

AFRICOM and America's Global Military Agenda: Taking The Helm Of The Entire World

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“AFRICOM facilitates the United States advancing on the African continent, taking control of the Eurasian continent and proceeding to take the helm of the entire globe.”

October 1st marked the one-year anniversary of the activation of the first U.S. overseas military command in a quarter of a century, Africa Command (AFRICOM).

AFRICOM was established as a temporary command under the wing of U.S. European Command (EUCOM) a year earlier and launched as an independent entity on October 1, 2008.

Its creation signalled several important milestones in plans by the United States and its North Atlantic Treaty Organization allies to expand into all corners of the earth and to achieve military, political and economic hegemony in the Southern as well as the Northern Hemisphere.

AFRICOM is the first American regional military command established outside of North America in the post-Cold War era. (The Pentagon set up Northern Command, NORTHCOM, in 2002 after the September 11, 2001 attacks to take in the U.S., Canada and Mexico.)

Its area of responsibility includes more nations – 53 – than any other U.S. military command. By way of comparison, EUCOM includes 51 nations, among which are 19 new nations emerging from the breakup of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia and the reunification of Germany.

The Pacific Command (PACOM) incorporates 36 countries in its theater of operations, down four since the creation of AFRICOM.

Central Command (CENTCOM) currently includes 20 nations in what is referred to as the Broader Middle East.

Southern Command (SOUTHCOM) covers 32 states, 19 in Central and South America and 13 in the Caribbean, of which 14 are U.S. and European territories.

AFRICOM is also the only new U.S. regional military command absorbing nations formerly in other commands; in fact in all other commands outside the Western Hemisphere.

EUCOM ceded 42 nations (including Western Sahara, a member of the African Union whose recognition has been virulently opposed by the West since Morocco invaded it in 1975) to AFRICOM.

The Horn of Africa region (Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan) was transferred from CENTCOM to AFRICOM, with the former picking up Lebanon and Syria from EUCOM in return. Egypt is the sole African nation still in CENTCOM. The Pentagon's Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa, which includes Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, the Seychelles, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Yemen, the last on the Arabian Peninsula, was also transferred from CENTCOM to AFRICOM. The U.S. has an estimated 2,000 troops stationed in Djibouti at Camp Lemonier which hosts the Combined Joint Task Force - Horn of Africa.

PACOM lost the Indian Ocean island nations of the Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius and the Seychelles to Africa Command.

Africa is, lastly, the first new continent targeted by the Pentagon for a comprehensive military structure, as the U.S. created comparable commands in Asia, Europe and Latin America after World War II and during the Cold War and had fought wars in all three areas by 1918. With the exception of the bombing of Libya in 1986 and military operations in Somalia in the early 1990s and by proxy since 2006, Africa has to date escaped direct American military intervention. And until the acquisition of Camp Lemonier in Djibouti in early 2001, before September 11, there was no permanent U.S. military installation on the continent.

The beginning of AFRICOM's second year has witnessed major military exercises on the western and eastern ends of the continent.

On September 29 AFRICOM led the militaries of 30 African nations in the ten-day Africa Endeavor 2009 maneuvers in Gabon off the coast of the oil-rich Gulf of Guinea. "The U.S. military has begun an exercise in the African nation of Gabon... to improve command and control between forces for possible peacekeeping or anti-terrorism missions.

"Africom... is sponsoring the exercise and much of the instruction is done by U.S. military personnel based in Europe and the United States." [1]

Coordinated with the command out of which AFRICOM arose, "The AFRICOM exercise comes on the heels of a similar U.S. European Command-sponsored operation - Combined Endeavor - that tested the communication compatibility of the U.S. and its European allies." [2]

The Gabon-based exercise reprised the previous year's Africa Endeavor which was run by European Command before AFRICOM's formal activation and which included "21 African nations, the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Sweden and the United States.

