



The Unified Command Plan and Combatant Commands: Background and Issues for Congress

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Summary

The Unified Command Plan (UCP) and associated Combatant Commands (COCOMs) provide operational instructions and command and control to the Armed Forces and have a significant impact on how they are organized, trained, and resourced—areas over which Congress has constitutional authority. The UCP is a classified executive branch document prepared by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) and reviewed and updated every two years that assigns missions; planning, training, and operational responsibilities; and geographic areas of responsibilities to COCOMs. Functional COCOMs operate world-wide across geographic boundaries and provide unique capabilities to geographic combatant commands and the Services while Geographic COCOMs operate in clearly delineated areas of operation and have a distinctive regional military focus. There are currently nine COCOMs:

- USSOCOM: U.S. Special Operations Command, MacDill Air Force Base, FL.
- USSTRATCOM: U.S. Strategic Command, Offutt Air Force Base, NE.
- USTRANSCOM: U.S. Transportation Command, Scott Air Force Base, IL.
- USAFRICOM: U.S. Africa Command, Kelley Barracks, Stuttgart, Germany.
- USCENTCOM: U.S. Central Command, MacDill Air Force Base, FL.
- USEUCOM: U.S. European Command, Patch Barracks, Stuttgart, Germany.
- USNORTHCOM: U.S. Northern Command, Peterson Air Force Base, CO.
- USPACOM: U.S. Pacific Command, Camp H.M. Smith, HI.
- USSOUTHCOM: U.S. Southern Command, Miami, FL.

This report provides information on the history, mission, and operational considerations for each of these organizations as well as a brief discussion of current issues associated with the UCP and these commands.

The origins of the UCP and COCOMs are rooted in World War II. After the war, U.S. leaders, taking advantage of the lessons learned in both theaters, initiated a series of legislative changes that resulted in the current UCP process and COCOM construct.

The UCP and COCOMs are covered under Title 10 - Armed Forces; Subtitle A - General Military Law; Part I—Organization and General Military Powers; Chapter 6—Combatant Commands. These provisions detail the responsibilities and authorities of COCOMs as well as legal requirements related to the UCP.

Potential issues for Congress include the implications of a strategic shift to the Asia-Pacific region. Another issue is whether there is a need for greater interagency involvement in the UCP development process. A possible area for congressional concern is if Geographical COCOMs have made U.S. foreign policy “too militarized.” Some have also suggested there might be a need for separate COCOMs apart from the current nine to better address emerging regional and ethnic alignments as well as emerging threats such as cyber warfare. Finally, if Congress believes the current COCOM construct does not meet contemporary or future security requirements, there are proposals for alternative organizational structures that might prove more effective.

Contents

What Are the Unified Command Plan (UCP) and Combatant Commands (COCOMs)?.....	1
Introduction	1
Unified Command Plan (UCP).....	1
Combatant Command (COCOM).....	2
Functional Combatant Commands	2
Geographic Combatant Commands	3
Origins of the UCP	3
Outline Command Plan 1946—The First UCP	3
National Security Act of 1947 (P.L. 80-253).....	4
DOD Reorganization Act of 1958 (P.L. 85-599).....	4
Goldwater-Nichols DOD Reorganization Act of 1986 (P.L. 99-433)	5
What Laws Govern the UCP?.....	5
UCP Update Cycle.....	6
Other Agency Involvement.....	7
Congressional Involvement	7
The Current UCP	8
Change One to the 2011 UCP.....	9
Origins of the COCOMs	9
What Laws Govern COCOMs?	10
General Discussion of Provisions.....	10
Command Authority.....	11
COCOM Commander’s Responsibilities	11
COCOM Funding	12
COCOM Budgetary Provisions	12
Functional and Geographic Combatant Commands	13
Basic Organizational Principles.....	13
Interagency Representation in COCOMs	14
Functional Combatant Commands.....	15
U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM)	15
Mission	15
History	15
Subcomponents.....	16
U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC)	16
Naval Special Warfare Command (NSWC)	16
Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC)	17
Marine Special Operations Command (MARSOC).....	17
Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC)	17
Other Components.....	17
Joint Special Operations University (JSOU).....	17
Special Operations Command–Joint Capabilities (SOC-JC)	18
Ongoing Operations.....	18
Selected Current Issues.....	18
SOF Support to Combatant Commanders	18

Efforts to Address “Fraying” of the Forces	18
Access to Local Training Areas	19
U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM)	19
Mission	19
History	19
Subcomponents.....	20
Service Subcomponents	20
Functional Components.....	21
Ongoing Operations.....	22
Selected Current Issues.....	23
Nuclear Weapons Sustainment	23
Possible Shortfalls in Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR)	
Analysts.....	23
USCYBERCOM Workforce	23
U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM)	24
Mission	24
History	24
Subcomponents.....	25
Surface Deployment and Distribution Command (SDDC)	25
Military Sealift Command (MSC).....	26
Air Mobility Command (AMC)	26
Ongoing Operations.....	26
Selected Current Issues.....	26
Ground Supply to Afghanistan	26
Guam and Building Toward USTRANSCOM’s Future	27
Geographic Combatant Commands	27
U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM)	27
Mission	27
A Different Kind of Combatant Command	28
History	28
Subcomponents.....	29
U.S. Army Africa (USARAF)	29
U.S. Naval Forces, Africa (NAVAF)	29
U.S. Air Forces, Africa (AFAFRICA)	30
U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Africa (MARFORAF)	30
Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA).....	30
Special Operations Command-Africa (SOCAFRICA)	30
Ongoing Operations.....	31
U.S. Deployment to Central Africa	31
Operation Enduring Freedom-Trans Sahara (OEF-TS).....	31
Exercises	31
Selected Current Issues.....	32
Regional Threats	32
Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) Challenges	32
U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM)	32
Mission	32
History	32
Subcomponents.....	34
U.S. Army Central (ARCENT)	34
U.S. Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT)	34

U.S. Air Forces Central (AFCENT).....	34
U.S. Marine Corps Forces Central Command (MARCENT).....	34
Special Operations Command Central (SOCCENT)	35
Ongoing Operations.....	35
Selected Current Issues.....	35
Middle East Unrest.....	35
Iranian Interference	36
U.S. European Command (USEUCOM).....	36
Mission.....	36
USEUCOM Commander and NATO	36
History	37
Subcomponents.....	38
U.S. Army Europe (USAEUR)	38
U.S. Naval Forces Europe (NAVEUR)	38
U.S. Air Forces in Europe (USAFE).....	38
U.S. Marine Corps Forces Europe (MARFOREUR).....	39
Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR).....	39
Ongoing Operations.....	39
Support to NATO’s International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan	39
Multi-National Joint and Interagency Exercises	39
Exercises in the Baltics, Balkans, and Caucasus.....	39
Selected Current Issues.....	40
Afghanistan	40
The Balkans.....	40
Missile Defense.....	40
U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM).....	41
Mission.....	41
North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD).....	41
Missile Defense.....	41
Unique Civil Support Mission.....	41
History	42
Subcomponents.....	43
Joint Force Headquarters National Capital Region (JFHQ-NCR)	43
Joint Task Force Alaska (JTF-AK).....	43
Joint Task Force Civil Support (JTF-CS).....	43
Joint Task Force North (JTF North)	44
Army North (ARNORTH)	44
Air Force North (AFNORTH).....	44
U.S. Fleet Forces Command (USFF)	44
Ongoing Operations.....	44
Selected Current Issues.....	45
Countering Transnational Criminal Organizations.....	45
The Arctic.....	45
U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM).....	46
Mission.....	46
History	46
Subcomponents.....	47
U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC).....	47
U.S. Forces Korea (USFK)	47

