United States Government Accountability Office

GAO

Report to the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, House of Representatives

July 2010

DEFENSE MANAGEMENT

Improved Planning, Training, and Interagency Collaboration Could Strengthen DOD's Efforts in Africa

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GAO-10-794

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Highlights

Highlights of GAO-10-794, a report to the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, House of Representatives

DEFENSE MANAGEMENT

Improved Planning, Training, and Interagency Collaboration Could Strengthen DOD's Efforts in Africa

Why GAO Did This Study

When the U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) became fully operational in 2008, it inherited well over 100 activities, missions, programs, and exercises from other Department of Defense (DOD) organizations. AFRICOM initially conducted these inherited activities with little change. However, as AFRICOM has matured, it has begun planning and prioritizing activities with its four military service components, special operations command, and task force. Some activities represent a shift from traditional warfighting, requiring collaboration with the Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development, and other interagency partners.

GAO's prior work has identified critical steps and practices that help agencies to achieve success. For this report, GAO was asked to assess AFRICOM in five areas with respect to activity planning and implementation. To do so, GAO analyzed DOD and AFRICOM guidance; observed portions of AFRICOM activities; interviewed officials in Europe and Africa; and obtained perspectives from interagency officials, including those at 22 U.S. embassies in Africa.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that AFRICOM complete its strategic plans, conduct long-term activity assessments, fully integrate interagency personnel into activity planning, and develop training to build staff expertise. DOD agreed with the recommendations.

View GAO-10-794 or key components.
For more information, contact John H. Pendleton at (202) 512-3489 or pendletonj@gao.gov.

What GAO Found

AFRICOM has made progress in developing strategies and engaging interagency partners, and could advance DOD's effort to strengthen the capacity of partner nations in Africa. However, AFRICOM still faces challenges in five areas related to activity planning and implementation. Overcoming these challenges would help AFRICOM with future planning, foster stability and security through improved relationships with African nations, and maximize its effect on the continent.

- **Strategic Planning.** AFRICOM has created overarching strategies and led planning meetings, but many specific plans to guide activities have not yet been finalized. For example, AFRICOM has developed a theater strategy and campaign plan but has not completed detailed plans to support its objectives. Also, some priorities of its military service components, special operations command, and task force overlap or differ from each other and from AFRICOM's priorities. Completing plans will help AFRICOM determine whether priorities are aligned across the command and ensure that efforts are appropriate, complementary, and comprehensive.
- **Measuring Effects.** AFRICOM is generally not measuring long-term effects of activities. While some capacity-building activities appear to support its mission, federal officials expressed concern that others—such as sponsoring a news Web site in an African region sensitive to the military's presence—may have unintended effects. Without assessing activities, AFRICOM lacks information to evaluate their effectiveness, make informed future planning decisions, and allocate resources.
- **Applying Funds.** Some AFRICOM staff have difficulty applying funding sources to activities. DOD has stated that security assistance efforts are constrained by a patchwork of authorities. Limited understanding of various funding sources for activities has resulted in some delayed activities, funds potentially not being used effectively, and African participants being excluded from some activities.
- **Interagency Collaboration.** AFRICOM has been coordinating with partners from other federal agencies. As of June 2010, AFRICOM had embedded 27 interagency officials in its headquarters and had 17 offices at U.S. embassies in Africa. However, the command has not fully integrated interagency perspectives early in activity planning or leveraged some embedded interagency staff for their expertise.
- **Building Expertise.** AFRICOM staff have made some cultural missteps because they do not fully understand local African customs and may unintentionally burden embassies that must respond to AFRICOM's requests for assistance with activities. Without greater knowledge of these issues, AFRICOM may continue to face difficulties maximizing resources with embassy personnel and building relations with African nations.

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Abbreviations

AFRICOM	U.S. Africa Command
DOD	Department of Defense
State	Department of State
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development

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United States Government Accountability Office
Washington, DC 20548

July 28, 2010

The Honorable John F. Tierney
Chairman
The Honorable Jeff Flake
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs
Committee on Oversight and Government Reform
House of Representatives

The Department of Defense (DOD) created its newest combatant command, U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), to provide a more strategic, holistic approach to U.S. military activities in Africa.[1] Upon becoming fully operational in fall 2008, AFRICOM inherited well over 100 activities, missions, programs, and exercises from other DOD commands that had been managing activities on the African continent.[2] These activities ranged from efforts to fight HIV/AIDS in African militaries to assisting African partners in combating terrorism. AFRICOM's initial approach was to continue to conduct these inherited activities with little change. However, as the command has matured, AFRICOM—with its four military service components (Army Africa, Naval Forces Africa, Marine Corps Africa, Air Force Africa), special operations command, and Horn of Africa task force—has begun planning and prioritizing activities.[3] According to AFRICOM's mission statement, its activities will focus on conducting sustained security engagement and collaborating with other U.S. government and international partners to promote a stable and secure African environment in support of U.S. foreign policy. Because some of AFRICOM's activities represent a shift from traditional warfighting activities, AFRICOM's efforts to plan and implement its activities have required increased collaboration with other federal partners such as the Department of State (State) and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

[1]In February 2007, then-President George W. Bush directed DOD to establish AFRICOM. DOD designated AFRICOM fully operational on September 30, 2008.

[2]In this report, we use the term "activities" broadly to include military missions, activities, programs, and exercises.

[3]For the purposes of this report, we use the term "components" to refer collectively to AFRICOM's military service components, special operations command, and Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa.

This report is part of a series of studies on DOD's efforts in Africa since the establishment of AFRICOM, which have been requested by the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform. In April 2010, we issued a report on the Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa, AFRICOM's task force that it inherited from U.S. Central Command at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti.[4] We recommended, and DOD generally agreed, that the department determine whether AFRICOM should retain the task force, and if so, whether changes were needed to the task force's mission, structure, and resources to best support AFRICOM's mission. Furthermore, we have previously reported and testified on challenges that AFRICOM has faced since its establishment with regard to its presence on the continent. We made recommendations to help AFRICOM address the challenges it faced with respect to communicating its mission, integrating personnel from other federal agencies ("interagency personnel") into the command, and determining the total costs for establishing a permanent headquarters and offices in Africa.[5] Furthermore, our prior work has noted that critical steps and practices that help agencies to achieve success include (1) strategic planning; (2) measuring performance; (3) aligning resources to support goals; (4) involving stakeholders; and (5) building expertise.[6] In response to your request, this report assesses AFRICOM in each of these five areas with respect to activity planning and implementation.

To conduct our work, we reviewed a wide range of DOD and command documentation, including DOD strategies and guidance; AFRICOM's theater strategy, theater campaign plan, and posture statements; and AFRICOM components' priorities and draft strategic plans, when available. We also reviewed non-DOD documents to determine how AFRICOM's strategies compared or aligned with the strategies of other federal partners, including the fiscal years 2007–2012 *Department of State/USAID Joint Strategic Plan*; the *USAID Strategic Framework for Africa*; and

[4]GAO, *Defense Management: DOD Needs to Determine the Future of Its Horn of Africa Task Force*, GAO-10-504 (Washington, D.C.: Apr. 15, 2010).

[5]GAO, *Defense Management: Actions Needed to Address Stakeholder Concerns, Improve Interagency Collaboration, and Determine Full Costs Associated with the U.S. Africa Command*, GAO-09-181 (Washington, D.C.: Feb. 20, 2009); and *Force Structure: Preliminary Observations on the Progress and Challenges Associated with Establishing the U.S. Africa Command*, GAO-08-947T (Washington, D.C.: July 15, 2008).

[6]GAO, *Executive Guide: Effectively Implementing the Government Performance and Results Act*, GAO/GGD-96-118 (Washington, D.C.: June 1996).

fiscal year 2008, fiscal year 2009, and fiscal year 2010 mission strategic plans of 12 U.S. embassies in Africa.[7] We interviewed DOD officials at many offices including AFRICOM headquarters, its military service component commands, and special operations command; its Horn of Africa task force headquarters; the Office of the Secretary of Defense; the Joint Staff; and the Defense Security Cooperation Agency. We also interviewed officials at State, USAID, and the Coast Guard to obtain other federal agencies' perspectives on AFRICOM's processes for planning and implementing activities, including the command's considerations of interagency perspectives, and we interviewed officials associated with nongovernmental organizations. We met with U.S. embassy officials in Uganda, Ethiopia, and Djibouti, and we contacted 20 additional embassies involved with AFRICOM activities and geographically dispersed throughout Africa. In addition, we met with some African government and military officials to obtain their viewpoints on AFRICOM's activities.

We selected two AFRICOM activities to observe in depth—(1) **the Africa Partnership Station**, a maritime safety and security activity, and (2) **Natural Fire 10**, a military training exercise associated with AFRICOM's pandemic preparedness and response activity. We chose these two activities based on several factors including their addressing of different theater security objectives, leadership by different military service components, considerable involvement of interagency and international partners, size of the activities, and distinct geographic locations. Detailed descriptions of these activities can be found in appendixes I and II. We supplemented our examination of these activities with information on additional activities highlighted by officials at AFRICOM, its components, DOD, State, and USAID during our review.

We conducted this performance audit from April 2009 to July 2010, in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. Appendix III provides a more detailed description of our scope and methodology.

[7]Beginning with the fiscal year 2012 cycle, State changed the name of its mission strategic plans to mission strategic and resource plans.

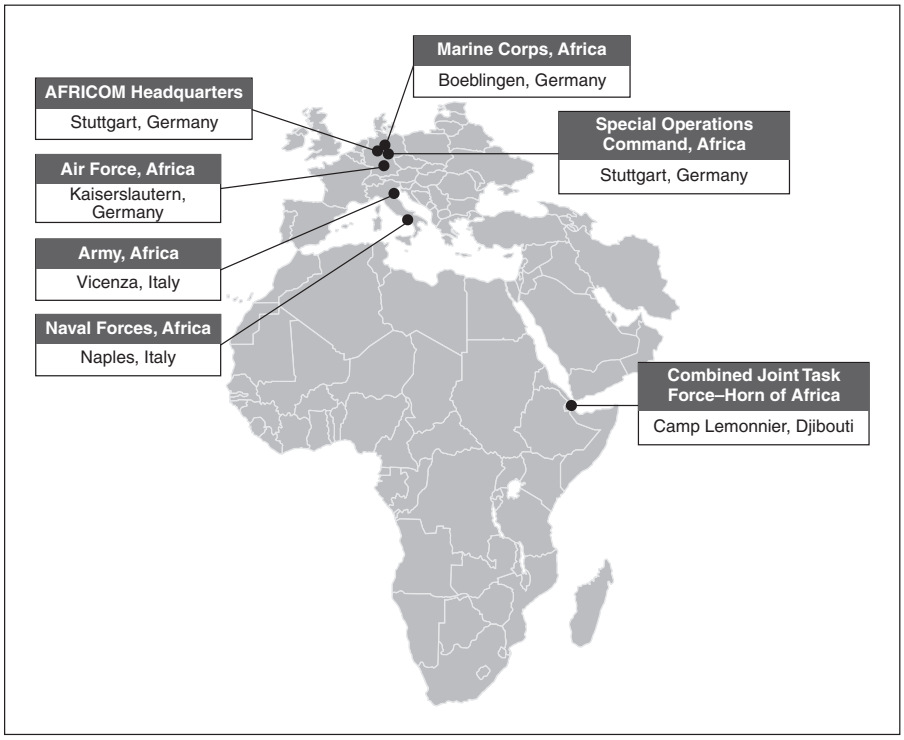
Background

When AFRICOM was designated fully operational on September 30, 2008, it consolidated the responsibility for DOD activities in Africa that had previously been shared by the U.S. Central, European, and Pacific Commands. AFRICOM's area of responsibility includes the countries on the African continent, with the exception of Egypt, as well as its island nations. The command's mission is to work in concert with other U.S. government agencies and international partners to conduct sustained security engagement through military-to-military programs, military-sponsored activities, and other military operations as directed to promote a stable and secure African environment in support of U.S. foreign policy. According to AFRICOM, it received about $340 million in funding in fiscal year 2009.

In addition to AFRICOM's headquarters, the command is supported by military service component commands, a special operations command, and a Horn of Africa task force (see fig. 1). AFRICOM's Navy Forces and Marine Corps components were designated fully operational on October 1, 2008, and its Air Force, Army, and special operations command components on October 1, 2009. The task force was transferred to AFRICOM on October 1, 2008. All components have begun carrying out activities under AFRICOM.

As of June 2010, AFRICOM reported that the command and its components had about 4,400 assigned personnel and forces. About 2,400 of these personnel were based at locations in Europe, and about 2,000 personnel—about 400 staff and about 1,600 forces—were assigned to the command's Horn of Africa task force at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti. AFRICOM also stated that there could be between 3,500 to about 5,000 rotational forces deployed during a major exercise.

