

Senate Armed Services Committee
Advance Policy Questions for General Stephen J. Townsend, USA
Nominee for Appointment to the Position of Commander, U. S. Africa Command

Duties

What is your understanding of the duties and functions of the Commander of U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM)?

The most important requirement is to detect, deter and prevent attacks against the United States, its territories, possessions, and bases and to employ appropriate force to defend the nation should deterrence fail.

If confirmed, I will take responsibility for carrying out USAFRICOM's mission to, along with partners, strengthen security forces, counter transnational threats, and conduct crisis response in order to advance U.S. national interests and to promote regional security, stability, and prosperity in Africa. The Commander, USAFRICOM is also responsible for the health, welfare and security of the 1,300 personnel assigned to HQs USAFRICOM as well as over 7,500 uniformed service members, civilians, and contractors forward deployed in the command's area of responsibility.

If confirmed, I will ensure our approach is synchronized and focused, capitalizing on regional cooperation and close coordination with a host of partners. USAFRICOM, along with our diplomatic, defense, and development partners will continue to help build African institutions capable of deterring the spread of extremism, protecting their populations, enabling economic prosperity, and expanding the rule of law and human rights.

What qualifications, qualities, and characteristics would you bring to the position of Commander, USAFRICOM, if confirmed?

For the entirety of thirty-seven years of service, I have focused on the training, readiness, and welfare of Soldiers to prepare them for the challenge and chaos of combat. That thirty-seven years includes more than five years of service in combat zones. I also believe in being the leader you want to be led by. I work hard to foster command climates that promote trust, teamwork, and cohesion by building trust and confidence in all members of the team.

Numerous leadership and command positions prepared me for this opportunity. Multiple combat deployments with coalition partners, including engagements with foreign heads of state, provided me with a deep appreciation for the leadership and work required to build cohesive teams and warfighting readiness among military units from other services, our allies and nations. Serving in United States Pacific Command, United States Central Command, Regional Command – East in Afghanistan, and more recently as the Commanding General, Combined Joint Task-Force – Operation Inherent Resolve and the XVIII Airborne Corps, I understand the importance of a whole of government approach to achieving durable security and political gains against terrorist and violent extremist organizations and prevailing in great power competition.

As the Director of the Pakistan-Afghanistan Coordination Cell for the Joint Staff, I gained experience and understanding on balancing ways and means to achieve our National

Security Strategy ends. I also gained appreciation for Combatant Commanders and their interaction with the Secretary of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the national security process. If confirmed, I will always place the mission first and draw on this knowledge and experience to ensure the tasks assigned to United States Africa Command are accomplished efficiently, effectively, and professionally.

Do you believe there are actions you need to take to enhance your ability to perform the duties of Commander, USAFRICOM?

I trust and have confidence in General Waldhauser's current strategy, campaign plan, and approach to ensuring USAFRICOM has the necessary authorities and resources to carry out all assigned tasks and missions and ensure preparedness to respond to crisis and contingencies.

If confirmed, I intend to become more familiar with USAFRICOM's plans, to consult with service component commanders, interagency colleagues, and conduct a 90-day assessment to ensure USAFRICOM's approach remains consistent with U.S. strategic guidance and operational commanders have the people, resources, and authorities necessary to execute assigned tasks and missions. In support of this effort, I will also consult with other combatant commanders and interagency and multinational partners critical to USAFRICOM's continued and future success.

Chain of Command

Section 162(b) of title 10, United States Code, provides that the chain of command runs from the President to the Secretary of Defense and from the Secretary of Defense to the combatant commands. Section 163(a) of title 10 further provides that the President may direct communications to combatant commanders through the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Do you believe that these provisions facilitate a clear and effective chain of command?

Yes.

In your view, do these provisions enhance or degrade civilian control of the military?

These provisions ensure that civilian leaders have a central and final voice on issues at the center of U.S. defense and national security policy. Civilian control of the military is clearly established by the Constitution of the United States, the National Security Act of 1947, and Title 10 U.S. Code. The idea of military subordination to civilian leadership is faithfully upheld by the men and women of the U.S. military who, on a daily basis, support and defend those foundational ideas and documents. This is our first and foremost responsibility as members of the armed forces of the United States.

Are there circumstances in which you believe it is appropriate for U.S. military forces to be under the operational command or control of an authority other than the chain of command established under title 10, United States Code?

In general, U.S. military forces should remain under the operational command or control of the chain of command established under Title 10 of the United States Code.

Although Afghanistan provides some precedence for operating within the North Atlantic Treaty Organization construct, the Commander, North Atlantic Treaty Organization Resolution Support Mission maintains a second “hat” as the Commander, United States Forces-Afghanistan, thus preserving the Title 10 chain of command.

Relationships

The law and traditional practice establish important relationships between the Commander, USAFRICOM, and other senior officials of the DOD and the U.S. Government. Please describe your understanding of the relationship of the Commander, USAFRICOM, to each of the following officials:

The Secretary of Defense

The Commander, USAFRICOM is directly responsible and reports to the Secretary of Defense.

The Under Secretaries of Defense

The Under Secretaries of Defense serve as principal staff assistants and advisors to the Secretary of Defense on all matters concerning their portfolios. As such, they are a valuable counsel to Combatant Commanders and part of the overall decision-making process within the Department of Defense.

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs is the principal advisor to the Undersecretary of Defense for Policy, providing advice on international security strategy and Department of Defense policy issues relating to the Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. Regular and good coordination is maintained between the Assistant Secretary’s Office and elements of the USAFRICOM staff.

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict

The Assistant Secretary of Defense for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict is the principal civilian advisor to the Secretary of Defense on special operations and low-intensity

conflict matters. The Assistant Secretary of Defense for SO and LIC has policy oversight for Special Operations and Low Intensity Conflict activities within the Department of Defense, including oversight of Combatant Commands' readiness to conduct special operations. If confirmed, USAFRICOM will maintain coordination with this office on policy issues related to special operations capabilities and resourcing.

The Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

The Chairman functions under the authority, direction, and control of the National Command Authority. The Chairman transmits communications between the National Command Authority and Commander, USAFRICOM as well as oversees the activities of the commander as directed by the Secretary of Defense. As the principal military advisor to the President, the National Security Council, and the Secretary of Defense, the Chairman is a key conduit between a combatant commander, interagency organizations and the Service chiefs.

The Vice Chairman serves on several councils and boards whose decisions affect USAFRICOM, including the Joint Requirements Oversight Council, the Defense Acquisition Board, the Defense Advisory Working Group, and the Senior Readiness Oversight Council. Interaction between the Commander, USAFRICOM and Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is important to ensure these boards and councils make informed choices on matters affecting the command.

The Commander, USAFRICOM keeps the Chairman informed on significant issues regarding the command's area of operations. The Commander communicates directly with the Chairman and Vice Chairman on a regular basis.

The Secretaries of the Military Departments and Service Chiefs

The Service Secretaries are responsible for all affairs of their respective Services including the administration of and support for forces employed by HQs USAFRICOM. The Secretaries exercise administrative control through the Service Component Commands assigned to USAFRICOM. The Service Chiefs are responsible for ensuring the readiness of their Service branch. The Service Chiefs are also members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and serve as advisers to the President, National Security Council, the Homeland Security Council and the Secretary of Defense. The Commander, USAFRICOM relies on the Service Chiefs to provide properly trained and equipped forces to accomplish command's mission.

Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command

The Commander, U.S. Special Operations Command is responsible for the administration and support of special operations forces assigned or attached to USAFRICOM. The Commander, USAFRICOM maintains a close relationship with the Commander, US Special Operations Command on issues of mutual interest. Special Operations Command Africa serves as a Theater Special Operations Command and is a subordinate command.

The other combatant commanders

The relationship among Combatant Commanders is characterized by coordinating mutual support and close communication to accomplish all assigned missions. These relationships are critical to the execution of the National Military Strategy. Each Commander has a mission to accomplish, but all are on the same team. U.S. strategic priorities are not evenly divided among us, therefore neither are resources. In today's globally integrated environment it is critical we work together.

The Commander, USAFRICOM maintains close relationships with the Commander, US European Command and Commander, US Central Command due to shared boundaries. The Commander, USAFRICOM has an especially close relationship with the Commander of U.S. European Command as we share three component commands, as well as forces and assets.

The U.S. Chiefs of Mission in the USAFRICOM area of responsibility (AOR)

The Commander, USAFRICOM enjoys a positive relationship with the Chiefs of Mission in the USAFRICOM area of responsibility. As the President's representative, they have the task of carrying out overarching U.S. foreign policy goals and strategic objectives. If confirmed, recognizing their scope of authority, HQ USAFRICOM will ensure its partner engagement complements the Ambassador's priorities and diplomatic mission.

