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# A CINC for Sub-Saharan Africa? Rethinking the Unified Command Plan

RICHARD G. CATOIRE

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From *Parameters*, Winter 2000-01, pp. 102-17.

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In 1946, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, recognizing the importance of the unity of military effort achieved by US forces during World War II, issued the "Outline Command Plan." This was the first in a series of documents specifying an arrangement now known as the Unified Command Plan. The plan divided the world into geographic regions and assigned responsibility to a designated military command for protecting US security interests in each region. This organizing principle has guided post-World War II US military operations.[1]

Over the last 54 years, the Unified Command Plan has been revised 18 times in response to the changing strategic environment, advances in technology, and the growing global commitment of US forces.[2] Legislation adopted in 1979 specified that the Unified Command Plan be reviewed biennially.[3] The President approved the current Unified Command Plan on 13 October 1999.

In this latest review there were no regional or functional changes pertaining to the continent of Africa. In fact, none of the language in the last two assessments directly addressed Africa. This is consistent with Department of Defense declarations that the United States has "very little traditional strategic interest in Africa,"[4] but that assertion is itself somewhat puzzling in light of the fact that the United States has intervened militarily in the region more than 20 times since 1990.[5]

Under the current Unified Command Plan, responsibility for the continent of Africa is divided among three of the five regional unified commands. The duties of the commands include developing joint operation plans to deter war and, if necessary, to guide the transition to war or to military operations other than war.[6] When hostilities start, the unified commands plan and conduct campaigns and major operations.[7]

In addition to these purely military roles, the Commanders in Chief (CINCs) of the unified commands also have come to play important diplomatic roles by using US military resources to enhance access and influence while communicating regularly with senior foreign civil and military leaders on a variety of issues.[8] No other organization of the US government is manned or equipped to play a regional role of this magnitude.[9]

Essentially, a unified command is the primary organization charged with protecting America's security interests in a geographic region of the world. It does this not only by managing US military resources in the region, but by building better security relations with the foreign countries in the region, endeavoring to build trust and "habits of cooperation" that permit quick agreement and common action to resolve regional conflict. Assisting America's diplomats in building coalitions and maintaining alliances is thus a key role of the unified commands. Such a role is particularly important in regions where US resources are limited.

Because of the increased US engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa, and because the current regional unified commands are principally focused elsewhere, the time has come to rethink the Unified Command Plan as it regards Africa. The current plan cannot effectively protect America's security interests on that continent. It is unlikely to realize the articulated policy objectives of the United States in the region, and it should be revised to better secure those objectives.

## History of the Unified Command Plan and Africa

The "Outline Command Plan" of 1946 established seven unified commands: Far East Command, Pacific Command, Alaskan Command, Northeast Command, Atlantic Fleet, Caribbean Command, and European Command.[10] None was assigned responsibility for the continent of Africa. Not until 1952 was responsibility for at least a part of Africa

assigned to a unified combatant command.[11] On 2 December 1952, recognizing the historical ties between North Africa and Europe, the European Command was given responsibility for the Algerian Departments of France, along with joint planning requirements for French Morocco, Tunisia, and Libya.

In 1960 the threat of a communist takeover of the newly independent Congo garnered attention to the whole of Africa. Atlantic Command was then given responsibility for plans and operations pertaining to Sub-Saharan Africa, while European Command retained responsibility for North Africa. In reaction to further problems in the Congo in 1962, the Unified Command Plan was again revised, with the recently established Strike Command (USSTRICOM) given responsibility for Sub-Saharan Africa.

When Strike Command was disestablished in 1971, responsibility for Sub-Saharan Africa was left unassigned. And so it remained for the next 11 years. Not until the 1982 biennial review of the Unified Command Plan (as newly mandated by Title 10 of the US Code) was the matter of responsibility for Sub-Saharan Africa again officially addressed.[12]

In the early 1980s, US strategic planners began acknowledging the importance of Africa's position astride principal sea lines of communication and admitted concern about access to strategic minerals in the central and southern regions of the continent. US strategic planners were also concerned over growing Cuban and Soviet involvement in the region, a characteristic feature of US foreign policy during the Reagan presidency.

As a signal to both allies and adversaries of the increasing importance of Sub-Saharan Africa to the United States, all countries in Africa south of the Sahara were added to the Unified Command Plan of 3 October 1983. This plan, recognizing the long-standing links between certain NATO countries and their former colonies, assigned all states above and below the Sahara, except those bordering the Red Sea, to the European Command. Seven countries in the northeast corner of the continent--Sudan, Egypt, Somalia, Kenya, Djibouti, Ethiopia, and eventually Eritrea--were subsequently assigned to Central Command. Responsibility for the island nations in the waters surrounding Africa remained with either the Atlantic or Pacific commands. Notwithstanding the major geopolitical changes occurring in the world and Africa since the end of the Cold War, this assignment of responsibilities for the African continent has remained relatively unchanged since 1983.

So why, after all these years and in view of all these revisions, should Africa, and particularly Sub-Saharan Africa, now warrant its own unified command?

The existing Unified Command Plan assigns responsibility for Africa to three different unified commands, none of which has Africa as its primary concern. This division of responsibility and lack of focus on Africa makes it difficult for the United States to prioritize its security interests and pursue them consistently in this region.[13] Because the region is so diverse and complex, this division of responsibility only further complicates US strategy for Africa. The lack of an overarching strategy and integrated programming hampers the effectiveness of virtually all security-related US programs in Sub-Saharan Africa.[14]

But the US military is not alone in failing to optimize its regional effectiveness. The multiple US government agencies involved in Africa have been criticized for a similar failure to coordinate their efforts to effectively secure US interests in the region.[15] Because of the subsequent inability to shape the emerging regional security environment, it is little wonder that the US government and the Department of Defense are regularly obliged to undertake expensive interventions in response to crises in Africa.[16] A review of African issues reveals the necessity for a more coherent strategy.

### **Africa's Fortunes and Misfortunes**

The continent of Africa is the second largest and second most populous landmass in the world. The great expanse of the Sahara Desert separates the population of Africa racially, economically, and religiously across the north and south of the continent. The societies north of the desert have strong cultural, ethnic, and religious ties to the Arab Middle East. Islam is the predominant religion. In most respects, North Africa is more a part of the Arab Middle East or Mediterranean Basin than of Sub-Saharan Africa,[17] and for that reason, the interest here is the 48 countries and 700 million people of Sub-Saharan Africa.