"Nations and organizations who participated... were Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya,

Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Sweden, Uganda, the United States and Zambia.” [3]

The Pentagon participated with personnel from “U.S. Marine Forces Europe (MARFOREUR); U.S. Air Forces in Europe, Public Affairs; First Combat Communications Squadron, Ramstein Air Force Base; 8th Communications Battalion, Camp Lejeune; Marine Headquarters History, Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa; U.S. European Command (EUCOM); U.S. African Command (AFRICOM); and the Joint Interoperability Test Command (JITC).” [4]

This year’s maneuvers effected the formal transfer of Africa from European Command to the new Africa Command.

From October 16-25 the U.S. is heading a multinational military exercise, Natural Fire 10, in Uganda in which “More than 1,000 American and East African troops are... deployed... as the United States carries out its biggest military exercise in Africa this year.” [5]

Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi are to provide troops to join 450 U.S. military personnel in drills which “involve live fire in the field as well as convoy operations, crowd control and vehicle checkpoints...” [6]

An African newspaper account of the exercises suggests ulterior motives: “[T]he decision to site the exercise in northern Uganda raises questions about whether it may presage a renewed US-supported assault against the Lord’s Resistance Army,” which has waged an armed rebellion against the Ugandan government since 1987.

The same source continued with these observations:

“The exercise in northern Uganda is scheduled to begin one week after the conclusion of another US-led military exercise in Gabon.

“Nearly 30 African nations – including Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda – took part in that communications-focused initiative led by the US Africa Command... Together, these exercises are cited by Africom’s critics as further indications of what they describe as the growing militarisation of the US presence in Africa.

“Situating the exercise in Uganda reflects the close military relationship that the United States has developed with that East African country...

“Worries persist in Africa that the Pentagon intends to station large numbers of US troops on the continent, despite denials by Africom’s leaders that such a move is being planned.

“The United States already maintains about 2,000 troops at a base in Djibouti. This Joint Task Force/Horn of Africa detachment is the source of some of the US soldiers, sailors and Marines who will participate in Natural Fire 10.” [7]

Two days after the above was published a Ugandan newspaper announced that “Hundreds of Rwandan and Burundi troops have arrived in the country for joint military training exercises geared towards the formation of the first Joint East African Military Force.

“The training, which will also have troops from Kenya and Tanzania with experts from the US, will be conducted in Kitgum... Last week, the UPDF

[Uganda Peoples Defence Force] said it supports the formation of a joint regional army, believing this will handle conflicts in the region.

“The proposal was mooted during a meeting of delegates from the five member countries in Kampala early this month.” [8]

The Pentagon is setting up a new African regional military force.

On October 20 a Rwandan news source revealed that “The visiting US commander of US Army Africa, Maj. Gen. William B. Garrett III, has stressed that the US army is interested in strengthening its cooperation with the Rwandan Defence Force (RDF).”

Garrett was quoted as saying “We are hoping to improve the relationship between Rwandan Defence Forces and the US army - this involves increase in interaction between our forces... Likewise, we hope that the Rwandan Defence Forces can also participate in our exercises. So we are hoping to increase the level of cooperation between the US and the Rwandan Defense forces.” [9]

The U.S. and its allies previously deployed Rwandan troops they trained and armed to Darfur and Somalia.

In northwest Africa, on October 20 the U.S. ambassador to Mali presented the latest tranche of “more than \$5 million in new vehicles and other equipment” to the armed forces of his host country. [10]

Two years earlier the Pentagon led a multinational military exercise, Operation Flintlock 2007, in the capital of Mali with troops from thirteen African and European nations.

In the prototype exercise, Flintlock 2005, the U.S. deployed over 1,000 Special Operations troops, Green Berets, for joint military maneuvers with counterparts from Senegal, Niger, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Algeria and Tunisia.