The U.S. Senior Defense Officials/Defense Attachés (SDO/DATT) in the USAFRICOM AOR

The respective U.S. Senior Defense Officials/Defense Attachés are the Combatant Commanders senior representatives in a country and represent the Command's perspective on the Country Team. They are assigned to their respective embassies and work for the Chief of Mission. There is a supervisory relationship between the Commander, USAFRICOM and the U.S. Senior Defense Officials/Defense Attachés. The Commander, USAFRICOM formally evaluates the U.S. Senior Defense Officials/Defense Attachés. This relationship ensures the Senior Defense Officials/Defense Attachés maintain close coordination with USAFRICOM on all matters as they are USAFRICOM's senior representative to the Chief of Mission and Country team.

Major Challenges and Opportunities

What do you consider to be the most significant challenges you will face if confirmed as Commander, USAFRICOM?

The most significant security challenge is weak or repressive states, such as Somalia and Libya, that give rise to terrorists and foreign VEOs that pose a threat to the U.S., its interests, and allies. An emerging and growing challenge is attempts by competitor nations, such as China and to a lesser extent Russia, to limit or curtail the U.S.'s access, influence, and freedom of action within the USAFRICOM's area of responsibility.

What plans do you have for addressing each of these challenges, if confirmed?

USAFRICOM assesses its Campaign Plan provides a sound construct to address these challenges. The plan balances six lines of effort to strengthen partner networks, enhance partner capabilities, develop security in Somalia, contain instability in Libya, support partners in the Sahel and Lake Chad region, and set the theater to support USAFRICOM's day-to-day activities, crisis response, and contingency operations. To do this, USAFRICOM must pursue a whole of government approach, paired with international partners, to assist African nations in building credible and professional security forces and defense institutions. USAFRICOM will build partner capacity and continue to use multinational exercises, limited operations, senior leader engagements, and posture and presence agreements to ensure the US's continued access and influence in Africa.

Recognizing that challenges, anticipated and unforeseen, will drive your priorities to a substantial degree, if confirmed, what other priorities, beyond those associated with the major challenges you identified above, would you set for your tenure as Commander, USAFRICOM?

The President signed the U.S. Women, Peace, and Security Act in October 2017, which strengthens U.S. efforts to prevent, mitigate, and resolve conflict by increasing women's participation. USAFRICOM has been implementing Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) through peacekeeping capacity building activities and exercises since 2014.

Furthermore, as a member of the Global Health Security Agenda Steering Group, the U.S. plays a key leadership role in developing a world safe and secure from biological threats and to promote global health as an international security priority. Through a whole of government approach, USAFRICOM works by, with, and through international partners to enhance civil-military cooperation within country specific and regional approaches to infectious disease outbreak, detection, prevention, and response programs.

If confirmed, what actions would you take to focus your Command's efforts on each of these priorities?

Efforts to fully understand the situation on the continent as quickly as possible will be a top priority. This involves visiting the AOR, meeting key U.S. diplomatic and development partners in the Department of State and USAID, obtaining assessments from subordinate Service component commanders, and discussing regional issues with African Chiefs of Defense. These efforts will inform USAFRICOM's priorities and the command's support to a whole-of-government approach to assisting our African partners.

National Defense Strategy

The 2018 NDS moved beyond the "two-war construct" that has guided defense strategy, capability development, and investment for the past three decades, and refocused DOD on a "2 + 3 framework." That framework prioritizes "great power competition and conflict" with China and Russia as the primary challenges with which the United States must contend, together with deterring and countering rogue regimes such as North Korea

and Iran. Finally the framework emphasizes the defeat of terrorist threats to the U.S., while consolidating gains in Iraq and Afghanistan, and moving to a “more resource sustainable” approach to counterterrorism.

What is your understanding of the 2018 National Defense Strategy (NDS) and its implications for the USAFRICOM AOR?

The 2018 National Defense Strategy addresses a strategic environment shaped by a return of long-term, strategic competition. To expand the US’s competitive space, the strategy establishes three lines of effort: build a more lethal joint force, strengthen alliances and attract new partners, and reform DoD for greater performance and affordability. Over the last year, consistent with the National Defense Strategy and other strategic guidance, USAFRICOM revised its strategic approach to strengthen African partners by evolving security cooperation against new strategic priorities: state fragility, increased involvement by China and Russia, violent extremist organizations, and threats to US access and influence.

What is your understanding of U.S. strategic objectives in Africa and what role do you believe USAFRICOM should play in supporting these objectives?

The three principle U.S. objectives are promote prosperity, strengthen security, and strive towards stability. Achieving these objectives requires a whole of government approach, whereby USAFRICOM is a supporting effort to diplomatic engagement and foreign assistance.

In your view, what will “great power competition” look like in the USAFRICOM AOR?

An emerging and growing challenge is attempts by competitor nations, such as China and to a lesser extent Russia, to limit or curtail the U.S.’s access, influence, and freedom of action within the USAFRICOM’s area of responsibility. In support of diplomatic and development efforts, USAFRICOM strengthens partner networks, including bilateral and multilateral partnerships, and enhances partner capabilities to both reduce VEOs to a level manageable by internal African security forces and limit malign influence of non-African powers over the long-term to assure the access and influence of the U.S. and its allies.

Are U.S. policies and programs, as applicable to Africa, appropriate to ensure the United States can compete, deter, and win in great power competition in the USAFRICOM AOR? Are there additional measures we should be considering? What do you perceive as the areas of highest risk?

The military is not the primary means of competing with China, Russia or other competitors. This requires a whole-of-government toolkit consisting of economic, commercial, health, development, defense, and soft power programs. Development of a senior level and comprehensive engagement plan can collectively convey why the U.S. is the desired partner of choice.

On the military side, our International Military Education and Training program (IMET) is the jewel in the crown of our security force assistance. From the service academies to the senior war colleges, every African student leaves better able to serve his or her country, and every student – and their families - remains lifelong friends of the U.S. and our military.

If confirmed, USAFRICOM will conduct a holistic review of applicable U.S. policies and programs in Africa. We will look for opportunities to further extend USAFRICOM's relationships with other U.S. government agencies, allies, and partners to maximize the effectiveness of shared resources in promoting stability, security, and prosperity. This effort will include an assessment on the potential risks of the transactional and coercive approach of non-African malign actors to U.S. vital interests in Africa.

Do you believe the Command's resources and authorities are aligned in a manner consistent with NDS priorities and U.S. strategic objectives?

Yes. USAFRICOM assesses its resources and authorities are adequately aligned to U.S. strategic objectives. The majority of USAFRICOM activities include exercises, engagements, security force assistance, and counter-terrorism operations, all of which support the goals outlined in the National Defense Strategy. USAFRICOM strikes a balance between the counter VEO effort and great power competition. Recognizing the global environment is dynamic, continuous assessments of conditions on the continent will inform recommendations to adapt USAFRICOM's posture to meet evolving needs and outpace strategic competitors.

If confirmed, what would you do specifically to enhance or expedite the implementation of the NDS and U.S. strategic objectives in USAFRICOM?

If confirmed, HQs USAFRICOM will maintain its azimuth and current campaign plan while conducting an aggressive engagement plan and assessment on this issue. Engagements with African, European, and interagency partners will ensure upfront coordination and set the right conditions in advance of any adjustments, if necessary, to priorities or objectives. Following this assessment, I will describe my vision for the command, determine priorities, and reallocate personnel and resources as required.

Other than those identified in the 2018 NDS, are there other nation-states operating in the USAFRICOM AOR that you perceive to be cause for concern? If so, why?

There are other nation-states operating in the USAFRICOM AOR. For example, the UAE and Saudi Arabia are competing to secure their national interests in the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait and the Red Sea. The UAE may also have interests in Libya. Saudi Arabia has garnered support from two dozen African nations in its fight against the Houthis in Yemen. Qatar is seeking to expand its influence in Africa to offset the effects of recent Gulf Cooperation Council rift with Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Iran is seeking to expand into Africa to offset sanctions and gain support in the UN. North Korea uses engagement with African nations to evade sanctions and gain additional revenue. The potential for increased competition on the continent is both a challenge and an opportunity to attract new partners with shared interests and values.

In your view, what does a “more resource sustainable approach” to counterterrorism mean for USAFRICOM?

The National Defense Strategy provides clear guidance for prioritizing efforts and resources for long-term competition with China and Russia and maintain the U.S.’s global military advantage. The DoD thoroughly evaluated USAFRICOM’s counter-terrorism campaign to optimize resources and personnel and achieve a more resource-sustainable approach. Prioritizing U.S. national interests, this approach focuses security cooperation programs to strengthen partner networks and enhance partner capabilities to counter threats to American and African security.

If confirmed, how would you seek to balance the requirements for increased emphasis on great power competition with China and Russia with countering violent extremism in the USAFRICOM AOR?

USAFRICOM recently completed the first year of a campaign plan specifically designed to balance requirements that address VEOs and global competitors. If confirmed, USAFRICOM will maintain a balanced approach. Specifically, a burden-sharing approach in which we work together with partners will account for the increased presence of external actors, namely Russia and China, and the continued threat posed by VEOs. This method has been effectively employed at USAFRICOM as they provide unique enabling support to our French partners who have an international leadership role in the Sahel.