With internal relationships differentiated by nationality, ethnicity, subregionality (central, eastern, western, and southern sub-regions), language (Anglophone, Francophone, Lusophone), sub-regional economic ties, and religion (Christian, Muslim, traditional), the environment of Sub-Saharan Africa may be the most complex on earth.[18] Sub-Saharan Africa's population is diverse, comprising 3,000 indigenous ethnic groups speaking over 1,000 different local languages. About a third of this number would be considered at least nominally Islamic. Over half claim adherence to some form of Christianity.[19]

The region has tremendous mineral wealth, huge hydro-electrical power reserves, and significant underdeveloped ocean resources. The better part of the world's diamonds, gold, and chromium are produced in countries at the southern end of the continent. Some 20 percent of America's oil now is imported from Africa. Copper, bauxite, phosphate, uranium, tin, iron ore, cobalt, and titanium are also mined in significant quantities. The waters off both coasts of the continent support huge fisheries. The continent's potential as a market and as a source of important commodities is great.

For all its economic potential, however, Sub-Saharan Africa is the most marginalized region of the world. Of the 20 poorest nations of the world, 18 are located in Sub-Saharan Africa. Of all the world's peoples, Africans have the least chance to survive five years, or to live to 50. Africa has the highest infant mortality rates and highest death rates in the world, reflecting its poor health care, sanitation, and diets. Life expectancy is the lowest in the world and forecast to decrease dramatically due to the HIV/AIDS epidemic throughout large areas of the sub-continent: Africa accounts for more than two-thirds of the world's HIV cases.[20] Yet Africa's annual population growth rate, exceeding three percent, is the highest in the world, rapidly adding to already unsupportable population levels. Over 40 percent of the population is under the age of 15. This population is stressed by health threats, including drug-resistant and lethal strains of malaria and tuberculosis. Diseases like sleeping sickness, schistosomiasis, and river blindness--once thought under control--have made a comeback in recent years. African countries lack the resources to cope with natural disasters--as evidenced by the flooding in Mozambique in February and March 2000--or to provide a health and educational infrastructure adequate to the challenges they face.

While some attribute the problems of Sub-Saharan Africa to the legacy of European colonialism, present-day difficulties are much more complicated and deeper than that. True enough, the colonial borders separated ethnically related peoples, undermined indigenous patterns of sustenance and trade, and left Africa fragmented into 53 different states based on external models of political organization. But not all of Africa's problems can or should be traced to some 70 years of European colonialism or simply to differences in race, religion, and ethnicity, or to artificial borders.

A view of the map of Africa shows it to be highly balkanized, consisting of many mini-states (37 boast populations of 10 million or less) and some 15 landlocked independent states (40 percent of the world's total).[21] Yet if African statehood were determined solely by ethnicity, the continent could boast up to 3,000 political entities, a situation that would exacerbate the problem of "mini-states."

Sub-Saharan Africa's legacy includes a much more intractable problem: societies divided between the descendants of landowners and peasants, former slaves and former slave owners, as well as people who were favored by their colonizers and people who were not.[22] Rulers of post-colonial Africa have exploited these differences to garner personal and political support from sub-groups identified by class, caste, ethnicity, and religion.

Economic and military assistance rendered by the former Soviet Union and the United States during the Cold War somewhat mitigated and obscured these differences, relegating them to the background of world events. But the vacuum created by the end of that conflict has allowed Africa's destabilizing diversities to come to the forefront. The result is evident in the extraordinary human tragedies of the last decade in countries like Liberia, Somalia, Sudan, Rwanda, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Such problems will persist for generations, and the developed world will be confronted with Africa's tragedies into the indefinite future.

The stability of Africa is not only threatened by intrastate and environmental problems. In the immediate aftermath of independence in the early 1960s, African leaders generally agreed to respect their neighbors' sovereignty.[23] The inviolability of colonial borders was perhaps the most fundamental principle in the charter of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), established in 1963. However, by the end of the 1990s, this principle was seriously challenged

when one secessionist state, Eritrea, attained independence, and Africans themselves began to intervene with conventional military forces in their neighbors' civil wars.[24]

## **In the Wake of the Cold War**

The end of the Cold War by all accounts should have led to a substantial reduction of warfare in Africa. Since the ability of African states to make war was greatly amplified and extended by the support provided by competitors in the Cold War rivalry, the end of that conflict should have vastly reduced Africa's capacity for making war.[25] However, quite the opposite has occurred. For the first time in Africa's history, eight independent nations engaged in a pan-African conflict, the civil war in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.[26] Indeed, this war continued in the wake of ongoing internal conflicts in several of the belligerent nations. Elsewhere in Africa, instability and fighting continues in Burundi, Guinea-Bissau, Lesotho, Sierra Leone, Somalia, and between Ethiopia and Eritrea.[27] Rather than reducing warfare in Africa, the end of the international bipolar geostrategic competition has witnessed the overall weakening of African states and the intensification of interstate and intrastate conflicts.

These African conflicts are further exacerbated by an unchecked flow of illicit arms into Africa from a variety of sources: arms dealers, security firms, and governments pursuing their individual agendas.[28] Arms bought by governments and other groups involved in these conflicts circulate throughout sub-regions. More than 25 percent of all the countries on the globe are involved in one way or another with arms entering Africa.[29] On 19 November 1998, the UN Security Council passed a resolution expressing its "grave concern at the destabilizing effect of illicit arms flows, in particular of small arms, to Africa." [30] The extent of the problem is widespread, and action to counter it has been limited and late. Additionally, at least two African countries, South Africa and Nigeria, now produce their own weapons, while several African nations produce their own small-arms ammunition.[31]

Africa's conflicts have led to humanitarian tragedies of traumatized and displaced populations--with floods of refugees. The epidemic diseases and predatory criminality that often emerges in such environments transcend the capacity of humanitarian relief agencies to alleviate them. Thus, humanitarian problems caused by ongoing military conflict cannot be solved by humanitarian relief agencies and must eventually be solved by diplomatic, military, or political action. For Sub-Saharan Africa in the 1990s, this has typically meant foreign military intervention.