Flintlock 2005 was employed to launch Washington’s Trans Saharan Counterterrorism Initiative with Algeria, Burkina Faso, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal. An American news report of the exercise bore the title “U.S. Said Eying Sahara For New War Front.” [11]

An official with the U.S. Special Operations Command Europe said at the time, “This is just the start of decades worth of work in Africa,” [12] a sentiment echoed by an American armed forces publication which wrote “If military planners have their way, U.S. troops are going to be deploying to Africa for years or maybe decades.” [13]

Within days of the completion of the 2007 exercise in Mali a U.S. military cargo plane, “flying food to Malian troops fighting rebels in the far north of the country,” was hit by gunfire. The plane had remained in the nation after Flintlock 2007.

“Malian troops had become surrounded at their base in the Tin-Zaouatene region near the Algerian border by armed fighters and couldn’t get supplies... [T]he Mali government asked the U.S. forces to perform the airdrops...” [14]

The fighters in question were ethnic Tuaregs.

Tuaregs in Mali and Niger, “whose armies have received U.S. counter-insurgency training,” have “taken up arms... driven by resentment over unresolved grievances and against what they see as interference in their territories by government armies and foreign companies.” [15]

What is in fact the reason for the heightened American military role in Mali and Niger rather than the Pentagon’s by now standard claim – alleged al-Qaeda threats – was mentioned in a Reuters dispatch of last year.

“The stakes are rising. We’ve got companies, beyond gold exploration [Mali is Africa’s third largest gold producer], wanting to explore for oil in northern Mali.

“There has been significant interest by investors wanting to explore for oil in Timbuktu (and other northern towns)... If oil is eventually discovered, that could of course play a role.” [16]

The report from which the above is quoted also said: “Tuareg tribesmen in neighbouring Niger... launched a fresh rebellion early last year, demanding greater autonomy and a bigger slice of revenues from French-operated uranium mines in their traditional fiefdom around the northern town of Agadez.” [17]

Last year the Red Cross reported that 1,000 Tuareg civilians fled into neighboring Burkina Faso to escape a U.S.-supported Malian government offensive.

AFRICOM’s mission in the region, as with much of the rest of Africa, is to wage counterinsurgency campaigns to secure vital resources including gold, precious stones, oil, natural gas and uranium.

The infamous Niger “yellow cake” forgeries played a decisive role in U.S. propaganda leading up to the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

Off the eastern coast of Africa “The US has supplied the Seychelles with drone spy planes... Seychelles officials say the planes will be used for surveillance, but did not say how many aircraft the US would be handing over... The move comes a day after the US gave equipment to Mali to fight insurgents.” [18]

A Middle Eastern website put together several components of AFRICOM’s plans in rendering this analysis:

“The United States is taking its military venture in Africa to new levels amid suspicions that Washington could be advancing yet another hidden agenda. American operatives are expected to fly pilotless surveillance aircraft over [Seychelles] territory from US ships off its coast... Washington has also started to equip Mali with USD 4.5 million worth of military vehicles and communications equipment, in what is reported to be an increasing US involvement in Africa.

“The developments come as the White House seeks grounds to establish a major military presence in Africa... [A]nalysts caution that similar pretexts were used to justify the US invasion of Afghanistan, the missile attacks in Pakistan, and its waning military operations in Iraq, where the civilian population

continues to bear the brunt of the US intervention.” [19]

The same news site reported two days earlier that a U.S. spy drone had been shot down over the southern Somali port of Kismayu. “Kismayu residents routinely report suspected US drones flying over the port. The drones are believed to be launched from warships in the Indian Ocean.” [20]

It was also reported in a feature titled “US to make Blackwater-style entry into Somalia” that “The grounds have reportedly been established for armed American presence on Somali soil with a US security firm [Michigan-based CSS Global Inc.] winning a contract in the war-ravaged country.” [21]

The development was characterised as follows: “Washington has been [increasingly] deputizing the companies, which are notorious for misusing their State Department-issued gun licenses as excuses for trigger-ready atrocities. The move has been denounced as an effort at putting a non-military face on the US pursuits in the respective countries.” [22]

Though not part of AFRICOM’s area of responsibility, the African nation of Egypt recently hosted the latest Bright Star war games.

