



Tell Senators and Members of Congress to Halt the Current Structure of AFRICOM and to Pursue a Foreign Policy Rooted in True Partnership with African Governments, the African Union, and African Civil Society

In February 2007, the Bush Administration announced plans to establish a unified US military command for Africa (AFRICOM). According to the State Department and the Department of Defense (DOD), it is a means of pursuing peace and security on the continent of Africa. According to African civil society, NGOs, governments, and peace advocates, AFRICOM is yet another step in militarizing foreign policy and will do more harm than good to the people of Africa.

It has become clear that there are three key motivators in the Administration's decision to launch a military command:

1. Africa has a significant geopolitical position in the Global War on Terror.
2. Africa may supply as much as 25% of America's oil by 2015.
3. China's growing influence in the region is seen as a threat to US economic investments in Africa.

Such self-interested reasons for creating a military command on foreign soil are cause for concern.

Another significant point of concern lies in the projected structure of AFRICOM. Much of the humanitarian and development work historically done by State Department and USAID may now fall under DOD directive and influence. The resulting dual-nature of the US military will not only be confusing to African civilians but blurs the roles of armed forces and civil society.

Additionally, DOD has reiterated that it will use this command as an opportunity to build the capacity of African armies – to “help Africans solve African problems.” However, it is very likely that private defense sub-contractors will be employed, jeopardizing both the safety of civilians as well as the legitimacy of the African Union and African armies.

What the people of Africa need is not increased military aid but improvements in education, adequate health care, jobs, clean water, debt relief, and fair international farming laws. If the United States truly wishes to pursue security in Africa, it should follow the path of development and diplomacy, not defense.

The Legislative branch of the US government should take these actions:

- The United States Congress should *first* fulfill and improve its current development obligations to the continent through diplomatic means.
- The Senate and the House of Representatives should set specific restrictions on AFRICOM finances to ensure that private defense contractors will *never* be used to carry out the mission of the command.
- The Senate and the House of Representatives should not approve funding for a command that blends the military and civil society in development work, particularly in countries where the military is already overused as a branch of corrupt or oppressive governments.

On October 1st, 2007, AFRICOM became operational in Stuttgart, Germany. Officials are hoping to establish a headquarters on the continent by October of 2008. Overwhelmingly, Africans are saying NO to AFRICOM. With the above actions, Congress can show that the US is interested in a responsible, attentive, and just foreign policy in Africa.

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Africa Faith and Justice Network, 125 Michigan Ave. NE, Washington DC 20017

I hereby add my voice to the call for a responsible US foreign policy that respects the dignity and capacity of its African partners. I ask you to halt the current mission of AFRICOM and to begin by taking the actions listed above. Thank you.

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