Potential requirements for US military involvement in Africa increased with France's announcement in 1997 that it would reduce its military forces on the continent by 40 percent, thereby prompting much of Francophone Africa to look increasingly to the United States as a patron for security issues. However, no US forces (other than defense attachés, security assistance officers, and Marine embassy guards) are presently permanently stationed in Africa.[32]

Despite--or perhaps because of--the conflicts on the continent, African countries themselves are demonstrating unprecedented interest in regional solutions. African nations are experimenting with security arrangements and sub-regional approaches to conflict management. They are now more open to cooperation with the United States on security issues than at any time in the past. This affords a substantial opportunity for the United States to shape the regional security environment. But this opportunity may not last very long.[33]

Although African political dynamics are currently in flux, US policymakers and military planners have surprisingly little access to much of what goes on behind the scenes among African leaders. US embassies in the region are typically small. Not all countries have a resident US diplomatic presence. Less than half have a resident US military representative. The United States does not have permanent representation in such regional forums as the Organization of African Unity, the Economic Community of West African States, or the Southern African Development Community.[34]

This US failure to engage Africa closely has led to a policy that more often than not is reactive rather than proactive. It limits the ability to engage African decisionmakers on security issues, undermines the ability to obtain warnings of impending political crises, and retards the ability to shape the regional security environment. A unified command with exclusive responsibility for this region would assist in developing needed access and in bringing significantly greater focus to US regional security policy.

With volatile situations developing in Africa on short notice, in remote areas with poorly developed or deteriorated

infrastructure, US military planners recognize that African problems require a different kind of military response than those on the European or Asian continents. If the United States is to effectively pursue its own security interests in Africa, respond to the needs of its African partners, and mitigate extreme human tragedies, the United States must be able to anticipate crises earlier, respond more rapidly in their initial stages, and cooperate more efficiently with regional actors.[35] But no matter how pressing the potential scenarios, the United States is not now prepared to act in a timely manner in this "limited engagement" theater.

## **A Growing Focus on Africa**

While official DOD documents clearly state that the United States has few strategic interests in Sub-Saharan Africa[36] (notwithstanding our oil and mineral imports), humanitarian interests and concerns for the safety of US citizens have prompted US military interventions in the region more than 20 times since the beginning of the 1990s, as noted earlier. In fact, no region of the world has seen a greater number of foreign or US military interventions in the past decade than Sub-Saharan Africa. The region also has received widespread humanitarian assistance from major international organizations and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs).

The role of the American and worldwide humanitarian community is very important in Sub-Saharan Africa. These organizations address many of the root causes of regional violence and promote the economic development which alone holds the promise for attenuating much of the regional instability. The US government has recognized the importance of the humanitarian community in contingency operations and has directed the cooperation of the US military establishment with those organizations.[37] Thus, unified commands are building "habits of cooperation" which can be quickly activated during contingency operations. The unified commands take this role seriously and have endeavored to comply with the spirit and letter of the directive. However, because the responsibility for continental Africa is split between two separate commands, because the responsibility for the offshore islands is delegated to a third, and because of the limited attention which any of the commands can currently afford to pay to Africa, the potential benefits of military cooperation with the humanitarian community in Africa are severely limited.[38]

Many of Africa's continuing problems have direct security implications. Consider the following destabilizing circumstances:

- Instability promoted by ethnic tension, weak economies, narcotics smuggling, unequal distribution of income, poor infrastructures, dysfunctional governments, and other factors that undermine the coherence of nation-states.
- Limited, inadequate, and unprofessional law enforcement establishments; police that abuse rather than protect the civil populace.
- Ongoing politico-military conflicts resulting in humanitarian crises.
- Unprofessional, overstrength, and underpaid militaries with the tendency for promoting coups d'etat, engaging in human rights abuses, and contributing to political instability.
- The influence of states such as Libya and Iran, which have contributed to rigged elections and other actions deemed unacceptable by the international community.
- The potential collapse of the governments of the "maxi-states" like the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, Nigeria, and the Sudan, which could set off more civil or sub-regional wars, halt the flow of oil and other strategic materials, create waves of refugees, and threaten the safety of American citizens in a variety of ways.
- Environmental degradation which reduces economic options, degrades health, and may even affect global weather patterns.[39]

As regional instability and humanitarian crises in the region continue to challenge America's interests and values, the United States is likely to commit resources and possibly substantial military forces in Africa in the future. Unfortunately, this likelihood is not anticipated structurally in the present Unified Command Plan.[40] Failure to establish a unified command or sub-unified command with exclusive responsibility for Sub-Saharan Africa significantly limits the continuous attention that the US security community can pay to the region, could seriously compromise US regional interests, and will make the inevitable military interventions more costly and less effective.

## **National Security Strategy for Africa**

While past US foreign policy toward Sub-Saharan Africa has been generally reactive, unsteady, and late, thus allowing events and crises to drive policy,[41] the Clinton Administration demonstrated a renewed interest in this region. An April 1998 visit by the President to six nations of Sub-Saharan Africa underscored his personal awareness of the sub-region and seemed to presage an increased US commitment to the development of Sub-Saharan Africa. A second Clinton visit to the region in August 2000 demonstrated continuing US engagement. While tangible results of the Clinton visits are yet to come, Africans generally have reacted very positively to this expression of US attention.

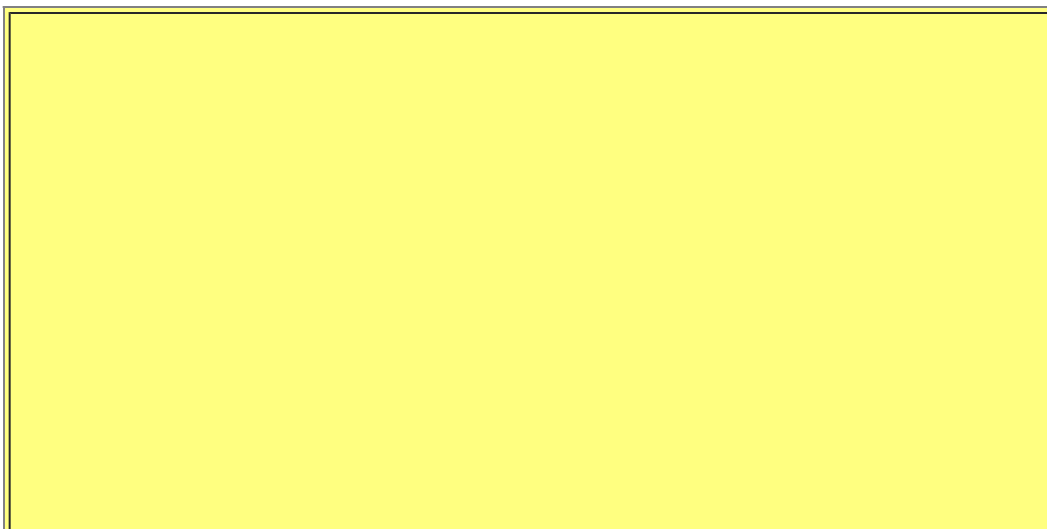
The Clinton Administration articulated three broad policies for Africa that require substantial and direct involvement: enhancing security to promote peace and stability, promoting prosperity by integrating Africa into the world economy, and fostering democracy and respect for human rights.[42] These three core policies in turn support a variety of more specific goals.[43]

