewed the contents and signed the results of the Niger investigation, which are currently with the Chairman and the Secretary of Defense. Upon completion of the briefings to the families, our intent is to provide a full and comprehensive briefing to this committee as soon as practical. I also want to recognize all the families who stand with us and support the U.S. Africa Command mission across the continent. On any given day, up to 7,200 U.S. uniformed personnel, Department of Defense civilians, and contractors are in Africa representing all services, career fields, and specialties, protecting our national security and working tirelessly to tackle the many challenges on the African continent. Since I last spoke with this committee, the U.S. Africa Command team has made significant progress with our U.S.-Africa strategy and with building the defense capacity of our African partners. I am truly honored to lead this team and its efforts in a very dynamic strategic environment.

In 2008, U.S. Africa Command was established as the first fully integrated interagency combatant command; its purpose was to foster U.S. long-term, security engagement in Africa. As we commemorate our Ten Year Anniversary, U.S. Africa Command continues to enhance the security and stability of Africa and its people. While our area of responsibility covers 53

countries with complex and varied issues, our mission is clear: *U.S. Africa Command, with partners, strengthens security forces, counters transnational threats, and conducts crisis response in order to advance U.S. national interests and promote regional security, stability, and prosperity.*

African nations—their people, their increasing appetite for democratic principles, their growing economic impact and potential in global markets—remain an enduring interest for the United States. U.S. Africa Command supports our African partners in building the capability and the capacity to develop local solutions to radicalization, destabilization, and persistent conflict. By making targeted investments and maintaining strong partnerships, we can set the basic security conditions needed for good governance and development to take root. Africa, our allies, the U.S., and the world stand to benefit from a secure, stable, and prosperous Africa.

To achieve this end state, the United States must remain engaged in Africa. In the long term, U.S. interests in Africa are best served by stable nations with effective, accountable governments, well-trained and disciplined militaries, and growing economies. None of Africa's challenges can be resolved through the use of military force as the primary agent of change. Therefore, our first strategic theme is that U.S. Africa Command activities directly support U.S. diplomatic and development efforts in Africa. Working with our interagency partners—primarily the Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)—is a core tenet of our strategic approach in Africa. In addition, U.S. Africa Command works alongside the African Union, the European Union, regional African economic and security communities, and the United Nations. Together, to provide alternatives to those who might otherwise be attracted to extreme ideologies, we work to develop government accountability, increase education opportunities, and develop strong economies. Further, to professionalize

security forces, U.S. Africa Command provides human rights training to make forces more accountable to the people and lessen the abuses and drivers of radicalization among the civilian populations. Only by partnering with interested stakeholders can long-term U.S. strategic goals be achieved.

U.S. Africa Command's second strategic theme is our focus on the *By, With, and Through* framework. This is a strategic approach that emphasizes U.S. military capabilities employed in a supporting role, not as principal participants in armed conflict. Security operations are executed almost exclusively by the partnered security forces. U.S. Africa Command works with partnered security forces based on their operational needs. The vital objectives of the U.S. and the partnered nation are achieved through a cooperative relationship in which U.S. Africa Command plays a supporting role. African leaders tell us how important it is to develop "African solutions to African problems." The framework of *By, With, and Through* recognizes the importance of partner ownership, which in turn, fosters enduring relationships.

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

African agriculture, financial services, manufacturing, and construction are promising sectors attracting international trade and investment. The U.S., therefore, is not the only prospective partner in Africa. We seek constructive, results-oriented relationships with other foreign interests who wish to develop Africa's infrastructure and tackle humanitarian and security issues. We must, however, be aware of interests that run counter to our own, as a larger number of external actors take a great interest in Africa. Though some of their actions contribute to Africa's infrastructure and defense, some of these actors are impeding the continent's long-term stability, economic growth and financial independence. Moreover, external actors may diminish U.S. influence by undermining our development and diplomatic efforts in Africa, and

we share this message with our African partners during all levels of engagement. Nonetheless, as the strategic environment becomes more crowded and competitive, our engagement with external actors, like China and Russia, will continue with an open and clear discussion of intersecting interests and differences.

