

STATEMENT OF
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*A secure, stable, and prosperous Africa
is an enduring American interest.*

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INTRODUCTION

Chairman Inhofe, Ranking Member Reed, and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to represent the men and women of U.S. Africa Command and share with you their accomplishments over the past year. Since I last updated the committee, the new National Security, Defense, and Military Strategies, the U.S. Strategy Toward Africa, the National Strategy for Counterterrorism, the Department of Defense Strategy for Africa, and a new U.S. Africa Command Strategy and Campaign Plan have shaped our efforts on the continent. Each of these foundational documents acknowledges and underscores the strategic importance of Africa and the command's mission: *U.S. Africa Command, with partners, strengthens security forces, counters transnational threats, and conducts crisis response in order to advance U.S. national interests and promote security, stability, and prosperity.*

Africa is an enduring interest for the United States, and security is a pre-requisite for economic growth and development. As a partner-based command, U.S. Africa Command assists African nations in building capable and professional militaries subordinate to elected civilian authority and respectful of human rights, the laws of armed conflict, and international humanitarian law. By making deliberate investments in defense institutions, the U.S. can assist African partners in meeting the basic conditions needed for good governance, economic development, and stability.

During 2018, U.S. Africa Command commemorated its tenth year as a geographic combatant command, reaffirming Africa's importance to the U.S. global strategy for defending and ensuring the economic well-being of the U.S. homeland. Our network continues to focus on shared goals of a secure, stable, and prosperous Africa, which benefits not only our African partners and the U.S., but also the international community.

Headquarters U.S. Africa Command employs a team of military, civilian, interagency, and contract professionals to fulfill the mission. Moreover, U.S. Africa Command is supported by families who bring with them the spirit of community and teamwork, without which the command could not succeed. U.S. Africa Command has partnerships with the Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and other interagency organizations who all work towards providing stability and prosperity on the continent. Globally, we collaborate with our European allies, the United Nations, the African Union and regional mechanisms, the European Union, non-governmental organizations, and other groups to pursue stability and security in Africa.

By employing a partner-centric approach, U.S. Africa Command complies with the specific direction in the National Defense Strategy to “support relationships to address significant terrorist threats in Africa.” To address this directive, U.S. Africa Command builds on two strategic principles. First, very few, if any, of Africa’s challenges can be resolved using only military force. Consequently, U.S. Africa Command emphasizes military support to diplomacy and development efforts. Our activities directly complement Department of State and USAID efforts to reduce the spread of harmful ideologies, strengthen governments who protect their citizens and foster security and economic successes.

Second, persistent pressure on terrorist networks—whether it be operational, financial, or political—is necessary to prevent the destabilization of our African partner nations. Our principal means for applying pressure is working through our African and with our international partners, increasing their security capabilities and, only when necessary, using kinetic force. Ultimately, our use of military force in Africa, for example in Libya and Somalia, supports the

host government's effort to provide the security and economic growth required for long-term stability and prosperity.

By design, U.S. Africa Command military assistance and activities occur in partnership with the host government and within overlapping regional and global mandates. In Somalia, the command supports the Federal Government of Somalia, while operating in support of African Union and United Nations mandates. In the fight against Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa (WA), we operate with partners in the African Union-endorsed Multinational Joint Task Force, which was established under the auspices of the Lake Chad Basin Commission. In the Sahel, we partner with five national governments and within the overlapping mandates of the G-5 Sahel and the United Nations. In Libya, our activities support the UN-led political reconciliation process and the UN-recognized Government of National Accord. Even when we operate unilaterally, those actions are firmly embedded in international law and international legitimacy.

U.S. Africa Command also plays a significant role in advancing the priorities outlined in the National Security and Defense Strategies, which emphasize the rise of China and Russia as key competitors. U.S. Africa Command has also observed increased engagement of non-traditional security actors, such as Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and the United Arab Emirates, as both challenges and opportunities to our mission. U.S. Africa Command strives to ensure the U.S. remains the partner of choice, in Africa, by maintaining our high standards of professionalism, demonstrating commitment to addressing their security needs, and providing high-quality equipment.

Targeted investments in innovative, cost-effective, and sustainable approaches are common practices within Africa, and U.S. Africa Command endeavors to maximize the returns on our investments. For example, our strategy in Somalia features a distinct set of Advise,

Assist, and Accompany authorities in support of the Federal Government of Somalia and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to provide the opportunity for the Somali National Security Forces to successfully assume security responsibilities. This carefully tailored level of operational support reduces risk to U.S. personnel and is a cost-effective way to further advance U.S. security interests.

Each day, we have approximately 7,000 personnel conducting their assigned tasks on the African continent. These include U.S. uniformed personnel, Department of Defense civilians, and contractors of all Services, career fields, and specialties working to address global security challenges and maintain strategic access and influence. These personnel perform duties in countries such as Cameroon, Djibouti, Kenya, Niger, and Somalia. Over the course of 2018, the command and our component commands conducted numerous engagements, exercises, security cooperation events, and operations across the continent. These activities strengthen mutually beneficial networks between the U.S. and partners and enhance the capability of partner nation defense forces to provide effective and legitimate security.

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

For scale, Africa is over three times larger than the U.S. The U.S. Africa Command Area of Responsibility encompasses 53 countries with a population of 1.3 billion. By 2050, this figure is forecasted to almost double to over 2.54 billion, with one out of every four people on the planet living on the African continent. Additionally, the continent faces a large and growing youth population as Africa is home to 21 of the 22 countries in the world with the youngest average populations. Forty-one percent of Africans are under the age of 15, while 60 percent of the total population is under the age of 24. Economic development, leading to employment, is

necessary in order to assist in preventing conflict, as Africa needs to add approximately 20 million jobs each year to keep pace with the growing population.

The lack of economic and educational opportunities, a large, disenfranchised youth population, and inadequate natural resources are potential drivers of extremism, which, when coupled with authoritarian, corrupt, or ineffective governments, contribute to persistent instability. According to the Fund For Peace's 2018 Fragility State Index, 33 of the 50 countries most at risk of becoming unstable are in Africa. This includes seven of the top ten most fragile states. According to the United Nations Development Programme's Human Development Index, 32 African countries are listed in the "Low Human Development" categories of health, education, security, and employment.

U.S. Africa Command employs the broad-reaching Diplomacy, Development, and Defense approach to foster interagency efforts and help negate the drivers of conflict and extremism. With the Department of State and USAID, U.S. Africa Command supports programs and initiatives fostering political reconciliation and elections in countries such as Libya. Our diplomatic and development partners work with African partners to provide jobs, food, clean water, and education, such as in Ethiopia and Nigeria, helping to counter incentives offered by violent extremists organizations (VEOs) or criminal networks.