Do you believe the U.S. should be “expanding the competitive space” with China or with Russia in the USAFRICOM AOR? If so, what does that mean for USAFRICOM efforts?

Yes. Increased Chinese and Russian activities in Africa are undermining African strategic interests and challenging U.S. position and influence on the Continent. Generally, China and Russia are on a path to contest the U.S. military’s ability to maintain access, influence, and operate freely across all domains. Increased Chinese and Russian influence in Africa could challenge U.S.’s national interests in the region. The challenge for the U.S. is to remain a trusted and preferred partner of choice.

China

What is your assessment of China’s strategic objectives in the USAFRICOM AOR?

China’s expanding economic, diplomatic, and military engagements in Africa are intended to secure or cement access to resources and markets, protect its investments and citizens, and to project the image of a global power. Economic engagement is Beijing’s main effort in Africa with diplomatic and military activities serving as supporting efforts. The loosely-defined Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is China’s primary foreign policy tool and relies heavily on the import of raw materials and extractives from the African continent. In terms of diplomacy, China is attempting to improve its global image, expand its influence, and gain African support

for international initiatives such as preventing the recognition of Taiwan. eSwatini (formerly Swaziland) is the only remaining African country with diplomatic ties to Taipei.

In what ways, if any, do their strategic objectives conflict with U.S. strategic objectives? In what ways, if any, do they align with those of the U.S.?

Beijing does not embrace core Western values; Chinese activity disregards partner nations' human rights records and long-term economic security. In countries where Chinese military assistance enables dictatorial regimes to stay in power via the violent repression of their citizens, we should view this as intent to compete with U.S. interests and values. China seeks to promote authoritarian tendencies in its partners; U.S. values such as transparency and democracy can act as a firewall to expanding Chinese influence.

Chinese business interests benefit from stability, economic development, and professional security forces and Chinese security and economic investments seek to support those goals. Where Chinese security assistance is used by responsible governments to address threats in a manner consistent with the rule of law, our interests align. Where Chinese economic investments are done with transparency and are consistent with free market principles, we welcome competition with China.

Our African partners see benefits from working with China and will likely continue to do so, especially absent a robust alternative. Many African partners view Chinese engagements as inclusive, visible, and respectful. China is also seen as easier to deal with and less restrictive in their financial and political requirements. Chinese engagement regularly targets key U.S. partners by leveraging Beijing's ability to rapidly deliver on promised assistance. However, Beijing's assistance comes with strings attached. Its investments undermine our partner's economic growth by undercutting free market prices and labor which harms nascent African industry and stunts long-run economic growth.

In your opinion, what effect has China's engagement with African militaries had on those militaries and on U.S. security interests?

Chinese engagement has marginally improved some African militaries through military equipment sales and limited training, although endemic quality concerns probably make any improvements short-lived. Investments in roads and infrastructure, despite quality, enhances mobility. Chinese materiel assists African militaries' contributions to peacekeeping operations. For example, China has provided Nigeria with armed unmanned aerial systems to improve its counterterrorism capabilities, but the poor quality of these platforms has contributed to their infrequent use. Low cost and short delivery timelines entice African partners to purchase Chinese equipment, but these purchases frequently do not address the underlying military need, complicating U.S. security force assistance.

China contributes up to 2,000 personnel to United Nations peacekeeping operations but Beijing's deployments are tailored towards its security interests, including gaining overseas operational experience for its military personnel.

Do you view China's activities on the continent of Africa as a threat or challenge to U.S. national security interests? Please explain your answer.

China's activities on the African continent do not currently pose a direct military threat to U.S. national security interests, but could in the future. China's first overseas military base formally opened at Doraleh in Djibouti in August 2017. This facility, although geographically located close to U.S. facilities in the region, currently poses minimal threat to our security interests. The capacity and capability of the facility provides China a platform to threaten future U.S. access and operations. The base supports its global security and economic interests, to include the Belt and Road Initiative, protecting its more than 1 million Chinese citizens living in Africa, and counter-piracy operations. China's base has enabled the People's Liberation Army Navy to expand its influence and global operations under the auspices of both regional cooperation and counter-piracy.

Where China is investing in vital infrastructure transparently, the US is in natural competition in a free market. When Chinese companies or other companies engage in bribery, they reinforce endemic corruption, breaking free market principles. A level playing field free from corruption is the best kind of competition. Where China promotes corruption or imposes predatory lending terms, the U.S. government and its allies must push back.

Are U.S. policies and the associated authorities—as applicable to Africa—sufficient to counter China's influence, where needed, or are additional measures required? What role should USAFRICOM play in this regard?

USAFRICOM assesses current authorities are adequate to fulfill its responsibilities to counter China's influence where needed. However, because the global situation consistently changes, we must regularly assess authorities in order to be adaptive and flexible to outpace our strategic competitors.

Do you foresee China's growing energy and resource demands affecting security developments in Africa?

Expanded Chinese resource extraction efforts in Africa have the potential to exacerbate local grievances. Chinese companies have increased their ability to advance their interests at the detriment of broader social and economic development. Seventy percent of Africans are under the age of 30. The current population is expected to double within the next 35 years, and Africa's under-18 population is projected to increase by two thirds to almost one billion, adding additional stress on limited natural resources.

Further, efforts by China to expand port and airport ownership in Africa will increase Chinese ability to export goods and import raw materials, while crowing out other imports and exports. Also, expanded Chinese energy and resource demands in Africa will likely be coupled with expanded Sino-African security engagement, presenting the potential for missteps as the Chinese military presence in Africa increases. Lower Chinese standards and disregard for the

rule of law harms our African partners' development and limits the ability of the United States to compete on a level playing field.

Russia

What is your assessment of Russia's strategic objectives in the USAFRICOM AOR?

Russia likely aims to discredit and undermine African-Western relationships, expand access to African energy markets to preserve Russian dominance over the European energy sector, and expand its African military engagements and arms sales. Russia advances these objectives via several approaches, including state-to-state relationships, oligarch-backed economic activity coordinated with the Russian government, and targeted disinformation and cyber operations.

Russia prioritizes engagement with North Africa to maintain access and project power in the Mediterranean and Red Seas. Russia specifically uses port development to increase its access and influence. Russia also uses private military companies to obscure its relationships and create flexible options to achieve its geopolitical and economic objectives. Moscow's efforts are frequently led by private military companies in which Russian oligarchs maintain financial stakes.

In what ways, if any, do their strategic objectives conflict with U.S. strategic objectives? In what ways, if any, do they align with those of the United States?

Russia intends to undermine Western influence and access wherever possible. Our objective is to assist our African partners in maintaining freedom and prosperity. We assist our allies in combatting violent extremists to protect U.S. and Western interests, but also for their own benefit. In contrast, Russia's assistance is focused on gaining influence to serve Moscow's needs and its business interests.

Russia's historical and renewed engagement in North Africa seeks to hold NATO's southern flank at risk, but Moscow's presence or influence there has not risen to a level that yet threatens the alliance. Russia's limited efforts in humanitarian and economic aid, infrastructure development, and security assistance including counterterrorism are broadly aligned with U.S. objectives but Moscow views these activities primarily as tools to compete with Western influence, promoting business practices that are counter to U.S. and Western values.

In your opinion, what effect has Russia's engagement with African militaries had on those militaries and on U.S. security interests?

Russia provides extensive arms sales and limited training to African militaries, especially in North Africa and with former Soviet partners. Russia is a leading supplier of military equipment to include small arms and heavier weapons such as armor and artillery, as well as large packages such as anti-air defense systems and naval vessels. These systems increase host nation lethality, but are difficult to sustain and decrease their interoperability with Western

military norms and systems. Russia's lack of robust end-user agreements and support for authoritarian regimes undermines U.S. objectives in Africa.

Do you view Russia's activities on the continent of Africa as a threat or challenge to U.S. national security interests? Please explain your answer.

Yes. Russia's current activities challenge U.S. national security interests in the USAFRICOM AOR. Russian military and security advisers currently do not pose a direct military threat to U.S. personnel, though Russia's military and security presence across Africa poses a foreign intelligence threat. Russia's pursuit of a persistent military presence and use of mercenaries in Libya, Central African Republic, and Sudan have the potential to destabilize already vulnerable security environments and threaten U.S. and western progress in these regions. Over time, Russian investments could complicate U.S. military and economic access.

Are United States policies, associated authorities, and resources—as applicable to Africa—sufficient to counter Russia's influence, where needed, or are additional measures required? What role should USAFRICOM play in this regard?

Yes. USAFRICOM assesses the current authorities to counter Russian influence in Africa are adequate. USAFRICOM will regularly reassess those authorities as Russia adapts to our efforts and modifies its activities with regard to Africa in an attempt take advantage of perceived U.S. weakness or inability to act.

