

*The LRA, Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab, AQIM and other Sources of Instability in Africa*  
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Madame Chairman, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today about sources of instability in Africa.

At the outset, I would like to note that African states and regional organizations are making significant progress in developing the ability to address security concerns and sources of instability on the continent. We are seeing this dynamic reflected in the robust role of the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), in the African Union's (AU) lead role in facilitating negotiations between the two Sudans, and in the Economic Community of West African States' (ECOWAS) work to facilitate a political settlement in response to the recent coup in Mali. Nonetheless, our partners in Africa still lack important capabilities and the capacity to address all of the varying sources of instability across Africa. Given this reality, the Department of Defense (DoD), in conjunction with the Department of State (DoS), continues to assist our partners on the continent with building their capacity to respond to security threats. Our efforts in this respect take several forms, including security assistance, exercises, rotational presence, advisory efforts, and training and equipping, as I'll discuss momentarily in the context of some specific threats. However, all of these efforts are implemented in accordance with the recent Defense Strategic Guidance, which calls for innovative, low-cost, and small-footprint approaches to achieve our security objectives in Africa. By assisting capable and willing African partners to address threats like al-Shabaab (AS), the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and Boko Haram (BH), we help them to create the space necessary to continue developing, politically and economically, which benefits both Africa and the United States.

### **Al-Shabaab**

On February 9, al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri and al-Shabaab's emir Ahmed Abdi released a joint video to announce formally a merger of the two organizations. AS seeks to undermine the Somalia Transitional Federal Government (TFG) and its supporters and establish an Islamic emirate in Somalia. In pursuit of this objective, AS employs several hundred foreign fighters and regularly tries to recruit fighters from Somali diaspora communities in the United States and Europe. AS propaganda has increasingly been directed at U.S. and other Western recruits and has had some success attracting recruits from the United States; dozens of individuals have traveled from the U.S. to Somalia to fight with AS since 2007.

In response to this threat, the United States has supported AMISOM forces, which have now driven al-Shabaab out of Mogadishu. In concert with these efforts, Kenyan and Ethiopian forces have successfully maintained military pressure against AS elements along their borders. UN Security Council Resolution 2036 recently authorized an increase in forces to 17,700 and welcomed Kenyan force contributions to AMISOM. As soon as the AU and the Government of Kenya sign a memorandum of understanding officially re-hatting Kenya as a member of

AMISOM, U.S. Government support to Kenyan military activities in Somalia may proceed. The U.S. Government remains limited with regard to the support that it can offer the non-AMISOM Ethiopian forces within Somalia because of the UN Security Council-authorized Somalia arms embargo and other concerns.

Outside of Somalia, DoD supports the DOS's Africa Contingency Operations Training Assistance (ACOTA) program by providing mentors. Separately, since FY 2011, DoD has provided training and equipment to African forces deploying as part of AMISOM under Section 1206 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for 2006, as amended.

In the NDAA for FY 12, Congress provided DoD an additional important tool through the new authority of section 1207(n). Pursuant to that authority, we are working with the DoS to plan our support to continue building the capacity of the counter-terrorism forces in the region. This authority complements DOS programs to train and equip African forces participating in AMISOM, as well as the program goals and objectives of the DOS's Partnership for Regional East African Counter-Terrorism (PREACT), which aims to defeat terrorist organizations by strengthening regional counterterrorism capabilities and enhancing and institutionalizing cooperation among the region's security forces.

### **Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)**

For the past several years, the people and Governments of Uganda, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and South Sudan have worked to eliminate the threat posed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), one of Africa's most violent and persistent armed groups, which has brutalized civilians in the region for decades. They have made progress, but there are significant challenges to pursuing LRA groups and protecting local communities across this vast, densely-forested region.

Consistent with the LRA legislation passed by Congress in 2010 and signed into law by the President, the United States continues to pursue a comprehensive, multi-year strategy to help our regional partners mitigate and eliminate the threat posed by the LRA. In October 2011, the President authorized approximately 100 U.S. military personnel to deploy to the LRA-affected region in October 2011 to serve as advisors to the forces pursuing the LRA and seeking to protect local populations.

To be clear, the deployed U.S. forces do not have an operational role and are focused on advising and assisting host nation forces. This deployment is consistent with the Defense Strategic Guidance, which states: "Whenever possible, we will develop innovative, low-cost, and small-footprint approaches to achieve our security objectives on the continent, relying on exercises, rotational presence, and advisory capabilities."

Small teams of U.S. military advisors are now present with the Ugandan military and the other regional military forces in field locations in LRA-affected areas of Central African Republic and South Sudan. In these two countries, U.S. advisors have helped to set up Operations Fusion Centers to enable daily coordination, information-sharing, and tactical coordination among the partner forces. The U.S. advisors are also integrating local civilian leaders into the work of the fusion centers to improve civil-military relations.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, U.S. advisors are supporting efforts by the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) and the Congolese military (FARDC) to increase the protection of civilians and address the LRA. The advisors are working at MONUSCO's Joint Intelligence Operations Center (JIOC), which serves as the intelligence fusion hub for these efforts. U.S. advisors are connecting the work of the JIOC and that of the Operations Fusion Centers to increase cross-border analysis and coordination on LRA movements.