Policymakers are well aware of the fact that they cannot subcontract the responsibility for securing America's interests in Africa to any existing alliance or ally. As the "one indispensable country"[44] in the post-Cold War world, the United States will inexorably take the lead in ensuring that its priorities are secured. But with competing commitments around the world, the United States has only limited resources to commit to Africa. The Cold War policy of generously distributing resources to any pro-Western or anti-Soviet state around the world no longer applies.[45]

Current US strategy and policy for Africa do not adequately reflect the changed geopolitical landscape, nor do they realistically establish the magnitude of US security interests in that region. The challenge of balancing resources against US interests to realize the best use of limited assets is a key role of a unified command.[46] Under the current circumstances, this task is not being accomplished well in Africa.[47]

As a truly regional representative of the United States, a unified combatant commander also functions as a singular subject-matter expert for his or her area of responsibility, particularly in regard to security issues. The division of responsibility for Africa among various unified commands makes it difficult for the United States to prioritize its regional security interests and pursue them consistently.[48] The differing organizational cultures and geographical focuses of the unified commands, along with the differing personalities of their leaders, lend an unfortunate subjectivity to US security relationships in Africa. Despite the best efforts of US military staff officers to be accommodating, African civil and military leaders have expressed puzzlement over the Unified Command Plan's lesser emphasis on Africa.[49]

With all but eight of 53 African countries in its area of responsibility, the US European Command (USEUCOM) is responsible for the vast majority of the African continent (see Figure 1, below).[50] However, more immediate threats to US national interests have garnered the lion's share of USEUCOM's attention. Ongoing military operations in Bosnia and Yugoslavia, the recent expansion of NATO, inclusion of European former states of the Soviet Union into its area of responsibility, the Arab-Israeli peace process, and continuing involvement in Northern Iraq have required the command to focus on the European and Middle Eastern geographic regions. Africa is thus by necessity relegated to the position of a "limited engagement" theater.[51]



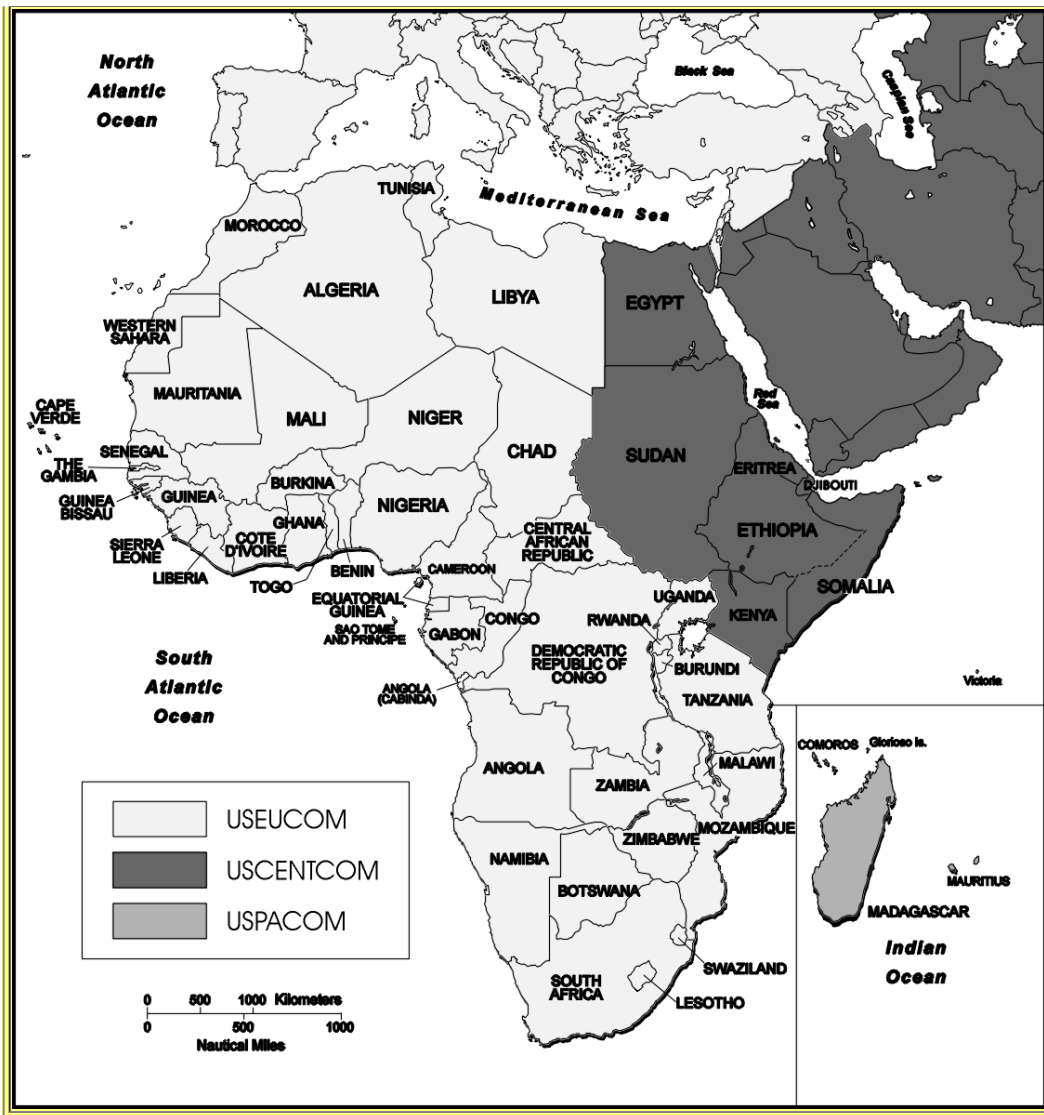


Figure 1. Current commanders' areas of responsibility for Africa.