In the hybrid competition with Russia—below the level of military conflict—do you support a whole-of-government approach to countering Russian influence? In your view, is the interagency effectively unified in implementing a strategy to compete with Russia in the USAFRICOM AOR?

A whole-of-government approach is the only way to effectively compete with Russia. The U.S. military serves a supporting role to the whole-of-government approach in constraining the growth of Russian malign influence. With increased diplomatic and economic pressure, the military's role is to (1) accentuate diplomatic and economic impacts through robust messaging, key leader engagements, and other means; (2) provide a credible deterrent, including through applications of our irregular warfare toolkit; and (3) continue to work with partner militaries to build their capabilities while ensuring access and influence for the U.S. and our partners.

Availability of Forces

USAFRICOM does not have any assigned forces and, as a result, is required to compete for forces in the global force management process.

What is your assessment of the availability and predictability of forces and associated capabilities to support the USAFRICOM Theater Campaign Plan and other requirements in the AOR?

USAFRICOM competes for forces through the Global Force Management Allocation

Process (GFMAP). As a result of the National Defense Strategy's shift in focus to Great Power Competition (GPC), the priority for resourcing USAFRICOM's Counter Violent Extremist Organizations (C-VEO) efforts has decreased. That said, if confirmed, HQs USAFRICOM will maintain its attention to the adequacy of forces allocated to Security Force Assistance; Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance; and protecting U.S. personnel and facilities.

What is your understanding of the challenges and risks to U.S. security interests, if any, resulting from the lack of assigned forces to USAFRICOM?

If confirmed, this is something HQs USAFRICOM will monitor closely and, as required, communicate risk and advocate for forces through the chain of command.

What is your assessment of the utility of aligning one of the Army's Security Force Assistance Brigades to USAFRICOM?

Many of the SFAB's capabilities align with the goals of the USAFRICOM Campaign Plan. If confirmed, HQs USAFRICOM will assess the value of assigning or allocating one of the Army's Security Force Assistance Brigades (SFAB) to USAFRICOM.

Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs) in Africa

What is your understanding of the U.S. counterterrorism strategy as it relates to the USAFRICOM AOR?

The National Strategy for Counterterrorism stresses the use of all aspects of National power, with a focus on non-military capabilities. The USAFRICOM Campaign Plan takes a partnered approach across allied governments in the public and private sectors (e.g., technology, financial institutions) to encourage counter-terrorism burden-sharing, information sharing, counter threat finance, reintegration of returning foreign fighters, and counter-narratives. USAFRICOM maintains pressure on VEO networks to create time and space for our partners to develop enduring governmental and security institutions.

How would you assess the effectiveness of the U.S. counterterrorism strategy and associated activities in addressing the threat posed by violent extremist organizations?

The strategy was published in October 2018, but USAFRICOM was already using a whole-of- government approach in partnership with allies to counter VEOs since the command's establishment in 2008. Recognizing the U.S. Counterterrorism strategy goes well beyond U.S. military capability and requires a whole a government approach, the command's role within the interagency is to build partner capability, support partners and allies, and use limited direct action, where appropriate, to provide time and space for diplomatic and development efforts to take hold. In Somalia, for example, the U.S. comprehensive approach has shown progress and while there is still a lot of work to be done, Somalia is more stable today than it was when USAFRICOM was founded 10 years ago. Additionally, piracy off the coast of Somalia no longer threatens global trade and VEOs do not pose a direct threat to the homeland.

What changes, if any, would you recommend to the strategy or associated measures of effectiveness? Should efforts to prevent the underlying causes of extremism be a component of our counterterrorism strategy?

Published in October 2018, it is too early to assess effectiveness of the strategy. Efforts to address the underlying conditions that give rise to terrorism should be a component of our counterterrorism strategy. The Command works with USAID and the Department of State to address local grievances, such as poor governance, corruption, and exclusion from economic opportunities, that VEOs could exploit to fuel radicalization.

Within the USAFRICOM AOR, what do you consider the highest counterterrorism priorities?

Developing security in Somalia is USAFRICOM's highest counterterrorism priority. Al-Shabaab remains a persistent threat in East Africa. USAFRICOM remains committed to supporting counterterrorism in Somalia through security force assistance, engagements, operations, and exercises intended to strengthen key relationships, and advance Somali Security Forces' (SSF) capabilities.

Second is containing instability in Libya. USAFRICOM will continue to conduct operations to degrade designated priority Violent Extremist Organizations, improve core Libyan security functions, and, when appropriate, strengthen Libyan national security forces aligned with a functioning and inclusive government.

Third is support to partners in the Sahel and Lake Chad Region. In the Sahel, we support the French and the Group of 5 (G5) Sahel countries (Chad, Niger, Mali, Mauritania, and Burkina Faso) with their counterterrorism efforts to degrade and defeat AQIM and ISIS-Greater Sahara aligned forces. In the Lake Chad Region, USAFRICOM supports the Multinational Joint Task Force by building counterterrorism capabilities to counter ISIS-West Africa, and Boko Haram.

What is your assessment of the threat posed by Al-Qaeda, the Islamic State, and other violent extremist organizations operating in Africa, to nations in the USAFRICOM AOR, the U.S. homeland, and broader western interests?

Though they may aspire to, at this time, no Africa-based extremist networks pose a direct threat to the U.S. homeland. However, numerous groups pose serious threats to the security of many African countries and U.S. and Western interests in the region. Al-Qaida and Islamic State (ISIS) networks exploit under-governed regions and porous borders to threaten the stability of our African partners, U.S. commercial and security interests, and U.S. citizens on the continent. These groups force our African partners to focus on short-term operational security requirements to the detriment of long-term development and security initiatives. Further, violent extremist organizations capitalize on long-term grievances, local disputes, and lack of governance to threaten the security and stability of African nations.

The most capable violent extremist organizations on the continent are al-Qa'ida-aligned al-Shabaab, al-Qa'ida in the Islamic Magreb (AQIM), and the Group for Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM), and ISIS adherents including ISIS-West Africa who pose a direct threat to allies in Africa. Diffuse extremist networks have enabled and inspired attacks against Western interests in Africa and Europe. If extremist influences are left unchecked, these networks could evolve to more directly threaten U.S. interests outside of the continent. Maintaining consistent counterterrorism pressure while supporting our regional partners is critical to containing the extremist threat in Africa.

Which VEOs do you find most concerning, and why?

The most concerning VEOs in Africa are Al-Shabaab, the Group for Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM), AQIM and ISIS-West Africa.

Somalia's al-Shabaab is the deadliest and largest violent extremist organization in Africa and remains a substantial concern. The group is firmly committed to its al-Qa'ida affiliation, continues to control large portions of southern Somalia, and acts as a regional destabilizer in East Africa. Al-Shabaab is responsible for the deadliest terrorist attack in Africa's history--a November 2017 Mogadishu car bomb that killed over 560 people. The group also continues to demonstrate its ability to conduct regional attacks, most recently in a mid-January armed assault on a hotel in Nairobi, Kenya that left over 20 dead, including one American.

In the Sahel, JNIM formed by merging four existing regional jihadist organizations. JNIM's ongoing collaboration with ISIS in the Greater Sahara and Ansaroul Islam enhances its ability to strike hardened military and government targets in Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso and makes JNIM a long-term regional threat in these already fragile states. Al-Qa'ida's regional media touts JNIM's attack successes to spur recruitment and rally local support against the Western presence in North and West Africa. The group also conducts kidnap for ransom operations against Westerners to fund operations.

Although AQIM is not currently conducting attacks in Libya, the group is strengthening illicit smuggling networks to facilitate fighters and weapons, probably to support operations in the Maghreb and Sahel. AQIM is a critical longer-term threat as it has gained influence by marrying into local tribes, building relationships with extremist Libyan militias, and using Libya to support its broad operational reach into the Sahel.

ISIS-West Africa, who split from Boko Haram in 2016, primarily operates in northeast Nigeria and exploits freedom of movement in under-governed spaces in Nigeria, Niger, Cameroon, and Chad. ISIS-West Africa leverages small arms tactics and indirect fire to overrun and displace Nigerian military and seize military equipment. Additionally, ISIS-West Africa has benefited from a faltering Nigerian military to expand operations Niger. The group is also attempting to replace state institutions for the population under its control.

Somalia

What is your understanding and assessment of U.S. national security interests in

Somalia?

U.S. National Security interests in Somalia include a state in which terrorist organizations are not able to destabilize the country, its neighbors, or threaten the U.S. homeland, persons, or interests. Currently, USAFRICOM assesses the US plans to degrade al-Shabaab and prevent piracy are achieving incremental success. Near, mid, and long term plans to build Somalia security forces are also showing incremental progress.

What is your understanding and assessment of the U.S. strategy for Somalia?

The U.S. strategy for Somalia is a unified, peaceful, and democratic Somalia with a stable and representative government. HQs USAFRICOM assesses this strategy is appropriate at the present time. If confirmed, HQs USAFRICOM will update its assessment and communicate any recommendations, if any, to the Secretary of Defense and interagency colleagues.