Figure 1: Locations of AFRICOM Headquarters and Its Components

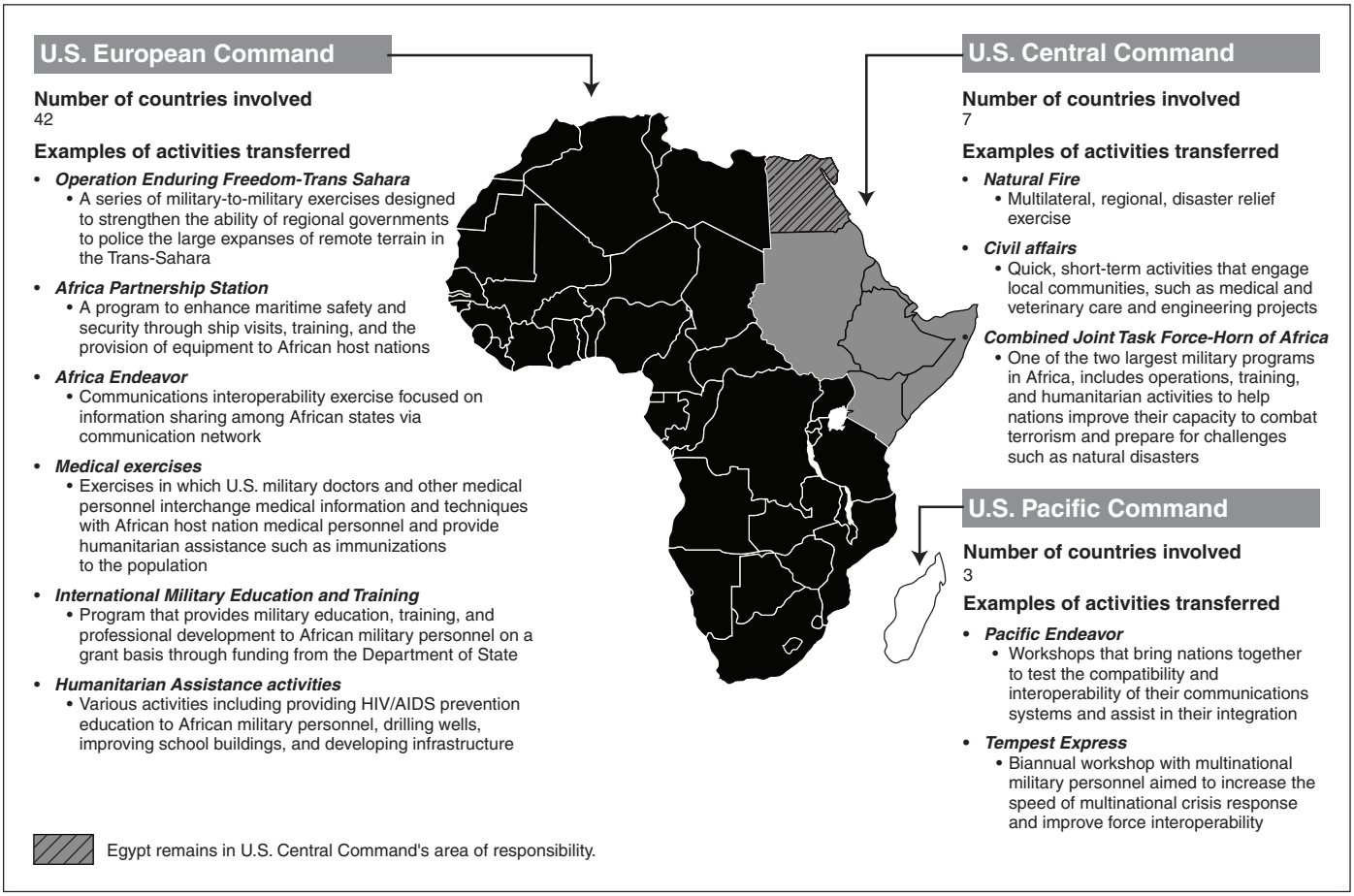


Source: GAO presentation of AFRICOM data; Copyright © Corel Corp. All rights reserved (map).

When AFRICOM was established, it inherited the activities previously conducted by its predecessors. Many of these activities reflect DOD's shift toward building the security capacity of partner states, a mission area noted in the department's 2010 *Quadrennial Defense Review*. Building security capacity furthers the U.S. objective of securing a peaceful and cooperative international order and includes such activities as bilateral and multilateral training and exercises, foreign military sales and financing, officer exchange programs, educational opportunities at professional military schools, technical exchanges, and efforts to assist foreign security forces in building competency and capacity. In particular, AFRICOM's inherited activities to build partner capacity, some of which involve coordination with State, range from efforts to train African soldiers in conducting peacekeeping operations to assisting African nations in combating terrorism, and they include one of the largest U.S. military activities in Africa, Operation Enduring Freedom–Trans Sahara. The areas of responsibility and examples of activities transferred to

AFRICOM from the U.S. Central, European, and Pacific Commands are presented in figure 2.

Figure 2: Areas of Responsibility and Examples of Activities Transferred to AFRICOM from Other Combatant Commands



Source: GAO presentation of DOD data. Copyright © Corel Corp. All rights reserved (map).

AFRICOM emphasizes that it works in concert with interagency partners, such as USAID, to ensure that its plans and activities directly support U.S. foreign policy objectives. On the African continent, DOD focuses on defense, State plans and implements foreign diplomacy, and USAID leads foreign development, including efforts to support economic growth and humanitarian assistance. DOD issued Joint Publication 3-08 in March 2006 to provide guidance to facilitate coordination between DOD and interagency organizations. The publication acknowledged that the various U.S. government agencies' differing, and sometimes conflicting, goals,

policies, procedures, and decision-making techniques make unity of effort a challenge, but noted that close coordination and cooperation can help overcome challenges. The 2008 *National Defense Strategy* identified AFRICOM as an example of DOD's efforts toward collaborating with other U.S. government departments and agencies and working to achieve a whole-of-government approach. Additionally, the 2010 *Quadrennial Defense Review* identified the need to continue improving DOD's cooperation with other U.S. agencies. In particular, the report stated that DOD will work with the leadership of civilian agencies to support those agencies' growth and their overseas operations so that the appropriate military and civilian resources are put forth to meet the demands of current contingencies. In our February 2009 report on AFRICOM, we noted that after DOD declared AFRICOM fully operational, concerns about AFRICOM's mission and activities persisted among various stakeholders.[8] Concerns included areas such as humanitarian assistance and other noncombat activities that involve non-DOD agencies and organizations. The concerns centered on the view that AFRICOM could blur traditional boundaries between diplomacy, development, and defense. In some cases, the apprehensions stemmed from DOD having more resources than other agencies and thus it could dominate U.S. activities and relationships in Africa. Among African nations, we found that there was some concern that AFRICOM would be used as an opportunity to increase the number of U.S. troops and military bases in Africa.

AFRICOM Has Created Some Overarching Strategic Guidance, but Activities Are Being Implemented While Many Plans Remain Unfinished

AFRICOM has created overarching strategic guidance and has led activity planning meetings with its stakeholders such as State. However, activities are being implemented as the detailed supporting plans for conducting many activities have not yet been finalized. Moreover, AFRICOM has postponed time frames for completing several of these supporting plans by about 2 years. Without supporting plans, AFRICOM cannot ensure that the activities of its components are appropriate, comprehensive, complementary, and supportive of its mission.

[8] GAO-09-181.

AFRICOM Has Developed Some Overarching Strategies and Led Planning Meetings

AFRICOM has published command-level overarching strategic guidance and has led activity planning meetings with its components and interagency partners. Strategic plans are the starting point and underpinning for a system of program goal-setting and performance measurement in the federal government. DOD strategic planning guidance, issued in 2008, requires each geographic combatant command to produce a theater campaign plan and specific posture requirements for its given area of responsibility.[9] In September 2008, AFRICOM published its theater strategy,[10] a 10-year strategy describing the strategic environment in which the command operates. In May 2009, the Secretary of Defense approved AFRICOM's theater campaign plan,[11] a 5-year plan that describes the command's theater strategic objectives, establishes priorities to guide the command's activities, and provides guidance to the command's staff and components. In its theater campaign plan, AFRICOM outlined priority countries that are of strategic importance, and it identified its theater strategic objectives, such as defeating the al-Qaeda terrorist organization and associated networks in Africa; ensuring that capacity exists to respond to crises; improving security-sector governance and stability; and protecting populations from deadly contagions. AFRICOM officials said that they worked with State and USAID officials to incorporate their perspectives into the theater campaign plan. However, AFRICOM officials observed that the Africa strategies for State and USAID have different timelines from those of AFRICOM, thus posing a challenge for alignment among the command and its interagency partners. For example, AFRICOM's theater campaign plan covers fiscal years 2010 through 2014, whereas the State/USAID strategic plan spans fiscal years 2007 through 2012.

[9]According to the *Guidance for Employment of the Force* and the *Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan for FY 2008*, CJCSI 3110.01G (Mar. 1, 2008), each of the geographic combatant commanders is required to produce a theater campaign plan. Furthermore, each geographic combatant commander except U.S. Northern Command is also required to develop theater posture plans as annexes to the theater campaign plan.

[10]A theater strategy outlines concepts and courses of action for achieving the objectives established in national policies and strategies through the synchronized and integrated employment of military forces and other instruments of national power.

[11]A theater campaign plan encompasses the activities of a supported geographic combatant commander, which accomplish strategic or operational objectives within a theater of war or theater of operations, and translates national or theater strategy into operational concepts and those concepts into unified action.

In addition to developing its theater strategy and campaign plan, AFRICOM has also led activity planning meetings for future activities. The command has held annual Theater Security Cooperation Conferences, which include officials from AFRICOM, its components, U.S. embassies, and other federal agencies. At these meetings, AFRICOM proposes activities to conduct for the following fiscal year, and it engages with other federal agency officials to coordinate and implement activities. Additionally, for individual activities, AFRICOM may hold multiple planning meetings prior to implementation. For example, for AFRICOM's Natural Fire 10 pandemic preparedness and response activity, four phases of planning occurred during the year prior to the exercise. These phases included: concept development, in which potential focuses for the exercise were discussed; initial planning, in which the final focus of the exercise and its location were determined; main planning, in which key partners determined the activities that would make up the exercise; and final planning. Similarly, in July 2009, we observed the main planning conference for activities of the Africa Partnership Station's *USS Gunston Hall*, which was deployed from March through May 2010. This conference built upon the progress of the initial planning conference, and it was followed by a final planning conference to identify specific details for the activity. During our observation of the main planning conference, we noted that AFRICOM's Navy component engaged DOD, interagency, and African partners in the coordination of Africa Partnership Station events.

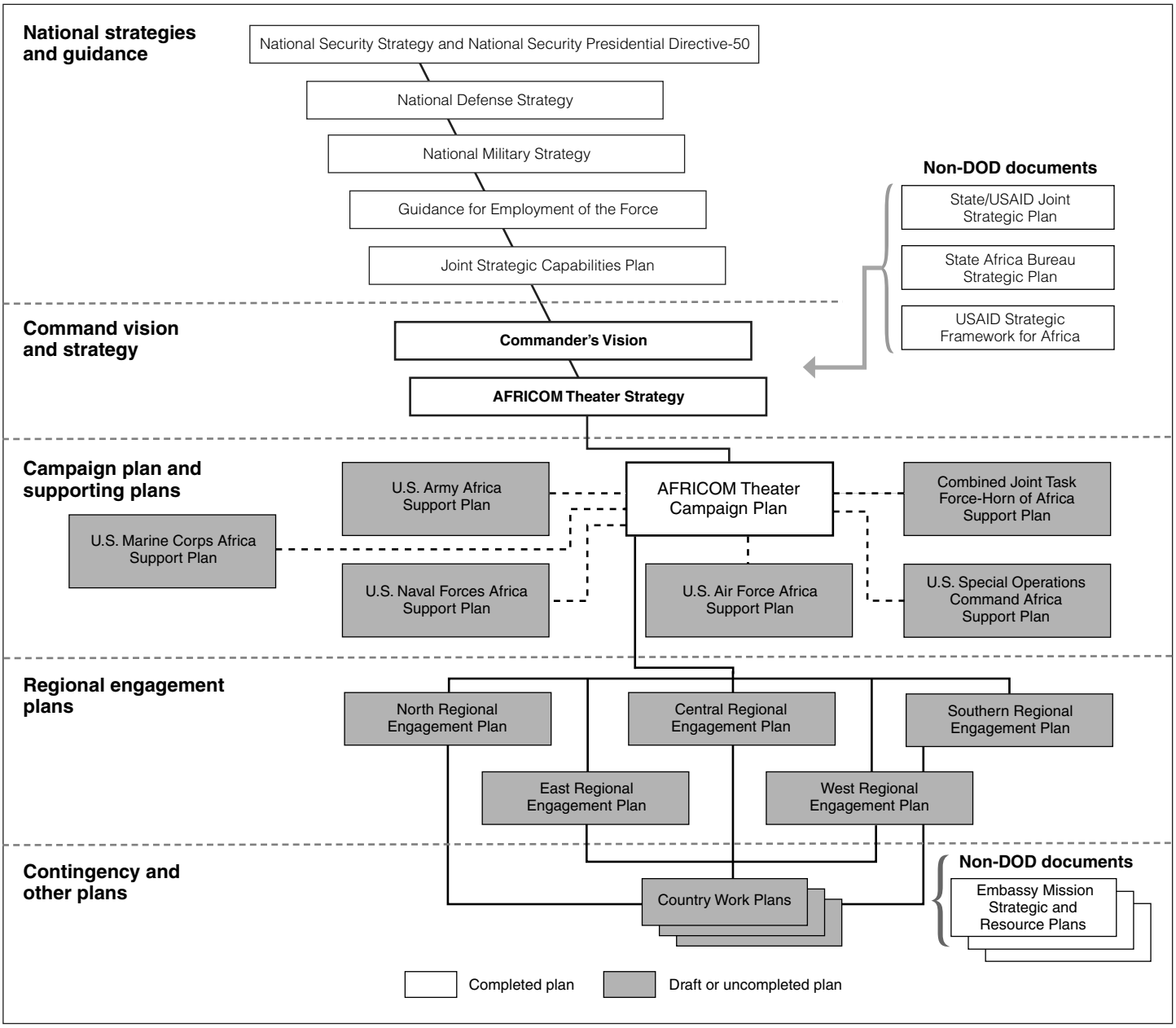
Many Plans Remain Unfinished, Hindering Activity Planning

Although AFRICOM has developed overarching strategic guidance and led planning meetings, it lacks specific supporting plans on conducting activities, which hinders planning and implementation efforts. As we previously reported, an agency should cascade its goals and objectives throughout the organization and should align performance measures with the objectives from the executive level down to the operational levels.[12] While AFRICOM's theater campaign plan identifies strategic objectives, it does not include detailed information on how to plan, implement, or evaluate specific activities. Rather, the theater campaign plan states that AFRICOM is to create specific supporting plans—(1) component support plans, (2) regional engagement plans, and (3) country work plans—with more detailed information. However, AFRICOM has not yet approved its military service components, special operations command, and task force

[12]GAO, *Managing for Results: Enhancing Agency Use of Performance Information for Management Decision Making*, GAO-05-927 (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 9, 2005).

support plans for use in guiding their activities. Furthermore, the command has not completed its five regional engagement plans or country work plans for Africa (see fig. 3).

Figure 3: AFRICOM Strategic Guidance and Plans



Source: GAO presentation of DOD data.

Note: State = Department of State; USAID = U.S. Agency for International Development.