U.S. Eighth Army	47
U.S. Pacific Fleet (PACFLT)	48
U.S. Pacific Air Force (PACAF)	48
U.S. Marine Forces Pacific (MARFORPAC)	48
Special Operations Command Pacific (SOCPAC)	48
Other Major USPACOM Organizations	48
Joint Intelligence Operations Center (JIOC)	48
Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (APCSS)	49
Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC)	49
Joint Interagency Task Force West (JIATF-West)	49
Ongoing Operations	49
Selected Current Issues	49
Regional Challenges	49
U.S. Strategic Shift to the Pacific	50
U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM)	50
Mission	50
History	50
Subcomponents	51
U.S. Army South (ARSOUTH)	51
U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. Fourth Fleet (COMUSNAVSO/COMFOURTHFLT)	52
Air Forces Southern/ Twelfth Air Force (AFSOUTH)	52
U.S. Marine Forces South (USMARFORSOUTH)	52
Special Operations Command South (USSOCSOUTH)	52
USSOUTHCOM Task Forces and Direct Reporting Units	52
Joint Task Force Bravo (JTF-Bravo)	52
Joint Task Force Guantanamo (JTF-Guantanamo)	52
Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF South)	53
Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies (CHDS)	53
Ongoing Operations	53
Exercises and Military-to-Military Activities	53
Task Force-Oriented Activities	53
Selected Current Issues	53
Counter-Trafficking	53
Natural Disasters, Poverty, and Violence	54
Extra-Regional Actors	54
Potential Issues for Congress	54
What Are the Implications of the Asia-Pacific Strategic Shift for the UCP and COCOMs?	54
Is Greater Interagency Involvement in the UCP Process Needed?	55
Has U.S. Foreign Policy Become “Too Militarized” as a Result of the Geographic COCOMs?	56
Are There Other Regions or Functions That Merit a Separate COCOM?	58
Is There an Alternative to COCOMs?	60
Replacing Subcomponent Commands with Joint Task Forces (JTFs)	60
Replacing COCOMs with a Joint Interagency Organization	60

Figures

Figure 1. Combatant Command Chain of Command 11

Tables

Table 1. FY2011 – FY2013 Operations & Management (O&M) Budget 12

Appendixes

Appendix. 2011 UCP COCOM Areas of Responsibility 62

Contacts

Author Contact Information..... 62

What Are the Unified Command Plan (UCP) and Combatant Commands (COCOMs)?

Introduction

The Unified Command Plan (UCP) and associated Combatant Commands (COCOMs) provide operational instructions and command and control to the Armed Forces and have a significant impact on how they are organized, trained, and resourced—areas over which Congress has constitutional authority. In a grand strategic sense, the UCP and the COCOMs are the embodiment of U.S. military policy both at home and abroad. The COCOMs not only execute military policy but also play an important role in foreign policy, and Congress, in both oversight and budgetary roles, has shown great concern in this regard. All Combatant Commanders testify to the Armed Services Committees on an annual basis about their posture and budgetary requirements and frequently host Members and staff during a variety of congressional delegation visits.

Unified Command Plan (UCP)

The Department of Defense (DOD) defines the Unified Command Plan (UCP) as

The document, approved by the President, that sets forth basic guidance to all unified combatant commanders; establishes their missions, responsibilities, and force structure; delineates the general geographical area of responsibility (AOR) for geographic combatant commanders; and specifies functional responsibilities for functional combatant commanders.¹

The UCP is a classified executive branch document prepared by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) and reviewed and updated at a minimum every two years. While the UCP is normally on a two-year cycle, it can be updated anytime based on changing strategic, political, and budgetary requirements. As noted, the UCP assigns missions; planning, training, and operational responsibilities; and geographic areas of responsibilities to COCOMs. The UCP is assessed and modified, taking into consideration the following strategic documents:²

- The National Security Strategy of the United States of America;
- The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America;
- The National Military Strategy of the United States of America; and
- The current UCP.

The UCP process also takes into consideration the strategic context (such as the war in Afghanistan, the global economic situation, relationships with allies, etc.) and command guidance from the President and senior DOD civilian and military leadership. As part of the final review

¹ Joint Publication 1-02, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, November 8, 2010 (as amended through May 15, 2011), p. 385.

² Information in this section is from a briefing provided to CRS by the Joint Staff Plans Division on October 7, 2010.

process before the UCP is submitted to the President, the proposed UCP is reviewed by senior service leaders, the Secretary of Defense, and the National Security Council (NSC). Congress is not included in this review process but does have visibility into issues affecting UCP development.

Combatant Command (COCOM)

DOD defines Combatant Command (COCOM) as:

A unified³ or specified⁴ command with a broad continuing mission under a single commander established and so designated by the President, through the Secretary of Defense and with the advice and assistance of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Combatant commands typically have geographic or functional responsibilities.⁵

Dr. Cynthia Watson, a professor at the National War College and author of “Combatant Commands: Origins, Structure, and Engagements” describes combatant commands as being:

Commands in charge of utilizing and integrating air, land, sea, and amphibious forces under their commands to achieve U.S. national security objectives while protecting national interests. Four [now three] of the unified commands handle functional concerns while there are six with geographic mandates. The specific configurations have shifted over the decades, but the idea that geography provides an organizing principle remains the same, allowing each combatant command to have its specific threats and opportunities. The combatant commanders work with the military forces in their theaters, and report to the commander in chief and secretary of defense. The combatant commanders do not serve on the Joint Chiefs of Staff nor are they the senior U.S. representatives in the theater.⁶

The number of combatant commands is not regulated by law or policy and their numbers and responsibilities have varied over the years. Today, there are nine active COCOMs, and one COCOM—U.S. Joint Forces Command (JFCOM) was disestablished in 2010 and all of its remaining functions were transferred to other COCOMs or organizations.

Functional Combatant Commands

Functional combatant commands operate world-wide across geographic boundaries and provide unique capabilities to geographic combatant commands and the Services:

- USSOCOM: U.S. Special Operations Command, MacDill Air Force Base, FL;

³ Joint Publication 1-02 defines a unified command as a “command with a broad continuing mission under a single commander and composed of significant assigned components of two or more Military Departments that is established and so designated by the President, through the Secretary of Defense with the advice and assistance of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.”