In Africa, VEOs remain a serious threat to the shared interests of our partners, allies, and the U.S. These VEOs and criminal networks prey upon disenfranchised populations, creating a cycle of recruitment and allowing extremist ideology to fester. Extremist networks also exploit criminal networks for the illicit transport of narcotics, weapons, and persons. VEOs cultivate and encourage an environment of distrust, despair, and hopelessness to undermine governments, allowing for the expansion of their radical ideology.

Over the next decade, Africa will be shaped by the increased presence of external actors and the effects of environmental change. The U.S. welcomes those partners pursuing helpful and constructive interests in Africa to develop its economic, infrastructure, humanitarian, and security sectors. However, with emerging markets and a growing consumer class, external actors often employ exploitative tactics and “debt trap” diplomacy to garner undue influence.

Over the past decade, China has injected considerable amounts of financing into the continent, including offering key loans to strategically-located countries, like Djibouti, Senegal, and Angola. Chinese interests include gaining greater access to Africa’s mineral and other natural resources, opening markets, and accessing naval ports. In the short term, the complete financial packages can make China appear to be an attractive partner for African nations. For example, African nations who become signatories to China’s Belt and Road Initiative (the BRI) receive promises of development, defense, and cultural investments in their countries, further enhancing China’s influence while challenging our own partnerships in Africa.

African leaders are growing increasingly wary of their business ventures with China. For example, the Nairobi-Mombasa Railway in Kenya has met with criticism for its high price and the relatively low number of African workers in dispatcher and locomotive driver positions, relative to Chinese workers. While Chinese officials say their business agreements come with no strings attached, construction work on the continent is often carried out by Chinese companies and Chinese workers failing to boost local employment. African countries, which can access financing through China’s state-owned banks, often commit to contracts that can lead to debt-equity swap arrangements when debt obligations are unfulfilled. For Kenya, which financed 90% of the total \$3.6 billion railway project from China in 2014, loan repayment rates are scheduled to triple in 2019 per the conditions of the loan agreement risking this scenario.

Russia is also a growing challenge and has taken a more militaristic approach in Africa. By employing oligarch-funded, quasi-mercenary military advisors, particularly in countries where leaders seek unchallenged autocratic rule, Russian interests gain access to natural resources on favorable terms. Some African leaders readily embrace this type of support and use it to consolidate their power and authority. This is occurring in the Central African Republic where elected leaders mortgage mineral rights—for a fraction of their worth—to secure Russian weapons. Russia also garners additional support at the United Nations and gains more customers for its military arms sales.

Russia is more deliberate in Libya as they invoke Qaddafi-era relationships and debts to obtain economic and military contracts. These agreements are aimed at accessing Libya's vast oil market, reviving arms sales, and gaining access to coastal territories on the Mediterranean Sea, providing Russia closer access to Europe's southern border.

Consequently, the cross-border and global nature of Chinese and Russian actions and influence in Africa necessitates collaboration between U.S. Africa Command, U.S. European Command, U.S. Central Command, and U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, amplifying the global complexity of this issue.

The second emergent challenge in Africa is the effect of environmental change on African security. A large number of Africans make their living on the land, whether they grow crops or raise livestock, and many live at a subsistence level. Settled farmers and nomadic herdsman are increasingly engaged in land-use disputes, which are emerging as major driver of conflict in central Mali, through the Middle Belt Region of Nigeria, in South Sudan, and into the Central African Republic. More people are competing for less arable land, while both modern state institutions and customary institutions are failing or have failed to regulate this competition.

Poor land-use policies, changing weather patterns, rising temperatures, and dramatic shifts in rainfall contribute to drought, famine, migration, and resource competition. In the greater Sahel region, the Sahara Desert has expanded southward by over 10 percent since the 1920s, reducing the amount of productive land. Due to changes in weather patterns aggravated by poor resource management, Lake Chad has contracted 90 percent since the 1960s, significantly decreasing the region's largest source of fresh water. The reduction in arable land for crops and grazing land for livestock has created strong competition between the region's farmers and herders who migrate across borders searching for usable land. As each group seeks land for its own purposes, violent conflict can ensue. Armed groups and criminal networks exploit this situation, leading to human trafficking, slavery, and more violence.

Environmental degradation and the overuse of natural resources exacerbate weak or ineffective governments who are unable to respond and cope with their already serious, on-going political, economic, and social challenges. U.S. Africa Command and our partners are investing to build the capability and capacity of governance, infrastructure, and defense institutions, so African governments can mitigate the effects of environmental degradation. This can be accomplished with, for example, sustainable electric grids, viable water treatment facilities, environmentally-sound agricultural developments, and professional security forces.

Despite the challenges on the continent, Africans are eager and receptive to work with the U.S. to advance common strategic interests. Africa's future depends on urgent action to address the needs of growing populations, mitigate the influence of harmful activities, and combat the effects of environmental change. U.S. Africa Command's role within the Diplomacy, Development, and Defense construct supports partner efforts to enable economic growth and prosperity by providing a stable security environment.

U.S. AFRICA COMMAND STRATEGIC APPROACH

The successful advancement of U.S. interests in Africa is best achieved with stable nations on the continent. Accountable governments, well-trained and disciplined militaries with a respect for the rule of law and human rights, and growing economies are cornerstones to this stability. Over the past year, consistent with the updated national strategies, U.S. Africa Command revised our strategic approach to effectively strengthen our African partners by evolving our security cooperation from a focus on crisis response to capability and capacity building against our new strategic priorities: state fragility, increased involvement of China and Russia, VEO expansion, and threats to U.S. access and influence.

The U.S. Africa Command strategy prioritizes five objectives: 1) African Partners contribute to regional security, 2) threats from VEOs and transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) are reduced to a level manageable by internal security forces, 3) U.S. access and influence are ensured, 4) U.S. Africa Command sets the theater by aligning forces, authorities, capabilities, footprints, and agreements, and 5) U.S. personnel and facilities are protected. These objectives nest within the foundational strategies and provide the framework for the revised five-year focus in the U.S. Africa Command Campaign Plan and the U.S. Africa Command Theater Posture Plan.

FOUNDATIONAL STRATEGIES

For U.S. Africa Command, the 2018 National Defense Strategy underscore the importance of our African Partners, European, and international alliances to build partner capabilities and capacity in order to create a more secure, stable, and prosperous continent. Furthermore, the strategies emphasize the protection of the American people, homeland, and the American way of life.

