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**“Coordinating Africa Policy on Security, Counter-Terrorism,  
Humanitarian Operations and Development”**

*Excerpts of Remarks by Chairman Chris Smith  
Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health and Human Rights  
July 26, 2011*

Thank you for joining us this afternoon to examine how United States policy is being coordinated in Africa from the security, counter-terrorism, humanitarian and development perspectives, since the establishment of the U.S. Africa Command in 2008.

For decades, despite the wave of African independence in the 1950s through the 1970s, many American policymakers did not believe Africa held strategic importance to the United States. According to one defense analyst, “during the Cold War, United States foreign policy toward Sub-Saharan Africa had little to do with Africa.” After the fall of the Soviet Union, many U.S. policymakers continued to consider the U.S. military’s role and responsibilities on the continent to be minimal. In 1995, the Department of Defense asserted in its U.S. Security Strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa, that “ultimately we see very little traditional strategic interest in Africa.”

A look at current statistics amply demonstrates that the United States does have a strategic interest in sub-Saharan Africa. More than 90% of U.S. trade with African nations centers on American imports of African oil. U.S. oil imports from Africa comprise nearly a quarter of all American oil imports and promises to increase as new sources of oil continue to be found throughout Africa. Similarly, African nations have abundant minerals on which our modern society relies. In recent years, the mineral coltan, largely coming from Africa, has enabled the development of computers, cell phones and other electronic devices. We would be hard-pressed to construct jet aircraft, automobile catalytic converters or iPods without the minerals found in Africa, and in some cases, almost nowhere else in the world.

Since the 1998 bombing of the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, it has become clear that terrorism can strike the United States even in Africa. In fact, the presence of Africans on the list of planners of the 1993 and 2001 World Trade Center attacks demonstrates that terrorism in Africa is not confined to Africa itself and can reach out to strike us even in our homeland. In a hearing I chaired on March 12<sup>th</sup>, 1999 on U.S. embassy security, Admiral

William Crowe, then chairman of the Accountability Review Board, said the Kenya and Tanzania bombings demonstrated the inadequacy of resources to provide security against terrorist attacks as demonstrated by the lack of resources devoted to security at U.S. posts abroad. That hearing resulted in what we then called the Embassy Security Act of 1999, which greatly enhanced security at our U.S. embassies and USAID missions.

When I visited Sudan in 2005, government officials in Khartoum admitted that they had harbored al-Qaeda in the past, and security chief Saleh Gosh bragged to me about how close his government was to the late Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda at one time. Clearly, we must remain vigilant concerning the existence of terrorist organizations that threaten our interest in Africa and Africa's people.

And as we learned during our hearing on Somalia on July 7th, we are currently in the midst of a famine in the Horn of Africa as a result of a severe drought that is affecting the entire Eastern Africa region. The drought, said to be the worst in 60 years, has caused a severe food crisis across Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya that threatens the livelihood of more than 12 million people. Other countries in and around the Horn of Africa, including Djibouti, Sudan, South Sudan and parts of Uganda, are also affected by a food crisis.

Our government certainly now realizes the importance of Africa, but remnants of our policy neglect remain. One example of the previous underestimation of Africa's significance was the division of American interests in Africa among three different combatant commands: the European Command, the Central Command and the Pacific Command. Because of their differing strategic objective and goals, Africa was hardly ever a primary concern. The creation of the African Command, or AFRICOM, demonstrates the current awareness of the strategic importance of Africa not only for the United States but for the world in general.

During our country's growing engagement with the nations of Africa, our policy toward the continent has been managed by two civilian agencies – the Department of State and the U.S. Agency for International Development. It is therefore reasonable that AFRICOM contains a larger non-DOD civilian staff than has been the tradition with other combatant commands, but questions remain concerning whether an expanded military presence will overshadow the so-called "soft power" of diplomacy and humanitarian and development assistance.

DOD officials emphasize that AFRICOM remains under development; some details regarding the command's structure and footprint are still being reviewed. For example, a decision on AFRICOM's final headquarters location has been postponed to 2012, and a move to the continent may not occur for several years, if at all.

This new coordination during the past three years among the State Department, USAID and the Defense Department, and its implications for United States policy in Africa as a whole, will be the focus of this hearing. A former EUCOM commander suggested that the Africa Command, with the interagency coordination, could be "the pioneer" for a new approach that the other commands might later adopt. We look forward to examining the challenges and successes of this approach with our distinguished witnesses.