⁴ Joint Publication 1-02 defines a specified command as “a command that has a broad, continuing mission, normally functional, and is established and so designated by the President through the Secretary of Defense with the advice and assistance of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. It normally is composed of forces from a single Military Department.”

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

⁶ Cynthia A. Watson, “Combatant Commands: Origins, Structure, and Engagement,” Praeger Security International, 2011, p. 15 (hereinafter, Cynthia A. Watson).

- USSTRATCOM: U.S. Strategic Command, Offutt Air Force Base, NE; and
- USTRANSCOM: U.S. Transportation Command, Scott Air Force Base, IL.

Geographic Combatant Commands

Geographic combatant commands operate in clearly delineated areas of operation and have a distinctive regional military focus.

- USAFRICOM: U.S. Africa Command, Kelley Barracks, Stuttgart, Germany;
- USCENTCOM: U.S. Central Command, MacDill Air Force Base, FL;
- USEUCOM: U.S. European Command, Patch Barracks, Stuttgart, Germany;
- USNORTHCOM: U.S. Northern Command, Peterson Air Force Base, CO;
- USPACOM: U.S. Pacific Command, Camp H.M. Smith, HI; and
- USSOUTHCOM: U.S. Southern Command, Miami, FL.

Origins of the UCP

The United States' experience with global warfare in World War II provided countless lessons attesting to the importance of unity of military effort achieved through the unified command of U.S. forces.⁷ While the United States was able to achieve a degree of unified command in the European theater under General Dwight Eisenhower—Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force—attempts to establish unified command in the Pacific “proved impossible.”⁸ Differences between the Army and Navy precluded any sort of unified command arrangement and General Douglas MacArthur commanded U.S. Army Forces, Pacific while Admiral Chester Nimitz commanded the U.S. Pacific Fleet. Although both commanders were able to work together to defeat Japan, there was a considerable amount of friction between these two powerful, independent commands. After the war, President Truman noted:

We must never fight another war the way that we fought the last two. I have the feeling that if the Army and Navy had fought our enemies as hard as they fought each other, the war would have ended much earlier.⁹

Outline Command Plan 1946—The First UCP¹⁰

In 1946, the Chief of Naval Operations characterized the Pacific command arrangement as “ambiguous and unsatisfactory” and proposed a single command over the Pacific (not including Japan, Korea, and China) to provide unity of command over all U.S. forces in the region. The

⁷ Unless otherwise noted, information in this section is taken from the Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Joint History Office, “The History of the Unified Command Plan 1946-1999,” Washington, DC, 2003.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

⁹ Charles A. Stevenson, “Underlying Assumptions of the National Security Act of 1947,” *Joint Forces Quarterly*, 1st Quarter 2008.

¹⁰ Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Joint History Office, “The History of the Unified Command Plan 1946-1999,” Washington, DC, 2003, p 11.

Army and the Army Air Forces rejected this proposal, favoring instead unified command based on assignment of mission and forces as opposed to geographic areas. After a great deal of discussion and compromise, a worldwide system of unified command was established. President Truman approved the “Outline Command Plan” in December 1946 which established seven commands as an “interim measure for the immediate post war period.” The seven commands were:

- Far East Command;
- Pacific Command;
- Alaskan Command;
- Northeast Command;
- Atlantic Fleet;
- Caribbean Command; and
- European Command.

Some of these seven commands contained more than one service and were, in a sense, unified, while others, such as the Atlantic Fleet, were service-specific. Even though these commands were established to achieve a degree of unity, the Services continued in many instances to plan and act independently. Since 1946, the UCP has continued to evolve—sometimes in a dramatic manner—to reflect ever changing strategic, organizational, and political requirements. While Congress has influenced the UCP over the years, three major legislative initiatives have had a lasting impact on the UCP.

National Security Act of 1947 (P.L. 80-253)

While the National Security Act of 1947 is best known for the creation of the U.S. Air Force, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and establishing the office of the Secretary of Defense, it also created the Unified Combatant Command (UCC) system.¹¹ The UCC system signified the recognition by the United States that it would continue to have a world-wide, continuous global military presence. The National Security Act of 1947 also gave the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) the responsibility to establish unified commands in “strategic areas” subject to the approval of the President and Secretary of Defense.¹²

DOD Reorganization Act of 1958 (P.L. 85-599)¹³

In 1958, President Eisenhower—the former Supreme Commander, Allied Expeditionary Force—decided a more unified and streamlined chain of command to employ combat forces was needed, essentially putting an end to separate land, sea, and air combat. President Eisenhower sought “a complete unification of all military planning and combat forces and commands” and proposed the DOD Reorganization Act of 1958 to Congress to amend the National Security Act of 1947.

¹¹ Cynthia A. Watson, p. 13.

¹² “The History of the Unified Command Plan 1946-1999,” p. 15.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

The DOD Reorganization Act of 1958 authorized the President, acting through the Secretary of Defense with the advice of the JCS, to establish unified or specified commands, assign missions, and determine their force structure. This act did not alter any of the authorities established by the National Security Act of 1947 but instead established a clear line of command from the President, through the Secretary of Defense, to the combatant commanders. Combatant commanders were delegated full operational control over forces assigned to them but once these forces were assigned, they could only be transferred with presidential approval. Responsibility for the administration of these assigned forces was to remain with their respective Services.

Goldwater-Nichols DOD Reorganization Act of 1986 (P.L. 99-433)¹⁴

In the aftermath of the failed 1980 multi-service mission to rescue U.S. hostages in Iran and the 1983 invasion of Grenada which featured numerous instances of poor inter-service planning and cooperation, there was renewed emphasis on “jointness” both in Congress and at the Pentagon. Goldwater-Nichols sought to “rebalance the relative power of the geographic commands versus the services.”¹⁵ Goldwater-Nichols called for the Chairman of the JCS (CJCS) to review the missions, responsibilities, and force structure and geographic boundaries for each COCOM not less than every two years and recommend changes to the Secretary of Defense and the President. In addition, the act expanded the CJCS’s and combatant commander’s powers and gave combatant commanders greater interaction with Congress and greater participation in the DOD budget process.

What Laws Govern the UCP?

The UCP and COCOMs are covered under Title 10 - Armed Forces; Subtitle A - General Military Law; Part I—Organization and General Military Powers; Chapter 6—Combatant Commands. As it relates to the UCP, Section 161, inter alia stipulates:

- Unified COCOMs are established by the President, through the Secretary of Defense (SECDEF), with the advice and assistance of the CJCS.
- The CJCS shall periodically review (at least every two years) missions, responsibilities (including geographic boundaries), and force structure of each combatant command.
- Based on this review, the CJCS will recommend to the President, through the SECDEF, changes to missions, responsibilities, and force structure deemed necessary.
- The President, except in times of hostilities or imminent danger, will notify Congress not less than 60 days after establishing a new combatant command or significantly revising the missions, responsibilities, or force structure of an existing combatant command.