US Central Command (CENTCOM) has responsibility for the remainder of the countries on the African mainland, specifically those nations bordering on the Red Sea. But this is only a small part of CENTCOM's area of responsibility, stretching 3,100 miles east to west and 3,600 miles north to south. Included in this region are 25 nations spread from Northeast Africa across Southwest Asia, the Middle East, and Central Asia (including the Arabian Gulf countries), an area including 70 percent of the proven oil reserves in the world and 428 million people.[52] In view of the ongoing efforts to incorporate the Central Asian countries that were former states of the Soviet Union into the CENTCOM area of responsibility, it is no wonder that Africa is secondary to CENTCOM's main attractions.[53]

Further, the existing unified commands are not particularly aligned with African cultural realities. For instance, US humanitarian intervention in Rwanda in 1994 (a USEUCOM responsibility) required extensive use of Kenyan ports and airfields, but Kenya falls within CENTCOM's area of responsibility.[54] The existing unified command structure was not designed to facilitate such interventions.

The same structural dilemma has occurred more recently with the reemergence of the East African Community, consisting of Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. This sub-regional entity is developing a mutual security infrastructure, making it a logical partner for a US unified command.[55] Unfortunately, Kenya is within the CENTCOM area, while Tanzania and Uganda are within the USEUCOM area.

More important, America's relative lack of pressing regional interests means that the attention of its senior policymakers to African issues will be sporadic and episodic. This makes it even more important to maintain close, consistent relations with emerging sub-regional organizations and with regional actors--a key unified command role.



To be effective, the unified command responsible for this region should have a nuanced appreciation for the interests and perspectives of regional actors and should be in constant communication with regional partners.[56] It also should have an organizational culture compatible with the region. This is true of USEUCOM in its NATO relationships, of CENTCOM in its Arabian Gulf connections, and of PACOM in the Far East. Yet this cultural sensitivity is obviously lacking with regard to Africa.

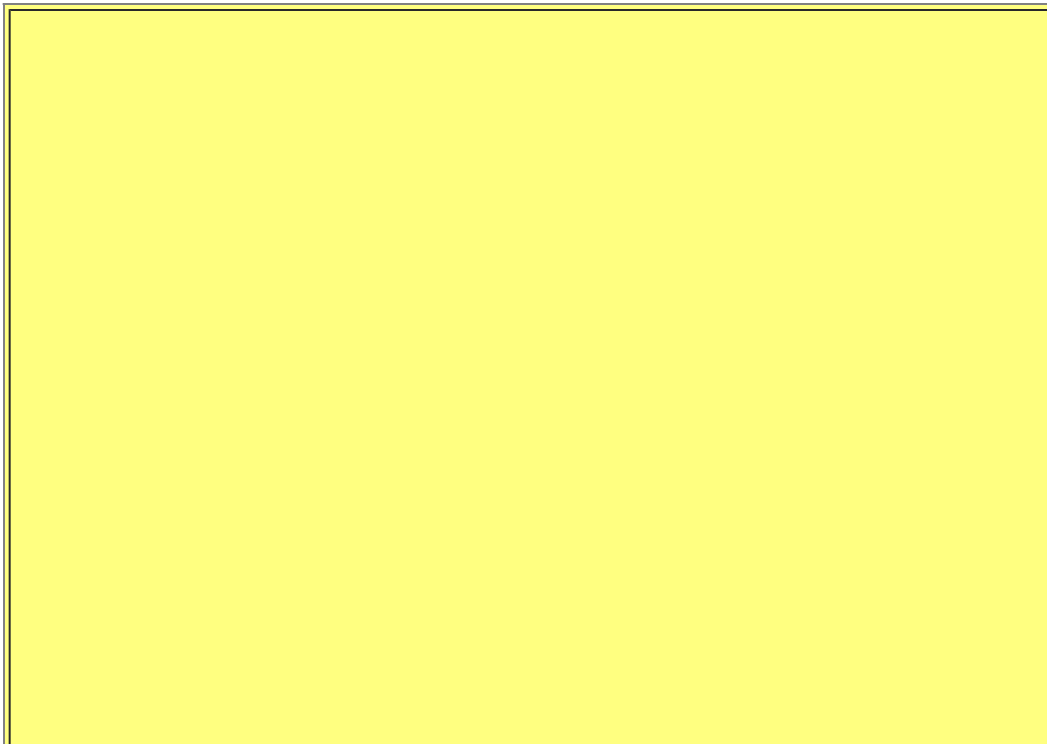
### **Looking to the Future**

To date, US foreign policy for Africa, and specifically Sub-Saharan Africa, has been reactive rather than proactive--generally driven by events rather than shaping events.[57] Because of this tentative approach to the region, African problems have obliged the US military to undertake a continuing series of contingency operations, and the prospect for future interventions is high. If any region of the world warrants the kind of "shaping" now prescribed by US strategic doctrine,[58] surely that region is Africa.

While US security interests in Africa are minimal and economic interests are currently limited (excepting the importation of oil and strategic minerals), the developed world does not ignore humanitarian tragedy. With its prominent position in the post-Cold War world, the United States will at times accede to international pressures to take the lead in addressing the problems of Sub-Saharan Africa. For the immediate future, such initiatives will require the capacity to intervene militarily when appropriate. US reluctance to accept this responsibility would undermine important international relationships and ultimately could require a far greater commitment and involvement of resources when events finally force the US hand.

It is in the best interests of the United States to stay actively involved in the region to ensure that strategic objectives are accomplished and that diplomatic and political goals are achieved. The Department of Defense already plays some role in US efforts in Africa to promote democratization, to increase respect for human rights, to promote conflict resolution, and to generate economic prosperity.[59] Those efforts could be more effectively managed by structural change within the Unified Command Plan.

If any region of the world warrants careful US attention to potential coalitions to alleviate greater reliance on US resources, surely that region is Africa. This is a key unified command role[60] which can best be accomplished by creating a unified or sub-unified command exclusively for Sub-Saharan Africa (see Figure 2, below). The advantages of creating "an area-oriented senior US military command,"[61] even if it is only an "economy of force" command headquartered in the United States, would far outweigh any perceived disadvantages.