In reviewing AFRICOM's theater campaign plan, we found that it provides overarching guidance but does not include specific information such as detailed activity information and the amount of effort focused on specific countries or regions. Rather, AFRICOM's theater campaign plan states that specific supporting plans will provide this information. To examine how another combatant command approaches planning, we compared AFRICOM's theater campaign plan to that of the U.S. Southern Command, a more mature DOD geographic combatant command that operates in the Americas and Caribbean, which, like AFRICOM, also has a focus on building partner capacity and collaborating with interagency partners. While this comparison was not meant to conclude that one combatant command's approach is superior to the other, our analysis did find differences between the two plans. For example, we noted that AFRICOM's theater campaign plan identifies only one activity—the African Partners Enlisted Development program—and calls for the establishment of regional engagement plans to focus on activities and programs. In contrast, Southern Command's theater campaign plan includes detailed information on dozens of its activities, and no supporting regional engagement plans are required. Additionally, although AFRICOM's theater campaign plan identifies priority countries or regions for each of its theater strategic objectives, it calls for supporting regional engagement plans and country work plans to provide additional information on regional and country information. In contrast, Southern Command's theater campaign plan specifically details the percentage of engagement effort that will be directed toward each region and country. In essence, it appears that both Southern Command and AFRICOM require that similar types of information on regional efforts and activities be incorporated into plans. The difference is that AFRICOM's approach requires the completion of supporting plans while Southern Command provides this information in its theater campaign plan.

AFRICOM's specific supporting plans—its components' support plans and regional engagement plans—have not yet been completed. AFRICOM's theater campaign plan required that component support plans be completed by each AFRICOM component no later than December 1, 2009, to address activities for fiscal years 2010 through 2012. According to AFRICOM, as of June 2010, four of the six component support plans had been developed and were ready to present to the AFRICOM commander for approval. The Navy's supporting plan, for example, was developed in November 2009, but had not yet been signed out by the AFRICOM commander. AFRICOM's theater campaign plan also requires the development of five regional engagement plans—North, East, Central, West, and South—to provide more detailed regional, country, and

programmatic guidance. Specifically, AFRICOM's theater campaign plan states that both it and the regional engagement plans provide the command's prioritization of time, effort, and resources for all steady-state activities that the command executes. The theater campaign plan states that regional engagement plans should contain three elements: (1) regional planning guidance, which highlights key objectives for each region that must nest within the theater security objectives outlined in the theater campaign plans; (2) a 2-year calendar that depicts planned security cooperation engagement activities, month by month, and country by country, for the region; and (3) country work plans, which should be developed for each critical partner identified in the theater campaign plan. The country work plans should include a detailed list of activities and events designed to make progress toward objectives for each region within a particular country, and they are required to be aligned with U.S. embassy Mission Strategic and Resource Plans to ensure unity of effort.[13] At the time we completed our audit work, the regional engagement plans had not been approved by the command, and the country plans were still in the process of being developed.

Furthermore, AFRICOM has postponed time frames for completing several of its supporting plans. For example, completion of the regional engagement plans has been repeatedly delayed throughout our review—postponed by about 2 years—from February 2009 to October 2009 to May 2010 to the first quarter of fiscal year 2011. While AFRICOM officials had previously told us that component support plans would be completed by December 2009, officials later stated that they expect the plans to be completed within 60 days of the regional engagement plans. DOD officials told us that AFRICOM held a planners' conference in April 2010 and that draft plans, such as country work plans, were discussed at this meeting to obtain the components' input. Moreover, in the absence of plans, DOD stated that AFRICOM holds weekly meetings with the components to discuss activities. However, by conducting activities without having specific plans in place to guide activity planning and implementation, AFRICOM risks not fully supporting its mission or objectives.

[13]State's Mission Strategic and Resource Plan, formerly the Mission Strategic Plan, is a strategic document created by each U.S. embassy and consulate detailing (1) the mission's highest foreign policy and management priorities; (2) the goals it wants to achieve; (3) resources required to achieve those goals; and (4) how it plans to measure progress and results.

AFRICOM's Components Identify Differing Priorities

Without having approved component support plans and regional engagement plans, AFRICOM and its components cannot be sure that they are conducting activities that align with the command's priorities. Currently, each of the military service components has established priority countries/areas in Africa, but in some cases they overlap or differ from each other and also differ from the priority countries that AFRICOM has identified.[14] Air Force component officials told us, for example, that they used AFRICOM's designation of priority countries to inform their initial identification of priority countries, but they also considered where U.S. Europe Command's Air Force component had prior engagements or existing relationships with Africans. These officials told us that they recently updated their priority countries based on their own objectives. The officials explained that, because the Air Force component has different objectives than AFRICOM's other military service components and because certain African countries have varying levels of Air Force capabilities, their designated priority countries would not necessarily coincide with those of other military service components. Marine Corps component officials said that their designated priority countries reinforce AFRICOM's designated "willing and capable" African nations; however, our analysis shows that the priority countries identified by AFRICOM and those identified by its Marine Corps component also do not fully align. Additionally, activities currently conducted by the military service components may overlap with AFRICOM's Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa's operating area.[15]

AFRICOM stated that in the absence of completed supporting plans, it has taken some steps to coordinate activities among its components, including the use of an information database to manage individual activities. AFRICOM stated that use of the database helps ensure a unified effort among the components. While component officials we spoke with said that the database can help them determine whether another AFRICOM component is planning an activity within a similar time frame or with the same African country, they noted that use of the database is preliminary within AFRICOM and that not all component activities may be included in

[14]These priorities are contained in classified documents.

[15]The Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa's "combined joint operational area" consists of 7 countries: Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Seychelles, Somalia, and Sudan. In addition, it has named another 11 countries as "areas of interest": Burundi, Chad, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Yemen.

the database. Air Force component officials said that they currently lack visibility and coordination with the other components for the full range of activities, and as a result, they may be unaware of some activities being planned or conducted by other AFRICOM components. Similarly, officials from AFRICOM's Army component stated that perhaps the greatest challenge to creating positive conditions in Africa is ensuring that U.S. defense efforts remain synchronized; if plans are not coordinated, their efforts could have unintended consequences, such as the potential for Africans to perceive the U.S. military as trying to influence public opinion in a region sensitive to the military's presence. Until AFRICOM completes specific plans to guide its activity-planning efforts and determines whether priorities are appropriately aligned across the command, it cannot ensure that the efforts of its components are appropriate, complementary, and comprehensive.

AFRICOM Has Not Made Decisions Regarding Its Horn of Africa Task Force, Which Impedes Planning

AFRICOM has yet to make critical decisions about the future of its Horn of Africa task force, including what changes, if any, are needed for the task force or its activities to best support the command. In April 2010, we reported that AFRICOM had not decided whether changes are needed to the task force's mission, structure, and resources to best support the command's mission of sustained security engagement in Africa.[16] Moreover, AFRICOM has stated that, as the capabilities of its military service components become mature, the command will determine the best course of action for transferring task force activities to the other components as necessary to ensure sustained security engagement with African countries within the task force's operating area. Some military service component officials said that coordination with the task force can be difficult. For example, Air Force component officials said that it has been challenging to coordinate with the task force because it is unclear how the task force's roles, responsibilities, and efforts align with those of AFRICOM and the Air Force component.

With the exception of the task force, each of AFRICOM's component commands is located in Europe and does not have assigned forces (see fig. 1). To conduct their activities, forces for AFRICOM's military service component activities are requested through a formal Joint Staff process. Force planning currently occurs within the Joint Staff 2 years prior to the designated fiscal year; forces needed for emergent requirements must

[16] GAO-10-504.

typically be requested 120 days in advance. AFRICOM officials told us that the command must request forces and equipment for its military service components to carry out any type of activity in Africa—whether it be a large-scale operation or additional personnel needed to travel to the continent to plan a future program.[17] Moreover, they said that AFRICOM does not always receive the forces or equipment it requests for an activity because DOD may have higher-priority needs. From AFRICOM's and some military service components' perspective, having to formally request forces for all activities may affect AFRICOM's effectiveness if there are greater DOD priorities. Furthermore, the special operations command component stated that, without assigned forces, it cannot act as a crisis-response force, which is the role of special operations commands in other combatant commands. AFRICOM has occasionally used Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa personnel with appropriate skill sets outside of its operating area and area-of-interest countries, such as in Liberia and Swaziland, and these forces could potentially be leveraged for other activities. Completing an evaluation of the task force in a thorough yet expeditious manner and clearly articulating any needed changes to the task force's mission, structure, and resources will aid in AFRICOM's efforts to plan and prioritize the many activities it inherited upon its establishment and ensure that personnel and resources are applied most effectively to enhance U.S. military efforts in Africa.

[17]When forces are not provided, AFRICOM may have to delay or cancel activities or take military service component staff away from other duties to travel to Africa.

AFRICOM Is Generally Not Measuring the Long-Term Effects of Its Activities to Determine Whether They Fully Align with the Command's Mission

It is unclear whether all of the activities that AFRICOM has inherited or is planning fully align with its mission of sustained security engagement in Africa because, in addition to unfinished strategic plans, AFRICOM is generally not measuring the long-term effects of its activities. Our prior work has highlighted the importance of developing mechanisms to monitor, evaluate, and report on results,[18] and we have previously reported that U.S. agencies cannot be fully assured that they have effectively allocated resources without establishing an assessment process.[19] In addition, according to Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government, U.S. agencies should monitor and assess the quality of performance over time.[20] The lack of clear, measurable goals makes it difficult for program managers and staff to establish linkages between their day-to-day efforts and the agency's achievement of its intended mission.[21] The Government Performance and Results Act also emphasizes that agencies should measure performance toward the achievement of goals.[22] Moreover, AFRICOM's theater campaign plan requires assessments of theater security cooperation activities.

AFRICOM has developed a tool to measure progress in meeting its strategic objectives. The tool measures objective factors (e.g., number of identified al-Qaeda members in a country), subjective factors (e.g., likelihood of an imminent terrorist attack), and perceptive factors (e.g., the level of protection against terrorism Africans expect their governments can provide). However, AFRICOM officials told us that this tool is used primarily for strategic planning purposes and not for follow-up on individual activities.

Moreover, beyond AFRICOM, our prior work has shown that DOD and State have conducted little monitoring and evaluation of certain security

[18]GAO, *Results-Oriented Government: Practices That Can Help Enhance and Sustain Collaboration among Federal Agencies*, GAO-06-15 (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 21, 2005).

[19]GAO, *The Democratic Republic of the Congo: Systematic Assessment Is Needed to Determine Agencies' Progress toward U.S. Policy Objectives*, GAO-08-188 (Washington, D.C.: Dec. 14, 2007).

[20]GAO, *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government*, GAO/AIMD-00-21.3.1 (Washington, D.C.: November 1999).

[21]GAO, *Results-Oriented Government: GPRA Has Established a Solid Foundation for Achieving Greater Results*, GAO-04-38 (Washington, D.C.: Mar. 10, 2004).

[22]Pub. L. No. 103-62, Sec. 4(b) (1993).

assistance programs.[23] Specifically, DOD and State have not carried out systematic program monitoring of funds for projects that, among other things, train and equip partner nations' militaries to conduct counterterrorism operations.[24] Instead, reporting has generally consisted of anecdotal information, although DOD has taken initial steps to establish systematic program monitoring. For example, DOD has hired a contractor to identify current project roles, data sources, and ongoing assessment activities in order to develop a framework for assessing projects. However, DOD officials stated that they had not consistently monitored these security assistance projects, and State officials were not involved with or aware of a formal evaluation process. Our review of 58 proposals for security assistance projects in African countries from fiscal years 2007 to 2009 revealed that only 15, or 26 percent, of the proposals included a description of how the activities would be monitored over time. In addition, only 10 of the project proposals, or 17 percent, included information related to program objectives or anticipated outcomes.

Some Activities Appear to Support AFRICOM's Mission, but Others May Have Unintended Consequences

While some activities appear to support AFRICOM's mission, others may have unintended consequences—which underscores the importance of consistently measuring the long-term effects of the full range of the command's activities. AFRICOM has stated that a primary purpose of its activities is to build partner capacity. The two activities we reviewed in depth appear to support this mission. First, the Africa Partnership Station initiative builds maritime security capabilities of African partners through ship- and land-based training events focused on areas such as maritime domain awareness, leadership, navigation, maritime law enforcement, search and rescue, civil engineering, and logistics (see app. I). Second, the command's Natural Fire 10 exercise brought together participants from Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda to build partner capacity in responding to a pandemic influenza outbreak (see app. II). Moreover, State and U.S. embassy officials said that peacekeeping and military-to-military training activities help support embassy goals and U.S. foreign

[23]GAO, *International Security: DOD and State Need to Improve Sustainment Planning and Monitoring and Evaluation for Section 1206 and 1207 Assistance Programs*, GAO-10-431 (Washington, D.C.: Apr. 15, 2010).

[24]Section 1206 of the Fiscal Year 2006 National Defense Authorization Act authorizes the Secretary of Defense, upon the direction of the President, to conduct or support a program to build the capacity of a foreign country's national military forces in order for that country to conduct counterterrorist operations or to participate in or support military and stability operations in which the U.S. Armed Forces are a participant. Pub. L. No. 109-163 (2006).

policy objectives in African nations. For example, the U.S. embassy in Algeria stated that AFRICOM's activities directly support the embassy's objectives of counterterrorism cooperation and engaging with and modernizing the Algerian military. In addition, a senior official at the U.S. embassy in Mozambique told us that AFRICOM supports the embassy's goals pertaining to maritime security and professionalizing Mozambique's military.

Figure 4: A Petty Officer from U.S. Naval Forces Africa Mentors Mozambique Marines in Board, Search, and Seizure Techniques

Source: AFRICOM.

However, based on concerns raised by interagency officials, other activities may not fully align with U.S. foreign policy goals or they may not reflect the most effective use of resources. For example, State officials expressed concern over AFRICOM's sponsorship of a news Web site about the Maghreb, citing the potential for Africans to perceive the U.S. military

as trying to influence public opinion.[25] State had previously told us that countries in the Maghreb are very sensitive to foreign military presence, and if a program is marketed as a U.S. military activity or operation, it may not be well received among these nations. AFRICOM officials said that they had inherited this activity from U.S. European Command and that they have been working closely with State in its implementation. Moreover, DOD officials observed that, with respect to the Maghreb news Web site sponsorship, the intent of the activity *is* to influence African public sentiment—the same effect for which some State officials have expressed concern. They said that State supports this as a foreign policy goal in Africa, and senior State officials have endorsed the Maghreb news Web site sponsorship activity. Similarly, some officials questioned whether the U.S. military should conduct a musical caravan activity in Senegal, which is intended to promote peace by having local artists provide free concerts throughout the country. State officials noted that the activity has overwhelmed embassy staff, who had to spend significant time ensuring that AFRICOM's effort was appropriately aligned with embassy goals. AFRICOM officials acknowledged that there have been some concerns with this activity and that it is being reviewed by both the command and State. However, AFRICOM noted that all activities within a country are reviewed and approved by the U.S. embassy before they are executed.