Also under Section 161, the CJCS is required to consider during each periodic UCP review:

¹⁴ Cynthia A. Watson, pp. 14-15.

¹⁵ Ibid.

- Whether there was an adequate distribution of responsibilities among the regional unified combatant commands;
- Whether fewer or differently configured commands would permit the United States to better execute war fighting plans;
- Whether any assets or activities were redundant;
- Whether war fighting requirements were adequate to justify current commands;
- Whether exclusion of certain nations from the Areas of Responsibility presented difficulties with respect to national security objectives in those areas; and
- Whether the boundary between the U.S. Central and European Commands could create command conflicts in the context of a major regional conflict in the Middle East.

UCP Update Cycle¹⁶

Generally, the UCP update cycle runs from 12 to 18 months. The current UCP process consists of five iterative phases described below:

1. **Guidance:** DOD UCP planners review four central documents: The National Security Strategy of the United States of America; The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America; The National Military Strategy of the United States of America; and the current UCP. UCP participants also receive command guidance in various forms and in varying degrees, and are apprised of the strategic context under which the UCP will be evaluated. During the final part of this phase, stakeholders (Combatant Commanders, Service Chiefs, and the Joint Staff) identify issues they believe need to be addressed during the UCP update cycle.
2. **Slate:** During this phase, issues are slated for discussion. At the beginning of the phase an action officer planning conference is held to discuss UCP issues. After the conference, stakeholders submit Issue Development Papers (IDPs) to the Joint Staff where they are posted online on a secure operating system (SIPRNET)¹⁷ where stakeholders can view and comment on them. After a period of time, these IDPs and associated comments are sent to the Deputy Director for Strategy and Policy and the Director J-5 for validation. Those IDPs that make it through the validation process are then “slated” and placed online so stakeholders can develop positions for the next phase of the UCP process.
3. **Assessment:** This phase begins with a Planner’s Assessment Conference where courses of action (COA) are developed for each validated IDP. These COA provide decision makers with a range of choices to address the IDPs. Once the COA are agreed at the conference, they are again posted online for review and comment. After a period of time, the COA are finalized and “closed out.”

¹⁶ Information in this section is from a briefing provided to CRS by the Joint Staff Plans Division on October 7, 2010.

¹⁷ SIPRNET stands for Secret Internet Protocol Router Network DOD’s classified computer network.

4. **Adjudication:** The adjudication phase is a four part process whereby the issues and COA are sent to various levels of the Joint Staff for approval. The first level is the Deputy Director for Strategy and Policy and after review and approval, a draft UCP is published. Next comes the Director J-5 and another revised draft UCP is published. This draft UCP is then taken to a Service Chiefs' "Tank"¹⁸ meeting and after that meeting, another UCP draft is prepared. Finally a Joint Chiefs of Staff Tank meeting is held and a final draft UCP is prepared, posted on the SIPRNET, and is then ready for final review.
5. **Review:** During this phase the UCP is reviewed and revised for the final time. The first review is held at the "four-star level" including Service Chiefs, Combatant Commanders, and other 4-star level general officers and DOD civilians. Next, the SECDEF reviews the draft UCP and suggests changes. The next step is the National Security Council (NSC) review where the UCP is commented on by other U.S. government agencies. Finally, after incorporating the views of the NSC principals, the UCP is taken to the President for approval and final publication.

Other Agency Involvement¹⁹

There are other executive branch agencies (State Department, Department of Justice, Department of Homeland Security, and the Central Intelligence Agency, to name a few) that are collectively referred to as the Interagency and have a vested interest in the UCP because some of its associated military tasks intersect with the responsibilities of these agencies. While none of these agencies are formally part of the UCP development process, they do have access to it by means of agency liaison officers stationed at the COCOMs and on the Joint Staff. These liaison officers have visibility of the IDP and COA process as well as access to draft UCPs and are able to report their observations and concerns to their principals (i.e. Secretary of State, Attorney General, etc.). The NSC also receives periodic updates on UCP development or revisions during the UCP cycle. The principals may then choose to address their UCP concerns with senior DOD leadership. During the NSC UCP Review, other agencies can publicly voice concerns with the UCP but, unless an agency has not been actively following the UCP development, there should be no "surprises" when the UCP is reviewed by the NSC.

Congressional Involvement²⁰

Congress currently has no statutory role in the UCP development, revision, or review process other than those stipulated in Title 10, Chapter 6, Sections 161 and 166. Congress does, however, make its concerns known during hearings, private conversations between Members and staff and DOD leadership, and through lending support to UCP-related issues through legislation or by resolution. For example, prior to the 2007 decision to stand up AFRICOM, a number of Members called for the creation of a separate geographic combatant command for Africa. Congress also

¹⁸ Tank is the euphemism for the Joint Chiefs of Staff Conference Room in the Pentagon where sensitive important senior-level meetings are held.

¹⁹ Information in this section is from a briefing provided to CRS by the Joint Staff Plans Division on October 7, 2010.

²⁰ Ibid.

periodically includes provisions in annual National Defense Authorization Acts calling for DOD studies and reports on certain aspects of COCOM structure and operations. These requirements, in addition to providing information to Congress, also serve the purpose of identifying areas of congressional concern which can influence DOD COCOM-related resourcing and policy decisions.

The Current UCP

The 2011 UCP is a classified document. On April 8, 2011, DOD released the 2011 UCP and the unclassified highlights were included in the following news release:

DOD Releases Unified Command Plan 2011²¹

The Department of Defense released today the updated Unified Command Plan (UCP), a key strategic document that establishes the missions, responsibilities, and geographic areas of responsibility for commanders of combatant commands. Unified Command Plan 2011, signed by the President on April 6, assigns several new missions to the combatant commanders.

Every two years, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is required to review the missions, responsibilities, and geographical boundaries of each combatant command and recommend to the President, through the Secretary of Defense, any changes that may be necessary. As in past years, the 2011 review process included the combatant commanders, service chiefs and DOD leadership. Significant changes made by UCP 2011 include

- Shifting areas of responsibilities boundaries in the Arctic region to leverage long-standing relationships and improve unity of effort. As a result of this realignment, responsibility for the Arctic region is now shared between USEUCOM and USNORTHCOM rather than USEUCOM, USNORTHCOM and USPACOM as directed in previous UCPs.
- Giving USNORTHCOM responsibility to advocate for Arctic capabilities.
- Codifying the President's approval to disestablish U.S. Joint Forces Command.
- Expanding U.S. Strategic Command's responsibility for combating weapons of mass destruction and developing Global Missile Defense Concept of Operations.
- Giving U.S. Transportation Command responsibility for synchronizing planning of global distribution operations.

UCP 2011 continues to support U.S. defense security commitments around the world while improving military responsiveness to emerging crises.

A map with the UCP COCOM Areas of Responsibility is included in the **Appendix**.

²¹ U.S. Department of Defense News Release, DOD Releases Unified Command Plan 2011, N. 288-11, April 8, 2011.