The National Defense Strategy focuses on Great Power Competition and expanding the use of lethality, partnering, and process reform. Additionally, the National Defense Strategy continues to emphasize the threat posed by VEOs to the U.S. homeland, our allies, and our African Partners. Much like the National Defense Strategy, U.S. Africa Command links VEOs to instability in Africa. Hence, the importance of alliances and partnerships is amplified in the command's strategy and campaign plan and in the command's response to regional crises, whether humanitarian or security related.

Two other key foundational documents provide the policy guidance to synchronize U.S. Africa Command efforts with that of the whole of the U.S. Government. First, the Department of Defense Strategy for Africa mandates U.S. Africa Command strengthen African security forces and develop institutions at the national and regional levels. U.S. Africa Command's focus on security cooperation is a key component in the U.S. whole-of-government approach. Moreover, by seeking low-cost and resource-sustainable security solutions, the Department of Defense Strategy for Africa framework sets the conditions for U.S. Africa Command to adapt to current and emergent challenges in Africa.

Next, the National Strategy for Counterterrorism emphasizes the use of all instruments of American power, with a focus on non-military capabilities. The strategy's framework encourages working with a wide-range of partners in both the public and private sectors (e.g., technology, financial institutions) and allied governments to encourage counterterrorism burden-sharing. Information sharing, counter-finance, reintegration of returning foreign fighters, and counter-messaging promote positive narratives to increase partner awareness and strengthen partner capability to address the broader counterterrorism challenges within Africa. These foundational strategies are synchronized with the U.S. Africa Command Strategy and Campaign

Plan, promoting a consistent approach, over time, to strengthen relationships and enhance the capability of our African partners.

In December 2018, the President signed the U.S. Strategy Toward Africa, which focuses on economic partnerships to build self-reliance among our African partners in the era of great power competition with external actors, such as China and Russia. This strategy aims to advance trade and commercial ties with key African states to increase U.S. and African prosperity. Doing so helps to protect the U.S. from cross-border health and security threats, and supports African states' progress toward stability and citizen-responsive governance. The strategy also prioritizes foreign assistance to help our African partners achieve sustained economic growth and self-reliance to combat transnational threats. Ultimately, the U.S. Africa Command Strategy seeks to strengthen partnerships to increase U.S. influence, protect U.S. personnel and facilities, and ensure access, as specifically directed in the U.S. Strategy Toward Africa.

U.S. AFRICA COMMAND CAMPAIGN PLAN

Based on the National Security and Defense Strategies, and as indicated in our mission statement, the revised U.S. Africa Command Campaign Plan provides the command, and our component commands, strategic direction to advance our strategic goals on the continent. It does so in a burden-sharing and balanced approach, accounting for the increased presence of external actors, namely China and Russia, and the continued threat posed by VEOs.

To achieve the U.S. Africa Command Campaign Plan objectives, the command emphasizes six approaches: 1) Strengthen Partner Networks; 2) Enhance Partner Capability; 3) Develop Security in Somalia; 4) Contain Instability in Libya; 5) Support Partners in Sahel and the Lake Chad Region; and 6) Set the Theater to facilitate U.S. Africa Command day-to-day activities, crisis response, and contingency operations.

Strengthen Partner Networks

U.S. Africa Command strives to further U.S., allied, and partner interests and access to mitigate destabilizing influences on the continent. The Strengthen Partner Network approach is the primary effort in which the command seeks to establish new partnerships with countries and organizations, strengthen existing relationships through enhanced communication and synchronization, and counter the activities of external actors such as China and Russia. This approach focuses on maintaining the U.S. as the preferred security partner in Africa.

For example, in April 2018, U.S. Naval Forces Africa conducted Exercise Lightning Handshake with the Royal Moroccan Navy and Air Force. This was the most sophisticated bilateral exercise the U.S. conducted with an African partner. It included a U.S. Carrier Strike Group executing close air support and naval surface fire support missions at the Tan Tan live fire range in Morocco.

Enhance Partner Capability

This approach is applied continent-wide and includes building African partner capability focused on defense institution building, countering illicit trafficking, maritime security, counter-improvised explosive devices (IED) efforts, humanitarian assistance, infectious disease control, and counter-VEO efforts. Engagements and exercises, managed by U.S. Africa Command and its component commands, strengthen key partnerships and improve partner capabilities. Since challenges in Africa intersect the activities of a multitude of U.S. Government agencies and international organizations, U.S. Africa Command maintains a broad group of federal, allied, and partner command liaisons to coordinate our capability-building efforts. One of those mechanisms is our Multilateral Planning Group, tri-chaired by the U.S., France, and the United Kingdom, where we are able to discuss and synchronize our efforts on the continent.

Develop Security in Somalia

This approach supports not only AMISOM and Somali Security Forces, but also the United Nations, European Union, African Union, and other allies and partners contributing to the international effort to counter al-Shabaab and ISIS-Somalia. Anchored by the AMISOM Troop Contributing Countries of Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda, this approach allows for creating the opportunity to build the capability, capacity, and willingness of the Somali Security Forces. The approach centers on security cooperation, engagements, and exercises, as well as Advise, Assist, and Accompany authorities, to strengthen the Somali Security Forces. Taken in concert with the Enhance Partner Capability approach, the effort also addresses the capacity-building needs of the Troop Contributing Countries. The cumulative effects of the two approaches aim to support Somalia and the Somali Security Forces as they work to achieve regional stability and to support the vision of the Federal Government of Somalia.

Contain Instability in Libya

This approach guides the command's efforts to contain instability brought on by the lack of a unifying government and the presence of VEOs in Libya, which include ISIS-Libya and al-Qaida in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). The approach is focused on using the military tool to advance diplomacy, conduct operations to degrade VEOs, improve the security architecture of the Libyan Government of National Accord, and, once a political reconciliation is achieved, strengthen the national security forces of a recognized Libyan government. U.S. Africa Command, working with the Libya External Office of the U.S. Embassy to Libya, conducts engagements with Libyan political and military leaders to bolster relationships and maintain progress toward reconciliation. U.S. Africa Command stands firmly with and supports

the efforts of the United Nations as it leads the political reconciliation process, the immediate next step for Libyan stability.

Support Partners in the Sahel and Lake Chad Regions

In West Africa, roughly the size of the continental United States, this approach provides capabilities and support to counter-VEO operations, primarily against Boko Haram, Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM), ISIS-Greater Sahara, and ISIS-West Africa. The command's efforts support the Multinational Joint Task Force countries of Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria, and the G5 Sahel Joint Force countries of Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger. To support the Multinational Joint Task Force, the G5 Sahel Joint Force, and their individual member states, the command conducts engagements, exercises, and limited operations, and provides appropriate security assistance to increase the partners' willingness and capabilities in counter-VEO efforts.