However, at the U.S. embassy level, officials also expressed concern about some of AFRICOM's activities. For example, according to one U.S. embassy, AFRICOM's sociocultural research and advisory teams, which comprise one to five social scientists who conduct research and provide cultural advice to AFRICOM, seem to duplicate other interagency efforts. AFRICOM officials told us that they use the information provided by the teams to help guide operations in Africa and obtain perspectives on cultural sensitivities among the local populations. However, the embassy expressed concern about the U.S. military performing this type of research itself instead of coordinating with interagency partners to gain sociocultural information. Moreover, an internal State memo emphasized the need for close coordination among AFRICOM's research teams and U.S. embassies. In March 2010, the Secretary of State issued guidance to U.S. embassies in Africa on AFRICOM's sociocultural research and advisory activities, stating that AFRICOM's research teams will share their findings with embassy staff and other government counterparts. Finally,

[25]The Maghreb is the Arabic name for the northwest part of Africa, generally including Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and sometimes Libya.

State and USAID officials we contacted at one U.S. embassy expressed concern that some of the activities that AFRICOM's Horn of Africa task force had previously proposed, such as building schools for an African nation, did not appear to fit into a larger strategic framework, and said that they did not believe the task force was monitoring its activities as needed to enable it to demonstrate a link between activities and mission. The embassy officials cited a past example where the task force had proposed drilling a well without considering how its placement could cause conflict in clan relationships or affect pastoral routes. While concerns raised about specific AFRICOM activities may or may not be valid, without conducting long-term assessments of activities, AFRICOM lacks the information needed to evaluate the effects of the full range of its activities, to be able to respond to critics if need be, and to make informed future planning decisions.

AFRICOM Generally Does Not Measure the Long-Term Effects of Its Activities

AFRICOM appears to perform some follow-up on activities shortly after their completion, but the command is generally not measuring the effects of activities over the long term. AFRICOM officials we met with while observing the command's Natural Fire 10 pandemic preparedness and response activity in Uganda told us that the command planned to produce an "after action" report after the activity, but they acknowledged that AFRICOM needs to develop a method to perform longer-term assessments on activities. With respect to the Natural Fire engineering projects, for example, the officials said that AFRICOM does not know whether projects such as reconstructing a school will have a sustainable effect on the community. AFRICOM's Humanitarian Assistance Branch has developed an assessment tool for Natural Fire that relates to the command's security objectives, but an official told us that AFRICOM is still determining exactly what will be assessed with respect to the activity. AFRICOM also envisions continuing its work on pandemic response by engaging bilaterally with each of the countries involved in the 2009 Natural Fire exercise.

Figure 5: U.S. Military Personnel Help Reconstruct a High School in Kitgum, Uganda

Source: GAO.

DOD, State, and officials we contacted at several U.S. embassies in Africa also stated that, from their perspectives, AFRICOM is not measuring the long-term effects of its activities in Africa. State officials told us, for example, that AFRICOM's Military Information Support Teams, which are intended to support State and U.S. embassies by augmenting or broadening existing public-diplomacy efforts, are not assessing the effect of their efforts. In addition, while the Africa Partnership Station activity has been viewed as a successful African partner training platform, concerns were raised that it may have taken on too many training activities—which range from maritime domain awareness to maritime law enforcement to civil engineering to humanitarian assistance efforts. With the potential for its mission to become amorphous or lose its effectiveness, it was suggested that the Africa Partnership Station might be more effective if it targeted its resources toward fewer activities.

In our April 2010 report on AFRICOM's Horn of Africa task force, we noted that the task force performs some short-term follow-up on activities, but AFRICOM officials said that the task force has not historically been focused on performing long-term assessments on activities to determine whether the activities are having their intended effects or whether modifications to activities need to be made.[26] In response to our report, the task force acknowledged that it needed to improve its ability to evaluate the effectiveness of its activities. The task force stated that it had taken steps to incorporate measures of performance and effects in its planning process so that it can determine whether its activities are achieving foreign policy goals. The command's sociocultural research and advisory team in the area is also being used to help assess task force activities, and the task force is beginning to follow-up on past activities, such as medical clinics, to determine their effects over time. We commend the task force for these efforts, which could serve as models for implementing long-term activity assessments across AFRICOM.

AFRICOM's limited long-term evaluation of activities to date may result, in part, from the differences in agency cultures among DOD, State, and USAID. Officials from State and USAID told us that their agencies are focused on monitoring and on long-term results, while they viewed DOD as having a tendency to take a short-term approach focused on immediate implementation or results. Similarly, nonprofit-organization officials said that, from their perspective, the U.S. military tends to view development activities on a onetime basis and is not focused on monitoring or measuring the effects of an activity after completion. They voiced concern that AFRICOM will not know whether its activities are effective or be in a position to evaluate the quality of the services its activities may be providing.

Long-term evaluation can be difficult to achieve but remains nonetheless important for AFRICOM in meeting its mission in Africa. While some activities may promote temporary benefits for the participants, their short-term nature or unintended long-term effects could potentially promote unfavorable views of the U.S. military among partner nations. We previously reported, for example, that AFRICOM's Horn of Africa task force had built a well for a local African community, but it did not teach the community how to maintain it. AFRICOM officials stated that they recognize the difficulties associated with measuring long-term effects of

[26] GAO-10-504.

activities, particularly the ability to link an action to a desired effect. For example, AFRICOM Navy component officials told us that it is difficult to measure the Africa Partnership Station's return on investment because changes in Africa can be incremental and thus it can be difficult to determine whether the activity caused the change or whether the effects will persist over time. The Navy has been working with the Center for Naval Analyses to assess the Africa Partnership Station. Center for Naval Analyses officials told us that their work has shown that Africa Partnership Station training has been successful in changing African participants' attitudes toward maritime safety and security activities but that it has been more difficult to show changes in the behavior of participating African nations. Despite the challenges associated with measuring long-term effects, implementing such assessments for all of its activities can help AFRICOM make successful future planning decisions and allocate resources to maximize its effect in Africa.

Some AFRICOM Staff Face Difficulties in Applying Multiple Funding Resources to Activities

Some AFRICOM staff face difficulties in applying funding to activities, which can pose challenges in implementing activities and impede long-term planning efforts. AFRICOM stated that it had access to 15 different funding sources to fund its activities in fiscal year 2009. In addition, AFRICOM reported that it influences other State and USAID funding sources—such as funds for State's Global Peacekeeping and Operations Initiative and International Military Education and Training, and USAID's Pandemic Response Program—but that these funding sources are not managed by the command. We consistently heard from officials at AFRICOM and its components that applying funding to activities was not well understood by staff and that they lacked expertise to effectively carry out this task. For example, Army component officials told us that activities must be designed to meet specific criteria in order to be granted funds and that their staff do not have the skills required to understand the complexities of funding. Similarly, Navy and Air Force component officials said that staff spend substantial amounts of time trying to determine which funding sources can be appropriately applied to which activities. Many different funding sources may be required for small segments of an activity, such as transportation or lodging for participants.

Determining which specific funding sources should be used for various activities has sometimes resulted in problems with activities. Officials cited instances in which limited understanding resulted in African nations having their invitations to AFRICOM-sponsored activities rescinded or in activities having to be canceled. In two recent instances, an official said that AFRICOM essentially disinvited two-thirds of the intended

participants for activities at the last minute because it was discovered that certain funding sources could not be used to support the participants. This caused much embarrassment and frustration for the Africans who had planned to attend the activities. Marine Corps component officials said that difficulties in identifying the appropriate funding source prevented them from responding to African requests for activities, causing the cancellation of some peacekeeping exercises. AFRICOM's Navy component has also struggled with the application of multiple funding sources to the Africa Partnership Station activity, an official explained, occasionally resulting in delayed submissions of funding packages to U.S. embassies for approval. Table 1 shows eight different funding sources required for theater security cooperation activities associated with the Africa Partnership Station's 2009 *USS Nashville* deployment.

Table 1: Africa Partnership Station *USS Nashville* Theater Security Cooperation Activities, 2009 Reported Funding Sources, and Amounts

Dollars in thousands

Activity	Funding source	Required amount
Partner Ship Rider Program	Traditional Combatant Commander Activities	$300
Humanitarian and Civic Assistance	Humanitarian and Civic Assistance	500
Training	Combatant Commander Initiative Fund	4,100
	Counter Narcoterrorism	100
Community Relations	Community Relations	30
Key Leader Engagement/ Outreach	Official Representation Funds	60
Partner Operational Travel/Fuel/Parts	Developing Country Combined Exercise Program	300
Operational Staff Engagement and Travel	Global War on Terrorism[a]	336
Total		**$5,726**

Source: U.S. Naval Forces Africa.

Notes: These funding sources do not include costs associated with ship operations such as fuel, personnel, and repair parts. Additionally, these funding sources do not include $2.1 million for port service requirements or funding provided by the Department of State to support the training activities.

[a]Starting with the fiscal year 2009 supplemental request in April 2009, the administration now refers to funds for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as Overseas Contingency Operations funds instead of Global War on Terrorism funds.

According to AFRICOM's Navy component, funding a large activity like the Africa Partnership Station on a 1-year planning horizon has hindered the ability to conduct persistent training efforts. Officials said that funding

sources, such as the Combatant Commander Initiative Fund, are only available for a year and must be applied only to new initiatives.[27] Similarly, Global War on Terrorism funds, now known as Overseas Contingency Operations funds, are supplemental appropriations, which officials said do not provide permanency for the activity. Our prior work has encouraged DOD to include known or likely project costs of ongoing operations related to the war on terrorism in DOD's base budget requests. Navy component officials told us that Africa Partnership Station may get its own funding line for fiscal years 2011 through 2015. If approved by the President, Navy component officials believe the dedicated budget line would help facilitate funding the activity, although AFRICOM added that the Africa Partnership Station will still require several funding sources to support the activity.

In its 2010 *Quadrennial Defense Review*, DOD stated that U.S. security assistance efforts are constrained by a complex patchwork of authorities and unwieldy processes. Several AFRICOM and component officials we contacted agreed, with some stating that funding challenges hampered their ability to sustain relationships in Africa. AFRICOM stated that the limitations of current funding sources create a continuing challenge for the command, noting that some funding sources were not designed for the types of activities AFRICOM carries out and thus do not adequately support AFRICOM's mission of sustained security engagement. Army component officials said that funding sources available for activities tend to be short term and must be used in a finite time frame, which limits long-term planning capabilities and the ability to have a sustained presence in Africa. AFRICOM's special operations command officials said that the lack of sustainable funding sources has created a short-term, unsustainable approach to the command's activities, describing their efforts as sporadic connections with African countries with which they should have enduring relationships. Marine Corps component officials described having to ask AFRICOM for funds for activities that fall outside of funding cycles, noting the need for streamlined funding for effective sustained engagement in Africa.

Our prior work on security assistance activities also found that the long-term effect of some projects may be at risk because it is uncertain whether

[27]Combatant Commander Initiative funds enable the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to act quickly to support the combatant commanders when they lack the flexibility and resources to solve emergent challenges and unforeseen contingency requirements critical to joint warfighting readiness and national security interests.

funds will be available to sustain the military capabilities that the projects are intended to build.[28] There are limits on the use of U.S. government funds for sustainment of certain security assistance projects,[29] and most participating countries have relatively low incomes and may be unwilling or unable to provide the necessary resources to sustain the projects. Moreover, officials told us that the process for submitting proposals for security assistance projects is lengthy, requiring them to begin writing the next fiscal year's plans before the last year's are processed, and that the time frames for receiving and applying the funding from the various funding sources needed for the project do not necessarily align with one another. For example, AFRICOM might apply resources from one funding source to deliver a maritime vessel to an African country, but the resources that must be obtained from another funding source to train the recipients on how to use the vessel may fall within a different time frame.

DOD guidance emphasizes the need for proper training and staffing to increase effectiveness in budgeting.[30] AFRICOM component officials told us that guidance or training on applying funding sources to activities would be helpful. When we asked about funding expertise within AFRICOM, Air Force component officials said that it is difficult to find assistance at AFRICOM because officials must first be able to identify the appropriate funding source in order to ask the correct AFRICOM staff member about that source. From their perspective, no individual at AFRICOM or its Air Force component command has comprehensive knowledge of all available funding sources for activities. AFRICOM officials said they provide the components guidance on the Combatant Commander Initiative Fund and noted that AFRICOM does not provide the actual funding to the components for many sources they use to fund activities. Additionally, they said that the command is researching funding sources available for activities, which they believe will help AFRICOM better define which sources can be applied to which activities.

Our April 2010 report on AFRICOM's Horn of Africa task force found similar issues among the task force's budget staff.[31] According to task force

[28]GAO-10-431.

[29]Pub. L. No. 109-163, § 1206 (2006), as amended by Pub. L. No. 109-364, § 1206 (2006) and Pub. L. No. 110-417, § 1206 (2008).

[30]Joint Publication 1-04, *Legal Support to Military Operations* (Mar. 1, 2007).

[31]GAO-10-504.

officials, budget staff must master a steep learning curve to understand the provisions associated with these funding sources because the task force comptroller and deputy comptroller are not financial specialists, generally do not work on military comptroller issues full time, and have short tour lengths. This steep learning curve can result in delays in conducting activities, as task force staff described spending extra time and resources understanding how to apply funding to activities. Moreover, AFRICOM stated that command staffing and tour lengths contribute to the difficulties in learning and maintaining knowledge of funding for task force activities. For example, task force staff had intended to continue providing training for senior enlisted Ethiopian military members through one type of funding source, but they later found that the source did not allow for training of foreign military members. Consequently, the staff had to revise their program from one of training officers to one of providing feedback to Ethiopian instructors. While eventually task force staff may correctly identify funding sources for their activities, their limited skills in applying funding may result in difficulties in implementing activities. We recommended that AFRICOM take actions to ensure that its task force budget personnel have the expertise and knowledge necessary to make timely and accurate funding decisions for activities. DOD concurred with our recommendation and cited some actions it had taken or planned—such as conducting on-the-job training and lengthening some tours for personnel—to augment critical skills among task force personnel. We believe the steps DOD outlined, if implemented in a timely and comprehensive manner, could help increase understanding and expertise associated with applying funding sources to activities within AFRICOM's Horn of Africa task force. However, DOD's comments were limited to AFRICOM's task force personnel and do not address the lack of understanding of funding sources throughout the command. Without a greater understanding of how to apply funding to activities, AFRICOM will likely continue to face difficulties in implementing activities—including the potential that activities may be delayed, funds may not be effectively used, and African partner nations may be excluded from participating—as well as institutionalizing knowledge within the command.