Change One to the 2011 UCP²²

On September 12, 2011, President Obama signed Change One to the 2011 UCP which primarily captured the administrative changes reflecting the disestablishment of USJFCOM and a number of SECDEF-directed Efficiency Initiatives. These changes include

- Removing any language referring to USJFCOM which was disestablished on August 31, 2011;
- Removing language for geographic combatant command standing joint force headquarters,²³ which are approved for disestablishment by the end of FY2012;
- Adding the responsibility of global standing joint headquarters to USTRANSCOM;
- Transferring the Joint Warfare Analysis Center missions from USJFCOM to USSTRATCOM; and
- Removing language and responsibilities for Information Operations, Military Deception, and Operations Security from USSTRATCOM as these mission areas are to be transferred to the Joint Staff.

Origins of the COCOMs

The nonstatutory origins of COCOMs are rooted in the U.S. experience in World War II. Prior to World War II, the Services operated independently and, despite lessons learned from World War I suggesting the Army and Navy needed to better communicate and plan, no real concerted effort was made to coordinate the armed forces, largely attributed to “bureaucratic distrust and service rivalry.”²⁴ During this period, Marine Corps fears the Army would lobby to eliminate the Marines on the grounds they were a “redundant service” as well as Army efforts to maintain control over the country’s air arm typified the climate among the Services that made any meaningful reform virtually impossible.²⁵

World War II presented unique challenges not faced during the eighteen month U.S. involvement in the First World War. While World War I was fought in a variety of theaters, such as Europe, Africa, the Mediterranean, and the Middle East, U.S. involvement was primarily limited to Europe and was predominately land-centric. In terms of strategic planning and command relationships, the United States played a supporting role.

The United States’ experience in World War II bore little resemblance to that of the Great War. The European and Pacific theaters of the Second World War varied significantly, with the European Theater being a land-centric conflict supported by naval operations whereas the Pacific

²² Taken from information provided to CRS by the Senate Armed Services Committee on September 13, 2011.

²³ From Joint Publication 1-02, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms, as amended through September 15, 2011, a Standing Joint Force Headquarters or SJFHQ is a staff organization operating under a flag or general officer providing a combatant commander with a full-time, trained joint command and control element integrated into the combatant commander’s staff whose focus is on contingency and crisis action planning.

²⁴ Cynthia A. Watson, p. 11.

²⁵ Ibid.

Theater was naval-centric and supported by Marine and Army ground forces. Both theaters also featured extensive supporting air force operations, including long-range strategic bombing campaigns unprecedented in both size and scope. In terms of relationships with allies, the United States assumed the leadership role in both the Pacific and European theaters - largely due to its unmatched military and industrial resources—despite insistence that the U.S. was “co-equal partners” with Great Britain, France, and Russia. Unlike 1918, after the Japanese surrender in 1945, U.S. political and military leaders did not advocate a post war policy of isolationism, because of fears of a communist Russia and, to a lesser extent, China. U.S. global military presence was viewed as a guarantee against unfettered communist expansion, and this presence necessitated an effective, geographically-focused, long term, joint command arrangement.

What Laws Govern COCOMs?

As previously noted, COCOMs are governed by the provisions contained in Sections 161 through 168 of Title X, Armed Forces, U.S. Code.²⁶ These sections address the following provisions;

- Section 161: The establishment of COCOMs;
- Section 162: Chain of command and assignment of forces for COCOMs;
- Section 163: Role of the CJCS;
- Section 164: Assignment and powers and duties of commanders of COCOMs;
- Section 165: Administration and support of COCOMs;
- Section 166: COCOM budget proposals ;
- Section 166a : Funding COCOMs through the CJCS ;
- Section 166b: Funding for combating terrorism readiness initiatives;
- Section 167: Unified COCOMs for special operations forces;
- Section 167a: Unified COCOMs for joint warfighting experimentation: acquisition authority; and
- Section 168: Military-to-military and comparable activities.

General Discussion of Provisions²⁷

These provisions assign a number of responsibilities to the CJCS including a regular (at least every two years) review of the missions, responsibilities, areas of operation, and force structure of each combatant command. Upon completion of this review, the Chairman provides suggestions to the President—through the SECDEF—for changes in missions, force structure, and responsibilities for the COCOMs. These provisions also tie the Services to the COCOMs as the Secretaries of the military departments are directed to assign their forces (unless assigned

²⁶ Unless otherwise noted, information in this section is taken from Sections 161-168, Title 10—Armed Forces, pp. 144-154, and Cynthia A. Watson, pp. 2-6.

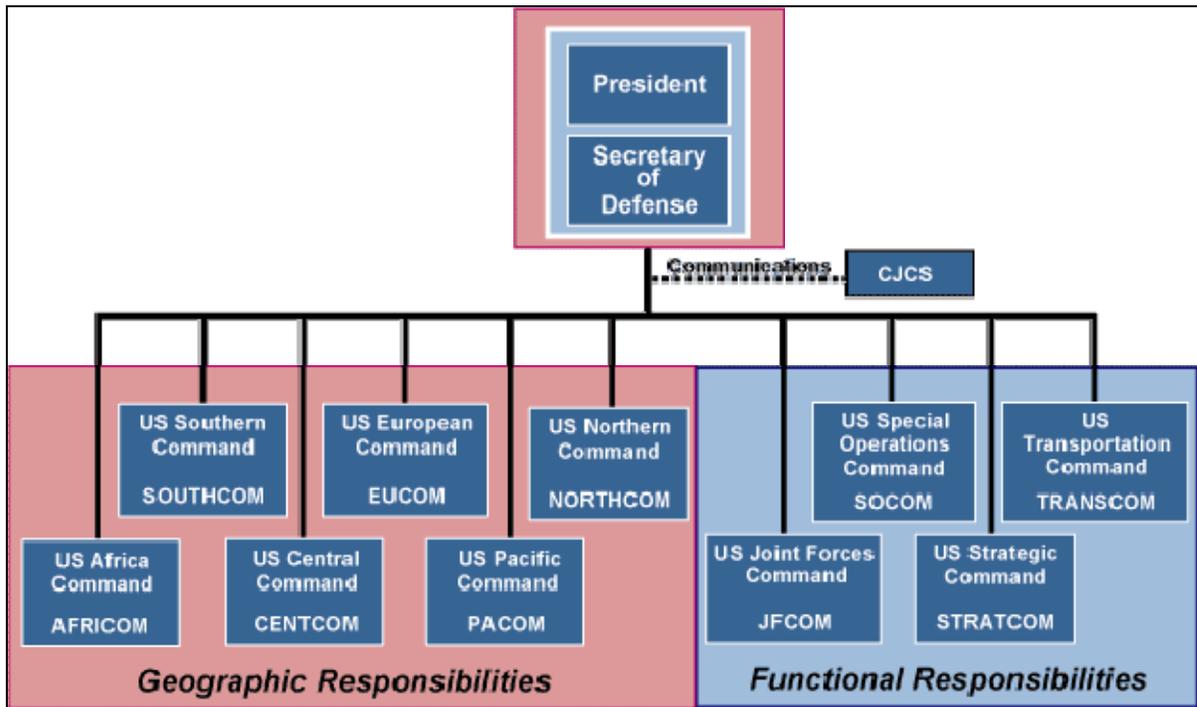
²⁷ Information in this section is taken from Cynthia A. Watson, pp. 2-6.

elsewhere such as a multi-national peacekeeping operation) to COCOMs. These forces can only be transferred from the commands by the SECDEF.