Extremes in poverty, limited infrastructure, predatory governance, inadequate health care, and in many cases, violent ideology, exist throughout Africa juxtaposed with enormous economic potential and strategic opportunity. This volatile environment creates instability and uncertainty and allows violent extremist organizations (VEOs) to grow and recruit from disenfranchised populations. Keeping military pressure on this VEO network is our third strategic theme. This cycle of disenfranchisement and recruitment feeds extremist movements that aspire to spread their violent ideology. For instance, a youth population with significant unemployment and who are being harassed by predatory and rights-abusing governments and security forces create the perfect hotbed in which to garner ideological support and recruit fighters who will target our partners, allies, and U.S. interests. VEOs also utilize existing illicit networks to move drugs, weapons and persons across the continent. They foment fear and distrust which undermine governments, and when combined with the despair caused by lack of hope for the future, provide for VEO expansion. These VEOs are a significant threat to our partners, allies, and U.S. interests on the continent.

Conflict, instability, and lack of economic opportunity in multiple regions across the continent lead to large numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, and migrants. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Africa has approximately 18.5 million people categorized as refugees, asylum seekers, IDPs, and stateless persons as of January 2017. The continent hosts 30% of the world's displaced people, more than any other

continent. In 2016, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) estimated there are more than 1.6 million new asylum requests worldwide, and of these, almost 1.2 million were registered in European countries. In Africa, many countries do not have the infrastructure necessary to absorb large influxes of refugees and displaced persons. These large numbers may destabilize already tenuous social, economic, and political institutions and further stress poor populations.

In Africa, weak and ineffective governance is the leading cause of state fragility. According to the 2017 Fund for Peace “Fragile State Index,” 15 of the 25 most fragile countries in the world are in Africa. While governance is not the primary mission of U.S. Africa Command, we recognize building legitimate defense institutions is critical for African governments that prioritize the security of their citizens over that of the state. Therefore, we work in concert with the Department of State, and other partners, to develop human rights-respecting security forces and inspire them to pursue military professionalism in their own institutions. For example, this past November, we hosted an African Senior Enlisted Leader conference to discuss the importance and value of enlisted leadership in the military ranks with noncommissioned officers (NCOs) from nineteen of our African partners. Empowering these NCOs is crucial to strengthening partner militaries, as enlisted force leaders are closest to the soldiers in the field and can relate to them in ways difficult for officers to match. For example, enlisted force leaders work to get soldiers paid on time, remove and reduce corruption, and continue to act as positive role models within their community.

U.S. Africa Command conducts Military Information Support Operations (MISO) to advise and assist partners in countries such as Kenya, Niger, and Nigeria to enable their counter-VEO

messaging and enhance their security operations. MISO empowers the government's ability to increase its outreach to the population and counter adversarial messaging.

COMMAND APPROACH

THEATER STRATEGY

Transnational VEOs are not only the most direct threat to U.S. interests in Africa, but also a threat to stability across the continent. Just as the threat on the ground evolves, so too does our Strategy. U.S. Africa Command utilizes the National Security, Defense, and Military Strategies, Guidance for the Employment of the Force, and other U.S. policy documents to guide our current Strategy. The 2017 National Security Strategy (NSS) states that the United States seeks to partner with African states that exercise sovereignty over their whole territory, are integrated into the world economy, able to provide for their citizens' needs, and capable of managing threats to peace and security. To that end, U.S. Africa Command will continue to search out willing and capable partners, strengthen existing partnerships, and form new relationships that promote these goals. The 2018 National Defense Strategy (NDS) reinforces U.S. Africa Command's approach of "working by, with, and through" local partners to degrade VEOs, interdict transnational extremist and criminal activity, and increase the institutional capacity of partners to do so with limited foreign assistance. Increasing partner capacity cannot be limited to training and equipping front-line forces. In concert with interagency and international partners, we must also contribute to building the institutions that fortify recruiting, training, sustaining, and fielding of these forces. Such institutions create the stable security environment to allow democracy and development to blossom, which diminish the factors that allow violent extremism and criminality to grow. Put simply, a sustainable solution to instability in Africa involves supporting national institutions and regional organizations willing and able to address their own security challenges.

In order to create the time and space necessary for this long-term effort, we maintain pressure on transnational VEOs. Our primary effort in this aspect is to execute programs with more capable partners. Working directly with these partners, we target VEOs who pose an imminent threat to partner, allied, and U.S. interests.

U. S. Africa Command focuses on cost-effective solutions that leverage interagency and international support as we continue our decisive effort of building the capacity of and strengthening relationships with African partners, primarily executed through security cooperation activities. To support these efforts, our FY 2019 Budget Request includes appropriate resources—notably, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) assets.