AFRICOM Has Made Efforts to Collaborate with Interagency Partners but Is Not Fully Engaging Them in Activity Planning Processes

AFRICOM has made efforts to integrate interagency personnel into its command and collaborate with other federal agencies on activities, but it is not fully engaging interagency partners in planning processes.

AFRICOM Has Integrated Interagency Personnel into the Command

According to DOD and AFRICOM officials, integrating personnel from other U.S. government agencies into the command is essential to achieving AFRICOM's mission because it will help AFRICOM develop plans and activities that are more compatible with those agencies. AFRICOM was established with two deputy commanders—a military commander that oversees military operations and a civilian commander for civil-military activities. The civilian commander directs the command's activities related to areas such as health, humanitarian assistance, disaster response, and peace support operations. According to AFRICOM, this deputy commander—who is currently a State ambassador-level official—also directs outreach, strategic communication, and AFRICOM's partner-building functions.

As of June 2010, AFRICOM reported that it embedded 27 interagency partners into its headquarters staff, which represents about 2 percent of the total headquarters staff. These officials have been placed in several directorates throughout the command. The interagency staff came from several federal agencies, including the Departments of Energy, Homeland Security, Justice, State, and Treasury; USAID; the Office of the Director of National Intelligence; and the National Security Agency. The command also plans to integrate five foreign policy advisors from State later this year, according to officials at AFRICOM and State. Moreover, DOD has signed memorandums of understanding with nine federal agencies to outline conditions on sending interagency partners to AFRICOM. These memorandums cover such topics as the financial reimbursement between DOD and the federal agencies for participating employees, the length of time the interagency partner may reside at AFRICOM, and logistical provisions (housing, office space, etc.). Table 2 compares the reported number of interagency personnel at AFRICOM at the time it reached unified command status with that of June 2010.

Table 2: Reported Interagency Personnel at Africa Command Headquarters

Agency	October 2008	June 2010
Department of State	2	5
U.S. Agency for International Development	2	2
Department of Homeland Security	3	6
Office of the Director of National Intelligence	3	4
Department of the Treasury	2	2
Department of Commerce	1	-
Department of Energy	-	1
Department of Justice	-	3
National Security Agency	-	4
Total	**13**	**27**
Percent of AFRICOM headquarters staff	1	2

Source: GAO presentation of AFRICOM data.

AFRICOM has had difficulty obtaining interagency officials to work at the command at the numbers desired. In February 2009, we reported that the command initially expected to fill 52 positions with personnel from other government agencies.[32] However, according to DOD and AFRICOM officials, this initial goal was notional and was not based on an analysis of specific skill sets needed to accomplish AFRICOM's mission. During our current review, command officials told us that there is no target number for interagency personnel, but rather that AFRICOM is trying to determine where in its command organization it could benefit from employing interagency personnel or where interagency partners would prefer to provide personnel. Command officials said that it would be helpful to have additional interagency staff at AFRICOM, but they understand that staffing limitations, resource imbalances, and lack of career progression incentives for embedded staff from other federal agencies may limit the number of personnel who can be brought in from these agencies.

[32]GAO-09-181.

AFRICOM Has Coordinated with Other Federal Agencies, but Is Not Fully Engaging Federal Partners in Activity Planning Processes

AFRICOM has coordinated with other federal agencies. For example, AFRICOM met with representatives from 16 agencies to gain interagency input into its theater campaign plan. We spoke with officials from State, USAID, and the Coast Guard who stated that they provided input into several additional strategy documents, including DOD's *Guidance for Employment of the Force* and AFRICOM's posture statement, as well as participated in activity planning meetings. State officials stated that AFRICOM has made improvements in taking their feedback and creating an environment that is conducive to cooperation across agencies. Similarly, USAID officials told us that AFRICOM has improved its coordination with their agency at the USAID headquarters level. Additionally, AFRICOM has created memorandums of understanding with some U.S. embassies, such as between AFRICOM's Horn of Africa task force and the U.S. embassy in Kenya. This memorandum outlines procedures for conducting activities, actions to be taken by task force personnel in Kenya, and communication policies between the task force and the embassy, among other topics.

While AFRICOM has made efforts to work with interagency partners, it is not fully engaging federal partners in activity planning processes in two areas. Our prior work has recommended, and the department generally agreed, that DOD provide specific implementation guidance to combatant commanders on the mechanisms that are needed to facilitate and encourage interagency participation in the development of military plans, develop a process to share planning information with interagency representatives early in the planning process, and develop an approach to overcome differences in planning culture, training, and capacities among the affected agencies.[33] Some interagency officials have stated that AFRICOM (1) is not always involving other federal agencies in the formative stages of activity planning, and (2) does not fully leverage expertise of interagency personnel embedded at AFRICOM.

AFRICOM Does Not Always Involve Interagency Partners in Formative Planning Stages

While AFRICOM has made progress in coordinating with other federal agencies since its establishment, interagency partners may not be included in the formative stages of activity planning. DOD's 2010 *Quadrennial Defense Review* states that the department will continue to advocate for an improved interagency strategic planning process. However, several

[33]GAO, *Military Operations: Actions Needed to Improve DOD's Stability Operations Approach and Enhance Interagency Planning*, GAO-07-549 (Washington, D.C.: May 31, 2007).

federal agency officials said that AFRICOM tends to plan activities first and then engage partners, rather than including interagency perspectives during the initial planning efforts.

Several interagency officials stated that AFRICOM has tended to develop initial activity plans before integrating interagency perspectives. Some U.S. embassy officials described AFRICOM's annual activity planning meetings, the Theater Security Cooperation Conferences, as useful for bringing together AFRICOM and federal partners to plan for future AFRICOM activities; however, they noted that past meetings have been limited in their effectiveness because AFRICOM set the agenda without interagency input, which they viewed as restricting their role. Additionally, officials said that AFRICOM gave presentations of its planned exercises during one of its annual activity planning conferences, but there was not meaningful discussion with interagency partners on the most appropriate activities to conduct. One official described the embassies' role at the conference as telling AFRICOM which proposed activities the embassies could not accommodate due to limited resources. Some federal officials suggested that interagency collaboration could be improved at AFRICOM's annual activity planning conferences if State took a lead role, although limited State resources would make this unlikely. In general, both State and AFRICOM told us that funding shortages prevent some State officials from participating at AFRICOM planning events. Nonetheless, some State officials noted that AFRICOM could better align its activities with U.S. foreign policy goals and reduce the potential to burden U.S. embassy staff in carrying out activities if AFRICOM would involve interagency partners earlier in the planning process. From its perspective, AFRICOM said that State has had significant influence in its planning processes, noting that State's deputy chiefs of mission, as well as USAID mission directors, were provided time to present information on their respective countries at the November 2009 Theater Security Cooperation Conference and that State officials are involved in other AFRICOM activity planning events throughout the year.

Following AFRICOM's most recent Theater Security Cooperation Conference, federal officials stated that the command's integration of interagency perspectives had improved from previous conferences. The officials commented that AFRICOM officials appeared genuinely interested in learning about foreign policy and political issues in African countries from U.S. embassy officials and that the emphasis of many command presentations appeared to convey AFRICOM's role as supporting U.S. embassies and furthering U.S. foreign policy goals.

During our observations of an Africa Partnership Station planning conference in July 2009, AFRICOM and its Navy component officials acknowledged that they needed to improve communications among AFRICOM, its Navy component, and the U.S. embassies; since that time, we found that AFRICOM has taken some steps to address the problems. At that conference, an official at the U.S. embassy in Ghana stated that details of a previous *USS Nashville* port visit were not provided to the embassy prior to the ship's arrival. Rather, when the ship arrived and the Navy component prepared to provide training, it was discovered that the proposed training did not meet the needs of the Ghanaian Navy. As a result, the U.S. embassy was required to work with AFRICOM's Navy component to quickly put together a new training plan so that the Ghanaian Navy could receive more relevant training. According to a State official, AFRICOM should work on communicating the Africa Partnership Station's mission in advance of its deployment because it is too late to conduct strategic communications once a ship is already in port. In response to concerns raised at the conference, AFRICOM has implemented a pilot program to help embassy public affairs offices generate public awareness of maritime security issues regarding 2010 Africa Partnership Station activities. As of February 2010, funding for the program had been provided to U.S. embassies in Gabon, Ghana, Senegal, and Mozambique.

Conversely, our observation of the Natural Fire 10 pandemic preparedness and response exercise in Uganda illustrated that early and continuous interagency involvement can lead to a successful outcome. Prior to the initial planning for Natural Fire 10, DOD and USAID signed an interagency agreement to streamline collaboration in enhancing African military capacity to respond to an influenza pandemic. When AFRICOM began planning Natural Fire 10, it included USAID in the initial discussions to consider the feasibility of focusing a portion of the exercise on pandemic planning and response, as outlined in the interagency agreement. USAID also funded civilian participation in that portion of the exercise. In addition, State and U.S. embassy officials were included at all Natural Fire 10 planning conferences prior to the exercise. Furthermore, an embedded USAID official at AFRICOM told us that the pandemic focus of that portion of the Natural Fire 10 exercise was unique because it was designed more like a USAID activity than a DOD activity, having a longer-term focus to allow AFRICOM to sustain and expand the program over time. By working with interagency partners throughout the planning process, AFRICOM was able to sponsor an activity that was well received by its interagency partners.

Figure 6: African Partners Participate in Planning a Pandemic Influenza Response during AFRICOM's Natural Fire 10 Exercise in Entebbe, Uganda (October 2009)

Source: GAO.

AFRICOM Is Not Fully Leveraging Expertise of Interagency Personnel Embedded at Its Command

Interagency personnel embedded into AFRICOM's organization may not be fully leveraged for their expertise, which can make it more difficult for some interagency personnel to contribute to the command's work. Our prior work has noted that having a strategy for defining organizational roles and responsibilities and coordination mechanisms can help national security agencies clarify who will lead or participate in activities, organize their joint and individual efforts, and facilitate decision making.[34] Although AFRICOM has included information on interagency collaboration in its theater campaign plan and created an interagency board to facilitate collaboration, an embedded interagency official stated that AFRICOM employs a hierarchal rather than collaborative approach to decision

[34]GAO, *Interagency Collaboration: Key Issues for Congressional Oversight of National Security Strategies, Organizations, Workforce, and Information Sharing*, GAO-09-904SP (Washington, D.C.: Sept. 25, 2009).

making. The command's Army component echoed this sentiment, stating that coordination and development of strategies is less collaborative than on specific activities. This approach differs markedly from USAID and State's planning approaches, which officials described as focusing on brainstorming with all relevant personnel or on the long-term results of the activities. Additionally, an embedded official from another federal agency told us that while AFRICOM officials bring some issues to interagency personnel at the command to obtain their perspectives, more often interagency staff must insert themselves into relevant meetings to affect decision making. For example, a USAID official formerly embedded at AFRICOM said that USAID embedded officials have to ask how they can help the command, even though he believed that the military officials should be asking how AFRICOM can provide support to USAID, as the command has stated that it is in a supporting role to USAID on development activities. Furthermore, some embedded interagency personnel said that coordination is problematic when activity planning takes place directly at AFRICOM's military service component commands and not at AFRICOM headquarters, as there are few embedded interagency staff members in the military service components.[35] State echoed this remark, noting that from its perspective, planning and decision making at the command's military service components is separate from that at AFRICOM headquarters, which creates difficulties for coordination with interagency partners. As a result, many activities could have undergone substantial planning at the component level before interagency perspectives are sought.

Moreover, some interagency personnel embedded at AFRICOM have said that they may not be fully leveraged for their expertise. AFRICOM officials told us that it is a challenge to determine where in the command to include the interagency personnel. For example, an official from the Transportation Security Administration decided on his own which directorate in which to work when he joined the command because AFRICOM had not identified a directorate for him. Another embedded interagency staff member stated that AFRICOM initially placed him in a directorate unrelated to his skill set, and he initiated a transfer to another directorate that would better enable him to share his expertise. In addition, Coast Guard officials stated that AFRICOM does not fully understand the roles and responsibilities of the Coast Guard and what knowledge and expertise it could provide the command. The officials cited

[35]AFRICOM's Marine Corps and Air Force components have a political advisor from State.

an example of AFRICOM's Navy component performing law enforcement training instead of allowing the Coast Guard to take the lead on providing this training to African forces.

Difficulties in leveraging interagency partners are not unique to AFRICOM. As we have previously reported, organizational differences—including differences in agencies' structures, planning processes, and funding sources—can hinder interagency collaboration, potentially wasting scarce funds and limiting the effectiveness of federal efforts.[36] Notwithstanding these difficulties, interagency collaboration can be successful—for example, observers have cited the U.S. Southern Command as having mature interagency planning processes and coordinating mechanisms. Southern Command has also identified civilian federal agencies as leads for each of its theater security objectives, furthering the early involvement of interagency partners. A senior State official said that AFRICOM's understanding of the roles of interagency partners might be improved if additional staff from other federal agencies were embedded at the command. However, several embedded interagency staff said that there is little incentive to take a position at AFRICOM because it will not enhance one's career position upon return to the original agency after the rotation. Additionally, staffing shortages at other federal agencies reduce agencies' abilities to send additional staff to AFRICOM. In February 2009, we reported that State officials told us that they would not likely be able to provide active employees to fill the positions requested by AFRICOM because they were already facing a 25 percent shortfall in mid-level personnel[37]—although AFRICOM and State officials said that five State foreign policy advisors are expected to arrive at the command later this year. Despite challenges, AFRICOM has made some efforts that could improve interagency collaboration within the command, such as expanding its interagency orientation process and including opportunities for interagency input into daily command meetings. In addition, AFRICOM said that its Deputy to the Commander for Civil-Military Affairs, a senior State official, is in charge of outreach for the command and sometimes chairs command staff meetings.