Set the Theater

The logistics challenges of supporting our engagements on the continent necessitate the command align with a whole-of-government approach to support national security interests. This whole-of-government approach ensures we have the authorities, capabilities, footprint, agreements, and understandings in place to maintain access and accomplish our missions. The U.S. Africa Command Theater Posture Plan details the command's footprint of forces and agreements on the continent. Posture initiatives focus on expanding strategic access to enable day-to-day activities, contingency operations, and crisis response. The backbone of access in Africa is our network of enduring contingency locations and agreements with key African partners, which provides freedom of action and status protection for U.S. personnel.

Ensuring strategic access requires complementary defense, diplomatic, and development efforts across the interagency and with our allied and African partners. An enduring mission of the command is to support the Department of State-led mission to protect U.S. personnel and facilities on the continent. We maintain defense cooperation agreements with several African nations allowing for forward staging locations to enable more efficient recovery and evacuation. As such, we maintain enduring locations and contingency locations throughout Africa, which provide a flexible and diverse posture for operational needs and the protection of U.S. personnel and facilities.

Our capable posture network also allows forward staging of forces to provide flexible and timely responses to crises involving U.S. personnel or interests. At Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, the only forward and enduring U.S. military installation in Africa, U.S. forces engaged in security cooperation activities, contingency operations, and logistics support to five combatant commands: U.S. Africa Command, U.S. Central Command, U.S. European Command, U.S. Special Operations Command, and U.S. Transportation Command. Camp Lemonnier is our hub in East Africa and remains a vital link to build stability in this key region.

One of U.S. Africa Command's newest and most important posture initiatives is the development of the West Africa Logistics Network. The West Africa Logistics Network provides and positions right-sized aircraft throughout West and Central Africa to facilitate the distribution of supplies, personnel, and equipment to support locations.

IMPLEMENTING THE U.S. AFRICA COMMAND STRATEGIC APPROACH

ACHIEVING AND MAINTAINING INFLUENCE

U.S. Africa Command continues to advance U.S. strategic objectives through the execution of activities and the expenditure of resources to respond to both regional crises and instability,

while prioritizing Great Power Competition efforts across the continent. This approach requires the U.S. to continue with our authorities to counter transnational threats, including terrorism and infectious diseases, which threaten African governments and the U.S. and its interests in Africa. It also strives to enhance security cooperation with our African partners, so they may become more stable, well-governed, and self-reliant, thereby setting the conditions for economic growth and development.

U.S. Africa Command aspires to achieve and maintain influence with our allies and African partners through security cooperation, exercises, engagements, operations, and efforts to mature the theater. This requires the synchronization of emerging policy and guidance from the National Defense Strategy and other strategic documents to drive U.S. Government activities and engagements across Africa, reinforced by the importance of capturing a return on investment. As such, the command and its component commands have a firm understanding of the necessity to coordinate a whole-of-government approach toward strengthening relationships and building partner capability in support of national defense objectives.

Consistency in resources is the most effective method for implementing our strategic approach in Africa, as U.S. Africa Command does not have an abundance of dedicated assigned forces. These resources include the authorities, capabilities, funding, and allocated personnel to further our international and interagency relationships and provide appropriate military support and security cooperation to diplomatic and development efforts with our African partners. This consistency allows for the planned execution and delivery of senior leader engagements, security capabilities, and multinational exercises necessary to bring about a secure environment for the advancement of U.S. national interests and sustainment of military advantages.

Additionally, various programs and funding allow U.S. Africa Command to further its campaign objectives. At its headquarters, U.S. Africa Command imbeds fifteen military personnel from allied and partner nations in the Multinational Coordination Center fostering an enduring relationships and increasing interoperability with allies and partners. The foreign military personnel do not command U.S. Forces or make final determinations on plans or directives but do assist in coordinating military engagement efforts and exercises to further U.S. multinational partnerships. Additionally, U.S. Africa Command leads and participates in multilateral planning groups for East Africa, North Africa, and the Sahel region. Likewise, our component commands host senior leader staff talks with their respective component equivalents. The U.S. Army Regionally Aligned Force also assists with the U.S. Africa Command mission. Working within the security cooperation framework, the Regionally Aligned Force executes a significant share of the military-to-military activities in Africa. Sustained access to the Regionally Aligned Force is critical to mission success.

The U.S. National Guard's State Partnership Program is by far one of U.S. Africa Command's most valuable implementing programs. The State Partnership Program pairs 14 African nations with 11 U.S. states and the District of Columbia and creates enduring relationships with their African partners to build and improve peacekeeping capacity, disaster management competency, and overall partner readiness. U.S. Africa Command continues to see a great return on investment with the State Partnership Program, conducting 120 events this past year and engaging over 3,000 partner nation personnel at a cost of four million dollars. We look forward to expanding this outreach as several more African countries have requested partnerships, which are currently under consideration.

Other programs mitigating the lack of dedicated forces and, in turn, building partner capability include the Department of State Global Peace Operations Initiative, the African Peacekeeping Rapid Response Partnership, and the Women, Peace, and Security Initiative. The Department of Defense also coordinates closely with the Department of State on programs in Africa including the Partnership for Regional East Africa Counterterrorism, Trans Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership, Africa Military Education Program, and Africa Maritime Security Initiative to support critical counterterrorism, maritime security and overall military professionalization efforts.

These programs continue to professionalize partner militaries and security forces through training and institution building, and their concepts are integrated into military-to-military engagements; training on human rights, rule of law, and prevention of gender-based violence; and exercises.

EAST AFRICA

In 1991, the United States closed the Embassy in Somalia as the country descended into rampant violence and insecurity. Al-Shabaab and al-Qaida eventually filled the security vacuum and, with Mogadishu firmly under their control, used this safe haven to plan and launch terror attacks not only inside Somalia, but also regionally throughout East Africa. Since al-Shabaab's first external attack in 2010, the group has killed hundreds through external operations, with the most lethal attacks occurring in Kenya and Uganda. Somali pirates have also disrupted commercial shipping lanes, reaching as far north as the Arabian Sea and as far south as Tanzania, while attacking and hijacking sea vessels for ransom.

By 2007, AMISOM was activated in Somalia, with Burundi, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda contributing troops and conducting military operations, which eventually led to the

return of the capital city to a newly formed Somali federal government. Today, a U.S. Ambassador is permanently located in Mogadishu and, along with the USAID Mission Director, is working with the Federal Government of Somalia to improve the security environment and promote stability. As such, U.S. military operations and activities are part of a whole-of-government approach working in support of diplomatic and development efforts.