THEATER POSTURE

To set the African theater, U. S. Africa Command's posture plan is designed to secure strategic access to key locations on a continent characterized by vast distances and limited infrastructure while adhering to Department of Defense guidance to maintain a tailorable, flexible, small, and expeditionary presence. Our posture network allows forward staging of forces to provide operational flexibility and timely response to crises involving U. S. personnel or interests without creating the optic that U. S. Africa Command is "militarizing" Africa.

In Djibouti, Camp Lemonnier is an enduring U.S. military installation that serves as a vital hub for Security Force Assistance, operations, and logistics for five combatant commands: U.S. Africa Command, U.S. Central Command, U.S. European Command, U.S. Special Operations Command, and U.S. Transportation Command. Camp Lemonnier provides, operates, and sustains superior service in support of combat readiness and security of ships, aircraft, detachments, and personnel for regional and combatant command requirements; and enables operations in the Horn of Africa while fostering positive U.S.-African relations.

Over the course of the last two years, U.S. Africa Command has endeavored to improve our distribution network. In January 2018, we initiated processes and procedures to establish the West Africa Logistics Network. This network will position right-sized aircraft on the continent to facilitate distribution from a primary logistics hub to support locations throughout West and Central Africa. That will vastly improve support to approximately 1,800 personnel supporting 11 named operations across a 13-nation region, roughly the size of the Continental United States.

COMBATANT COMMAND CAMPAIGN PLAN

To contribute to “a secure, stable, and prosperous Africa,” we focus on building partner capacity, protecting U.S. personnel and facilities, and maintaining U.S. access. This approach complements the efforts of our allies, such as France and the United Kingdom.

U.S. Africa Command currently operates along five Lines of Effort (LOEs), which focus resources and operations throughout the continent: 1) Develop Security and Stability in East Africa; 2) Degrade VEOs in Sahel and Maghreb Regions / Contain Instability in Libya; 3) Contain and Degrade Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa; 4) Interdict Illicit Activity in Gulf of Guinea and Central Africa; and 5) Build Peace Keeping / Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) capacity of African Partners.

Each LOE links multiple tasks and objectives to achieve a desired end state. While each geographical region presents different challenges, the overall message that “a secure, stable, and prosperous Africa is an enduring American interest” remains our focus. The LOEs help translate our strategy into an operational approach while allowing flexibility to address each region’s specific needs. This flexibility is key as we review and adjust our campaign plan. Over the next

few months, we will work with partners, allies, and the interagency to review and then release an updated Combatant Command Campaign Plan in 2018, covering fiscal years 2019-23.

Our strategy features a whole-of-government approach utilizing the specific skill sets of the Department of State, USAID, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Justice, and other interagency partners to synchronize and complement our approach. Many partners embed a liaison cell within U.S. Africa Command to support our strategy, a method we endorse and expand as needed. Additionally, U.S. Africa Command understands legislation generally consistent with a proposal outlined in the President's 2019 Budget and the National Security Strategy has been introduced to create a new development finance institution. We look forward to working with this new agency as well.

EAST AFRICA

For East Africa, the desired end state is one in which VEOs are not able to destabilize Somalia or its neighbors or threaten the U.S. homeland, U.S. persons, or our international partners and allies. Accordingly, the desired end state includes transitioning security responsibility from the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) and Somalia's Federal Member States (FMS) so the central and regional governments ultimately secure their own territory, neutralize al-Shabaab, and interdict illicit flows of arms, drugs, money, natural resources, and persons.

In Somalia, the 2017 election of President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, known as President "Farmajo," proved to be a strategically significant change in the region. Historically, Somalia has been plagued with drought, extreme food insecurity, and decades of political, economic, and military unrest. President Farmajo inherited clan-based conflicts, al-Shabaab's ongoing violent extremism, and the emergence of ISIS-Somalia.

However, in the short time since taking office, President Farmajo has re-aligned the Somali National Army security sectors to coincide with the borders of the Somali Federal Member States. He also utilized 2017 as a year of planning while gathering local, regional, and international support. At both the May 2017 London Conference and the December 2017 Mogadishu Conference, President Farmajo reiterated his administration's commitment to implementing Somali national security architecture in 2018 and refocused the AMISOM transition into a conditions-based turnover rather than a time- or date-based transition. International partners, including the U.S., are committed to Somali progress leading to well-trained Somali security forces.

President Farmajo fully supports U.S.-led train and equip missions, as well as U.S. kinetic efforts in support of the FGS. President Farmajo recognizes that Somalia's security cannot be manufactured by international partners but must come from Somali citizens in towns and villages across the country. President Farmajo supports a federal form of government, with power and security responsibilities shared among federal member states and local forces; he also supports military accountability to the civilian population. President Farmajo has demonstrated a willingness to integrate federal, regional, and local interests into his administration and encourages defections from al-Shabaab. Also assisting in Somalia is a coalition of international partners, such as the European Union, the African Union, the United Nations, the United Kingdom, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates.