Command Authority

Forces assigned to COCOMs are under the command of that COCOM commander, with the chain of command starting with the President and running through the SECDEF as indicated in **Figure 1**. The CJCS serves as a link between the President and the SECDEF and the COCOM commanders. The President can send guidance to COCOM commanders through the CJCS, and the chairman can relay combatant commander’s needs and concerns to the SECDEF and the President. The CJCS may exercise oversight of the COCOMs, if desired by the SECDEF, but has no command authority over the COCOMs. In this regard, the CJCS is described as taking part in national security discussions but not in the formal decision-making process as it relates to COCOMs.

Figure 1. Combatant Command Chain of Command



Source: This figure is taken from the author’s National Defense University academic notes, 2010.

Note: USJFCOM was disestablished in August 2011 and no longer functions as a COCOM.

COCOM Commander’s Responsibilities

COCOM commanders are responsible for the accomplishment of missions assigned to them as well as all aspects of joint training, logistics, and military operations. COCOM commanders are also responsible for establishing command relationships with subordinate commands as well as organizing subordinate units as deemed necessary. While Combatant Commanders exercise control over subordinate units from different services, the services retain administrative control of

their personnel to include assignment, promotion, schooling, and retirement. To facilitate administrative control, geographic combatant commands have service subcomponents for each service.

COCOM Funding

On an annual basis, COCOMs request Operations and Maintenance (O&M) funding. Funding for forces assigned to COCOMs are funded by the respective Services and funding for operations are funded separately, such as operations in Afghanistan and counterterror operations that have primarily been funded through the Overseas Contingency Operations (OCO) account. **Table 1** provides O&M funding figures for the COCOMs from FY2011-FY2013. It should be noted that some amounts include operational and OCO costs (see corresponding notes).

Table 1. FY2011 – FY2013 Operations & Management (O&M) Budget

\$ in thousands

COCOM	FY2011	FY2012	FY2013
USAFRICOM	259,368	282,152	285,022
USEUCOM	134,377	120,278	119,267
USSOUTHCOM	198,930	193,257	206,342
USPACOM	301,919	268,014	300,097
USNORTHCOM	274,572	203,803	200,114
USSTRATCOM	648,459	507,382	689,821
USCENTCOM ^a	106,631	137,167	179,266
USSOCOM ^b	7,269,710	3,890,115	5,096,226
USTRANSCOM ^c	13,588	13,368	13,003

Source: Information in this table was provided to CRS by the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) Comptrollers Office.

Note: COCOM amounts, unless noted, reflect headquarters and mission support O&M funding.

- a. Does not include figures for operations in Afghanistan.
- b. USSOCOM figures include both headquarters *and operational funds*.
- c. USTRANSCOM is funded predominately with customer orders.

COCOM Budgetary Provisions

The SECDEF is required to submit an annual budget proposal for the COCOMs and funding may be requested for joint exercises, force training, contingencies, and selected operations. Proposed funding for special operations forces (SOF) training with foreign forces may also be requested. COCOMs can also receive funds through the CJCS as part of the “Combatant Commander Initiative Fund.” Although not a COCOM, the U.S. element of the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) is also eligible for this fund. Authorized activities include

- Force training;

- Contingencies;
- Selected operations;
- Command and control;
- Joint exercises to include activities of participating foreign nations;
- Humanitarian and civic assistance;
- Military education and training to military and related civilian personnel of foreign countries;
- Personnel expenses of defense personnel for bilateral or regional cooperation programs;
- Force protection; and
- Joint warfighting capabilities.

COCOMs also have access to a DOD budget account known as the “Combating Terrorism Readiness Initiatives Fund.” Authorized activities under this fund include

- Procurement and maintenance of physical security equipment;
- Improvement of physical security sites;
- Under extraordinary circumstances:
 - Physical security management planning;
 - Procurement and support of security forces and security technicians;
 - Security reviews, investigations, and vulnerability assessments; and
 - Any other activity relating to physical security.

Functional and Geographic Combatant Commands

Basic Organizational Principles²⁸

COCOM commanders hold four-star flag rank and have risen through the ranks of their respective services, commanding at the highest levels. COCOM commanders have also met Joint Military Education Requirements as set forth in the Goldwater-Nichols Act. The President nominates combatant commanders based on the recommendations of the SECDEF. The Senate Armed Services Committee holds confirmation hearings for the nominees and the Senate then votes to confirm the candidates. While four-star officers from any service may serve as combatant commander for any given COCOM, some appointments (e.g., U.S. Pacific Command being commanded by a Navy admiral) traditionally have gone to specific services.

²⁸ Ibid., pp 19-21.

The basic configurations of COCOM staffs are generally the same and mirrors the Joint Staff at the Pentagon. COCOM staffs are organized as follows, although there are variations based on unique COCOM mission areas:

- J-1 Directorate of Manpower and Personnel;
- J-2 Directorate of Intelligence;
- J-3 Directorate of Operations;
- J-4 Directorate of Logistics;
- J-5 Directorate of Strategic Plans and Policy;
- J-6 Directorate of Command, Control, Communication, and Computer;
- J-7 Directorate of Operational Planning and Joint Force Development;
- J-8 Directorate of Force Structure, Resources, and Assessment; and
- J-9 Directorate of Interagency Partnering.

Within the COCOM command and staff construct, Joint Task Forces (JTFs) are often created to address a single policy concern and allocate resources, such as anti-drug efforts or humanitarian assistance, on a short to mid-term basis. JTFs can also be established in response to a crisis or for a long-term commitment.

Some COCOMs also have a political advisor (POLAD) assigned to the commander to serve as an interface with the civilian portion of the national security establishment as well as the ambassadors and embassy staffs of countries that fall under the COCOM commander's UCP mandate.

Interagency Representation in COCOMs²⁹

Both Functional and Geographic COCOMs have integrated assets and representatives of other agencies and departments of the U.S. government into the COCOM's structure to enhance operations. Examples of this representation include

- USAFRICOM: A State Department Deputy Commander for Civil-Military Activities, a senior U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) advisor, and two other senior U.S. diplomats who serve as a Foreign Policy Advisor and as the J-9, Director of Outreach;
- USCENTCOM: An Interagency Action Group (IAG) established in the J-3 Directorate of Operations to integrate USCENTCOM and Interagency activities;
- USEUCOM: Established a J-9 Directorate for Interagency Partnering; and

²⁹ Information in this section is taken from Department of Defense Report to Congress Pursuant to Section 944 of the Ike Skelton National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2011 P.L. 111-383, Department of Defense Report on Organizational Structures of the Headquarters of the Geographic Combatant Commands, June 2011, p. 3.