Somalia remains key to the security environment of East Africa, and its long-term stability is important to advancing U.S. interests in the region. When assessing Somalia, it is important to understand incremental progress has been made over the last decade as the result of a truly international effort inside the country. The U.S. works closely with our international partners, which include the United Nations, European Union, African Union, AMISOM and the troop contributing countries, the United Kingdom, Turkey, and others, on security sector development efforts. Together, we remain committed to Somali-led progress on improving conditions for a well-trained Somali National Security Forces that can assume and sustain security within the country.

The U.S. also continues to target al-Shabaab and ISIS-Somalia. U.S. military activities in Somalia include remote or accompanied advise and assist missions, the building, training, and equipping of Somali combat units, and when necessary, kinetic action. The effects of our kinetic activities serve to disperse al-Shabaab and ISIS-Somalia leadership, disrupt how they communicate, and further decentralize how they conduct operations. Ultimately, our kinetic activities, encouraged and supported by the Federal Government of Somalia, create opportunities for governance to take hold.

Our actions are synchronized with AMISOM's mandate to reduce threats and support stabilization, reconciliation, and peacebuilding. We are supporting the AMISOM transition plan,

which envisions conditions for an effective, responsible, and gradual handover of security responsibilities from AMISOM by 2021. Recent efforts by Somali security forces, working with AMISOM, to stabilize the area in and around Merka, is a positive step. However, the Federal Government of Somalia must continue to demonstrate sustained progress in implementing the federated security model, within its national security architecture, and increase coordination and cooperation with the Federal Member States.

The U.S. brings leadership and influence to Somalia, led by the U.S. Ambassador, to synchronize and support the international community's ongoing security and stability efforts. While U.S. military training and operations alone cannot defeat al-Shabaab and ISIS-Somalia, alongside U.S. diplomatic and development efforts, they provide legitimacy to the Federal Government of Somalia and create opportunity for political and economic growth, and security and stability in the broader region.

U.S. Africa Command's security cooperation is closely linked with the U.S. Mission to Somalia's political and economic initiatives targeting the root cause of instability. The Department of State and USAID provide effective tools to build and reinforce stabilization, democratic institution building, education, and health development programs. Somalia has held a credible federal presidential selection process, and political leaders have formed four Federal Member States and selected regional presidents and parliaments. While Somalia remains a fragile state, the gross domestic product has moderately increased over the past two years and, combined with other positive economic indicators, has the potential to lead to debt relief and additional international financing and investments.

While there have been signs of improvement in Somalia, progress is not irreversible and sustained international engagement will be necessary to keep the country on a positive trajectory.

The U.S., by virtue of our capabilities, influence, and credibility, is uniquely postured to support Somali efforts, including to help coordinate other international partner engagement. As such, the Federal Government of Somalia must now take advantage of the opportunities before them, with a clear understanding future assistance will depend on demonstrated progress.

In Djibouti, the U.S. remains a steadfast partner. In May 2018, members of the Djiboutian Army's first ever Rapid Intervention Battalion graduated from training. The Texas National Guard, assigned to Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa, provided the Rapid Intervention Battalion with comprehensive individual and collective training in support of the unit's mission as a multi-purpose reaction force responsible to the leadership of the Djiboutian Army.

However, Djibouti's increasing partnership with China across defense, trade, and financial sectors encroaches on and, at times, diminishes U.S. access and influence. In 2018, Djibouti nationalized the Doraleh Container Port. Despite the increased presence of China within the port complex, Djibouti has retained control of the container port, increasing shipping volume and through-put since removing Dubai Ports World. Our continued access and unimpeded usage to this facility is critical to our logistical efforts in East Africa.

Additionally, China's first overseas naval base in Djibouti, only a few miles from Camp Lemonnier, creates air space and coordination challenges for all international partners. U.S. Africa Command considers access to Djibouti and to critical global shipping lanes through the Bab-el-Mandeb strait an imperative to ensure U.S. strategic interests are not compromised. We work closely with the U.S. Ambassador to Djibouti and his initiative to coordinate with the host nation, the Chinese, and other countries based in Djibouti to de-conflict operations, ensure the safety of forces, and maintain appropriate access for our military activities.

In Ethiopia last April, Abiy Ahmed Ali became Prime Minister, and his commitment to political reform, human rights, and unity has been a positive contribution to peace and stability in the region. By June, Abiy's government made significant progress implementing the 2000 Algiers Accord to end the war with its neighbor, Eritrea. Since then, both countries have taken numerous positive actions to conclude Africa's longest running border conflict. Commercial flights between the capitals of Addis Adaba and Asmara now occur daily, Ethiopian commercial vessels operate through Eritrean ports, communication channels are open between the populations reuniting families and friends, and military forces are withdrawing from contested territory.

Prime Minister Abiy's reform agenda represents an unprecedented attempt to comprehensively reset Ethiopian governance. The Government of Ethiopia is working with various ethnic factions inside the country to address root causes of conflict and expand the political discourse. Prime Minister Abiy restructured his cabinet, establishing a Ministry of Peace and appointed women to 50 percent of the positions, to include the Minister of Defense, a first for Ethiopia.

In partnership with the Government of Ethiopia and in support of our diplomatic mission, U.S. Africa Command is developing additional support options to improve security cooperation with this key partner. Ethiopia is already benefiting from security cooperation programs, including intelligence sharing initiatives, and we will identify avenues to enroll more personnel in U.S. military education and training programs. In July 2019, Ethiopia will host U.S. Africa Command Exercise Justified Accord in order to enhance AMISOM's Troop Contributing Countries' ability to conduct peace operations. Ethiopia is the largest contributor of United Nations peacekeeping forces and provides approximately 4,200 troops to AMISOM.

U.S. Africa Command will seek to expand our military-to-military relationship in support of Prime Minister Abiy's fast-paced internal reform efforts and regional outreach.

NORTH AFRICA

Since 2011, with the overthrow of Libyan dictator Muammar Qaddafi and the rise of the Arab Spring, Libya has been in a constant state of turmoil. In 2014, Libyan militants began pledging allegiance to the Islamic State and its cause. By 2015, the Islamic State had infiltrated the coastal city of Sirte, shifted aspirations of the militia members there, and declared it a part of the caliphate. Soon militants from outside Libya joined the organization, now branded as ISIS-Libya, and their numbers swelled into the thousands.