Even with President Farmajo's forward-looking Somalia strategy, al-Shabaab remains a threat to the region, as demonstrated by the devastating October 2017 vehicle-borne IED attacks in Mogadishu that killed over 500 people. While some high-profile defections have occurred,

only a small number of fighters have actually defected. In addition, Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham (ISIS)-Somalia remains isolated in northern Somalia with small, limited capabilities. By the end of 2017, sustained conflict and prolonged food insecurity drove more than two million people to flee their homes in Somalia. Though there are some improvements in 2018, unfortunately, forecasted drought conditions will likely lead to continued poor harvests and reduced food security in Somalia, sustaining and contributing to population displacement. As a component of our whole-of-government efforts, and building on longstanding and large humanitarian investments, in 2017, USAID signed an important development assistance agreement with Somalia, supporting that country's efforts to achieve stability through good governance, economic recovery, education and health. USAID has invested \$400 million in development assistance in Somalia since 2011. Delivered over a five-year period, the funds will support democracy, stabilization and governance, education, and economic growth activities to achieve economic recovery and resilience for Somalia.

With the full support of the Federal Government of Somalia, U.S. Africa Command maintains pressure on the al-Shabaab and ISIS-Somalia networks and seeks to accelerate the delivery of training and equipment to the Somali Federal Member States. Our joint Department of Defense-Department of State Security Force Assistance efforts in Somalia have built the 1st Danab Advanced Infantry Battalion, a combat-tested unit at the leading edge in southern Somalia. Furthermore, with the Department of State and the Defense Threat Reduction Agency's (DTRA) Joint Improvised Threat Defeat Organization (JIDO), we are working to improve the security posture in Mogadishu and mitigate the destabilizing effects of vehicle-borne IED attacks in the city.

Our relationship with Djibouti is strong, though we are carefully monitoring Chinese encroachment and emergent military presence. In November, Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti hosted a commemorative event celebrating the Africa First Initiative and its contract awardees, which President Ismail Omar Guelleh attended as the honorary guest. This long-term initiative to acquire local goods and services for U.S. military members helps boost African businesses. Camp Lemonnier remains the only enduring U.S. military installation in Africa, and as such, a key component of the command's regional readiness. Furthermore, last August, the Chinese opened their first overseas naval base in Djibouti. U.S. Africa Command views security and access to Djibouti as a top priority. Consequently, we continue to monitor this development to ensure U.S. interests are not deterred.

In South Sudan, the political climate continues to be volatile. U.S. Africa Command maintains constant communication with U.S. Embassy Juba and stands ready to assist them should the situation on the ground necessitate our support. This response capability means the U.S. can maintain diplomatic and humanitarian presence inside of South Sudan as U.S. Embassy Juba works to seek an end to one of Africa's largest humanitarian disasters.

Ethiopia remains a longstanding partner and contributes over 4,000 uniformed personnel to AMISOM, further advancing regional peace and security efforts in East Africa.

Other countries in East Africa continue to develop reconnaissance and surveillance capabilities to build their capacity for counterterrorism operations. Kenya and Uganda have deployed tactical unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) in their fight against al-Shabaab in southern Somalia. The Kenyans use theirs to identify ambushes ahead of their patrols, and the Ugandans use theirs as artillery spotters against al-Shabaab concentrations. Both countries have seen the value of such capabilities, and Kenya is now investing their own money in additional platforms.

Furthermore, as Kenya received guided strike capabilities, we are developing air-ground integration mentorship programs to optimize the impact of these tools. Both Kenya and Uganda receive helicopters, UAVs, and medium altitude reconnaissance platforms.

NORTH AFRICA

Turning to North Africa, our four primary objectives in Libya are: degrade terrorist groups who threaten U.S. interests and threaten to destabilize Libya and the region; avert civil war; support the political reconciliation process towards a unified central government; and assist to curb the flow of illegal migrants into Europe via Libya. Efforts by European allies and international organizations are underway to interdict the illicit flow of arms and drugs flowing into and through of North Africa due to porous borders and under-governed spaces.

In Libya, U.S. Africa Command continues to support the U.S. Libya External Office's diplomatic efforts to promote the UN-facilitated Libyan political reconciliation process. Our counterterrorism strategy has allowed time for the political reconciliation process to continue.