In fall 2009, the command conducted an assessment of the embedded interagency process to analyze successes and identify lessons learned, including recommendations on how to integrate interagency personnel

[36]GAO-09-904SP.

[37]GAO-09-181.

into command planning and operations. AFRICOM identified five key observations based on its assessment: (1) embedded staff want to ensure they can accomplish their own objectives and not merely perform duties that a DOD employee could perform; (2) interagency personnel arrive at AFRICOM with the expectation that they will help achieve not only command goals and objectives but also U.S. government goals, yet they feel that DOD employees do not expect embedded personnel to develop new programs; (3) embedded interagency personnel need to understand the function, operation, and role of a military command and how it differs from other federal government agencies; (4) the military planning process is more structured than the planning approaches of other government agencies; and (5) embedded personnel experience an overwhelming adjustment to military culture. The assessment identified several recommendations and suggestions, such as developing a training and orientation program for embedded interagency personnel. In July 2010, AFRICOM stated that it had established an interagency command collaborative forum to assess, prioritize, and implement the recommendations from the study. Fully leveraging its embedded interagency partners can help AFRICOM contribute to a unified U.S. government approach to activity planning and implementation in Africa.

AFRICOM Faces Challenges in Building Personnel Expertise to Work in Africa

AFRICOM emphasizes the importance of collaborating with its interagency partners and building cultural awareness; however, the command has sometimes experienced difficulty implementing activities because some personnel have limited knowledge about working with U.S. embassies and about cultural issues in Africa. The training or guidance available to augment personnel expertise in these areas is limited.

Some AFRICOM Personnel Have Limited Knowledge of Working with U.S. Embassies and of African Culture

Some AFRICOM personnel have limited knowledge of working with U.S. embassies and of African culture, which can decrease the effectiveness of implementing activities.

Working with U.S. Embassies

AFRICOM emphasizes that it works closely with the U.S. embassies and chiefs of mission to ensure that its activities are consistent with U.S.

foreign policy and contribute to unity of effort among the interagency.[38] While many U.S. embassies told us that the command has made efforts to coordinate with them, some AFRICOM staff's knowledge of how to work with U.S. embassies is limited. USAID officials told us that while AFRICOM has made improvements coordinating with their agency at the headquarters level, most USAID planning efforts occur at U.S. embassies in country and that AFRICOM has not fully integrated its staff into the planning process at the country level. Moreover, in our prior work on AFRICOM's Horn of Africa task force, we reported that task force personnel did not always understand embassy procedures for interacting with African partner nations.[39] For example, task force personnel would, at times, approach the Djiboutian government ministries directly with concepts for activities rather than follow the established procedure of having the U.S. embassy in Djibouti initiate the contact. Additionally, in our prior work on the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership activity, we noted that disagreements about whether State should have authority over DOD personnel temporarily assigned to conduct activities affected implementation of DOD's activities in Niger and Chad.[40] In commenting on that report, DOD stated that it believed sufficient guidance existed that defined the authorities of DOD's combatant commander and State's chief of mission but noted that issuing joint guidance reflecting the implications of the shift to a greater DOD emphasis and support in shape and deter operations would be helpful to both the combatant commander and chief of mission in the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership region. A senior State official formerly stationed at AFRICOM told us that command and control responsibilities in Africa are improving but that issues still exist. He cited a recent example in which the U.S. ambassador to Liberia maintained that the embassy should have authority over DOD personnel carrying out security sector reform activities in the country, while AFRICOM argued that it needed shared authority over these personnel. A shared authority agreement was eventually reached for DOD personnel who would reside in Liberia on a semipermanent basis.

[38]Chiefs of mission are the principal officers (usually ambassadors) in charge of a diplomatic facility of the United States and serve as the personal representative of the President in the country of accreditation.

[39]GAO-10-504.

[40]GAO, *Combating Terrorism: Actions Needed to Enhance Implementation of Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership*, GAO-08-860 (Washington, D.C.: July 31, 2008).

Some AFRICOM personnel's limited knowledge of working with U.S. embassy staff can impose burdens on embassies because, as officials stated throughout our review, the embassies are short-staffed. The Department of State Inspector General released a report in August 2009 stating, in part, that the embassies in Africa are understaffed and that the U.S. military is filling a void created by a lack of embassy resources for traditional development and public diplomacy.[41] AFRICOM's requests for information and assistance with activities take embassy staff away from their assigned duties to focus on command priorities. For example, a U.S. embassy official in Uganda stated that AFRICOM personnel arrived in country with the expectations that the embassy would take care of basic cultural and logistical issues for them.

AFRICOM is trying to increase its presence in U.S. embassies and send planning teams prior to activity implementation in order to alleviate the burden it has placed on U.S. embassies. According to command officials, AFRICOM inherited 12 offices at U.S. embassies in Africa, and as of June 2010, it had added 5 additional offices, bringing its total U.S. embassy presence to 17. Command officials told us that they plan to have a total of 28 offices in U.S. embassies, which would give AFRICOM a presence in just over half of the 53 countries in its area of responsibility. Additionally, at an Africa Partnership Station planning conference, we observed Navy component officials request guidance from and offer suggestions on how to ease the administrative burden the activity may place on U.S. embassy personnel. AFRICOM has also begun to send reservists to African countries to help with coordination prior to an Africa Partnership Station ship visit. By providing more assistance to the embassies, AFRICOM can potentially ease the burden placed on them as command staff work to increase their understanding of engaging with the embassies and partner nations.

African Cultural Awareness

Cultural awareness is a core competency for AFRICOM, but the limited knowledge of some AFRICOM and its military service component staff on Africa cultural issues occasionally leads to difficulties in building relationships with African nations. For example, as we reported in our prior work on AFRICOM's Horn of Africa task force, task force personnel did not always understand cultural issues, such as the time required to

[41]United States Department of State and the Broadcasting Board of Governors Office of Inspector General, *Report of Inspection: The Bureau of African Affairs*, Report Number ISP-I-09-63 (Arlington, Va.: August 2009).

conduct activities in African villages or local religious customs.[42] In one case, the task force distributed used clothing to local Djibouti villagers during Ramadan, which offended the Muslim population. In another case, according to a U.S. embassy official, AFRICOM's task force provided 3 days notice that it would conduct a medical clinic in a remote village in Djibouti. However, because the villagers are nomads, it was difficult to get participants with that short amount of notice. Moreover, a Ghanaian military participant involved with the Africa Partnership Station said that AFRICOM's tendency to generalize its programs across Africa is not effective, as each country is different and requires an individualized approach.

A better understanding of African cultural issues would likely help AFRICOM improve relationships with African nations. For example, as we previously reported, a U.S. embassy official in Tanzania said that AFRICOM's task force team members had become proficient in Swahili, thus helping them to develop relationships. Getting to know the language, culture, and the people in the region, the embassy official said, has contributed to the success in developing a Tanzanian-American partnership in a region where extremists are known to operate.[43] In addition, an internal State memo described AFRICOM's sociocultural research and advisory teams as intending to provide personnel with the necessary background to work more effectively on the ground and to interact in a more respectful and collaborative manner with local populations. While a U.S. embassy had voiced concern about the teams appearing to duplicate interagency efforts, the State memo stressed the need for coordination with embassy and USAID personnel, including the sharing of information obtained in the field. In general, more widespread and robust understanding of African culture could help personnel avoid potentially unfavorable views of AFRICOM among the Africans and risk straining relations between African nations and the U.S. government.

Limited Training and Guidance Is Provided to AFRICOM Personnel

We found that AFRICOM personnel and forces deploying for activities receive some training on working with interagency partners and on African cultural awareness—and that efforts are under way to increase training for some personnel—but our review of training presentations indicated that they were insufficient to adequately build the skills of its

[42]GAO-10-504.

[43]GAO-10-504.

staff. Moreover, AFRICOM does not monitor training or require that it be completed. We have previously reported that collaborative approaches to national security require a well-trained workforce with the skills and experience to integrate the government's diverse capabilities and resources, and that increased training opportunities and strategic workforce planning efforts could facilitate federal agencies' ability to fully participate in interagency collaboration activities.[44]

AFRICOM officials told us that current training for personnel includes Web courses, seminars led by DOD's Africa Center for Strategic Studies, and guest-speaker programs. In addition, there are theater entry training requirements for personnel deploying to Africa such as medical and cultural awareness Web-based training. Officials said, however, that while training is encouraged, it is not required, and that the command does not currently monitor the completion of training courses. We requested to review training presentations provided to incoming AFRICOM staff. Our review of the 10 training presentations that were provided to us by the command found that they did not contain cultural awareness information. However, AFRICOM stated that there are 2 hours on Africa cultural awareness provided to new command staff during the first day of training, though we were not given documentation of this training. Additionally, our review found that 7 of the 10 training presentations that we were provided did not contain interagency information. The remaining 3 presentations provided an overview of AFRICOM partners, including international government organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and other federal government agencies; identified the interagency partners at the command; and provided more detailed information on one specific federal agency. While these training presentations offered some suggestions for planning and cooperative opportunities with other federal agencies, we found that they were brief and lacked specific guidance on how to involve interagency partners. Furthermore, because the presentations are provided during the beginning of tours, when personnel are also learning about their new assignments and daily operations, it is unlikely that they provide for comprehensive, effective training.

AFRICOM issued joint training guidance in December 2009[45] that included as a training goal the need to work with other federal agencies, but the

[44]GAO-09-904SP.

[45]U.S. Africa Command Guide 3500.01, Commander's Joint Training Guidance FY 2010 through FY 2015, (Dec. 18, 2009).

guidance lacks specific actions to reach this goal as well as measures to evaluate progress and effects. Moreover, the guidance states that AFRICOM will develop predeployment guidance for personnel, but we noted that no time frames were provided for when the guidance will be issued. In our prior work on AFRICOM's Horn of Africa task force, we reported that the task force's training on working with U.S. embassies was not shared with all staff, and cultural awareness training was limited. We recommended, and DOD agreed, that AFRICOM develop comprehensive training guidance or a program that augments assigned personnel's understanding of African cultural awareness and working with interagency partners.[46] Since our report, AFRICOM has taken some steps to increase training opportunities for task force personnel. For example, we reviewed an extensive briefing on East African culture that the task force said is now being provided to all incoming task force personnel. In addition, the task force stated that its sociocultural research and advisory teams provide some task force personnel with cultural and political training when needed, including training for some personnel prior to deployment. Finally, the task force said that online training on cultural awareness is now available to all task force personnel, and that it intends to make this training mandatory in the future.

Formal training is important because it would help institutionalize practices in the command. Officials from AFRICOM's Army, Marine Corps, and Air Force components and task force all voiced a preference for more cultural training and capabilities, with Army officials noting that staff do not have sufficient understanding of the size, diversity, and unique problems confronting the different regions of Africa. In addition, during our observation of Natural Fire 10, an Air Force official told us that his team received no training on Ugandan culture prior to its deployment. An AFRICOM official told us it would be beneficial to have increased sociocultural training at the command's headquarters as well as a database to monitor training completion. AFRICOM's Air Force component officials told us that they have begun working with the Air Force Cultural Language Center to develop a Web-based, African cultural awareness training for Air Force personnel deploying on AFRICOM activities, but officials noted that AFRICOM had not provided any cultural awareness training to the Air Force. Several officials from other federal agencies suggested possible courses that might be cost-effective or easy for AFRICOM to implement, such as a State online course focused on working with U.S. embassies,

[46] GAO-10-504.

curricula at the Foreign Service Institute that prepare U.S. embassy personnel, or training similar to that provided to Peace Corps volunteers. State also recommended that AFRICOM develop best practices for working more effectively and efficiently with other agencies to ensure that any lessons learned are institutionalized within the command. In June 2010, AFRICOM held a symposium to discuss how to augment language, regional expertise, and cultural competence capabilities. The command identified some options under consideration to improve capabilities, including possibly establishing an office to develop training initiatives, holding an annual symposium, and developing a newsletter with articles by personnel about their deployment experiences. These considerations reflect the command's recognition that it needs to improve its personnel's expertise. However, until AFRICOM develops, requires, and monitors training for all of its personnel on working with interagency partners and understanding African cultural issues, it continues to risk being unable to fully leverage resources with U.S. embassy personnel, build relationships with African nations, and effectively carry out activities.

Conclusions

Building the capacity of partner nations to secure and defend themselves has become a key focus of DOD, and AFRICOM's focus on supporting security and stability in Africa has the potential to advance this effort. Despite initial concerns among stakeholders about the potential U.S. militarization of foreign policy or increasing the U.S. military footprint on the continent, AFRICOM has made progress in developing overarching strategies and trying to engage interagency partners. Moreover, since our April 2010 report on AFRICOM's task force, efforts have been made to begin to evaluate some task force activities in the Horn of Africa. However, AFRICOM still faces challenges that could limit its effectiveness. Until the command completes supporting plans to guide activity planning and implementation and begins consistently conducting long-term assessments of activities, it cannot ensure that the actions it is taking on the continent best support DOD and U.S. foreign policy objectives. On a broader level, without plans and assessments, AFRICOM lacks the critical information it needs to make successful future planning decisions and to allocate resources to maximize its effect in Africa. Moreover, while many U.S. embassies and federal partners now believe that AFRICOM has the potential to make positive contributions in Africa, until the command more fully incorporates interagency partners into its activity planning process, AFRICOM continues to risk the perception—or worse, the possibility—of conducting activities that may counter U.S. foreign policy interests or lead to unintended consequences. Finally, assigning more than 4,000 personnel and forces to AFRICOM and its components illustrates

DOD's commitment to conducting activities in Africa. Developing a well-trained workforce that understands the complexities associated with working on the continent can advance the department's efforts to foster stability and security through improved relationships with African nations.