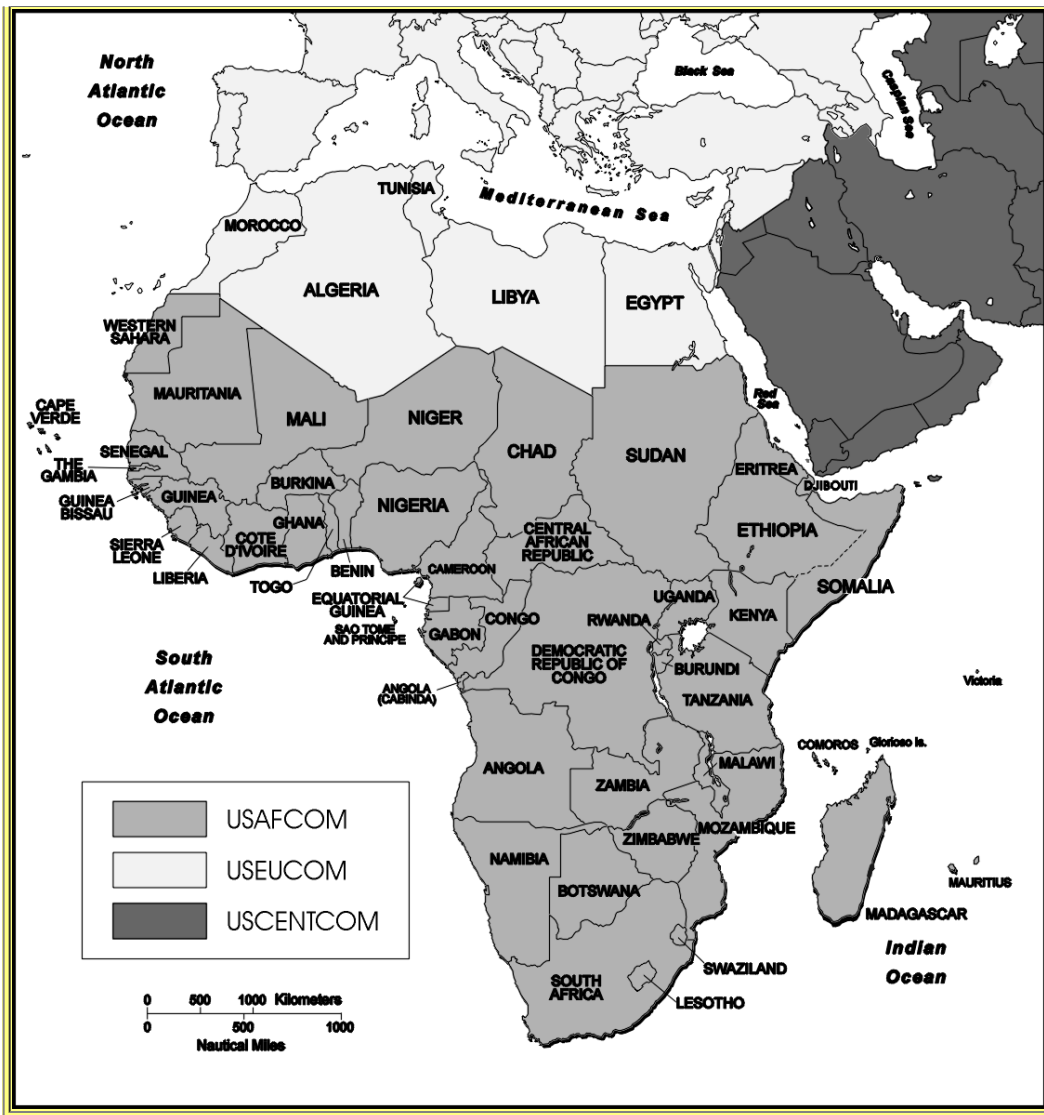


Figure 2. Proposed US Africa Command (USAFCOM) and revised commanders' areas of responsibility.

In the end we must ask whether US policy goals and priorities for Sub-Saharan Africa are aligned with our current structural ability to secure them, whether they are realistically based on present funding levels, and whether they are adequate for anticipating and alleviating crises. "Shaping" the environment to avoid crises is a far less expensive option than responding to full-blown emergencies with expensive and uncertain military interventions. Events since the early 1990s suggest that US policy "ends" in Africa are not aligned with our "ways and means." Recent African history suggests that the inevitable result of failure to anticipate a crisis is horrifying human tragedy and a requirement to resort to expensive military operations. At the same time, Africa has entered a period of significant social and political flux and is now more open to US assistance on security issues than at any time in the past. If there ever was a time for the United States to shape the African regional security environment, this is it.

US policy alone cannot solve Africa's many problems, nor even necessarily secure all of America's regional interests there, but a unified command with exclusive responsibility for Sub-Saharan Africa would provide many advantages. It would bring the constant attention of senior US military planners to African security issues and facilitate long-term, coherent programs to shape the regional environment. This attention would be much less subject to distraction because of events in the Balkans or the Arabian Gulf. Such a command would be in constant communication with African civil and military leaders, as well as with US diplomats in the region. This interactive focus would provide better warning of impending crises, a much more nuanced understanding of African interests, and more options for crisis management than is presently the case. It would also better communicate US concerns to African partners and potential adversaries. It would certainly signal an important US commitment to regional stability and regional development.

The unified combatant commander plays a key role in American efforts to realize regional strategic objectives as outlined in the National Security Strategy. This includes conflict avoidance as well as conflict management. But with responsibility for Sub-Saharan Africa divided among three of the five regional combatant commands, and with none of them focused consistently on African issues, US regional interests in Africa are poorly served. As both his right within the law and his responsibility as the Commander-in-Chief, the new US President should establish a unified or subordinate unified combatant command with exclusive responsibility for Sub-Saharan Africa.