The Pentagon’s website described aspects of this year’s Bright Star, “U.S. Central Command’s longest-running exercise”:

“U.S. Marines and sailors were part of a four-nation coalition that stormed the beaches... during a major amphibious assault demonstration Oct. 12.

“The 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit and the Navy’s Bataan Amphibious Ready Group, as well as the Egyptian army and navy and Pakistani and Kuwaiti marines, took part in the assault as part of Exercise Bright Star 2009, which began Oct. 10 and ends Oct. 20.

“As part of the simulation, Egyptian special operations forces conducted beach reconnaissance prior to the assault. U.S. Marines followed with four AV-88 Harriers. Then amphibious assault vehicles, Humvees and landing craft came ashore... Troops from the various nations, along with 30 vehicles including aircraft, landing craft, amphibious assault vehicles and amphibious tracked vehicles, participated. [23]

Another American source added: “The coalition of military forces participating in the exercises also includes France, Greece, Italy, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and the United Kingdom.

“During the past week, Fort Bragg soldiers made parachute jumps with Egyptian, German, Kuwaiti and Pakistani soldiers.” [24]

AFRICOM was nurtured by U.S. European Command since then U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld in 2002 proposed the creation of a NATO Rapid Response Force (NRF), which was approved by NATO defense chiefs in Brussels in June 2003 and was inaugurated in October 2003. In 2006 Rumsfeld followed up on that initiative by forming a planning team to establish a new Unified Command for the African continent.

The top military commander of EUCOM is simultaneously NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe, and the two generals holding those joint positions during preparations for forming and activating AFRICOM were Marine General James Jones (2003-2006) and Army General Bantz John Craddock (2006-June, 2009). The first is now National Security Adviser to the U.S. president.

"[T]he newly formed NRF [NATO Rapid Response Force] carried out its first exercise code named STEADFAST JAGUAR in Cape Verde... in West Africa from 14-28 June 2006." [25]

"The islanders of Cape Verde are slowly getting used to German armored vehicles and Spanish helicopters descending on their sun-drenched beaches as U.S. fighter F-16 jets roar overhead.

"7,800 troops involved in the maneuvers, the alliance's first major presence on African soil." [26]

Reuters reported at the time that "The NATO Steadfast Jaguar exercises are the final test of a 25,000-strong rapid-reaction force due to be ready from October to dive into troublespots around the world and deal with everything from natural disasters to terrorist attacks."

And it quoted U.S. Lieutenant-Colonel Matt Chestnutt, "whose unit of F-16 fighters was deployed in the 1991 Gulf War and later conflicts in Bosnia and Kosovo," as saying "Africa was a great choice. It is possible the NATO Response Force could come here one day." [27]

Agence France-Presse was no less effusive in its account of the unprecedented war games, dubbing its report "Military Brass Hail 'the New NATO' at Cape Verde War": "Troops, fighter planes and warships descended on the West African archipelago of Cape Verde as NATO continued major war games this week to test its global rapid-response force.

"Leading politicians and military top brass from the western alliance's member countries hailed the maneuvers — NATO's first on African soil — underway on the archipelago's northern island of Sao Vicente." [28]

Two months before NATO held a warm-up naval exercise, Brilliant Mariner 2006, ranging from the Netherlands to Norway and consisting of "sixty four ships from eighteen countries... conducting joint warfare inter-operability training in a multi-threat environment," which was "the final preparation phase before the land, air and maritime components of the NATO Response Force come together in June for the capability demonstration exercise Steadfast Jaguar 2006 in Cape Verde, off the west coast of Africa." [29]

A month before the NATO global strike force pilot exercise in Cape Verde, Portuguese Foreign Minister Diogo Freitas do Amaral said "the West African archipelago is interested in joining both NATO and the European Union. [30]

The test run for the NATO Rapid Response Force was also conducted off the African mainland. In 2005 the Alliance held the 16-nation Noble Javelin 2005 air force, army and naval exercises in Spain's Canary Islands off the coasts of Morocco and Western Sahara.