What role should USAFRICOM play in supporting that strategy?

USAFRICOM's role in supporting the U.S. strategy for Somalia should center on our commitments at the 2017 London Conference to assist in building Somali Security Forces. The USAFRICOM portion of the Comprehensive Approach to Security is to help build the Somali National Army's regional infantry units (the Danab) and to partner with Somali and African Union Mission in Somalia partners to keep pressure on the VEO network.

How would you evaluate the effectiveness of U.S. efforts to counter Al Shabaab to date?

USAFRICOM assesses the U.S. military effort has made incremental progress towards countering al-Shabaab. While al-Shabaab controls substantial territory, mainly in southern Somalia, al-Shabaab has been unable to increase their capability.

U.S. and partner nation counterterrorism operations alone will not defeat al-Shabaab, but they have impacted the group's operations and capabilities in two main ways. Many senior leaders have been removed from the battlefield, forcing the group to replace them with less effective leaders who have less freedom of movement. Airstrikes have also put pressure on the network responsible for car bomb attacks in Somalia's capital, resulting in a one-third decrease in such attacks in 2018 over the previous year (33 in 2017; 21 in 2018) – the first reduction in years. Nonetheless, for these operational successes to translate into strategic gains, Somalia's government and security forces will need to continue overcoming disruptive clan politics, improving leadership and logistics shortfalls, and facilitating greater cooperation between the federal government and member states.

How would you evaluate the effectiveness of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) efforts?

USAFRICOM assesses AMISOM and Somali Security Forces have recently achieved incremental gains in driving terrorist organizations out of strategically important population

centers; however, Somali Security Forces continue to face difficulties in holding ground. USAFRICOM continues to be committed to supporting AMISOM and Somali Security Forces in their responsibility of extending security throughout Somalia.

What is your assessment of the prospect for long-term stability in Somalia?

USAFRICOM assess long-term stability in Somalia will require the establishment of inclusive, representative, and accountable governance at all levels. In terms of the prospect for long-term stability, Somalia's political leadership has considerable work to do to meet its own timetable and goals for revising and ratifying a permanent constitution, advancing federalism and reconciliation efforts between the Federal Government and its member states, as well as, preparing for upcoming national election in 2021.

What role, if any, do you see for USAFRICOM in building the capacity of the Somali National Army and what should the objectives of such efforts be in the near-, mid-, and long-term?

USAFRICOM's role in building the capacity of the Somali National Army includes providing continuous coordination of U.S. and international efforts to man, train and equip Somali National Army Forces, and specific responsibilities to build out the Danab Brigade, the Somali "Lightning" Brigade, whose responsibilities will include offensive counterterrorism actions in the Federal Member States. At this time, USAFRICOM is improving the capabilities of Somali National forces by focusing on providing technical training and logistical assistance, as agreed to under the Comprehensive Approach to Security for Somali that came out of the 2017 London Conference.

In the near term, USAFRICOM is concentrating efforts on building clan-appropriate, regionally aligned Danab formations across the Federal Member States. The objective of this effort is to create combat ready formations that can conduct offensive operations to take territory back from al Shabaab.

In the mid-term, USAFRICOM will help the Danab formations integrate into the Somali National Security Forces; the Danab is designed to be a regional force that is paid, equipped and sustained by the Federal Government of Somalia. Somali National Army and other security forces are intended as the "hold force" for territory Danab units take back from al Shabaab. The objective of this effort is to ensure the regionally-aligned Danab and the Federal Government of Somalia's forces have a sustainable relationship that reinforces the federal aspect of Somali governance. As Somalis take and hold territory, it will be possible for AMISOM to relinquish control of areas they formerly secured, setting the conditions for the transition of AMISOM to a Somali-led force.

In the long term, efforts focus on developing a Somali internal defense structure that is capable of providing security for its people – one that maintains the U.S. as its preferred partner.

Lake Chad Basin and the Sahel

What is your understanding and assessment of U.S. national security interests in the Lake Chad Basin? The Sahel?

Limited success by the Lake Chad Region (LCR) countries to degrade ISIS-West Africa (ISIS-WA) and Boko Haram to reduce their territorial control in northeastern Nigeria, both VEOs continue to commit deadly, asymmetric attacks against civilians and security forces. Boko Haram and ISIS-WA challenge Nigeria's sovereignty and have created a humanitarian crisis which has displaced over 2.6 million people. Long-term stability and economic growth of Nigeria is inextricably linked to the continent's future; it is in the U.S. interest to support Nigeria and the other Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) partners in degrading this VEO threat.

Within the Sahel, dangerous pockets of extremists control numerous under-governed spaces. The nexus is in Mali, where VEOs intermix with tribal clans to create an environment characterized by illicit trade, lawlessness, and terrorism. Numerous international security actors conduct security operations in Mali, namely the European Union, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), and France via Operation BARKHANE. They have different missions but all focus on preventing the spread of VEOs across West Africa and further regional destabilization. The U.S. shares these interests and is also interested in denying safe havens to ISIS and Al Qaeda affiliated VEOs in the region.

What is your understanding and assessment of the U.S. strategy to address threats in the Lake Chad Basin and across the Sahel?

In the LCR, the U.S. strengthens security sector capacities of Cameroon, Chad, Niger and Nigeria in order to enable these nations to degrade ISIS-WA and Boko Haram. These activities are designed to provide time and space for humanitarian assistance as well as longer term security sector and governance reforms. The U.S. strategy in the LCR has contributed to containing Boko Haram and ISIS-WA to northeastern Nigeria.

The U.S. strategy for the Sahel is to support the African-led and French assisted regional counter-terrorism efforts, while providing operational and bilateral security force assistance to the G5 Sahel member nations.

Through these activities, pressure is applied to VEO networks allowing maturation of long term African-led security sector reforms and initiatives such as the G5 Sahel Joint Force.

Through its bilateral partnerships in the region, USAFRICOM assesses the U.S. strategy of containment has achieved some success as VEO activity has remained generally confined to the Sahel region.

What is your understanding of USAFRICOM's role in supporting that strategy?

Within the LCR, USAFRICOM assists the MNJTF via the P3 (U.S., UK, France) Cell for Coordination and Liaison in Chad. Additionally, the U.S. delivers bilateral security force assistance to Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria to develop their capabilities to counter the

Boko Haram and ISIS-WA threat. USAFRICOM also works with our interagency partners to assist with humanitarian support and facilitate international relief efforts.

In the Sahel USAFRICOM lends critical support to partner counterterrorism efforts by providing key enabling capabilities (e.g. ISR, intelligence sharing) to the French and G5 Sahel Joint Force members. Further, USAFRICOM builds military operational and defense institutional capabilities through measured security cooperation coordinated with other U.S. government agencies' diplomacy and development efforts and those of our partner nations. Through these actions USAFRICOM complements the international effort to maintain pressure on terror networks and increase security and stability in Mali.

Do you view the problem sets in the Lake Chad Basin and the Sahel to be the same? If not, how do they differ and how should we account for that in our strategies?

No. These are distinct problem sets separated by geography, origins and ideologies. Boko Haram and ISIS-WA are mostly confined to northeast Nigeria and areas around Lake Chad. Boko Haram's origins stem from grievances against the Nigerian Government and must be seen in that context. In the Sahel, uprisings related to historical ethnic grievances in Mali set conditions for large swaths of ungoverned territory to be seized by opportunistic terrorist organizations. USAFRICOM's Campaign Plan addresses the distinct nature of these problem sets.

What is your assessment of the efforts of governments in the region to combat VEOs, as well as other regional security and governance challenges?

Security and political challenges continue to undermine stability in the Sahel. Mali remains the epicenter of instability and a haven for many terrorist groups to stage and launch attacks across the region. Governments are willing to combat violent extremist organizations (VEOs) and want to improve regional security. They do this unilaterally, bilaterally (frequently with French assistance), and multilaterally through the G5 Sahel Joint Force—comprised of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger—and the UN Mission in Mali. Yet these countries are among the world's poorest, face severe resource constraints, and have limited military capability, making it more difficult for them to counter VEOs. Vast and non-permissive terrain, enduring ethnic conflict, inter-communal violence, and tense civil-military relations also hinder efforts to extend governance outside of major population centers.

Similarly, in the Lake Chad Region, Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria are largely willing to confront VEOs operating out of Nigeria and do so through unilateral operations and the five-nation Multinational Joint Task Force. Nigeria has faced multiple setbacks in the last year, as ISIS-West Africa has seized military bases and materiel, including armored vehicles, weapons, and ammunition. This has strained the Nigerian military's readiness and capabilities. Multiple competing national security priorities in each of the Lake Chad Region nations have prevented them from focusing adequate resources to counterterrorism operations, which has allowed VEOs freedom to operate.

What do you view as the most pressing impediments to regional efforts to address security and governance challenges?

