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**United States House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs**  
***Democracy, Development, and Defense: Rebalancing U.S. – Africa Policy***  
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Chairman Engel, Ranking Member McCaul, distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to testify on defense policy matters relating to “Democracy, Development, and Defense: Rebalancing U.S.-Africa Policy,” alongside Assistant Secretary Nagy and Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator Day. I am pleased to be here with colleagues with whom I work closely, speaking with you on the important issue of U.S.-Africa policy. I would also like to thank the women and men of the Department of Defense, whose dedication, talent, and sacrifice enable us to execute our policies and achieve our objectives in Africa and elsewhere.

As this is my first appearance before this Committee, I would also like to recognize and thank you for the strong collaboration and bipartisan support you provide to our security missions, and the vital contribution this Committee makes to our national security dialogue and decisions. Though brief, my experience as a Legislative Fellow in the U.S. Senate instilled in me a deep respect for the role of the foreign affairs committees in serving the American people and our national interests.

Vast, complex, diverse, and dynamic, Africa is a continent of opportunities and challenges with the possibility of surging either positively or negatively. Home to more than a billion people, the population of sub-Saharan Africa is expected to double by 2050, with the majority under 25 years of age. This growth, coupled with burgeoning economies, can lead to increased market potential, a dynamic new workforce, and innovative change. But it may also strain resources and services and exacerbate security threats. It is imperative that the Department of Defense helps partners foster positive trends and arrest the negative ones, as Africa is an enduring national security interest for the United States.

The Department of Defense’s approach to Africa policy is nested within the 2017 National Security Strategy, the 2018 National Defense Strategy, and the 2018 U.S. Strategy for Africa – and detailed in the 2018 Department of Defense Strategy for Africa. The overall goals of the National Security Strategy are to protect the American people, defend the Homeland, and promote prosperity and peace from a position of strength. The National Defense Strategy supports the National Security Strategy and focuses on three key pillars: (1) increasing lethality; (2) strengthening existing partnerships and attracting new ones; and (3) reforming practices to improve performance and affordability. The National Defense Strategy also gives clear guidance and priorities to the Department that, though we must continue to address terrorist threats, inter-state strategic competition is our top national security priority. The U.S. Strategy for Africa also focuses on three pillars: (1) promoting prosperity; (2) strengthening security; and (3) striving for

stability. DoD plays a primary role in pillar two, and we work with our interagency colleagues to support pillars one and three.

As outlined in the 2018 DoD Strategy for Africa, the Department will continue to pursue African-led security solutions while maintaining the ability to act unilaterally to protect U.S. citizens and interests. As such, DoD will: (1) support the U.S. whole-of-government effort to address African security challenges; (2) leverage international partnership to support security objectives; (3) maintain strategic access and influence; and (4) seek low-cost, resource-sustainable, innovative security solutions. We strive to deny adversaries the ability to harm the United States and our partners while strengthening security to advance U.S. and partner interests. In this effort, we face a complex and volatile security environment marked by competition and aggressive behavior from other great powers as well as ongoing threats from terrorist groups and violent extremist organizations, illicit traffickers, and transnational criminal organizations.

The Department of Defense achieves these goals through partnership, both within the U.S. Government and with international partners. Department of Defense activities in Africa primarily serve to support diplomacy and development, as military solutions alone cannot address the challenges in Africa. Thus, our interagency counterparts are our core partners as we work together to achieve our long-term strategic goals. Additionally, we work closely with African partners and organizations, as well as other international actors, such as the African Union, regional African economic and social communities, the United Nations, and the European Union to achieve our shared objectives. We maximize our partnerships via a *by, with, and through* approach, with U.S. military capabilities employed in a supporting role. Security operations are executed almost exclusively *by* the partner forces; we work *with* partnered security forces on their operational needs; and we achieve U.S. and partner objectives *through* cooperative relationships. Together, we cooperate to contain and degrade transnational threats, protect U.S. personnel and facilities, prevent and mitigate conflict, and build partnership capacity to achieve our strategic goals. We will focus our engagement where our most significant defense and security interests are at stake, our partners demonstrate political will and a commitment to address security challenges, and targeted efforts are likely to have positive impact.

With your support, we will continue our approach, conveying demonstrated commitment and resolve while keeping our adversaries off-balance. Additionally, we will continue to work closely with Department of State, U.S. Agency for International Development, and other U.S. Government department and agency colleagues to ensure an integrated, balanced approach to address complex challenges and encourage opportunities to promote prosperity, strengthen security, and support stabilization in Africa.

Thank you for holding today's hearing and highlighting U.S.-Africa policy. I appreciate the opportunity to represent the Department of Defense in this important forum.