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USAFRICOM's Approach to International Stability

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USAFRICOM’s Approach to International Stability

The United States Africa Command, created in 2007, is responsible for military relations in 53 African countries. Having assumed responsibilities formerly housed in three other combatant commands, USAFRICOM is now tasked with a broad range of humanitarian, military and policy objectives on the continent, including conducting mine action and remediation the damages posed by explosive remnants of war. This article explores the massive tasks facing USAFRICOM as it stands up, and the ways in which the command is already making a much-needed difference.

Humanitarian Approach

Whereas traditional commands have focused their attention on direct warfare, USAFRICOM instead works toward diplomacy and sustainability through military operations to promote “a stable and secure African environment in support of U.S. foreign policy.” The command employs more than 1,000 individuals from both military and humanitarian organizations, working closely with the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the African Union, and other international and nongovernmental organizations to ensure coordination of political stability, economic growth and international humanitarian efforts in Africa.

In October 2008, USAFRICOM officially transitioned to independent Unified Command status, and since then it has actively worked toward merging and managing the U.S. military activities for Africa organized by U.S. Pacific Command, U.S. Central Command and U.S. European Command. Despite the Command’s relatively short existence, USAFRICOM has already assumed many responsibilities previously allocated to U.S. Africa Command, U.S. Central Command and U.S. European Command into a single African security-related organization.

Without enough money to begin investment, these countries have little to no chance of economic development.

Background

After 10 years of discussions about how best to reverse the unfortunate dichotomy between international influence and regional instability, and how to achieve and promote the long-term sustainability and security of African nations, the U.S. Department of Defense announced the creation of an African Geographic Combatant Command on 6 February 2007. Officially established in October 2007, USAFRICOM is the youngest of the U.S. Department of Defense’s six geographic commands. USAFRICOM consolidates the responsibilities previously allocated to U.S. Africa Command, U.S. Central Command and U.S. European Command into a single African security-related organization.

USAFRICOM has been operational for only two years. Despite its nascent state, this Combatant Command has already assumed many responsibilities from other geographic commands. In addition, USAFRICOM has also established a program that initiated mine-action work in six African countries. Though there are no clear results yet on how these particular programs will affect the host nations, with an increased budget, more focus on training and diplomacy, greater military personnel and expanded military operations, USAFRICOM expects a long-term beneficial impact.

Conclusion

USAFRICOM has been operational for only two years. Despite its nascent state, this Combatant Command has already assumed many responsibilities from other geographic commands. In addition, USAFRICOM has also established a program that initiated mine-action work in six African countries. Though there are no clear results yet on how these particular programs will affect the host nations, with an increased budget, more focus on training and diplomacy, greater military personnel and expanded military operations, USAFRICOM expects a long-term beneficial impact.

See Endnotes, Page 77