In 2016, the Libyan Government of National Accord requested assistance from the U.S. and our European allies to rid the country of ISIS-Libya. Together, we assisted Libyan forces aligned to the Government of National Accord and conducted hundreds of kinetic strikes in support of its ground operations in Sirte. Within months, Sirte was liberated. Since then, the U.S. has remained engaged in the international efforts to stabilize Libya.

U.S. Africa Command focuses on three objectives for Libya. First, U.S. Africa Command assists in degrading terrorist groups, such as AQIM and ISIS-Libya, who pose threats to U.S. and Western interests and destabilize Libya and its neighbors. Second, every effort is made to prevent widespread civil conflict that would threaten security and stability. Finally, U.S. Africa Command supports the political reconciliation process by providing security to facilitate diplomatic engagements in Libya.

U.S. Africa Command continues to support the U.S. Libya External Office's diplomatic efforts to promote the United Nations-facilitated Libyan political reconciliation process. The recent return of a former Ambassador to Libya as the Chargé d'Affaires of the Libya External

Office offers a seasoned diplomat, who is familiar with the multi-layered problem set. The U.S. is now better positioned to manage the diplomatic and counterterrorism strategy. In 2018, U.S. Africa Command conducted kinetic strikes targeting the leadership and operational commanders of both ISIS-Libya and AQIM providing the opportunity for the Libyan Government of National Accord to continue its efforts to improve security and work towards political reconciliation.

Tunisia is one of our most capable and willing partners. In May 2018, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Africa conducted Exercise African Lion in Tunisia and Morocco. This annual, multinational exercise enabled U.S. forces and our African partners to increase interoperability and further refine tactics, techniques, and procedures for countering VEOs.

Furthermore, U.S. Africa Command-managed security cooperation programs work to develop Tunisian counterterrorism and border security capabilities. Through Fiscal Years 2017 to 2019, over \$165 million in Title 10 and Title 22 funding will be invested in developing maritime and rotary-wing capabilities to bolster Tunisian border control forces. Tunisia is also developing its counter-IED awareness program through training provided by U.S. Army Africa and sponsored by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency. With this state-of-the-art training, Tunisian special operations forces will be better trained and equipped to counter IED attacks.

Tunisia is also capable of managing more advanced logistics training and maintaining increasingly complex intelligence, reconnaissance, and surveillance assets. For example, U.S. Air Forces Africa completed proof-of-principle flights with the Tunisian Air Force as part of an initiative to leverage their transport capability for rapid mobility requirements across the theater. Continued flights over time will serve as an opportunity to enhance the capability of the Tunisian Air Force, while reducing the stress on U.S. airlift assets and personnel. Tunisia remains a political and military leader in the region and a net exporter of security.

The Kingdom of Morocco remains a vital U.S. security partner and ranks in the top five of African countries providing peacekeepers to UN missions in Africa. Additionally, Morocco is a key exercise integrator serving as the permanent host of Exercise African Lion which focuses on counter-VEO, interoperability, and strengthening regional relationships. In 2019, Morocco will also host Exercise Phoenix Express, the premier U.S. Naval Forces Africa exercise emphasizing maritime security and counter-illicit trafficking.

Algeria is a capable partner in the fight against extremism. With the largest army in Africa, Algeria conducts frequent military-to-military engagements to build its border protection and counterterrorism forces. U.S. relations with Algeria continue to foster cooperation and further regional stability.

SAHEL AND LAKE CHAD REGIONS

Within the Sahel region of northern and western Africa, dangerous pockets of extremists control numerous under-governed spaces. The African-led, French-assisted, and U.S.-supported G5 Sahel Joint Force, comprised of forces from Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger, is a successful example of burden sharing. The U.S. is providing bilateral security assistance for the countries of the G5 Sahel Joint Force, and U.S. Africa Command contributes operational planning support to compliment the funding and operational assistance provided by our European allies to the G5 Sahel Joint Force. U.S. Africa Command remains committed to assisting the African-led operations to degrade VEOs and to build the defense capabilities within the G5 Sahel Joint Force and, in turn, build the capabilities of individual countries within the joint force.

Mali remains the epicenter of instability and a haven for many terror groups to stage and launch attacks across the region. The United Nations Mission in Mali continues to support the

stabilization of the country and implementation of the Algiers Accord for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali. Burkina Faso, Chad, Guinea, Niger, Senegal, and Togo are the leading African nations contributing to United Nations Mission in Mali, which has more than 11,000 military personnel. Our European allies provide military education, advice, and training to the Malian Armed Forces through the European Training Mission-Mali. This mission has trained over 12,000 personnel in an effort to strengthen the Malian Armed Forces to defend its territory and protect its people.

U.S. Africa Command lends critical support to partner counterterrorism efforts in the Sahel. This primarily takes the form of providing key enabling capabilities to the French and members of the G5 Sahel Joint Force. Furthermore, we continue to build military operational and defense institutional capabilities through measured security cooperation coordinated with other U.S. government agencies' diplomacy and development efforts. Through these actions, we complement the international effort to maintain persistent pressure on terror networks and increase security and stability in Mali.

In Burkina Faso, U.S. Africa Command finds a willing and capable partner in West Africa. With almost \$40 million in U.S. Title 10 expenditures, the Burkinabe armed forces remain dependable exporters of security with trained security forces capable of contributing to the G5 Sahel Joint Force. Despite manpower and equipment challenges, the Burkinabe security forces continue to conduct counterterrorism operations in both the North and Eastern regions.

In Niger, serious governance and development issues are exacerbated by rapid population growth, environmental degradation, economic stagnation, and stressed infrastructure. Moreover, regional VEOs, such as ISIS-Greater Sahara, JNIM, Boko Haram, and ISIS-West Africa, overlap within Niger. As such, our policy goals aim to assist Niger's continued development as a stable

democracy with accountable governance, become an increasingly capable partner against regional threats, and achieve social and institutional development and broad-based economic growth, which will further strengthen the population against VEO recruitment efforts. In spite of these challenges, Niger is an increasingly capable regional partner.

Over a three year period, U.S. Africa Command-managed Title 10 support has increased Nigerien counter-IED capability, as well as intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance asset sustainment, maintenance, and operations. This includes the Government of Niger-requested development of an expeditionary, contingency support location in Agadez, scheduled to be initially operationally capable in the summer of 2019.

In April 2018, Niger hosted Exercise Flintlock, the annual U.S. Special Operations Command-Africa exercise to develop capacity and interoperability among African, allied, and U.S. forces. Exercise Flintlock was entirely facilitated by the special operations force units of more than 20 African nations with the support of western nations. This successful multilateral event enhances coordination among partners and improves special operations force capabilities to combat violent extremist organizations.