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## NOTES

1. Ronald H. Cole et al., *The History of the Unified Command Plan 1946-1993* (Washington: Joint History Office, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, February 1995), Foreword.
2. Ibid, Overview.
3. "General Military Law," *Code of Federal Regulations, Title 10 - Armed Forces* (Washington: US General Services Administration, National Archives and Record Service, Office of the Federal Register, as amended through 31 December 1994), ch. VI, sec. 161.
4. US Department of Defense, *United States Security Strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa* (Washington: DOD, Office of International Security Affairs, August 1995), p. 3.
5. Interventions since 1990 include: noncombatant evacuations from Liberia (1990, 1996), Somalia (1991), Zaire/Congo (1991), Sierra Leone (1992, 1997), Rwanda (1994), and the Central African Republic (1996); humanitarian relief operations in Somalia (1992), Rwanda (1994), and Central Africa (1996); election support in Angola (1992); support of UN withdrawal from Somalia (1995); and support to deployment of the monitoring group of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOMOG) in Liberia (1997). There were multiple operations in some countries in some years. Dan Henk, "US National Interests in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Parameters*, 27 (Winter 1997-98), 92.
6. Office of the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Implementation of the Unified Plan*, MCM 162-99 (Washington: DOD, 12 October 1999).
7. US Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Unified Action Armed Forces*, Joint Pub 0-2 (Washington: DOD, 24 February 1995), p. xv.
8. Headquarters, US European Command, *Peacetime Engagement Activities in Africa*, ECJ5-M, 1 July 1998, p. 2.
9. The assistant secretaries who run the regional bureaus of the Department of State come to mind as analogous authorities, but they are based in Washington, not in the region. Their organizations are very small compared to a CINC's staff. The desk officers in a bureau are more focused on the needs and functions of the US embassies in the region than on the foreign leadership.
10. Material in this section is derived from Cole et al., *The History of the Unified Command Plan\_1946-1993*.
11. The lack of concern for Africa was driven in large part by the fact that all of Sub-Saharan Africa except Liberia and Ethiopia were colonies of European powers until the late 1950s. Most African countries received independence in the early 1960s.
12. "General Military Law," ch. VI, sec. 161.
13. See, for example, C. William Fox, Jr., *Military Medical Operations in Sub-Saharan Africa: The DOD "Point of the Spear" for a New Century* (Carlisle, Pa.: USAWC, Strategic Studies Institute, 24 June 1997), p. 4.
14. Office of the Secretary of Defense, International Security Affairs, *A New Strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa (Draft)* (Washington: DOD, Office of African Affairs, 15 April 1999), p. 3. The Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) is

endeavoring to develop a DOD-wide "Strategy for Africa" in support of an overall US government strategy for engagement in the region. Under the supervision of Dr. Nancy Walker, this effort has included informal consultations among OSD, Joint Staff, Unified Commands, State Department, the National Security Council, and selected African officials. However, the sheer bureaucratic difficulty of forging agreement among complex bureaucracies is itself an indictment of the current approach to unified command responsibility for Africa.

15. Ibid., pp. 7, 8. See also, Dan Henk, *Peace and Security in Africa: Contributions by the United States* (Halfway House, South Africa: Institute for Security Studies Monograph N035, March 1999).

16. Office of the Secretary of Defense, *A New Strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa (Draft)*, p. 9.

17. *Compton's Interactive Encyclopedia Deluxe*, 1997, "Africa."

18. Dan Henk and Steven Metz, *The United States and the Transformation of African Security: The African Crisis Response Initiative and Beyond* (Carlisle, Pa.: USAWC, Strategic Studies Institute, 5 December 1997), p. 2.

19. Interview with Colonel Dan Henk, Director of African Studies, US Army War College, 1 April 1999.

20. Chester A. Crocker, "Why Africa Is Important," *Foreign Service Journal*, 72 (June 1995), 28. Also, Office of the Secretary of Defense, *A New Strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa (Draft)*, p. 4.

21. Crocker, pp. 24-33.

22. Rhoda E. Howard, "Civil Conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa," *International Journal, Canadian Institute of International Affairs*, 51 (Winter 1995-96), 28.

23. Organization of African Unity (OAU), *Charter of the Organization of African Unity* (Addis Ababa: OAU, May 1963), Article III.

24. Ian Fisher with Norimitsu Onishi, "Congo's Struggle May Unleash Broad Strife to Redraw Africa," *The Washington Post*, 12 January 1999, A1. See also, Dan Henk, "Democratic Republic of Congo: Point Paper" (unpublished paper, US Army War College, Carlisle, Pa., 1998), p. 7.

25. Tom Lodge, "Armed Conflict in Africa since the Cold War" (unpublished paper, Department of Political Studies, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa), p. 1.

26. Angola, Chad, Namibia, Sudan, and Zimbabwe have intervened on the side of the Kabila government, while Burundi, Rwanda, and Uganda have backed rebel factions.

27. A typology of conflicts in Africa since the end of the Cold War can be constructed under the following headings: ethnic competition for control of the state; regionalist or secessionist rebellions; continuation of liberation conflicts between competing movements; fundamentalist religious opposition to secular governments; warfare arising from state degeneration or collapse; protracted conflict within politicized militaries; border disputes. Lodge, p. 1.

28. See, for example, Christopher Smith, Peter Batchelor, and Jakkie Potgieter, *Small Arms Management and Peacekeeping in Southern Africa*, UNIDIR/96/21 (New York: United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, 1996); and Edward J. Laurence, *Light Weapons and Intrastate Conflict: Early Warning Factors and Preventative Action* (Washington: Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict, 1996).

29. US Congress, House, Subcommittee on International Human Rights, testimony by Kathi Austin, Consultant to Human Rights Watch (Arms Division), May 1998.

30. Al Venter, "Arms Pour into Africa," *New African*, January 1999, p. 14. Also, in late 1998, US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright committed the United States to pursue efforts to resolve the problem, and a Department of State-led interagency working group currently is attempting to develop US policy to pursue that commitment.