Security and governance challenges are exacerbated by corruption, rapid population growth, environmental degradation, economic stagnation, and stressed infrastructures. These issues, combined with other development challenges in education, health, and livelihoods create fertile opportunities for VEOs to exploit local grievances. Additionally, a lack of resources make it difficult for national governments and regional security institutions to effectively tackle the challenges. For instance, while the G5 Sahel Joint Force demonstrates an opportunity for regional collaboration, the lack of institutional structures and resources may undermine the effectiveness of the organization.

In your view, what measures should the United States incorporate into current and future military-to-military engagements to help avoid violence by regional police and the militaries of other nations against civilians during operations?

Militaries who fail to comply with international norms should be restricted from receiving assistance. For the U.S. under the Leahy Law, assistance will be withheld from a security force when there is credible evidence the unit has committed a gross violation of human rights. The impact of Leahy's Law is significant as it incentivizes compliance with the rule of law. The potential loss of U.S. support can act as a deterrent to improper behavior.

Libya

What is your understanding and assessment of U.S. national security interests in the Libya?

U.S. national security interests are a stable and secure Libya that contributes to regional security. USAFRICOM supports UN-led efforts in the political reconciliation process, setting conditions for Libyan stability. In support of this goal, USAFRICOM assists in containing VEOs, supports and enables diplomatic efforts, and contributes to establishing conditions that deter illegal migration along NATO's southern flank.

What is your understanding and assessment of the U.S. strategy for Libya?

USAFRICOM is taking a threefold approach to supporting the U.S. strategy for Libya. First, degrade and contain violent extremist organizations to prevent terrorists in Libya from attacking U.S. interests, while creating opportunities for the political process to advance. Second, support United Nations-mediated efforts for political reconciliation between Libya's competing factions. This is a State Department-led effort managed by the Libya External Office which USAFRICOM supports by enabling diplomatic engagements in Libya. Third, prevent a return to civil war in Libya.

U.S. efforts to degrade and contain violent extremism in Libya have been largely successful to date. USAFRICOM has facilitated several visits by US governmental officials to further the political process. USAFRICOM assesses the threat of civil war in Libya is reduced

from previous years, but, if the National Conference does not produce a political agreement acceptable to the majority of Libyans, there is the possibility of renewed civil conflict.

What is your understanding of USAFRICOM's role in supporting the U.S. strategy?

USAFRICOM supports all three tenets of the U.S. strategy. In coordination with the UN-recognized Libyan Government of National Accord (GNA), U.S. forces are conducting ongoing counterterrorism operations to degrade terrorist organizations' abilities to recruit, train, and plot terror attacks. USAFRICOM will continue to limit both al Qaeda in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and ISIS-Libya's freedom of movement, constrain their ability to reinforce fighters, and degrade command and control. USAFRICOM provides military support to diplomacy by enabling diplomatic engagements within Libya and providing senior leader support where required to reinforce Libya External Office messaging. Finally, USAFRICOM monitors military developments across Libya to provide indications and warning for any potential renewed civil war.

What role, if any, do you believe the United States should play in helping Libya build capable security institutions?

The U.S., in cooperation with international partners, should seriously consider assisting Libya in developing capable security institutions if an internationally recognized Libyan government requests assistance. HQs USAFRICOM continues to monitor this issues closely.

What is your assessment of the risks associated with the paramilitary forces that continue to control large swaths of Libya?

The greatest risk is the lack of a centralized Libyan security force responsible to the Government of National Accord. Powerful paramilitary groups, such as the Libyan National Army, will likely continue to capitalize on the weak governance of the GNA to exert their own power and agendas. These forces are driven by their own self-interest and leverage transactional relationships and shifting allegiances built upon tribal ties, political agendas, ideology, and material gain. This makes the paramilitary forces a dynamic and destabilizing factor in the security of Libya. Allegiances can change without notice, possibly affecting access, degrading security, and ultimately complicating efforts to build political unity. The unpredictable nature of paramilitary group patronage will most likely remain a significant obstacle to the efforts of the GNA to establish security.

What do you view as the most significant challenges to the efforts of the Government of National Accord (GNA) to build capable and sustainable security institutions?

The most significant challenges to the GNA building capable and sustainable security institutions are divided Libyan security organizations, over reliance on paramilitary militias, and uneven distribution of economic resources. The GNA is challenged to unify a deeply divided country, with fractured key government and military institutions. These weak institutions have

compounded the degraded security situation, allowing paramilitary militia to fill the resulting security vacuum. While not a significant challenge to building security institutions, the lack of accountable governance in Libya allows for grievances among civilians to fester due to lack of government services which increases risks to long-term stability.

In what ways can the United States be most effective in assisting the GNA to build capable and sustainable security institutions?

The United States will be most effective in assisting the internationally recognized Libyan government to build security institutions through a whole of government approach to ensure political, economic, and security development is synchronized so security institution development does not outpace development of the government's ability to direct, manage, and fund those institutions. Reconstitution of the Libyan security apparatus will require significant resourcing and development of institutions at all levels, from national down to local. The U.S. can contribute as part of a coordinated international effort based on Libyan requests for assistance and U.S. policy.

Building Partner Capacity and Security Assistance

In your view, what should be our strategic objectives in building the capacities of partner nations in the USAFRICOM AOR through defense security cooperation activities or other means?

USAFRICOM's line of effort to build partner capability is aligned with National Security, Defense and Military Strategies, contributes to a shared defense in support of U.S. strategic interests, and limits opportunities for strategic competitors. USAFRICOM's objectives include: African partner's capabilities and capacity contribute to regional security; threats from VEOs and transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) are reduced to a level manageable by internal security forces; U.S. access and influence is ensured; the theater is set with aligned forces, authorities, capabilities, footprints, and agreements; U.S. personnel and facilities are protected.

In your view, what is the appropriate balance between efforts to build partnership capacity at the tactical and operational levels and at the institutional and ministerial levels?

Capacity building must be carefully balanced between developing the partner's long term institutional and ministerial levels which provide a lasting foundation for the more immediate activities at their tactical and operational levels. The focus and level of effort will vary depending upon a number of variables to include: the partner's stability and baseline military capabilities, the operational environment, and the presence or absence of an internal or external threat.

Do you believe the ability of a partner nation to sustain U.S.-provided equipment and capabilities should be a key factor in determining the level and type of assistance to be provided?

Yes. A partner nation's ability to sustain U.S.-provided equipment and capabilities is one of the key factors in determining the level and type of assistance provided. In order to maximize U.S. return on its security cooperation investments, one must comprehensively review and balance a partner's immediacy of need with its capacity to absorb and sustain the U.S. support.

How would you characterize the importance of adherence to human rights as an objective of USAFRICOM security cooperation programs and activities?

Adherence to human rights and rule of law must remain a critical component of security cooperation programs. This adherence is non-negotiable, and it is what sets us apart from many global competitors attempting to carve out a share of the security cooperation market.

When credible allegations of violence against civilians by partner nation security forces arise, what should the U.S. response be?

Deliberate violence against civilians by any U.S. partnered force is a violation of international law and inconsistent with American values. If the allegations prove credible, security cooperation activities with the partner unit involved must be suspended. Depending on the nature of the violation and the partner's remediation efforts, further political, military, and/or economic sanctions may be necessary.

Support to United Nations Peacekeeping Missions in Africa

In your view, should the U.S. contribute military personnel in the form of staff positions and military observers to UN peacekeeping missions and other international peace operations in the USAFRICOM AOR?

Yes. United Nations peacekeeping missions and other peace operations play a critical role in advancing peace, stability and security throughout Africa. The role of the U.S. in these operations offers a way to advance the nation's interests. Peacekeeping missions benefit from appropriate contributions of U.S. military personnel.

In your view, what are the advantages and disadvantages of contributing military personnel to UN operations in the form of staff positions and military observers' positions?

Contributing U.S. military personnel to United Nations operations adds value to those operations and affords our personnel a unique opportunity to build relationships and trust with other United Nations members' military personnel.

Determining the value of contributing personnel to UN operations relative to other investments of military personnel is a policy decision, one requiring deliberate planning, including consideration of risk to force and risk to mission.

Special Operations Forces

What special operations capabilities are in highest demand by USAFRICOM?

USAFRICOM assesses Special Operations capabilities to train and build partner capability and Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) to assist partner forces in counterterrorism operations are in highest demand. Additionally, personnel recovery, search and rescue and casualty evacuation assets are in high demand and short supply.

Which countries in the USAFRICOM AOR do you believe have the greatest need for engagement with U.S. Special Operations Forces?

If confirmed, HQs USAFRICOM will assess counterterrorism priorities in Africa, including which countries have the greatest need for engagement. Consultations with the State Department Chiefs' of Mission, USSOCOM, and other partners will inform this determination and recommendations, if any, to adjust how USSOF are current deployed within the USAFRICOM AOR.

What are your views on the use of general purpose forces for missions providing security force assistance to other nations' militaries?