DoD is satisfied with the progress of the deployment to date considering the complexity of the operating environment, the number of partners involved, and the remoteness of the operational areas. The U.S. advisors have established a good foundation, and President Obama announced on April 23 that the United States will continue the deployment of advisors. There will continue to be an ongoing review process to ensure our efforts are helping the region make progress in ending the threat posed by the LRA. In this respect, DoD appreciates the flexibility provided by the authority in Section 1206 of the National Defense Authorization Act for FY 2012, which allows for the expenditure of \$35 million to provide enhanced logistical support, supplies, and services to the regional partner forces to increase their operational effectiveness.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that DoD's role in addressing the LRA threat is embedded within a broader strategy and complemented by civilian efforts, including encouraging members of the LRA to defect and peacefully surrender, and we continue to work closely with the DoS and USAID in this regard. We believe that the use of the State Department's War Crimes Rewards Program to target Joseph Kony and top LRA commanders would significantly enhance and complement the DoD rewards program. We support legislation that would expand the authority for this program for these purposes. This would provide an additional tool to help generate information about the location of LRA leaders and encourage more LRA fighters to defect.

### **Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)**

The DoD remains very concerned about the threat posed by AQIM to U.S. citizens and interests in West Africa. AQIM uses the under-governed spaces of the Sahel as a safe haven from which to attack Western interests and persons. Originally focused on overthrowing the government of Algeria, AQIM has evolved and begun to target Western interests in North Africa and the Sahel.

AQIM continues to increase its activities, including collecting large sums of money through kidnapping for ransom. The breakdown in security in Libya has generated a significant illicit flow of militants and weapons into the Sahel and decreased legitimate cross-border trade at a time of exceptional economic fragility and sociopolitical turbulence. The revolutions in Libya and Tunisia, and most recently the Tuareg rebellion in northern Mali, have created opportunities for AQIM to exploit instability and establish new and expanded safe havens. DoD is closely watching what this will mean for the stability of the region and the ability of AQIM to target U.S. interests.

The Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP) is the DoS-led interagency framework for coordinating U.S. efforts to address the AQIM threat. The TSCTP works with ten partner countries to build their capacity to combat the threat posed by AQIM. DoD collaborates closely

with the DOS to plan and implement TSCTP military assistance funds to train and equip TSCTP partners to address the AQIM threat. DoD's military-to-military activities under the TSCTP seek to build the counterterrorism capacity of key partners in the region. DoD also leverages Section 1206 authorities to train and equip partner nations and conducts Joint Combined Exchange Training events. Additionally, DoD has incorporated Man Portable Air Defense Systems (MANPADS) awareness and mitigation training into DoD engagements. Finally, DoD conducts regional exercises focused on counterterrorism to enhance partner nation capacity and interoperability, such as Exercise Flintlock.

### **Boko Haram**

The group known as Boko Haram (BH) in Nigeria is a source of increasing concern. Attacks associated with the group have grown dramatically in number, range, sophistication, and lethality over the last year. While Boko Haram is primarily focused on Nigerian government issues and actors, elements of the group have shown interest in attacking Westerners as well. Its attack on the UN headquarters building in Abuja last August demonstrated its capability to attack international interests. In January of this year, BH detonated a series of coordinated IEDs in the northern city of Kano, killing nearly 200 people. These attacks demonstrate Boko Haram's will and capacity to mount sophisticated terrorist attacks. BH enjoys little popular support among the people of Nigeria but exploits popular discontent (particularly in the north) to recruit members. There are also credible reports that BH receives training and other support from other extremist groups operating in the region.

Although DoD has a role to play in building the capacity of the Nigerian military, much of the effort required to defuse BH must focus on addressing the socio-economic, political, developmental, and governance challenges Nigeria faces. That effort falls clearly within the purview of the DoS and USAID, but DoD will provide support where it can. For example, in late January 2012, DoD participated in the inaugural meeting of the regional security working group established under the DoS-led U.S.-Nigeria Bi-national Commission. Although meant to address the full range of U.S.-Nigeria security cooperation, this working group meeting focused on countering violent extremism. To date, our broader efforts are focused on counter-IED and civil-military operations, where our engagement and cooperation can support the mutual goal of addressing BH as a threat. We will continue to explore further areas of cooperation with Nigeria on counterterrorism issues as circumstances permit.

### **Other Sources of Instability**

Beyond the organizations previously described, it has become abundantly clear that the instability created at sea by piracy off the Horn of Africa is directly tied to instability on land in Somalia. It has become a lucrative business; money from outside Somalia is invested in increasingly sophisticated equipment with the hope of extorting profit by threatening the lives of innocent merchant seamen.

The international community, including NATO and the European Union, is actively combating piracy, yet many African partners lack the maritime capability to address this threat effectively. DoD seeks to help partner nations build their capacity to increase maritime domain awareness and security in Africa as part of broader U.S. Government and international efforts. International

naval patrols have helped to decrease the number of successful hijackings, as have the steps taken by the commercial maritime community.

Another source of instability in Africa relates to illicit trafficking, from weapons proliferation to trafficking in narcotics and even humans. Narcotics are also a destabilizing influence in Africa, which serves as a transit point from South America into Europe. DoD activities complement the DoS's West Africa Cooperative Security Initiative (WACSI), which was designed to address transnational organized crime through a multi-layered approach to building security and cooperation with international partners and donors.

DoD objectives for addressing these threats include fostering regional integration and cooperation and increasing response capabilities. In addition to the authorities already cited, these activities are carried out pursuant to a variety of DoD (Title 10) and DoS (Title 22) authorities and funding streams, such as International Military Education and Training (IMET), Foreign Military Financing (FMF), and Peacekeeping Operations (PKO). In all cases, DoD is fully cognizant of and complies with the human rights vetting procedures contained in the relevant legislation.

## **Conclusion**

The Defense Strategic Guidance provides the framework for DoD activities on the continent, including countering threats to stability by non-state actors. In tandem with the Department of State and other U.S departments and agencies, we will continue to work with our partners in the region to help them secure their territories and promote an environment that is hostile to terrorists and other threats to stability, enabling our African partners to focus their energies on democratic consolidation and continued economic development.