31. Interview with Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Marley, USA Ret., 19 April 1999. Lieutenant Colonel Marley is a highly experienced former Foreign Area Officer (FAO), who served in Africa and in policymaking assignments.
32. US Department of Defense, *United States Security Strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa*, p. 3.
33. Dan Henk, *Peace Operations: Views from Southern and Eastern Africa*, US Army Peacekeeping Institute Occasional Paper (Carlisle, Pa.: USAWC, US Army Peacekeeping Institute, June 1996), pp. 30-37.
34. Even within the staffs of the unified commands responsible for parts of Africa, analysts and staff officers assigned to keep track of African issues frequently are diverted to other pressing problems until a crisis occurs in Africa. Marley interview, 19 April 1999. Also, interview with Linda Knight, USEUCOM staff officer with considerable African experience, 19 April 1999.
35. McGill Alexander (Colonel, South African Army), "An African Rapid Deployment Force," *Military Review*, 77 (May-June 97), 26.
36. US Department of Defense, *United States Security Strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa*, p. 3.
37. See, specifically, White Paper, "The Clinton Administration's Policy on Managing Complex Contingency Operations: Presidential Decision Directive 56," May 1997.
38. One example of the lack of communication between US military authorities and the humanitarian community occurred as a result of the war in eastern Zaire in 1997. The humanitarian community accused the US government and the US military of working in deliberate concert with the government of Rwanda to harm Hutu refugees in Eastern Zaire. These accusations badly undermined the willingness of both sides to cooperate in ways that would have mitigated the tragedy. This situation highlights the merit of PDD-56 and the importance of continuous peacetime relations between a unified command and the humanitarian community. See Nik Gowing, "New Challenges and Problems for Information Management in Complex Emergencies: Ominous Lessons from the Great Lakes and Eastern Zaire in Late 1996 and Early 1997," conference paper from "Dispatches from Disaster Zones: The Reporting of Humanitarian Emergencies," Wilton Park, West Sussex, UK, 27 May 1998.
39. Nancy J. Walker and Larry Hanauer, "EUCOM and Sub-Saharan Africa." *Joint Force Quarterly*, No. 15 (Spring 1997), p. 104.
40. According to a source in the Office of the Joint Staff, Policy and Plans, both the FY97 and FY99 assessments of missions, responsibilities, and force structure of the unified commands did consider different command arrangements for Sub-Saharan Africa (along with other geographic regions of the world), including assigning Sub-Saharan Africa to its own unified or sub-unified command. Any recommendations for changes to the Unified Command Plan have not been made public at this writing.
41. Dan Henk, "U.S. National Interests in Sub-Saharan Africa," p. 3.
42. Walker and Hanauer, p. 104.
43. These include: regional stability; access to key persons, institutions, facilities; economic opportunity; safety of US citizens; region free from weapons of mass destruction; region free of sponsors or safe havens for transnational threats (such as terrorism, criminal cartels, and epidemic diseases); regional governance that is humane, competent, and accountable; sustained economic development; early information and warning; regional comity and cooperation; unthreatened natural environment; and security of regional borders. Henk, "U.S. National Interests in Sub-Saharan Africa," p. 3.
44. Arthur E. Dewey and Margaret Zeigler, "Comprehensive Engagement in Post-Cold War Complex Contingencies: A 'Comprehensive Campaign Plan' Approach for Ex-Yugoslavia and Similar Complex Contingency Operations," unpublished paper, Washington, Congressional Hunger Center, December 1998, p. 42.

45. Walker and Hanauer, p. 107.

46. Interview with Colonel Tom Dempsey, US Army FAO with African experience and faculty member, US Army War College, 19 April 1999, Carlisle, Pa.

47. Office of Secretary of State, *FY 99 Congressional Presentation for Foreign Operations* (Washington: Department of State, February 1998). This is one source of comparison of funds distributed to Africa versus other regions of the world in several different categories; it does not include funding provided through USAID.

48. For instance, the permanent staff of the OAU is based in a CENTCOM country, but most of its member states are in EUCOM's area of responsibility, with some member states in PACOM and Atlantic Command regions as well. This makes it difficult for the US government to develop a single, unified program to assist the OAU in developing a conflict resolution capability (to include equipping and deploying military observer missions). The United States faces a similar dilemma in managing its African Crisis Response Initiative (ACRI). Two African participants (Eritrea and Ethiopia) are in the CENTCOM region, with the other seven countries being EUCOM responsibilities. That is why the ACRI is managed by an office in Washington (currently at the State Department) rather than in a unified command, where it more logically should be. This also means that two different US Army Special Forces groups are required for training ACRI participants, presenting the possibility at least of differing approaches or standards. Coordination meetings pertaining to security assistance programs and operations in Africa among EUCOM, CENTCOM, and PACOM are extremely rare and largely ineffective. This results in dissimilar (and often disjointed) security assistance programs in neighboring countries in which US interests and objectives are identical, sending badly mixed signals. One final example is "Natural Fire," a multilateral peace operations exercise conducted by Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda in 1998. When Kenya came to the United States asking for support and assistance in conducting this exercise, debate over funding issues between EUCOM and CENTCOM dragged on for so long that the African nations finally conducted the exercise with their own assets. Marley and Knight interviews.

49. Interviews with Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Benade, South African National Defense Force (then a student at the US Army War College), and Colonel Dan Henk, Director of African Studies, USAWC, 16 April 1999, Carlisle, Pa.

50. USEUCOM'S responsibilities include supervision of security assistance programs such as excess defense articles and international military education and training, military exercises, special operations joint combined exchange training, and humanitarian de-mining operations. In addition, USEUCOM is engaged in two new programs unique to US foreign policy in Africa: the African Crisis Response Initiative and the African Center for Security Studies (ACSS). Headquarters, US European Command, *Campaign Plan for Sub-Saharan Africa*, 1 July 1998.

51. On 1 October 1998, USEUCOM assumed responsibility for the Western Slavic and Caucasus states of Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan. With the recent addition of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, 19 independent nations now comprise the membership of NATO. USEUCOM also has responsibility for the Partnership for Peace program with former Warsaw Pact nations. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

52. On 1 October 1999, USCENTCOM assumed responsibility for the five Central Asian states of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgystan.

53. The CENTCOM engagement plan divides the area of responsibility into four sub-regions: Horn of Africa, Arabian Peninsula, Northern Red Sea States, and South and Central Asia. While there is no ranking of importance or priority among these sub-regions within CENTCOM--and, in fact, efforts are made to ensure each region is afforded equal status--ongoing events in the Arabian Gulf have caused this not to be true in the near term. Telephonic interview with USCENTCOM J5 action officer for Africa, 16 April 1999.

54. *Ibid.*

55. *Ibid.*

56. This is illustrated by the US humanitarian intervention in Rwanda in 1994. Though a multi-million-dollar US commitment, Africans viewed it as slow, grudging, and limited. This was due in part to the insistence of its

commander that the mission be very short and limited in scope. A year after the last Americans had departed, Ugandan military officers were still complaining of unpaid bills left in the hasty departure. For USEUCOM, the operation was a model of efficiency. For Africans, it was a clear statement that America--and its military--were fickle partners in efforts to resolve regional problems. This is the kind of perception on the part of regional allies that a dedicated unified command would be at pains to dispel. Interview with Colonel Dan Henk, 17 April 1999.

57. Dan Henk, "Uncharted Paths, Uncertain Vision: U.S. Military Involvements in Sub-Saharan Africa in the Wake of the Cold War," *Occasional Paper #18* (Colorado Springs, Colo.: US Air Force Academy, Institute For National Security Studies, March 1998), p. ix, available on the Internet at <http://www.usafa.edu>, accessed 30 August 2000.

58. William J. Clinton, *A National Security Strategy for a New Century* (Washington: The White House, October 1998), p. 8.

59. Office of the Secretary of Defense, *A New Strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa (Draft)*, pp. 5, 6.

60. US European Command, *Peacetime Engagement Activities in Africa*.

61. As described in Cole et al., p. 39.

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