U.S. warships returned to Cape Verde the following year and an American commander said

of the event that “These are the types of efforts that are contributing to the CNO’s [Chief of Naval Operations] ‘1000-ship Navy’ initiative.” [31] On Washington’s 1,000-ship Navy, see Proliferation Security Initiative And U.S. 1,000-Ship Navy: Control Of World’s Oceans, Prelude To War. [32]

Also in 2007 it was reported that the “USS Fort McHenry will begin a roughly six-month deployment to Western Africa as the Navy tries a new concept it has dubbed the Global Fleet Station program.” [33]

The Global Fleet Station (GFS) program was elaborated in 2007 in a U.S. combined maritime services release, “A Cooperative Strategy for 21st Century Seapower.”

In June of that year Admiral Harry Ulrich, commander of U.S. Naval Forces Europe, spoke at the Africa Center for Strategic Studies in Washington, D.C. and said “The Global Fleet Station concept is ‘closely aligned’ with the task to be provided by the still-developing U.S. Africa Command.” [34]

Africa, then, is a testing ground for NATO’s Rapid Response Force and the U.S.’s 1,000-ship Navy and Global Fleet Station projects.

Later in 2007, even before AFRICOM was formally announced, Defense News reported that the Pentagon had already decided to divide the continent into five regions: North, south, central, east and west.

“One team will have responsibility for a northern strip from Mauritania to Libya; another will operate in a block of east African nations – Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Uganda, Kenya, Madagascar and Tanzania; and a third will carry out activities in a large southern block that includes South Africa, Zimbabwe and Angola... A fourth team would concentrate on a group of central African countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad and Congo [Brazzaville]; the fifth regional team would focus on a western block that would cover Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Niger and Western Sahara...” [35]

Before the official inauguration of AFRICOM, analysts around the world sounded the alarm that beneath the innocuous-sounding claims by Washington that it was solely interested in becoming a “security partner” to African nations lurked something more geostrategically significant. And more sinister.

The following are from Nigerian, Algerian and Chinese sources, respectively.

“From the current data on production capacities and proven oil reserves, only two regions appear to exist where, in addition to the Middle East, oil production will grow and where a strategy of diversification may easily work: The Caspian Sea and the Gulf of Guinea.

“The Caspian Sea came into the limelight after the demise of the Soviet Union, and the US has since entered the region and built up a strong military presence on both sides of the lake.

“Some of the problems linked to Caspian oil give the Gulf of Guinea a competitive edge.

“Much of its oil is conveniently located off shore.

"[T]he region enjoys several advantages, including its strategic location just opposite the refineries of the US east coast. It is ahead of all other regions in proven deep water oil reserves, which will lead to significant savings in security provisions. And it requires a drilling technology easily available from the Gulf of Mexico." [36]

"A major focus of AFRICOM will be the Gulf of Guinea, with its enormous oil reserves in Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Angola and the Congo Republic... The U.S. is already pouring \$500 million into its Trans-Sahel Counterterrorism Initiative that embraces Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria in North Africa, and nations boarding the Sahara including Mauritania, Niger, Mali, Mauritania, Chad and Senegal." [37]

"By building a dozen forefront bases or establishments in Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria and other African nations, the U.S. will gradually establish a network of military bases to cover the entire continent and make essential preparations for docking an aircraft carrier fleet in the region.

"The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) with the U.S. at the head... carried out a large-scale military exercise in Cape Verde, a western African island nation, with the sole purpose for control of the sea and air corridor of crude oil extracting zones and to monitor the situation with oil pipelines operating there.