- USNORTHCOM: A Joint Interagency Coordinating Group (JIACG) that integrates and synchronizes the activities of numerous civilian, State, Federal, and private sector organizations.

Functional Combatant Commands

U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM)³⁰

Website: www.socom.mil

Mission³¹

USSOCOM's primary mission is to organize, train, and equip special operations forces (SOF) and provides those forces to the Geographic Combatant Commanders under whose operational control they serve. USSOCOM also develops special operations strategy, doctrine, and procedures for the use of SOF and also develops and procures specialized, SOF-unique equipment for its assigned forces. USSOCOM is also the lead COCOM for synchronizing DOD planning against terrorists and their networks on a global basis. USSOCOM also can execute global operations against terrorist networks when directed to do so by the President or Secretary of Defense. The diverse nature of USSOCOM's counterterror mission requires working extensively with other non-DOD U.S. Government Agencies, sometimes referred to as the Interagency.

History³²

The 1980 Desert One tragedy and the 1983 loss of 237 Marines in Beirut, combined with the command and control problems experienced during Grenada in 1983 heightened apprehensions about DOD's ability to manage the Services, including special operations forces who were "owned" by their respective service.

By 1983, there was a small but growing sense in Congress of the need for military reforms. In June, the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC), under the chairmanship of Senator Barry Goldwater (R-AZ), began a two-year-long study of DOD which included an examination of SOF. With concern mounting on Capitol Hill, DOD created the Joint Special Operations Agency on January 1, 1984. This agency had neither operational nor command authority over any SOF units and did little to address SOF issues.

Within Congress, there was a growing sense that a radical restructuring of SOF was needed. Proponents included Senators Sam Nunn (D-GA) and William Cohen (R-ME), both members of

³⁰For detailed information on USSOCOM, subcomponents, and assigned forces see CRS Report RS21048, *U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF): Background and Issues for Congress*, by Andrew Feickert.

³¹ Posture Statement of Admiral William H. McRaven, USN, Commander United States Special Operations Command before the 112th Congress House Armed Services Committee, March 7, 2012.

³² Information in this section is taken from author's National War College course materials, USSOCOM History Book, "Founding and Evolution of USSOCOM," pp. 5-11.

the SASC, and Representative Dan Daniel (D-VA), the chairman of the Readiness Subcommittee of the House Armed Services Committee (HASC). Congressman Daniel believed the U.S. military establishment had little interest in special operations and that U.S. SOF was second-rate when compared to countries such as Great Britain and Israel. Senators Nunn and Cohen also believed that DOD was not preparing adequately for future threats. Senator Nunn expressed a growing frustration with the Service's practice of reallocating monies appropriated for SOF modernization to non-SOF programs and suggested the U.S. needed a more efficient organization and a more direct chain of command for special operations.

In early 1986, SOF advocates introduced reform bills in the House and Senate. The Senate bill, co-sponsored by Senator Nunn and others called for a joint military organization for SOF and the establishment of an office in DOD to ensure adequate funding and policy emphasis for low-intensity conflict and special operations. Representative Daniel's proposal went even further - he wanted a national special operations agency headed by a civilian who would bypass the Joint Chiefs and report directly to the SECDEF, thereby keeping Joint Chiefs and Services out of the SOF budget process.

Congress held hearings on the two bills in the summer of 1986. CJCS Admiral William J. Crowe, led the Pentagon's opposition to the bills and proposed instead a new special operations forces command led by a three-star general. This proposal was not well received by Congress who wanted a four-star officer in charge so that he could deal on an equal footing with the four-star Service Chiefs.

President Reagan approved the establishment of USSOCOM on April 13, 1987. DOD activated USSOCOM on April 16, 1987 and nominated Army General Lindsay to be USSOCOM's first commander.

Subcomponents³³

U.S. Army Special Operations Command (USASOC)

USASOC includes Army Special Forces, also known as Green Berets; Rangers; Civil Affairs, and Military Information Support Operations (MISO)—formerly known as psychological operations (PSYOPS)—units. In addition, the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment (SOAR) provides rotary wing support to all SOF units.

Naval Special Warfare Command (NSWC)

NSWC consists of Sea, Air, and Land (SEAL) teams that conduct operations in both maritime and ground environments. NSWC also has SEAL Delivery Vehicle (SDV) teams—specialized SEALs that pilot small submersible vehicles that can deliver SEALs to their area of operations. NSWC includes Special Boat Teams that can deliver SEALs from ship to shore as well as operate in the littorals and rivers.

³³ Information from this section is taken from CRS Report RS21048, *U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF): Background and Issues for Congress*, by Andrew Feickert and USSOCOM website, <http://www.socom.mil>.

Air Force Special Operations Command (AFSOC)

AFSOC provides specialized fixed and rotary wing support to USSOCOM units. In addition to aircraft support, AFSOC also provides Combat Controllers, Pararescue Jumpers, Special Operations Weather Teams, and Tactical Air Control Parties (TACPs) to support special operations. AFSOC is currently establishing a capacity to train and advise partner nation aviation units as part of foreign internal defense initiatives.

Marine Special Operations Command (MARSOC)

Established in 2005, MARSOC is the newest USSOCOM subcomponent. It consists of three Marine Special Operations Battalions, a Marine Special Operations Support Group, a Marine Special Operations Intelligence Battalion, and the Marine Special Operations School.

Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC)³⁴

According to USSOCOM, JSOC is a sub unified command charged with studying special operations requirements and techniques to ensure interoperability and equipment standardization. JSOC also plans and conducts special operations exercises and training and develops joint special operations tactics.

USOCOM also notes JSOC “is comprised of an impressive amalgamation of rigorously screened and accessed, Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Civilians,” and “past and present members of JSOC have participated in all of our Nation’s wars and contingency operations since it was activated in 1980.” Press reports suggest JSOC is home to USSOCOM’s national mission forces which reportedly conduct highly sensitive combat and supporting operations against terrorists on a world-wide basis.³⁵

Other Components

Joint Special Operations University (JSOU)³⁶

JSOU’s stated mission is to

Educate Special Operations Forces executive, senior, and intermediate leaders and selected other national and international security decision-makers, both military and civilian, through teaching, research, and outreach in the science and art of Joint Special Operations.

³⁴ Information in this section is taken from the JSOC web page, <http://www.socom.mil/Pages/JointSpecialOperationsCommand.aspx>.

³⁵ Jennifer D. Kibbe, “The Rise of the Shadow Warriors,” *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 83, Number 2, March/April 2004 and Sean D. Naylor, “JSOC to Become Three-Star Command,” *Army Times*, February 13, 2006; and U.S. Army Special Operations Command News Service, “Gates Nominates McRaven, Thurman for Senior Posts,” Release Number: 110303-02, March 3, 2011, <http://www.soc.mil/UNS/Releases/2011/March/110303-02.html>.