Following its late 2016 expulsion from in Surt, ISIS-Libya remains dispersed and disorganized and likely capable of little more than localized attacks. Meanwhile, al-Qa'ida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) in Libya maintains a low profile yet still aims to use illicit means to move fighters and weapons and focuses on building influence within Libya's various extremist groups. The disrupted state of VEOs, however, has not translated into a stable Libya. Libya remains politically and militarily divided, with loyalties shifting based on tribal interests and personalities involved in the struggle for power. Given this turmoil, the risk of a full-scale civil war remains real. We will continue to apply pressure on the ISIS-Libya network,

work with the Government of National Accord, and support the international community to consolidate a comprehensive approach to bringing stability and a political settlement to Libya.

In Tunisia, we work to develop Tunisian counterterrorism and border security capabilities. Through programs that build partner capacity, like the JIDO counter-IED awareness program, we have trained and equipped Tunisia's special operations forces. Recently, elements of the U.S.-trained Tunisian Special Forces airborne battalion successfully engaged a group of terrorists in the Kasserine Mountains, killing a senior ISIS attack planner. On border security, Tunisia is making use of U.S.-provided mobile ground surveillance radar systems and ISR aircraft to better monitor its border with Libya. Furthermore, the U.S.-funded border security project managed by DTRA is on track to provide fixed radar and camera coverage of the Tunisia-Libya border in November 2018. DTRA has begun a second radar to extend coverage to the southern portion of the Libya-Tunisia border. This second phase is funded by the German Government and managed by DTRA.

On 31 January 2017, Morocco was admitted to the African Union (AU), more than three decades after it withdrew from the precursor Organization of African Unity. This means all African nations are now members of the AU. As the country with the largest Foreign Military Sales (FMS) program within our Area of Responsibility, Morocco has repeatedly demonstrated the ability to operate and maintain advanced U.S. equipment and seeks to increase interoperability with U.S. and NATO Forces. Morocco's role as a net exporter of security makes it a key partner in the region.

Algeria is another highly capable partner in North Africa, who continues to implement an effective counterterrorism program against local extremist groups. Further, U.S. Africa

Command and the Algerian People's National Armed Forces hold regular dialogues to advance cooperation on shared security interests.

SAHEL REGION

The Sahel region of Africa is a critical battleground in the fight against violent extremism and jihadist terrorism. The African-led, French-assisted, U.S.-supported G5 Sahel organization (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger) has established a joint force to combat violent extremism within the region. U.S. Africa Command is contributing two operational planners to the G5 Sahel Joint Force.

In Mali and adjacent countries, AQIM and its affiliates remain a threat to U.S. interests and the security of our African partners. Mali's government, rebel groups, and pro-government militias are struggling to implement the 2015 Algiers peace agreement. We remain committed to assisting the French-led operations to degrade VEOs and to build the defense capacity in Mali and its neighbors.

Niger is at the crossroads of regional instability: Boko Haram, ISIS-West Africa, ISIS-Greater Sahara, Jamaat Nursat al-Islam wal-Muslimin (JNIM), and affiliated extremist groups in the region; spillover from the Mali conflict in the west; instability emanating from Libya to the north; and a large flow of would-be migrants to Europe who converge on Agadez en route to Libya. Moreover, Niger faces internal governance and development issues with rapid population growth, environmental degradation, lack of economic opportunity, and stressed infrastructure. While the Department of Defense has increased Title 10 support to Nigerien forces, the U.S. military does not have a direct combat mission in Niger. Instead, U.S. Africa Command has provided training and equipment to the Nigerien Armed Forces and through the Trans Sahara Counter Terrorism Partnership since 2005, and advises and assists certain Nigerien combat units.

Additionally, at the request of the Government of Niger and the Nigerien Armed Forces, U.S. Africa Command is establishing an expeditionary, contingency support location in Agadez. This will be a Nigerien base from which we will fly ISR assets to better identify and monitor threats in the region. Furthermore, Niger will host Exercise Flintlock 2018, a multi-national event among African, allied, and U.S. forces to develop capacity and collaboration between security forces to protect civilian populations. The fight against terrorism is a long-term effort, and Niger has shown itself to be a dedicated partner.

In Burkina Faso, U.S. forces are supporting intra-theater mobility operations. Additional security assistance initiatives in Burkina Faso include training and equipping army companies dedicated to counterterrorism operations and logistics. On 2 March 2018, our partners sustained devastating attacks on the Burkinabe Army Headquarters and on the French Embassy, and we remain in steadfast support to their efforts.