"[The US} is also seeking to set up small military facilities in Senegal, Ghana and Mali, so as to facilitate its interference in the oil-rich African nations... [T]he African Command represents a vital, crucial link for the US adjustment of its global military deployment.

"At present, it moves the gravity of its forces in Europe eastward and opens new bases in East Europe.

"Africa is flanked by Eurasia, with its northern part located at the juncture of the Asian, European and African continents. The present US global military redeployment centers mainly on an 'arc of instability' from the Caucasus, Central and Southern Asia down to the Korean Peninsula...

"AFRICOM facilitates the United States advancing on the African continent, taking control of the Eurasian continent and proceeding to take the helm of the entire globe." [38]

The third set of observations is from a director of the Chinese Army's Academy of Military Sciences. That is, from an authority expected to be familiar with world geopolitical dynamics and trends.

He situates America's military drive into Africa, all of Africa, within an integrated global context, as does the Nigerian commentary that preceded his analysis once removed.

The campaign to subjugate an entire continent with its more than one billion inhabitants to Western military and economic demands is an integral and milestone component of broader designs around the world. Starting with the Balkans and Eastern Europe as a whole after the breakup of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union in 1991, the U.S. and its NATO allies have relentlessly pursued plans to penetrate and dominate the former Eastern bloc, former Soviet space, the Broader Middle East, the Arctic Circle and Greater Antarctica and to reclaim and solidify control of Latin America and Oceania.

AFRICOM and complementary NATO initiatives are an exponential advancement of the

campaign by the West to reassert and expand global supremacy by targeting a continent at the crossroads of north and south, west and east, and the industrial and the developing worlds. As an earlier citation mentioned, it is also the meeting place of three continents and the Middle East with coasts on two of the world's oceans and three of its seas.

Notes

- 1) Associated Press, September 30, 2009
- 2) Stars and Stripes, October 4, 2009
- 3) United States European Command, July 29, 2008
- 4) United States European Command, July 16, 2008
- 5) The East African, October 12, 2009
- 6) Ibid
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- 8) The Monitor, October 14, 2009
- 9) The New Times, October 20, 2009
- 10) Associated Press, October 21, 2009
- 11) United Press International, December 28, 2005
- 12) Stars And Stripes, May 15, 2005
- 13) Stars And Stripes, July 17, 2005
- 14) Stars and Stripes, September 18, 2007
- 15) Reuters, May 23, 2008
- 16) Reuters, June 6, 2008
- 17) Ibid
- 18) BBC News, October 21, 2009
- 19) Press TV, October 21, 2009
- 20) Press TV, October 19, 2009
- 21) Press TV, October 16, 2009
- 22) Ibid
- 23) U.S. Department of Defense, American Forces Press Service, October 14, 2009
- 24) Fayetteville Observer, October 4, 2009
- 25) Leadership (Nigeria), November 22, 2007
- 26) Reuters, June 29, 2006
- 27) Ibid
- 28) Agence France-Presse, June 23, 2006
- 29) NATO, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, April 5, 2006
- 30) Reuters, May 19, 2006
- 31) Navy NewsStand, April 11, 2007
- 32) Stop NATO, January 29, 2009
<http://rickrozoff.wordpress.com/2009/08/26/proliferation-security-initiative-and-us-1000-ship-navy-control-of-worlds-oceans-prelude-to-war>
- 33) Stars and Stripes, June 14, 2007
- 34) Ibid
- 35) Defense News, September 20, 2007
- 36) Abba Mahmood, Country, Gulf of Guinea And Africom Leadership, November 22, 2007
- 37) U.S. embassies turned into command posts in North Africa Ech Chorouk, October 17, 2007
- 38) Lin Zhiyuan, deputy office director of the People's Liberation Army Academy of Military Sciences, U.S. moves to step up military infiltration in Africa

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