Recommendations for Executive Action

To more effectively plan, prioritize, and implement activities in a collaborative interagency environment that aligns with both the command's mission of sustained security engagement and U.S. foreign policy goals; make effective use of resources in a fiscally constrained environment; and take steps to institutionalize its processes and procedures, we recommend that the Secretary of Defense direct the Commander, AFRICOM, to take the following five actions:

- Synchronize activities among AFRICOM's components by expediting the completion of its regional engagement plans, country work plans, and component support plans; and develop a process whereby plans are reviewed on a recurring basis to ensure that efforts across the command are complementary, comprehensive, and supportive of AFRICOM's mission.
- Conduct long-term assessments of the full range of its activities to determine whether the activities are having their intended effects and supporting AFRICOM's mission.
- Take actions to ensure that budget staff within its military service components, special operations command, task force, and Offices of Security Cooperation within U.S. embassies in Africa have the expertise and knowledge necessary to make timely and accurate funding decisions for activities. These actions could include some combination of training, staffing changes, and/or comprehensive guidance on applying funding sources to activities.
- Fully integrate interagency personnel and partners into the formative stages of the command's activity planning processes to better leverage interagency expertise.
- In consultation with State and USAID, develop a comprehensive training program, with a means to monitor completion, for staff and forces involved in AFRICOM activities on
  - working with interagency partners and U.S. embassies on activities and
  - cultural issues related to Africa.

Agency Comments and Our Evaluation

In its written comments on a draft of this report, DOD concurred with all of our recommendations and cited some actions that it was taking to address the issues we identified in this report. DOD's comments are reprinted in appendix IV. Technical comments were provided separately from DOD, State, and the U.S. Coast Guard and incorporated as appropriate. USAID chose not to provide any comments.

DOD concurred with our first recommendation that AFRICOM synchronize activities among AFRICOM's components by expediting the completion of its supporting plans and developing a process whereby plans are reviewed on a recurring basis. In its response, the department stated that, in the absence of supporting plans, AFRICOM conducts weekly meetings at which its components and the Horn of Africa task force discuss the status of current activities and future events. The department added that AFRICOM uses an information database to manage events conducted by the command and its components. We noted these efforts in our report, and we agree that it is a good practice for AFRICOM to coordinate with its components through weekly meetings and an information database. However, as our report states, component officials have noted that within AFRICOM the use of the database is preliminary, that the database may not include all component activities, and that coordinating defense efforts in Africa remains a challenge. Furthermore, DOD stated in its response that regional engagement plans and component support plans are in the final stages of review and approval by AFRICOM's leadership, and will be used by the staff and components to guide and synchronize activities even though the plans have not been formally approved. The department added that country work plans are being developed for the command's critical partners as identified in the theater campaign plan. However, the department's response did not include a specific time frame for completion of AFRICOM's plans. Such a time frame is critical, given that AFRICOM has repeatedly postponed the completion of several of its supporting plans. Until AFRICOM finalizes and approves its plans, AFRICOM risks conducting activities that do not fully support its mission and may hinder a unity of effort among its components.

DOD also concurred with our second recommendation that AFRICOM conduct long-term assessments of the full range of its activities. The department stated that its Horn of Africa task force is now required to report on the effectiveness of its activities—which we note in our report. Moreover, the department stated that all AFRICOM operations and planning orders now include tasks to staff and components to develop metrics and indicators and to conduct assessments; however, we were not provided copies of these documents during our review. If these actions are

implemented in a comprehensive manner such that they require long-term evaluation of all AFRICOM activities, they have the potential to provide the command with valuable information on whether its activities are having their intended effects or whether modifications are needed. Completing thorough long-term assessments of its activities will aid in the command's efforts to make successful future planning decisions and allocate resources to maximize its effect in Africa.

DOD also concurred with our third recommendation that AFRICOM take actions to ensure that its components' and Offices of Security Cooperation's budget personnel have the appropriate expertise and knowledge to make timely and accurate funding decisions for activities. DOD fully agreed with us regarding with the need to improve the use of security cooperation tools through training, staff changes, and better guidance. DOD further stated that while AFRICOM has Title 10 authorities to conduct traditional military activities and operations, the activities that are most important to the department in Africa center around building institutional and operational security capacity and that most of the authorities and funding for these activities belong to State Department programs under Title 22 authorities. In our report, we acknowledge AFRICOM's reports of having access to several funding sources, as well as influence over some State and USAID funding sources, and that many different funding sources may be required for an activity. We also note in our report that DOD, in its 2010 *Quadrennial Defense Review*, stated that U.S. security assistance efforts are constrained by a complex patchwork of authorities. We maintain that, given the challenges associated with applying various funding sources to activities in Africa, AFRICOM should identify and complete specific actions—such as training, staffing changes, and/or comprehensive guidance—to increase understanding among its budget staff and institutionalize knowledge throughout the command.

DOD also concurred with our fourth recommendation that AFRICOM fully integrate interagency personnel and partners into the formative stages of the command's activity planning processes to better leverage interagency expertise. The department noted that AFRICOM is unique in that, in addition to a military deputy commander, it has a Deputy Commander for Civil-Military Activities—a senior Foreign Service Officer of ambassadorial level who helps ensure that policy/program development and implementation include interagency partners and are consistent with U.S. foreign policy. In our report, we highlighted the civilian deputy as a positive example of AFRICOM's efforts to integrate interagency personnel into the command. DOD also noted that it continues to pursue qualified interagency representatives to work in management and staff positions at

AFRICOM, will work with its partners to prepare personnel for assignment in a military organization, and encourages interagency partners to fill vacant positions and reward their detailees for taking assignments at AFRICOM. Our review highlights some efforts AFRICOM has taken to integrate its interagency partners into command planning and operations—such as developing a training and orientation program for embedded interagency personnel. We also state in our report that staffing shortages at other federal agencies reduce those agencies' ability to send additional staff to AFRICOM. DOD's response does not indicate how AFRICOM intends to better integrate interagency personnel into the formative stages of activity planning, which would help AFRICOM better leverage interagency expertise and promote a U.S. government unity of effort in Africa.

Finally, DOD concurred with our fifth recommendation that AFRICOM develop a comprehensive training program on working with interagency partners and African cultural issues. DOD noted that AFRICOM has developed cultural awareness training for all incoming headquarters personnel, which is mandatory and tracked. We include in our report that AFRICOM told us it allots 2 hours to Africa cultural awareness during the first day of training for new command staff. However, since presentations are given at the beginning of tours, when personnel are also learning about their new assignments and daily operations, we believe that it is unlikely that this constitutes comprehensive, effective training. The department also stated that AFRICOM's Horn of Africa task force personnel receive Web-based and in-country training as part of newcomers' orientation. As we note in our report, we reviewed the task force's briefing on East African culture and found it to be extensive and a positive step toward training personnel. Furthermore, DOD stated that key personnel attend training for working with embassies; however, the department did not identify which personnel attend the training and what opportunities are available for those who do not attend it. Additionally, DOD did not address how AFRICOM would mandate staff participation in any training it develops. Until AFRICOM provides training or guidance to its staff on working with interagency partners and cultural issues in Africa, the command risks being unable to fully leverage resources with U.S. embassy personnel, build relationships with African nations, and effectively carry out activities.

We are sending copies of this report to the Secretary of Defense; the Secretary of Homeland Security; the Secretary of State; and the Administrator, United States Agency for International Development. The

report will also be available at no charge on the GAO Web site at http://www.gao.gov.

If you or your staff have questions about this report, please contact me at (202) 512-3489 or at pendletonj@gao.gov. Contact points for our Offices of Congressional Relations and Public Affairs may be found on the last page of this report. GAO staff who made key contributions to this report are listed in appendix V.

John H. Pendleton
Director, Defense Capabilities and Management

Appendix I: Africa Partnership Station

Led by Africa Command's (AFRICOM) Navy component, the mission of the Africa Partnership Station is to build maritime safety and security capabilities with African nations. Training is typically conducted aboard a ship, moving between ports to offer training at sea and ashore with African partners. Africa Partnership Station training events focus on a broad range of areas, including maritime domain awareness, leadership, navigation, maritime law enforcement, search and rescue, civil engineering, and logistics. Crew members also participate in humanitarian assistance efforts focusing on health care, education, and other projects in local communities, which may involve participation by other federal agencies including the Department of State (State) and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). AFRICOM's Navy component coordinates with other AFRICOM components to conduct Africa Partnership Station activities, including the Marine Corps component and the Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa; interagency partners such as the U.S. Coast Guard, State, and USAID; and participants from over 22 countries from Europe, Africa, and South America. Figure 7 shows a few of the Africa Partnership Station activities.

Figure 7: U.S. and African Partners Take Part in Africa Partnership Station Activities

Source: U.S. Naval Forces Africa.

The Africa Partnership Station activity began under U.S. European Command and was transferred to AFRICOM upon reaching full operational capacity. As of May 2010, there have been 14 Africa Partnership Station deployments, including a deployment of vessels from the Netherlands and Belgium. Table 3 identifies Africa Partnership Station ships, deployment dates, and countries visited.

Table 3: Africa Partnership Station Deployments

Ship	Time frame	Countries visited
USS Fort McHenry	November 2007–April 2008	10 countries in West and Central Africa
HSV-2 SWIFT	January–April 2008	Togo, Ghana, Gabon, Nigeria, Benin, Liberia, Angola
USS Nashville	January–May 2009	Senegal, Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon, Gabon, Sao Tome and Principe
USS Robert G. Bradley (FFG 49)	February–April 2009	East Africa: Mozambique, Djibouti, Kenya, Tanzania
USS Arleigh Burke	June–August 2009	Djibouti, Kenya, Mauritius, Reunion, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Reunion (French Island)
USCGC Legare	July–September 2009	Cape Verde, Sierra Leone, Senegal
HSV Swift	July–September 2009	Senegal, Gambia, Liberia, Ghana, Togo, Nigeria, Cameroon, Gabon
HNLMS Johan de Witt (Netherlands)	October–November 2009	Senegal, Sierra Leone, Cape Verde, Liberia, Ghana
HSV Swift and USS Nicholas	November 2009–March 2010	Comoros, Djibouti, Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, Reunion (French Island), Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania
USS Samuel B. Roberts	November 2009–March 2010	Cape Verde, Senegal, Ghana, Congo, Angola, Sao Tome and Principe, Gabon
USNS Grapple	December 2009	Tanzania, Kenya, Seychelles
USS Gunston Hall	March–May 2010	Senegal, Gambia, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Togo
BNS Godetia (Belgium)	March 2010	Democratic Republic of Congo, Benin
USCGC Dallas	May–September 2010	To be determined

Source: GAO analysis of U.S. Naval Forces Africa data.

Note: USCGC = U.S. Coast Guard Cutter.

In July 2009, we observed the main planning conference for the *USS Gunston Hall*, which was scheduled to conduct Africa Partnership Station activities from February through May 2010. After an initial diversion to

Haiti for disaster relief support, the *USS Gunston Hall* arrived in West and Central Africa in March 2010. The Africa Partnership Station deployment used a "hub" approach, such that the *USS Gunston Hall* conducted operations out of ports in two countries—Ghana and Senegal. Members from various African nations were brought to these two hubs to receive training. Specific Africa Partnership Station activities on the *USS Gunston Hall* included maritime workshops and seminars on small boat operations, maritime law enforcement boarding, maritime domain awareness, and fisheries management and maritime meteorology. Additional activities included a maritime safety and security forum with key maritime stakeholders; military-to-military training led by AFRICOM's Marine Corps component; a strategic communications forum; medical outreach to local clinics conducted by a 20-person medical team, which reported seeing over 3,000 patients; several performances by the U.S. Sixth Fleet's five piece brass band; delivery of humanitarian assistance supplies; and several construction/refurbishing projects at local schools and clinics.

Appendix II: Natural Fire 10

Natural Fire 10 was an exercise led by U.S. Africa Command's (AFRICOM) Army component to train U.S. forces and build the capacity of East African forces to provide humanitarian aid and disaster response. Natural Fire began under U.S. Central Command and was transferred to AFRICOM upon its establishment. Prior to 2009, three previous Natural Fire exercises had been carried out. Natural Fire 10, which was conducted in October 2009 at various sites in Uganda, focused on disaster response to an outbreak of pandemic influenza. AFRICOM officials told us that Natural Fire 10 included approximately 550 U.S. personnel and 650 participants from five East African countries: Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Uganda.

Figure 8: Natural Fire Exercise 10 in East Africa

Source: U.S. Army Africa (left) and GAO (right).

The exercise consisted of three parts:

- **Field exercises**: a 7-day military-to-military activity which included exercising forces on convoy and humanitarian civic assistance operations; weapons handling and helicopter familiarization; weapons fire; hand-to-hand combat; crowd and riot control; and entry control point and vehicle checkpoints.
- **Tabletop**: focused on strengthening the capacity of five East African militaries to prepare and respond to a potential pandemic outbreak in their countries. The exercise consisted of 2 days of academic sessions, during which officials from various organizations gave presentations about pandemic preparedness and response. The academic sessions were followed by 2 days of pandemic scenarios for which participants were divided into three groups—civil authorities, military, and international community—to develop and act out their responses.
- **Humanitarian civic assistance**: included medical assistance events, dental assistance events, and engineering projects such as a school and hospital reconstruction.

In addition to the efforts by AFRICOM's Army component, other components also contributed to Natural Fire 10. Specifically, the Navy component oversaw construction of the camp hosting the field exercise and led humanitarian civic assistance engineering projects. The Air Force component led the medical programs. The Marine Corps component supported weapons training during the field exercise. AFRICOM's Horn of Africa task force oversaw photography and public affairs. Additionally, interagency partners and international organizations were involved in the tabletop portion of the exercise. For example, the U.S. Agency for International Development partnered with AFRICOM in developing the pandemic influenza focus for the tabletop activity, and international organizations such as the United Nations, World Health Organization, and International Red Cross led academic training sessions.