In Chad, U.S. forces conduct Security Force Assistance focused on logistics, sustainment, and maintenance with the Chadian Special Anti-terrorism Group (SATG). Key programs include counter-Boko Haram equipment (e.g. armored trucks, fuel, and radios), ISR aircraft, and command and control enhancements. In addition, U.S. forces are building intelligence and counter-IED capabilities to augment Chad's counterterrorism efforts. We trained and equipped the National Army with sixty light armored vehicles and provided fuel allotments to support border surveillance as well as counter extremists operations in the Lake Chad Region. In 2017, the Chadian National Army used some of these vehicles to assist in operations to contain ISIS-West Africa in Nigeria, decreasing attacks into Niger and Chad.

WEST AFRICA

Unrest within West Africa is driven by local grievances, corruption and weak governance, human rights violations, and imported religious ideology. U.S. Africa Command's principal strategic objective in West Africa and the Lake Chad Region is to contain and degrade Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa. U.S. Africa Command works with the four Lake Chad Region countries (Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria) to build their capacity to ensure Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa do not threaten partner, allied, or U.S interests.

The Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF), composed of forces from Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria, coordinates operations and facilitates intelligence sharing. Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa continue to hold territory and conduct suicide IED attacks, and to varying degrees terrorize local communities, displacing people from their homes. The persistent violence limits the ability of international humanitarian aid organizations to deliver needed assistance. Basic health care, clean drinking water, adequate sanitation, and food supplies are in short supply to the millions of refugees and displaced persons in the area. U.S. Africa Command supports Department of State and USAID (the U.S. government leads) who work closely with the UN and non-governmental organizations to provide humanitarian development assistance, and stability to the region.

Nigeria's capabilities and capacity continue to grow, with intelligence sharing agreements and additional cooperation with U.S. forces. Nigeria has made arrangements to purchase 12 A-29 Super Tucano light attack airplanes with delivery of the first 8 expected in 2020. Furthermore, President Buhari has encouraged trust in U.S.-Nigerian interaction. However, challenges remain, as MNJTF partners sometimes fall short of respecting international norms of human rights when dealing with local populations. We are closely monitoring reports of the armed forces of Lake Chad Region countries using heavy-handed counter-insurgency techniques

and which have led to additional displacement of civilian populations and reports of forcible return of Nigerian refugees from neighboring countries in violation of international humanitarian principles and refugee-related conventions. We continually remind them techniques such as these not only increase regional fragility by undermining public trust and confidence in the state, but also produce the grievances that fuel support for the enemy. Partner nation fiscal challenges and competing security concerns add additional pressure in the region. Nigeria faces unrest in its southern Delta region, home to its oil fields and oil revenues, piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, and threats by Biafran separatists. As Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa become localized to northeastern Nigeria, the remaining MNJTF partners have become reluctant to commit resources to what they view as “a Nigeria problem.”

U.S. Africa Command supports the efforts of the Lake Chad Region partners to counter Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa by providing advisors, intelligence, training, and equipment instead of engaging in direct military operations. In July 2017, U.S. Africa Command started training and equipping MNJTF-designated units to counter IEDs. Over a hundred MNJTF soldiers are now less vulnerable to IEDs employed by violent extremists. We intend to expand counter-IED training and equipping programs to other affected regions.

GULF OF GUINEA AND CENTRAL AFRICA

In the Gulf of Guinea, maritime security remains a strategic priority due to its role in global oil markets, trade routes, and the presence of approximately 75,000 American citizens residing in the area. Piracy and other illicit maritime activities threaten development efforts, weaken state security, and rob states of resources required for greater economic growth and more effective governance. Incidents of piracy and armed robbery at sea trended lower in 2017, but continued to threaten maritime trade and offshore hydrocarbon installations.

In addition to the VEO threat throughout Africa, criminal and smuggling networks remain a persistent danger within the Gulf of Guinea and Central Africa. U.S. Africa Command supports our African partners who work with international and interagency partners to interdict and to disrupt illicit trafficking and smuggling networks that finance trans-national criminal organizations.

U.S. Africa Command remains engaged with coastal nations and international partners to increase African maritime capacity and willingness to interdict illicit activity in the Gulf of Guinea. We execute the African Maritime Law Enforcement Partnership (AMLEP) and support the Yaoundé Code of Conduct, a strong regional framework for information sharing and operational coordination. In 2017, under the AMLEP, U.S. Coast Guard and Cabo Verde security personnel embarked a Senegal Navy ship for joint patrol operations in Senegal and Cabo Verde waters. This represented the first combined African partner maritime law enforcement patrol hosted from another African partner nation's vessel.