General Purpose Forces (GPF) can play a role in security cooperation partnerships. GPF capabilities align well with the Command's objectives and partner nation capabilities. GPF support to build the capacity of conventional partner forces helps preserve capacity for our special operations forces to prioritize SOF-specific missions and activities as required.

Crisis Response Capabilities

What is your understanding of the crisis response capabilities available to USAFRICOM?

USAFRICOM has two specific crisis response forces designated: the Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force – Crisis Response Africa (SPMAGTF-CR-Africa) and the East Africa Response Force (EARF). These forces are deployable throughout Africa and are capable of operating in both permissive and uncertain environments to provide embassy security reinforcement and/or military assisted departure of DOS-designated personnel.

USAFRICOM also has the Fleet Antiterrorism Security Team (FAST) which can provide rapid response anti-terrorism and security capabilities suited for deliberate contingency responses based on indications and warnings of emerging threats.

Last, USAFRICOM has a Commander's Crisis Response Force (CRF), designed to provide military counterterrorism capabilities and resolve terrorist acts against U.S. personnel and interests.

Do you believe that the availability of crisis response capabilities and the mechanism for obtaining and deploying those capabilities are both appropriate and adequate to meet crisis response requirements in the USAFRICOM AOR?

USAFRICOM assesses they have adequate crisis response capabilities and appropriate authorities to meet crisis response requirements. However, time and distance impacts USAFRICOM's ability to respond to crisis. When coupled with indications and warning, USAFRICOM's ability to respond to crisis, including those at high risk/high threat diplomatic posts, is best enabled by forward deploying forces in anticipation of a crisis.

In your opinion, what additional steps, if any, should be taken to reduce the risk of attacks on U.S. embassies, consulates, and personnel by terrorist organizations and other threats throughout USAFRICOM?

USAFRICOM contributes indications and warning data to the whole of government effort to reduce risk of attacks on diplomatic facilities. Marine Security Guard Detachments and Augmentation Units are key stakeholders in the protection of U.S. persons and facilities. The Department of State and the Diplomatic Security Service are the lead agencies.

Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) Capabilities

Demand for intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities of every kind has grown exponentially in recent years, largely due to the enhanced situational awareness and targeting capabilities they bring to our commanders. Almost all of the geographic combatant commands have validated ISR requirements that are not being met.

What is your understanding of the support USAFRICOM is currently receiving to respond to its ISR requirements?

USAFRICOM assesses ISR support is insufficient to meet current USAFRICOM ISR requirements. USAFRICOM is seeking to increase ISR coverage and activities on the continent to enhance understanding and US access and influence in order to respond to threats to U.S. personnel and facilities throughout the continent.

Do you believe the threats emanating from the USAFRICOM AOR warrant additional resources from within DOD? If so, how do you intend to advocate for additional ISR and other enabling assets, if confirmed?

Insufficient ISR capacity is a key shortfall not only for the U.S., but also allies and partners with whom USAFRICOM supports to counter VEO threats. USAFRICOM currently faces capability shortfalls in flexible, sea-based ISR; long-range, long-endurance ISR; and flexible-manned ISR. If confirmed, HQs USAFRICOM will seek opportunities to optimize ISR allocation to integrate U.S. and partner ISR capabilities and maximize intelligence sharing.

Maritime Security

Maritime security has proven to be a significant issue on the coasts of West and East Africa.

What is your assessment of USAFRICOM’s ongoing maritime security initiatives?

USAFRICOM assesses the implementation of regional maritime security agreements, with the goal of helping partners develop capable maritime forces that can patrol their territorial seas and economic exclusion zones, is an important initiative. This fosters rule of law, supports good governance, and promotes economic development.

Very few African countries have the capacity to project naval forces beyond their coastal waters; as a result, the economic exclusion zones of many coastal African countries are exploited by a variety of international actors.

What opportunities, if any, do you see for expanded U.S. engagement on maritime security in the USAFRICOM AOR?

There may be opportunities for expanded maritime security engagement in East Africa, modeled on USAFRICOM’s successful maritime law enforcement partnership program in West Africa. If confirmed, HQs USAFRICOM will conduct an assessment for the potential of expanded U.S. engagement in maritime security domain.

USAFRICOM Health Related Issues

Health issues are a significant concern in many African nations and in their militaries. The U.S. Government’s engagement strategy in Africa includes an emphasis on health-related issues.

To what extent should USAFRICOM be involved in broader U.S. Government “health diplomacy” and capacity building efforts in Africa?

DoD has an important role to play in the broader U.S. Government engagement in “health diplomacy.” USAID, which is the largest provider of foreign assistance in health, has limitations on funding programs with the armed forces (both military and police). African militaries have a larger and more direct roles in their nations’ public health and healthcare systems. When we build military medical capability/capacity, we enhance the entire national health system. Finally, African militaries are often essential to their nations’ outbreak response capabilities, especially when the outbreak occurs in an insecure or unstable area.

If confirmed, what changes, if any, would you recommend to USAFRICOM’s efforts in this regard?

USAFRICOM will continue its important role in the broader U.S. Government’s “health diplomacy” efforts. If confirmed, HQs USAFRICOM will conduct an assessment of changes required, if any, in this regard.

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response in USAFRICOM

In your view, are the policies, programs, and training that DOD and the Military Services have put in place to prevent sexual assault and respond to sexual assault when it does occur, adequate and effective?

Sexual assault within our units and formations is anathema and not tolerated by any leaders within the armed services. It is not only a crime, it is intentional fratricide which destroys the climate of trust, teamwork, and cohesion necessary for effective units and organizations. We have the right policy. Yet, despite all of our efforts we have not made the progress we would all like to see. I support General Dunford's call for a fresh look at the U.S. military's approach to preventing and responding to sexual assault where ever it might occur. I also welcome Senator Martha McSally's request for a task force focused on eliminating sexual assault and sexual harassment in the United States military.

What is your assessment of USAFRICOM's sexual assault prevention and response program?

USAFRICOM assesses they have the required programs and personnel in place to set the conditions for prevention of sexual assault both at our home base in Stuttgart and in the Offices of Security Cooperation on the African Continent. USAFRICOM's Sexual Harassment/Assault Response and Prevention (SHARP) personnel report that reports of sexual assault in the Command are very limited. Assessing the health and adequacy of the SHARP program will remain one of the command's highest priorities.

If confirmed, I will conduct an assessment of USAFRICOM's program and make any changes required, if any, and lead the command's effort to eliminate sexual assault and sexual harassment in the United States military.

What is your view of the necessity of affording a victim both restricted and unrestricted options to report a sexual assault?

The restricted or unrestricted reporting of sexual assault balances the following priorities: protection and treatment for victims of sexual assault; the victim's right to make choices as to how this most personal type of assault is handled; and the necessity for good order and discipline in military organizations.

What is your assessment of the potential impact, if any, of proposals to remove from military Commanders, case disposition authority over felony violations of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, including sexual assaults?

After thirty-seven years of leading and commanding at all levels, my experience is the nation and the U.S. military achieves the best outcomes when we make commanders responsible and hold them accountable.

Removing military Commanders from the case disposition decision would significantly undermine the concepts of Command authority and responsibility. The military holds commanders responsible for all aspects of mission accomplishment and discipline in their units.

The Commander, who is trusted with life and death decisions in combat, must also be trusted with all aspects of unit discipline – to include the response to allegations of sexual assault. Commanders are regularly required to make tough decisions on the disposition of military justice matters; relying on their Judge Advocates' expertise and counsel, these leaders work through the merits of complex cases to maintain good order and discipline in their units.

What is your assessment of the Department's implementation of protections against retaliation (including reprisal; social ostracism; and acts of cruelty, oppression, and maltreatment) for reporting sexual assault?

The Military Justice Act of 2016 significantly updated the military justice system, to include the new retaliation article. This new article provides added protection for witnesses, victims, and persons who report or plan to report a criminal offense to law enforcement or military authorities adding a valuable means to hold offenders accountable. These changes, combined with the right command climate, will build trust and confidence in uniformed service members in the military justice system and result in increased reporting.

What is your understanding of the "continuum of harm" in the context of sexual harassment and sexual assault and their effects on the readiness of military units?

The "continuum of harm" is a spectrum of behaviors, including gender focused jokes, sexual comments, touching, and bullying, that can escalate to sexual violence. Sexual assault is intentional fratricide which destroys the climate of trust, teamwork, and cohesion necessary for effective units and organizations. These behaviors are fundamentally inconsistent with our military's values and erode combat readiness of military units to deploy, fight and win.

If confirmed, I will build a climate that fosters mutual respect and trust where everyone recognizes their personal responsibility to interrupt the "continuum of harm." I will lead the command's effort to eliminate sexual assault and sexual harassment in the United States military.

What is your view of the role of the chain of command in maintaining a command climate in which sexual harassment and sexual assault are not tolerated?