Within the Lake Chad Region, the Multinational Joint Task Force comprises forces from Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria, and remains a strategically significant organization in the efforts to counter Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa. Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa attack military and civilian targets throughout Northeast Nigeria and the Lake Chad Border areas of Niger, Chad and Cameroon, thus dominating large swaths of territory and displacing millions from their homes, contributing to a multi-border displaced persons crisis. U.S. Africa Command and USAID work with the Multinational Joint Task Force to deliver humanitarian support and facilitate international relief efforts to bring basic health care, clean drinking water, adequate

sanitation, and food supplies to the hardest hit areas. However, the persistent violence and the growing number of displaced persons impact the ability for organizations to deliver the required assistance.

Nigeria has faced multiple setbacks in the volatile Northeast Borno State as ISIS-West Africa has seized military bases and materiel, including armored vehicles, weapons, and ammunition. This series of ISIS-West Africa high-profile attacks has placed tremendous strain on the Nigerian military's readiness and capabilities. The attacks also underscore the need for the contributing countries to the Multinational Joint Task Force to increase their commitments, resources, troop deployments, and regional operational coordination to counter ISIS-West Africa's momentum.

Nigeria also faces instability over the violent herder-farmer conflicts in the middle belt region, as these groups fight over the scarcity of resources and usable land required to feed the growing and, often due to conflict, displaced and transient population. By 2050, Nigeria will overtake the U.S. as the third most populous country in the world, further compounding the strain on natural resources and risking the disenfranchisement of a population increasingly dissatisfied by the lack of security and basic services.

U.S. Africa Command is working to assist the Nigerian military through a variety of security cooperation efforts. In April 2018, forty African senior military leaders represented their countries at the sixth annual African Land Forces Summit in Abuja, Nigeria. Co-hosted by the Nigerian Army and U.S. Army Africa, the African Land Forces Summit provided a forum to develop cooperative solutions for improved trans-regional security and stability.

Over the past year, we have expanded our intelligence support and are currently working with the Nigerian Air Force to increase their effectiveness in line with international standards. In the upcoming years, utilizing Title 10 and Title 22 funding, U.S. Africa Command will execute tailored programs to expand Nigerian intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; intelligence; counter-IED; and air-ground integration capabilities. U.S. Africa Command will continue to work with Nigeria and seek additional partnership opportunities following Nigeria's planned presidential election in early 2019.

Cameroon has been the focus of long-term U.S. Department of State, U.S. Department of Defense, and U.S. Africa Command security cooperation efforts to boost the country's capacity to counter Boko Haram and ISIS-West Africa in the Lake Chad region. Cameroon has been an effective partner within the Multinational Joint Task Force. Cameroon also ensures security in the Gulf of Guinea and in neighboring Central African Republic, where it plays a valuable role in the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic.

The U.S. has urged the Cameroonian government to address human rights concerns, investigate allegations thoroughly, hold accountable perpetrators of abuse, and disclose the outcome of its investigations to the people of Cameroon. In accordance with the Leahy law, the U.S. government does not provide assistance to security force units or individuals against whom credible allegations of gross violations of human rights have been lodged.

The crisis and credible allegations of gross violations of human rights in the Anglophone Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon is a concern. The violence stem from a long-term sense of marginalization and political disenfranchisement among Anglophone Cameroonians, compounded by government suppression of moderates, and the government and separatists inability to enter into any constructive dialogue to resolve the conflict. The

Government of Cameroon has assured the U.S. no security assistance will be diverted from counter-Boko Haram and ISIS-WA efforts to the Anglophone regions.

GULF OF GUINEA AND CENTRAL AFRICA

In the Gulf of Guinea, maritime security remains crackdown a strategic priority due to its role in global oil markets, trade routes, and the residence of approximately 75,000 U.S. citizens. Piracy and other illicit maritime activities threaten development efforts, weaken state security, and rob states of precious resources required for greater economic growth and effective governance. In 2018, piracy incidents trended lower as cooperation increased among the Gulf of Guinea partners.

For example, last summer, U.S. Naval Forces Africa conducted Operation Junction Rain as part of the African Maritime Law Enforcement Partnership Program. Under this framework, U.S. Coast Guard law enforcement personnel partnered with Cabo Verdeans and Senegalese on board their naval vessels countering illicit trade and criminal activities. Capacity building remains paramount to continue the downward trend in piracy and address the growing threat of illicit trafficking of drugs, arms, and persons in the region.

In Central Africa, the most visible nontraditional threat this past year was an Ebola outbreak in an unstable region in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. The outbreak, which began in August 2018, is presently the second most lethal in history. Furthermore, the medical response has been hampered by armed conflict in the region.

External actors in Central Africa, such as Russia, have also undermined security and countered U.S. interests. For example, in the Central African Republic, Russia has bolstered its influence with increased military cooperation including donations of arms, with which it has gained access to markets and mineral extraction rights. With minimal investment, Russia

leverages private military contractors, such as the Wagner Group, and in return receive political and economic influence beneficial to them.

Recently, the President of the Central African Republic installed a Russian civilian as his National Security Advisor. The President also promised the armed forces would be deployed nationwide to return peace to the country by forces likely trained, equipped, and in some cases, accompanied by Russian military contractors. Russia's ability to import harsh security practices, in a region already marred by threats to security, while systematically extracting minerals, is concerning. As Russia potentially looks to export their security model regionally, other African leaders facing similar instability and unrest could find the model attractive.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

In comparison to a large portion of Africa, many countries in Southern Africa have suffered fewer consequences from terrorism and violent conflict. However, it still struggles with economic, societal, governance, and environmental challenges, including poverty, crime, social inequality, corruption, and lack of water and is influenced by China's growing presence in the region. The majority of U.S. Africa Command's engagements with Southern Africa aim to strengthen partnerships and build partner capacity for peacekeeping and crisis response, including infectious disease outbreaks.

We work closely with our diplomatic and development partners to support and complement their efforts across Southern Africa. For example, the largest exporters of security in the region are Zambia, Malawi, and South Africa. Our primary investment in these countries is through Title 22, through such programs as the International Military Education and Training program and Global Peace Operations Initiative, which are designed to improve interoperability and develop long-term, sustainable peacekeeping capability and capacity.