In Central Africa, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) used to terrorize isolated populations. Our surge efforts with the African Union Regional Task Force effectively diminished the LRA to a threat that can now be better addressed by local and state actors, in which the Department of State Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs and the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations are investing. Now, regional efforts are focused on expanding security in this region by investing in civilian law enforcement agencies to provide more security and address illicit trafficking of minerals, natural resources, narcotics and weapons which fuel violence.

AFRICA-WIDE CAPACITY BUILDING EFFORTS

U.S. Africa Command continues to build the capacity of African partners to respond to crises including infectious disease outbreaks. Most of our engagement with Southern Africa is in this regard. Despite its relative stability, Southern Africa faces economic, social, and environmental challenges that include poverty, crime, social inequality, corruption, and lack of water. U.S. Africa Command will continue to work closely with our Department of State and USAID partners, providing support and complementing their efforts when requested.

One of U.S. Africa Command's most valuable implementing partners is the National Guard's State Partnership Program (SPP). These state partnerships' enduring relationships build and improve peacekeeping capacity, disaster management competency, and overall partner readiness. For example, the SPP currently supports the Botswana Defense Force as they build various defense institutions such as an Office of the Inspector General and a Staff Judge Advocate program. Through U.S. Africa Command's Security Force Assistance, the SPP and other organizations are setting the stage for force development in Botswana. Currently, the SPP pairs 13 African nations with 11 U.S. states. Several more African countries have requested partnerships, and their requests are currently under consideration. We continue to see great value in the SPP program.

Other programs that build partner capacity include the Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI), the African Peacekeeping Rapid Response Partnership (APRRP), and the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Initiative. GPOI, managed by the Department of State, works to strengthen the capacity and capabilities of international partners to execute UN and regional peacekeeping operations. Most GPOI partners are in Africa (23), as the program builds sustainable peacekeeping capacity within each country to aid in their participation in UN and regional peacekeeping missions. APRRP focuses on six African partners (Ethiopia, Ghana,

Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, and Uganda) to allow for deeper investment in rapid response capability. APRRP allows for development of aviation, medical, engineering, and logistical capabilities; command, control, communications, and information systems; and the formation of police units to handle local law enforcement requirements. GPOI and APRRP professionalize partner militaries and security forces through training and equipping and institution building.

U.S. Africa Command remains committed to aligning capacity building efforts with WPS objectives. WPS integrates a gender perspective in our military activities through two main efforts: 1) staff training and awareness, and 2) integration in the Combatant Command Campaign Plan. For training and awareness, we host “Gender in Military Operations” seminars and provide informative briefings to both U.S. Africa Command and partner leadership during conferences. WPS concepts are integrated into military-to-military engagements; training on human rights, rule of law, and prevention of gender-based violence; and exercises.

U.S. Africa Command’s whole-of-government approach includes building partners’ capacity for responding to disease outbreaks. U.S. Africa Command Surgeon’s Office leads the Africa Malaria Task Force (AMTF) programs through leadership engagements, assessments, and training for 18 African militaries to implement the U.S. government’s President’s Malaria Initiative (PMI) and to support countries’ malaria prevention programs. The command’s components lead the Africa Partner Outbreak Response Alliance (APORA) that promotes effective military-civilian partnerships in health and security communities to manage emerging epidemics. Based on the initiative’s successes, we are establishing professional development and training programs for emergency managers and responders in West Africa at the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center in Accra, Ghana.

IMPLEMENTING OUR APPROACH

U.S. Africa Command relies on partnerships not only with African nations but also with international, multinational, interagency, and specialized U.S. units to achieve U.S. strategic objectives. Fifteen of our international partners are embedded within the command staff in the Multi-National Coordination Center (MNCC). U.S. Africa Command leads and participates in multilateral planning groups for East Africa, North Africa, and the Sahel region, in addition to our component command-hosted senior leader staff talks with their respective component equivalents. In addition, the U.S. Army's Regionally Aligned Force (RAF) executes a significant share of the Security Force Assistance activities in Africa. Sustained access to the RAF is critical to mission success.

U.S. Africa Command coordinates and integrates its activities with the Department of State and USAID through the annual Africa Strategic Dialogue in the fall and the Africa Strategic Integration Conference in the winter. Working with the Department of State and other departments and agencies, the Security Governance Initiative (SGI) builds the capacity of civil and defense institutions in six countries, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, and Tunisia. Additionally, the Section 333 authority provided in the FY2017 National Defense Authorization Act assists U.S. Africa Command in building security force capacity and has been essential in enabling African partners in their fight against home grown extremism.

