

**Testimony by U.S. Department of State
Acting Assistant Secretary Donald Yamamoto
26 July 2011
Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Human Rights
U.S. House Foreign Affairs Committee**

“AFRICOM: Promoting Partnership for Global Security in Africa”

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Payne, honorable Members of the Committee: Thank you for inviting me to testify before you today on USG cooperation in Africa since AFRICOM was created. As you know, we are currently witnessing some of the greatest changes on the African continent since the era of independence. These changes present both challenges and opportunities, and since its inception in October 2008, AFRICOM has been a critical partner for the Department of State in addressing conflict and transnational issues across Africa, in addition to the prominent role it has played in traditional military operations, such as the conflict in Libya. Today I am here to tell you why AFRICOM matters and how we are working together to pursue our common foreign policy objectives.

Without effective cooperation within the U.S. Government, we will not be able to address the issues of terrorism, piracy and conflict in places like Sudan, Somalia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Before the creation of AFRICOM, the Department of State had to coordinate with three different Geographic Combatant Commands, each of which had varying priorities and security cooperation objectives. The Department of Defense was able to unify these efforts by placing all of the previous areas of responsibility for Africa under one command solely focused on Africa 365 days a year. We have seen how this new focus in places like Liberia can have success in building sustainable, indigenous African security capacity that respects civilian authority and human rights, and contributes meaningfully to economic and social development. Given the important role militaries play in the region, AFRICOM’s work is critical to the success of our Administration’s broader efforts to build a more peaceful, prosperous, and democratic Africa.

AFRICOM’s previous and first commander, General Kip Ward, used to say that standing up a new Combatant Command was like trying to build an airplane in flight, and we appreciate that the State Department has been allowed to be part of this process of growth from the beginning. Since its inception, AFRICOM has strived to be a collaborative Combatant Command with a core function of not just overseeing U.S. forces on the continent, but also preventing and resolving armed conflict through building partner nation capacity. For the past three years, the U.S. Department of State has coordinated and collaborated with AFRICOM as it worked to achieve the Administration’s highest priority goals related to democracy, good governance, the peaceful resolution of conflicts, and transnational challenges. President Obama’s speech in Accra in July 2009 laid out a clear framework for our Africa policy, and we believe that AFRICOM has played an important supporting role in implementing this framework. It is doing this by supporting efforts to build professional, capable militaries that respect human rights and civilian control, which in turn supports efforts to resolve armed conflicts, address transnational challenges, and safeguard democratic institutions.

AFRICOM has two co-equal deputy commanders – a civilian deputy and a military deputy. The Deputy to the Commander for Civil-Military Activities (DCMA) is a senior U.S. diplomat, and provides direct policy input and advice to the Commander of AFRICOM. The State Department further augments the AFRICOM Headquarters staff with a Foreign Policy Advisor and five additional Foreign Service Officers, including a Senior Development Advisor provided by USAID who reports directly to General Ham. Most of the other Foreign Service Officers in the command have regional responsibilities. Additionally, each of AFRICOM's component commands also has a Foreign Service Officer serving as a Foreign Policy Advisor. The State Department currently has four other employees seconded to AFRICOM and is in the process of adding five additional officers. Similarly, AFRICOM has significantly expanded the number of DoD personnel who are integrated into embassies across the continent over the past three years. These personnel are valuable members of our country teams, as they provide direct and sustained support for both DOS and DoD-funded activities. AFRICOM has strived to not just do more, but do better in its activities on the continent and these expanded offices of security cooperation have enabled our embassies to increase the quality of our engagement on the continent. Effective collaboration is possible because the Department of State and AFRICOM are imbedded in each other's organizations. This structure has allowed us to work together effectively on a number of programs over the past three years, and I would like to outline these collaborative efforts for you today. I also want to discuss briefly AFRICOM's relationship with our partner nations.