Finally, in addition to our Title 22 commitments, the South Africa-New York State Partnership Program is the oldest on the continent and offers the most meaningful U.S. military-to-military engagements in South Africa. In 2018, South Africa hosted Africa's largest air show, the Aerospace and Defense Exposition, and the New York Air National Guard supported with two cargo airplanes, an unmanned aerial vehicle system, and 38 soldiers and airmen. Such engagements offer a low-cost solution to improve U.S. partnerships, particularly in a relatively accessible and neutral ground where our competitors seek influence in both the military and economic spheres.

ENSURING STRATEGIC ACCESS

Our efforts to ensure strategic access must also be viewed through the lens of competitor influence and coercive activities, which seek to gain advantages over the U.S. by moving faster in economic and security markets where we are constrained by our values and law. China is a strategic competitor which uses economic and security outreach to foster investment incentives, jobs, and infrastructure growth in return for access to Africa's strategic locations, natural resources, and markets. China has most successfully employed this model in Djibouti, holding 80 percent of the Government of Djibouti's debt, where access through the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, the Red Sea, and the Suez Canal remains a U.S. strategic imperative.

Today, on the African side of the Red Sea and in the Bab-el-Mandeb strait, which encompasses Somalia, Djibouti, Eritrea, Sudan, and Egypt, the Great Powers and the Gulf States both cooperate and compete for real estate and port facilities.

Along Somalia's northern coast, the semi-autonomous region of Somaliland is working with Dubai Ports World on developing its Gulf of Aden port city of Berbera. When development

is complete, Berbera's location, close to the entry and exit point of the Bab-el-Mandeb strait, will be strategically valuable for both Somaliland and with whomever they choose to partner.

Djibouti, a nation about the size of New Jersey, remains congested with a preponderance of foreign forces from the U.S., France, Germany, Japan, and China maintaining bases and competing for access and airspace. Currently, the Djiboutians operate the Doraleh Port facility, through which passes 90 percent of all logistics and materiel for U.S. operations in East Africa. Continued access to the Doraleh Port Facility remains a U.S. strategic imperative.

Just north of Djibouti, other geopolitical developments have had ramifications on the future of the Red Sea. With the normalization of relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea and the United Nations Security Council lifting sanctions on Eritrea, other nations will undoubtedly look to Eritrea to unlock its coastline for Red Sea port access.

Given its strategic location, coupled with its already developed infrastructure, Sudan is also looking to develop its Red Sea coast. In fact, Sudan recently entered into an agreement to allow Russia to explore natural gas fields off Port Sudan.

Along with U.S. Central Command, the strategic evolution of the Red Sea remains a command priority, as we consider how Red Sea access can be maintained and expanded on the continent. It is imperative for the U.S. to not only maintain our status as the preferred security partner of choice, but also look to diversify our strategic access to the Red Sea.

In 2018, U.S. Naval Forces Africa continued its annual exercise series, which consisted of Exercises Phoenix Express, Cutlass Express, and Obangame Express. These exercises aim to build the maritime capabilities of African partner nations, and Exercise Obangame Express this past year included participation from the Somali Maritime Police. Their participation marked the first time in nearly 30 years Somalia has participated in a security event outside its borders.

U.S. Africa Command seeks to build partner networks and assist in establishing the security environment required for economic opportunity and trade to flourish. Through a whole-of-government approach, enhanced security fosters development and investment with initiatives such as The Better Utilization of Investments Leading to Development (BUILD) Act. The BUILD Act facilitates private-sector investments and institutional engagements with low and lower-middle income countries. It also opens the door for U.S. companies to compete overseas and respond to China's increased economic engagement in Africa, most notably the \$60 billion, largely in loans with some security and development funding, recently promised during the 2018 Forum on China-Africa Cooperation.

Additionally, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, established by the U.S. Congress in 2004 to apply a new philosophy toward foreign aid, works with partner nations to promote growth in agriculture and irrigation, power and energy, and transportation infrastructure. In November 2018, the Millennium Challenge Corporation provided a \$550 million investment into the Senegal Power Compact to increase electricity access and reliability for one of Africa's fastest growing economies.

The U.S. Institute for Peace (USIP) delivers skills training, education, grants, and research through local and international partnerships. USIP also serves as a conduit for various non-governmental organizations to interface with the broader diplomatic and development stakeholders in Africa. During 2019, USIP and U.S. Africa Command will host a symposium to discuss how non-governmental organizations can support and, when appropriate, integrate into the U.S. whole-of-government approach.

U.S. Africa Command's component commands engage every day on the continent to enhance partner capability, where an important aspect of maintaining relationships is continued

engagement between senior leaders. In 2018, senior leaders from U.S. Africa Command and its components conducted numerous key leader engagements, including visits to Cabo Verde, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Libya, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Somalia, and Uganda.

U.S.-facilitated exercises and conferences offer the best return on investment for our security assistance efforts and provide our African partners with access to American values, expertise, and professionalism. In October 2018, senior military leaders from 28 African air forces and U.S. Air Forces Africa met in Morocco for the African Air Chiefs Symposium. This annual symposium provides a forum to discuss common defense issues, increase cooperation, and improve command and control of air operations.

Throughout 2018, U.S. Army Africa continued its annual exercise series, which included Exercise Unified Focus in Cameroon, Exercise Justified Accord in Uganda, Exercise United Accord in Ghana, and Exercise Shared Accord in Rwanda. These exercises provided integrated training opportunities, with a focus on respecting the rule of law and human rights, integrating women into peacekeeping operations, and responding to allegations of abuse.

Finally, in October 2018, led by the Command Senior Enlisted Leader, U.S. Africa Command hosted its second annual African Senior Enlisted Leader Conference with over 50 Africa enlisted leaders from 25 countries. African enlisted leaders engaged with senior US and NATO enlisted leaders on professional development, civilian control of the military, respect for human rights, and caring for Soldiers and their families. The conference advanced key professionalism concepts and training opportunities vital to sustaining African security and peacekeeping forces.

CONCLUSION

In summary, U.S. Africa Command remains poised to meet Africa's current and future challenges. The men and women of the command, our partners on the continent, and our collection of stakeholders understand how important Africa is to the global economy and security environments. The National Defense Strategy and its supporting foundational documents have outlined the importance of long-term Great Power Competition with China and Russia and the need to limit the harmful influence of non-African powers on the continent.

As the U.S. Africa Command Campaign Plan guides the command into the next decade, our partner-centric approach remains central to advancing U.S. interests in Africa. Much work remains, as U.S. Africa Command continues to contribute to the broad-reaching Diplomacy, Development, and Defense approach for further economic growth and prosperity in Africa.

Finally, it remains an honor to lead the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen, civilians, contractors, and families of U.S. Africa Command. Together, their efforts have made the U.S. safer and kept Africa on the road towards prosperity.