Commanders are responsible for the morale, welfare, and discipline within their formations and must establish a positive climate and lead on the issue of sexual harassment and sexual assault to eliminate it from our military. Military leaders and commanders are trusted professionals who uphold service policies fostering and supporting service and national values. Yet, it is an insufficient standard for leaders to simply comply with service regulations. Leaders must invest in and work hard to build positive climates based on trust, where everyone, regardless of rank or position and without fear of reprisal, is empowered to take appropriate action to interrupt the "continuum of harm," which can lead to sexual assault.

In your view, do military and civilian leaders in USAFRICOM have the training, authorities, and resources needed to hold subordinate commanders and supervisors accountable for the prevention of and response to sexual harassment and sexual

assault? If not, what additional training, authorities, or resources to you believe are needed, and why?

USAFRICOM assesses their military and civilian leaders have the required training, authorities, and resources to hold subordinates accountable. If confirmed, I will assess the adequacy of the training, authorities, and resources across the command, to include remote locations on the continent.

What additional steps would you take, if confirmed, to address the problem of sexual assaults in USAFRICOM?

If confirmed, HQs USAFRICOM will initiate a command climate survey. I will personally meet with all commanders, leaders, and subject matter experts within the command to assess the sexual harassment and assault response program in USAFRICOM. I will apply my thirty-seven years of military experience and judgment and lead on this issue to ensure that every Soldier, Sailor, Airman, Marine, and Coast Guardsman understands and believes that sexual violence is not only a serious crime, but intentional fratricide which destroys the climate of trust, teamwork, and cohesion necessary for effective units and organizations.

The Senate Armed Services Committee has received testimony about troubling allegations concerning child sexual abuse by coalition partners in Afghanistan.

In your view, what is the appropriate role for a U.S. military commander who is working with coalition partners, when that U.S. officer becomes aware of allegations of child abuse by members of that coalition force?

If confirmed, I and every uniformed leader in USAFRICOM have the responsibility to assess and report any allegations of child abuse by coalition partners. The U.S. military takes all allegations of crimes seriously and upon witnessing or receiving allegations, the U.S. military commander on the ground has an obligation to report the criminal misconduct to the appropriate authority. If there is an allegation of child abuse by our one of our NATO partners, the conduct is reported to the coalition force in accordance with the NATO SOFA; if there is an allegation of child abuse by one of our African partner forces, the conduct is reported per our agreements with that partner force's government, and if no agreement exists, to the local authorities.

If confirmed, what direction would you give to U.S. personnel assigned to your command who become aware of such allegations?

As previously noted, if confirmed, I will evaluate the adequacy of established tactics, techniques, and procedures for the reporting and response to observed child sexual abuse. I will also examine the guidance established with USAFRICOM for the notification to the Headquarters (e.g., establishing observed child sexual abuse as a Commander's Critical Information Requirement), our partner nations, and the Department of Defense of such criminal allegations.

Under what circumstances would you expect U.S. personnel under your command

to intervene to stop such misconduct if they suspect it or observe it?

If U.S. uniformed personnel observe an incident of abuse in progress, I expect them to intervene to stop it, subject to their assessment of the potential risks to our own forces. If they suspect an incident of abuse, I expect them to expeditiously report it through their chain of command, bring it to the immediate attention of the appropriate partner nation officials, and encourage those officials to address the incident through appropriate criminal justice systems.

While U.S. Forces do not have the legal authority to enforce matters of partner nation domestic law, I expect all U.S. personnel under my command to embody this responsibility and act accordingly.

Quality-of-Life Challenges in USAFRICOM

What unique quality-of-life challenges affect service members, civilians, and their families assigned to the USAFRICOM AOR?

USAFRICOM works closely with the Ambassadors and Embassy staffs in each country to ensure our Service members, civilians, and their families have the quality of life they deserve. Our challenges are lack of medical, dental and recreational facilities, language barrier, cultural differences, changing threat levels, and limited education opportunities in remote locations without typical Department of Defense support.

If confirmed, how would you address these theater-wide challenges to help improve the quality-of-life and retention of these personnel and their families?

USAFRICOM's Families Forward Program was established to prepare families for mission requirements, travel, culture, and operational considerations before traveling to their assignment in Africa. It helps manage expectations before the family pushes forward to their duty location. In addition, USAFRICOM leaders consistently visit locations of concern and respond to feedback from our folks deployed on the Continent.

Mental and Behavioral Health Care

In your view, are there sufficient and properly located mental health assets in USAFRICOM to address the mental and behavioral health needs of the service members, civilians and their families assigned to the AOR?

There are several different means by which service members, civilians and their families can access care on the continent. The choice depends largely on the specific location to which they are assigned. Some units have begun embedding mental health providers in their formations. The Expeditionary Medical Facility at Camp Lemonier Djibouti has a mental health provider on staff. Additionally, several locations are serviced on a rotational basis by Military and Family Life Consultants. Service members and families at embassies can receive immediate, primary care assistance from the embassy health units. Those in countries with providers in the TRICARE network can be referred to care locally. Those in countries without TRICARE

network providers can access tele-behavioral health from the embassy back to a military treatment facility. Everyone with access to a phone or computer can also access counseling via Military OneSource.

If confirmed, what additional actions will you take to address the mental and behavioral health needs of service members, civilians and their families in USAFRICOM?

If confirmed, I will continue to foster a culture in which military personnel and families seek assistance for mental health needs (i.e. reduce the stigma). Engaged leadership, education, and accessibility of services are all key components of that culture.

Focus on prevention and early recognition should include resiliency training, compassionate outreach by the chain of command, especially at the platoon level. Medical providers and chaplains are also important. We will work with the Defense Health Agency and our communications professionals to enhance the tele-behavioral health resources available to service members and families on the continent.

Additionally, we must adhere to both service and family member screening and execution of the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) to ensure families are not put in a position where known medical issues are beyond local medical capabilities.

Although the Department has made great strides in reducing the stigma associated with help-seeking behaviors, many service members remain concerned that their military career will be adversely affected should their chain of command become aware that they are seeking mental or behavioral health care. At the same time, the military chain of command has a legitimate need to be aware of physical and mental health conditions that may affect the readiness of the service members under their command.

Do you have any views on how to reduce the stigma, real or perceived, for seeking mental health care?

The best method for overcoming stigma is active, involved leadership who engage honestly and openly, with all levels of personnel. First line supervisors, friends, and family have the greatest influence on a person's decision to seek help.

As the Commanding General, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, my subordinate leaders and I support those seeking help, and encourage family and friends to do the same. If confirmed, USAFRICOM will continue to ensure that mental health programs sponsored by the Defense Health Agency and the Services are understood and accessible to families, friends, and supervisors to ensure people receive care early.

As regards the provision of mental and behavioral health care, how does DOD bridge the gap between a service member's desire for confidentiality and the chain

of command's legitimate need to know about matters that may affect the readiness of individual service members and the unit?

The "Military Command Exception" permits the disclosure of Protected Health Information (PHI) by a health care provider to appropriate military command authorities that would otherwise be prohibited by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Privacy Rule. If disclosure is made, then only the minimum amount of information necessary should be provided.

To dispel stigma around members seeking mental health care or voluntary substance misuse education, DoD issued an instruction to balance patient confidentiality rights with the commander's need to make informed decisions. The DoD directs that healthcare providers shall not notify a member's commander when the member obtains mental health care and/or substance misuse education services; however, disclosure to the commander is required if certain extenuating conditions exist. Examples of special circumstances are: serious risks of harm to self, others, or the mission; and transitions to inpatient care programs.

Congressional Oversight

In order to exercise legislative and oversight responsibilities, it is important that this committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate committees of Congress receive timely testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information from the executive branch.

Do you agree, if confirmed, and on request, to appear and testify before this Committee, its subcommittees, and other appropriate committees of Congress?

Yes.

Do you agree, if confirmed, and when asked before this committee, its subcommittees, or other appropriate committees of Congress to give your personal views, even if those views differ from the position of the Administration?

Yes.

Do you agree, if confirmed, to provide this committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate committees of Congress, and their respective staffs such witnesses and briefers, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information, as may be requested of you, and to do so in a timely manner?

Yes.

Do you agree, if confirmed, to consult with this committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate committees of Congress, and their respective staffs, regarding your basis for any delay or denial in providing testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information requested of you?

Yes.

Do you agree, if confirmed, to keep this committee, its subcommittees, other appropriate committees of Congress, and their respective staffs apprised of new information that materially impacts the accuracy of testimony, briefings, reports, records—including documents and electronic communications, and other information you or your organization previously provided?

Yes.

Do you agree, if confirmed, and on request, to provide this committee and its subcommittees with records and other information within their oversight jurisdiction, even absent a formal Committee request?

Yes.

Do you agree, if confirmed, to respond timely to letters to, and/or inquiries and other requests of you or your organization from individual Senators who are members of this committee?

Yes.

Do you agree, if confirmed, to ensure that you and other members of your organization protect from retaliation any military member, federal employee, or contractor employee who testifies before, or communicates with this committee, its subcommittees, and any other appropriate committee of Congress?

Yes.