The Department of State collaborates with AFRICOM on a long list of issues such as military professionalization; building counterterrorism capacity; disaster management; peacekeeping capacity building; humanitarian operations coordinated with USAID; demining and ammunition handling training; non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; destruction of excess small arms and light weapons and unstable ammunition; reduction of excess and poorly secured man-portable air defense systems (MANPADS); Defense Sector Reform in Liberia, DRC, and South Sudan; counter-piracy activities off the Somali coast; maritime safety and security capacity building; and civil-military cooperation. AFRICOM elements at our embassies implement Department of State-funded Foreign Military Financing (FMF) and International Military Education and Training (IMET) programs, which further U.S. interests in Africa by helping to professionalize African militaries, while also assisting our African partners to be more equipped and trained to work toward common security goals.

In the realm of counterterrorism, AFRICOM plays a critical and central role in both the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) and the Partnership for Regional East Africa Counterterrorism (PRACT), our primary programs to support the long-term counterterrorism (CT) capacity building of member countries in northwest and East Africa. Both programs are led by State, but are managed in close coordination with DoD and AFRICOM, as well as USAID. DoD launched Operation Enduring Freedom – Trans-Sahara (OEF-TS) in 2007 to support TSCTP programming. OEF-TS adds both funding and essential staff to TSCTP, including military trainers and advisors.

State also collaborates with AFRICOM on a range of transnational issues. We continue to work together to develop U.S. maritime engagement in Africa from one of individual, isolated efforts to a more comprehensive and sustainable approach. Early and close coordination on

AFRICOM programs such as the Africa Partnership Station, which State provides funding to support the training of African maritime forces, and Africa Maritime Law Enforcement Partnership, which provides operational support, both contribute to a whole-of-government approach. Non-proliferation and counternarcotics are two other key areas of cooperation. Recently, DoD began to design and implement cooperative threat reduction programs in East Africa, focused on improving security around sites housing potential biological threats. The AFRICOM Counternarcotics Office has been active in West Africa supporting maritime and airport interdiction efforts and funding the Federal Bureau of Investigation's and Drug Enforcement Administration's training activities throughout the region.

If there is a downside to this level of engagement, it is that the large numbers of AFRICOM temporary assignment personnel deploying to the continent often present significant logistical challenges for U.S. Missions, which sometimes find it difficult to maintain full visibility and provide support given their own very limited staffing levels. This large and growing AFRICOM presence and programming in Africa at times risks overwhelming the "soft power" of USAID and State programs and personnel. Additionally, the constant turnover of temporary military personnel working on three and six month rotations can cause significant confusion with both the country team and the host nation if not carefully and managed. Nonetheless, we will continue to work together and coordinate closely in order to mitigate and manage these challenges.

However, the downside of additional DoD personnel on the continent is far outweighed by the positive gains AFRICOM made in the past three years. I can report to you today that cooperation between AFRICOM and our African partners is at an all-time high despite a continuing lingering wariness towards AFRICOM on the part of some African nations. This cooperation begins at the highest levels, where AFRICOM assists the African Union Peace and Security Commission. It continues down through the African Standby Force regional brigades, and ends with extensive partnering at the bilateral level. The capacity that AFRICOM builds at the regional level improves the relationship not just between the United States and the AU, but between the African nations themselves, increasing overall cooperation exponentially. An example of this is AFRICOM's Exercise African Endeavor, which assists African nations and their regional organizations in communicating with one another over a variety of spectrums, making greater regional cooperation possible. AFRICOM exercises, like Natural Fire in East Africa, bring together biannually forces from Kenya, Tanzania, Burundi, Uganda, Rwanda, and the United States to conduct interoperability training in a humanitarian response scenario. These specific examples demonstrate how AFRICOM is increasing cooperation and building trust bilaterally through its interactions with African regional organizations.

Engaging with regional organizations is just one way that AFRICOM is improving cooperation on the continent. Since its inception, AFRICOM has worked in concert with other U.S. government agencies and international partners to provide effective security engagement through military-to-military programs and activities designed to promote a stable and secure African environment. The Department of State applauds these efforts, and believes that, despite the difficult challenges it has faced, AFRICOM is on a positive trajectory of better cooperation with both other U.S. Government agencies and our partner nations. Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today. I will be happy to answer any questions.