Relationships with U.S. European Command and U.S. Central Command are essential to our mission success. We rely on allies such as France, Germany, Italy, and Spain to project U.S. forces out of Europe to support efforts in North Africa, the Sahel, and other location on the continent, and U.S. European Command helps orchestrate these efforts. We coordinate closely with U.S. Central Command for shared response forces, as well as shared equities in Egypt, the Arabian Peninsula, and the Gulf of Aden. In 2017, for example, our Exercise Cutlass Express,

sought to improve U.S. military interoperability with the armed forces of eastern African nations and European allies. The exercise was linked with U.S. Central Command's international maritime exercise to build capabilities in the region. Finally, our partnership with U.S. Special Operations Command (SOCOM)—through Special Operations Command – Africa (SOCAFRICA)—is a vital link in containing and degrading extremism on the continent.

To support the Department of State-led mission to protect U.S. personnel and facilities, U.S. Africa Command manages rapid-response forces that are flexible and specialized: the Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force-Crisis Response at Moron Air Base, Spain; the Crisis Response Force in Baumholder, Germany; and the East Africa Response Force in Djibouti. Also, when required, amphibious Marine Expeditionary Units offer another layer of reaction forces to protect U.S. personnel and facilities. Finally, U.S. Africa Command maintains Defense Cooperation Agreements with several African nations—which allow for the forward staging locations enable faster recovery or evacuation of personnel.

U.S. Africa Command is a supporting effort in the worldwide fight against violent extremism. With regard to resources, we have, historically, been viewed as an “economy of force” area of operations, particularly in comparison to other combatant commands. However, consistent with the National Defense Strategy, we continue to explore efficient and cost-effective ways to make the best use of the assets we are provided. This is best represented by U.S. Africa Command's limited ISR allocation. With personnel recovery and casualty evacuation, contracted search and rescue assets are an expensive but necessary substitute to our limited capacity. Moreover, most African partners neither have the organic assets nor the funding to assist with personnel recovery or casualty evacuation missions. While U.S. Africa Command

will continue to meet its mission with the assets provided, we will also continue to find ways to help protect personnel and enhance mission success.

CONCLUSION

In summary, ten years ago, at the inception of U.S. Africa Command, many were skeptical of a U.S. combatant command for Africa. However, over the past decade, U.S. Africa Command professionals have built strong and trusting relationships with many African nations, key partners, and organizations. Today, we continue with our partners to contain and degrade transnational threats, protect U.S. personnel and facilities, prevent and mitigate conflict, and build African partner defense capability in order to promote regional security, long-term stability, and prosperity. In line with the National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy, U.S. Africa Command will continue to bolster existing bilateral and multilateral partnerships and develop new relationships to deter or constrain threats to U.S. interests. We will focus on working by, with, and through local partners to build the capability required to counter violent extremism, human trafficking, transnational criminal activity, and illegal arms trade. As a command, we will apply small, wise investments toward “African solutions to African problems,” promoting U.S. interests and protecting the U.S. homeland. I am honored to lead our service members, civilian employees, and families of U.S. Africa Command. They inspire all of us every day as “we go further together.”

**General Thomas D. Waldhauser, U.S. Marine Corps
Commander, U.S. Africa Command**

United States Marine Corps General Thomas D. Waldhauser is the fourth Commander of the United States Africa Command. In this capacity, General Waldhauser is responsible for building defense capabilities, responding to crises, deterring and defeating transnational threats in order to advance U.S. national interests and promote regional security, stability, and prosperity, all in concert with interagency and international partners.

A native of South St. Paul, Minnesota, General Waldhauser graduated from Bemidji State University and was commissioned in 1976. He has served as an infantry officer at all levels in the U.S. Marine Corps, including command of the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (Special Operations Capable) during combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. His General Officer commands include the Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, and Commander, Marine Corps Forces Central Command.

General Waldhauser's flag officer Joint assignments include Chief of Staff, U.S. Special Operations Command, Senior Military Assistant to the Secretary of Defense, Joint Staff Director of Operations J3 (Acting), and Joint Staff Director for Joint Force Development J7.

General Waldhauser attended U.S. Army Ranger School, Jumpmaster School, Amphibious Warfare School, Marine Corps Command and Staff College, and the National War College where he earned a Master's Degree in National Security Strategies.