Appendix III: Scope and Methodology

In conducting our work, we reviewed a wide range of Department of Defense (DOD) and command guidance and other guidance including DOD strategies; U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) theater strategy, theater campaign plan, and 2009 and 2010 posture statements; and AFRICOM's military service component and task force's priorities, draft strategic plans (if available), and engagement plans. We met with AFRICOM officials in Stuttgart, Germany, in June 2009 and held follow-up meetings in December 2009. We also met with officials at the European headquarters of AFRICOM's military service components (Army Africa, Naval Forces Africa, Air Force Africa, and Marine Corps Africa) and special operations command in June and July 2009. In July 2009 we also observed the main planning conference for the Africa Partnership Station, a maritime safety and security activity led by Navy Africa and sponsored by AFRICOM. We traveled to Uganda, Ethiopia, and Djibouti in October 2009 to observe U.S. military operations, interview officials at the Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa, and meet with U.S. embassy officials. We chose to visit Uganda to observe the AFRICOM-sponsored, U.S. Army Africa–led Natural Fire 10 exercise, AFRICOM's largest exercise in Africa for 2009; Ethiopia, due to its proximity to Djibouti and large amount of task force civil-affairs team activity proposals; and Djibouti, due to the location of the task force at Camp Lemonnier. As part of our review of AFRICOM's task force, in January 2010 we observed and obtained documentation from an academic training and mission rehearsal exercise for incoming task force staff in Suffolk, Virginia. Additionally, we interviewed DOD officials at the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Joint Staff, and the Defense Security Cooperation Agency.

We also reviewed non-DOD documents to determine how AFRICOM's strategies compared or aligned with the strategies of other government partners, including the fiscal years 2007–2012 *Department of State /U.S. Agency for International Development Joint Strategic Plan*; *USAID Strategic Framework for Africa*; and fiscal year 2008, fiscal year 2009, and fiscal year 2010 mission strategic plans of 12 U.S. embassies in Africa.[1] We interviewed officials at the Department of State (State), the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), and the Coast Guard to obtain other federal agencies' perspectives on AFRICOM's process of planning and implementing activities, including the command's considerations of interagency perspectives. We spoke with officials from State and USAID

[1]Beginning with the fiscal year 2012 cycle, State changed the name of its Mission Strategic Plans to Mission Strategic and Resource Plans.

due to their relationship with DOD in supporting U.S. foreign policy objectives, and we met with officials from the Coast Guard due to their relationship with AFRICOM in its maritime activities. We met with U.S. embassy officials in Uganda, Ethiopia, and Djibouti, and we contacted 20 additional embassies throughout Africa: Algeria, Botswana, Burundi,[2] Chad, Comoros/Madagascar, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Mauritius/Seychelles, Morocco, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, and Yemen. We chose to contact these specific embassies based on several factors including that they were in countries that coordinate with AFRICOM's task force; their involvement with the two activities we observed in detail, Africa Partnership Station and Natural Fire 10 (see below); and their geographical dispersion to ensure that various regions were represented across Africa. When multiple countries met our criteria, we gave preference to U.S. embassies located in countries that were identified by DOD officials or in documents as important countries for AFRICOM. In addition, we met with an organization that represents U.S.-based international nongovernmental organizations that conduct work in Africa, as well as some African government and African military officials, to obtain their viewpoints on AFRICOM's activities.

We observed two AFRICOM activities in depth to complement our broader review of the command's activities at the interagency and command levels. These two activities were: Africa Partnership Station (a maritime safety and security activity) and Natural Fire 10 (part of AFRICOM's pandemic preparedness and response initiative). In choosing which of AFRICOM's over 100 activities to review as illustrative examples, we first narrowed the activities to 30 main activities that support AFRICOM in achieving its theater strategic objectives, as identified by AFRICOM officials. We then chose to review the Africa Partnership Station and Natural Fire 10 activities due to factors such as their addressing of different theater security objectives, timeliness to our review, leadership by different military service components, considerable involvement of interagency and international partners, size of the activities, and distinct geographic locations. To review the Africa Partnership Station, we observed the activity's main planning conference in New York, New York, in July 2009; reviewed documentation including reports and assessments; and spoke to officials at DOD, AFRICOM, U.S. Navy Africa, Coast Guard, State, and USAID, as well as nongovernmental organizations and African military

[2]We did not receive a response from the U.S. Embassy in Burundi.

officials. To review Natural Fire 10, we observed the Natural Fire 10 exercise in Uganda in October 2009; reviewed documentation including guidance, plans, reports, and assessments; and spoke to officials at DOD, AFRICOM, U.S. Army Africa, State, and USAID, as well as African military officials, about the activity. These two activities serve as examples, and information about them is not meant to be generalized to all AFRICOM activities. We supplemented our examination of the Africa Partnership Station and Natural Fire 10 with information on additional activities highlighted by AFRICOM, AFRICOM's military service components and task force, DOD, State, and USAID officials during our review, as well as by two GAO reports that addressed AFRICOM activities: one that examined the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership, Operation Enduring Freedom–Trans Sahara,[3] and related AFRICOM activities to combat terrorism;[4] and one that partially reviewed the Global Peace Operations Initiative and Africa Contingency Operations Training and Assistance activities.[5]

To assess AFRICOM's activity planning and implementation, we considered successful organizational practices, as identified in prior GAO work. Because AFRICOM is still maturing as a combatant command, we decided it was important to consider in our review critical steps and practices that help agencies to achieve success, including strategic planning; measuring performance; aligning resources to support goals; involving stakeholders; and building expertise. Specifically, in examining strategic planning, we reviewed DOD national strategies and guidance including the *Quadrennial Defense Review*, *National Defense Strategy*, *National Security Strategy*, and *Guidance for Employment of the Force*. We analyzed AFRICOM's theater strategy, theater campaign plan, and posture statements—as well as AFRICOM's military service components', special operation command's, and task force's priority areas, draft strategic plans (if available), and engagement plans—for guidance on implementing activities. We also reviewed DOD's Theater Security Cooperation Management Information System; Joint Staff Global Force

[3]Operation Enduring Freedom–Trans Sahara is designed to strengthen the ability of regional governments to police large expanses of remote terrain in the Trans-Sahara.

[4]GAO, *Combating Terrorism: Actions Needed to Enhance Implementation of Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership*, GAO-08-860 (Washington, D.C.: July 31, 2008).

[5]GAO, *Peacekeeping: Thousands Trained but United States Is Unlikely to Complete All Activities by 2010 and Some Improvements Are Needed*, GAO-08-754 (Washington, D.C.: June 26, 2008).

Management portal; Force Allocation Decision Framework; Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 7401.01E on the Combatant Commander's Initiative Fund; and AFRICOM training presentations. We spoke with officials at AFRICOM, its military service components, special operations command, and task force about their respective strategic planning efforts. To examine AFRICOM's assessment of activities, we reviewed a presentation of AFRICOM's strategic assessment tool as well as activity assessment requirements in the command's theater campaign plan and the task force's draft regional engagement plan. We spoke with officials at DOD, AFRICOM, AFRICOM's components, U.S. embassies, and other federal agencies to assess whether the command's activities support AFRICOM's mission and reflect the most effective use of resources. In examining funding for activities, we reviewed AFRICOM's funding sources as well as the available funding for the Africa Partnership Station and Natural Fire 10 activities. We also reviewed a GAO report that examined the use of funds under the programs authorized in Sections 1206 and 1207 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2006.[6] AFRICOM provided data on the funding amounts for its activities in fiscal year 2009, which were drawn from the Standard Army Finance Information System. We assessed the reliability of the finance information system through interviews with personnel responsible for maintaining and overseeing these data systems. Additionally, we assessed the quality control measures in place to ensure that the data are reliable for reporting purposes. We found the funding amount data reported by AFRICOM to be sufficiently reliable for the purposes of this review. To review efforts at interagency collaboration and building expertise, we examined agreements between AFRICOM and interagency partners, training guidance, and training programs. We spoke with interagency partners embedded at AFRICOM, at U.S. embassies in Africa, and at other federal agency offices.

We conducted this performance audit from April 2009 through July 2010 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

[6]GAO, *International Security: DOD and State Need to Improve Sustainment Planning and Monitoring and Evaluation for Section 1206 and 1207 Assistance Programs*, GAO-10-431 (Washington, D.C.: Apr. 15, 2010).

Appendix IV: Comments from the Department of Defense

OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-2400

INTERNATIONAL
SECURITY AFFAIRS

Mr. John H. Pendleton
Director, Defense Capabilities and Management
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Pendleton:

This is the Department of Defense (DoD) response to the GAO draft report, GAO 10-794, "DEFENSE MANAGEMENT: Improved Planning, Training, and Interagency Collaboration Could Strengthen DoD's Efforts in Africa." DoD concurs with the five recommendations with additional comments. Our response to the recommendations is enclosed.

U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) was designed as an innovative command structure that relies on the active participation of other government departments and agencies in order for it to successfully achieve objectives focused on developing African security capacity. We are still learning from our experiments in the creation of AFRICOM and GAO's active interest in the command is welcome as we refine the way we do business in this new organization.

The GAO highlights areas where we need to improve and we are pleased to note that AFRICOM has taken a number of steps to address the shortcomings identified in this report. DoD and AFRICOM, in close cooperation with our interagency partners, will continue to pursue improvements to the way the organization operates.

Our point of contact for this action is Mr. Mark Swayne, Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for African Affairs, commercial phone (703) 571-9420 or electronic mail address: mark.swayne@osd.mil.

Sincerely,

Vicki J. Huddleston
Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense
for African Affairs

Enclosure:
Tab A: DoD Response

TAB A

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GAO DRAFT REPORT 10-794 – DATED JUL 2010
GAO EC351340

"DEFENSE MANAGEMENT: Improved Planning, Training, and Interagency Collaboration Could Strengthen DOD's Efforts in Africa"

GAO RECOMMENDATION 1: Synchronize activities among AFRICOM's components by expediting the completion of its regional engagement plans, country work plans, campaign support plans, and develop a process whereby plans are reviewed on a recurring basis to ensure that efforts across the command are complementary, comprehensive, and supportive of AFRICOM's mission.

DOD RESPONSE: DoD concurs with comment. In the absence of support plans, AFRICOM conducts weekly Command and Staff Updates (CSU) where components and CJTF-HOA brief the status of each current activity and the status of key future events. Additionally, AFRICOM utilizes an information database, the Theater Security Cooperation Management Information System (TSCMIS), to manage each individual event conducted by AFRICOM staff and subordinate commands from initial planning to final assessment. TSCMIS links events to the AFRICOM Theater Campaign Plan's Theater Security Objectives in order to guide subordinate command activities for unified effort.

Additionally, Regional Plans and Component Support Plans are in the final stages of review and approval by AFRICOM's leadership. These final draft plans—although not formally approved—will be used by the staff and components to guide and synchronize activities. Country Work Plans are also being developed for the command's critical partners as identified in the Theater Campaign Plan.

GAO RECOMMENDATION 2: Conduct long-term assessments of the full range of its activities to determine whether the activities are having their intended effects and supporting AFRICOM's mission.

DOD RESPONSE: DoD concurs with comment. AFRICOM has taken steps to improve the assessment of its activities. A CJTF-HOA Fragmentary Order (FRAGO) directs units to report measures of effectiveness on activities and projects based on CJTF-HOA objectives and desired effects. Since the release of the FRAGO, CJTF-HOA has seen a remarkable improvement in the reporting of qualitative evidence of positive results. All AFRICOM operations and planning orders now include tasks to staff and service components to develop metrics and indicators and to conduct assessments.

GAO RECOMMENDATION 3: Take actions to ensure that budget staff within its military service components, Special Operations Command, Task Force, and Offices of

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Security Cooperation within U.S. Embassies in Africa have the expertise and knowledge necessary to make timely and accurate funding decisions for activities. These actions could include some combination of training, staffing changes, and comprehensive guidance on applying funding sources to activities.

DOD RESPONSE: DoD concurs with comment. DoD fully agrees with the need to improve the use of security cooperation tools through training, staff changes, and better guidance. AFRICOM has Title 10 authorities to conduct traditional military activities and operations. However, the activities that are most important to DoD in Africa center around building institutional and operational security capabilities and capacity among our African partners. Most of the authorities and funding to provide this capacity building fall within State Department programs under Title 22 authorities. Even so, the innovative command structure is enabling creative solutions to be developed between AFRICOM military and State Department staff to address these challenges.

GAO RECOMMENDATION 4: Fully integrate Interagency personnel and partners into the formative stages of the command's activity planning processes to better leverage Interagency expertise.

DOD RESPONSE: DoD concurs with comment. DoD continues to pursue qualified interagency representatives to work in management and staff positions at AFRICOM and will work with our partners to prepare personnel for assignment in a military organization. DoD encourages interagency partners to fill vacant positions and to reward their detailees for assignments at AFRICOM.

U.S. Africa Command is unique in that it houses two Deputy Commanders. The Deputy Commander for Military Operations (DCMO) is a General or Flag officer of a three star rank while the Deputy Commander for Civil – Military Activities (DCMA) is a senior Foreign Service Officer of ambassadorial level. The deputies serve to keep military command authorities distinct while recognizing the value added to civil-military activities by incorporating Interagency expertise at the right levels and locations in the command. The DCMA helps to ensure the command integrates interagency personnel at all levels of planning.

The DCMA directs the command's plans and programs associated with health, humanitarian assistance and de-mining action, disaster response, security sector reform, and Peace Support Operations. He also directs Outreach, Strategic Communication, AFRICOM's partner-building functions and ensures that policy/program development and implementation include the interagency and are consistent with U.S. Foreign Policy.

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GAO RECOMMENDATION 5: In consultation with State and USAID, develop a comprehensive training program, with a means to monitor completion, for staff and forces involved in AFRICOM activities on

- Working with Interagency partners and U.S. Embassies on activities and
- Cultural issues related to Africa.

DOD RESPONSE: DoD concurs with comment. As of February 2010, Cultural Awareness Training for HQ staff personnel was incorporated into the newcomer's orientation course and is mandatory for all incoming personnel. During the initial in processing, attendance is monitored, tracked and recorded by the Joint Force Development and Readiness Directorate to ensure compliance. Additionally, personnel deploying to CJTF-HOA receive web based Cultural Awareness training via Joint Knowledge Online and are also given additional training in-country as part of the CJTF-HOA newcomer's orientation.

As for working within Embassies, key personnel attend training at the Defense Institute for Security Assistance Management (DISAM) once they have been selected for an assignment. AFRICOM will continue to develop and conduct training to improve the command's ability to work with Embassies and other agencies.

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Appendix V: GAO Contact and Staff Acknowledgments

GAO Contact

John H. Pendleton, (202) 512-3489 or pendletonj@gao.gov

Staff Acknowledgments

In addition to the contact named above, Marie Mak, Assistant Director; Kathryn Bolduc; Alissa Czyz; Robert Heilman; Lonnie McAllister; James Michels; Steven Putansu; Jodie Sandel; Erin Smith; and Cheryl Weissman made major contributions to this report.

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