



Chairman Rodney Frelinghuysen

Subcommittee on Defense, House Committee on Appropriations

FY 2016 Budget Hearing – U.S. Africa Command March 3, 2015 Opening Statement As Prepared

The Committee will come in order.

This morning the Subcommittee conducts a closed hearing on the posture of United States Africa Command - a full-spectrum combatant command, responsible for all Department of Defense operations, exercises, and security cooperation on the African continent and surrounding waters.

The command is becoming increasingly important, primarily due to the growing presence of Al Qaeda, ISIL and other terrorist organizations among the Command's Area of Responsibility of 53 nations.

The reality is that the African continent has become the new haven for extremism – presenting significant opportunities and challenges, including those associated with military-to-military relationships.

Regional instability within AFRICOM, combined with the expanded responsibilities for protecting U.S. personnel and facilities have increased operational requirements.

Today we are pleased to welcome General David Rodriguez, AFRICOM Commander – a military leader with impressive understanding of his AOR. General, thank you for testifying again before the Subcommittee.

Of course, the Committee is concerned that certain African countries offer ready-made havens for terrorist training and recruitment activity.

During a time in which our way of life has been threatened by those with radical beliefs, the area within your command is a prime target for terrorist activity, because of its vastness and the large number of countries, many of which are ungovernable, dysfunctional or have unmonitored borders.

General, as you know, we face a truly challenging fiscal environment. But we must make sure that the budget that we pass provides you with the tools and trained personnel you rely upon to do your job. We will look forward to getting your thoughts today on how best to do just that.

We look forward to your testimony, but first, I would like to call on the ranking member, my friend, Pete Visclosky for his comments.

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