³⁶ Information in this section is taken from the JSOU web page, <https://jsou.socom.mil>.

Special Operations Command–Joint Capabilities (SOC-JC)³⁷

With the August 2010 disestablishment of JFCOM, SOCJFCOM was transferred to USSOCOM where it was renamed SOC-JC. SOC-JC's mission is to train conventional and special operations force commanders and their staffs in the employment of Special Operations Forces focusing on the full integration of SOF and the conventional forces in both planning and execution to enhance warfighting readiness.

Ongoing Operations

USSOCOM operates on a global basis in both overt and classified modes. Missions range from foreign internal defense to counterterrorism, but the primary emphasis for U.S. SOF is attacking terrorists and terror cells world wide. While USSOCOM's primary focus of these activities is the USCENTCOM region, USSOCOM Commander Admiral William McRaven stated, "U.S. special operations forces are in 78 countries around the world, supporting U.S. policy objectives."³⁸

Selected Current Issues³⁹

SOF Support to Combatant Commanders

In testimony, Admiral McRaven noted that even when operations conclude in Afghanistan, historical data suggest that there will be a constant demand for a "steady state" SOF-deployed force of almost 12,000 SOF troops to support COCOM requirements. As SOF forces continue their Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR)-mandated growth, USSOCOM assesses they will have adequate capacity by FY2017 to meet the anticipated COCOM demand without placing undue risk to global counterterrorism (CT) operations. This FY2017 target is predicated on USSOCOM's self-imposed growth rate of 3% to 5% annually, which is intended to maintain the overall quality of special operations forces.

Efforts to Address "Fraying" of the Forces

In March 2011, then USSOCOM Commander Admiral Eric Olson testified that the decade-long wars had resulted in some "fraying around the edges" for U.S. SOF.⁴⁰ This almost constant state of deployment had resulted in significant time away from families and limited time for needed professional training and education and created a great deal of pressure on SOF and their families. As a result of a study initiated under Admiral Olson, a lack of predictability resulting from a demanding operational tempo and increased difficulties for SOF troops reconnecting and reintegrating into family activities after returning from deployments were identified as two

³⁷ Information in this section is taken from Special Operations Command–Joint Capabilities website, <http://www.sojc.socom.mil>.

³⁸ Senate Armed Services Committee Holds Hearing on the Proposed Fiscal 2013 Defense Authorization as it Relates to the U.S. Central Command and U.S. Special Operations Command March 8, 2012, p. 10.

³⁹ Information in this section is taken from the Posture Statement of Admiral William H. McRaven, USN, Commander, United States Special Operations Command Before the 112th Congress, House Armed Services Committee, March 7, 2012.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

primary sources of ongoing stress.⁴¹ As a result, Admiral McRaven has established a task force that has been tasked with building and implementing innovative solutions across USSOCOM to address these stressors.

Access to Local Training Areas

While USSOCOM has built a number of training ranges, they must also use pre-existing Service ranges and SOF does not always have priority for use and sometimes must travel great distances to use these facilities—contributing to “days away from home,” a force stressor. USSOCOM is in the process of building new ranges and coordinating access to existing service ranges, particularly those ranges that cannot be replicated due to environmental or land use restrictions. Admiral McRaven noted that USSOCOM continues to work with the Services to secure priority access to local training ranges.⁴²

U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM)

Website: <http://www.stratcom.mil>

Mission⁴³

USSTRATCOM’s primary responsibility is the stewardship and employment of U.S. nuclear weapons and to detect, deter, and prevent attacks against the United States and our allies and to join with the other combatant commands to defend the nation should deterrence fail. Specific responsibilities include planning, synchronizing, advocating, and employing capabilities to meet the United States’ strategic deterrence; space operations; cyberspace operations; global strike; missile defense; intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance (ISR); and combating weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

History⁴⁴

USSTRATCOM was established October 1, 2002. USSTRATCOM has provided intelligence, planning and cyber support to coalition forces in Afghanistan and Iraq. It monitors orbiting satellites and space debris, allowing spacecraft to avoid collision. USTRATCOM has also deployed systems to provide limited protection against ballistic missile attack.

The missions most directly associated with USSTRATCOM and its predecessors are deterrence and global strike. These were the missions of Strategic Air Command (SAC) from 1946 to 1992 and of the first USSTRATCOM from 1992 to 2002. Though best known for its connection with

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 13-14.

⁴² Ibid., p. 15.

⁴³ Information in this section is taken from USSTRATCOM’s web page, <http://www.stratcom.mil>, and Statement of General C. Robert Kehler, Commander, United States Strategic Command before the Senate Committee on Armed Services, March 29, 2011.

⁴⁴ <http://www.stratcom.mil/history/>.

the nuclear deterrent, SAC conducted conventional bombing operations during the Korean War and Vietnam War and the first Persian Gulf War, 1991.

On June 1, 1992, SAC was replaced by a new unified command, USSTRATCOM. The new command's primary mission was to deter attack, especially nuclear attack, on the United States and its allies and, if deterrence failed, employ nuclear forces in response.

The U.S. military began operating in space in the late 1950s, with many of the early systems developed to meet SAC's needs for surveillance, warning, meteorology, and communications. By 1985, space activities had grown to such a scale that DOD created a new unified command, USSPACECOM, to manage military space operations. Secretary Rumsfeld's initiative to merge USSTRATCOM and USSPACECOM led to the creation of the current USSTRATCOM in 2002.

Two other areas took on increasing importance beginning around 2000: missile defense and cyberspace operations. By September 2004, the U.S. had deployed a limited system that offered some protection to North America and had opened discussions about extending the system to cover allies.

The U.S. military's reliance on computer networks grew exponentially in the 1980s and 1990s. National leaders took steps to protect defense networks in 1998, creating a Joint Task Force for Computer Network Defense and assigning it to USSPACECOM. As computer attacks against DOD become more sophisticated and frequent there were calls to place greater emphasis and visibility on cyber operations. Defense Secretary Robert Gates favored a new sub-unified command under USSTRATCOM that would recombine offensive and defensive computer network operations. Established 21 May 2010, U.S. Cyber Command (USCYBERCOM) was fully operational on Oct. 31, 2010.

Subcomponents

Service Subcomponents⁴⁵

Air Force Global Strike Command (AFGSC)

AFGSC is responsible for the Air Force's three intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) wings, two B-52 Stratofortress wings and the sole B-2 Spirit wing. AFGSC has two numbered air forces that are tasked with providing capabilities to combatant commands. The Eighth Air Force controls the long-range nuclear bomber assets (B-52s and B-2s) and the Twentieth Air Force controls the ICBM wings.

Air Force Space Command (AFSPC)

AFSPC provides space and cybersecurity forces for USSTRATCOM. It has two numbered air forces providing these capabilities. The Fourteenth Air Force controls and supports several satellite systems including the Global Positioning System (GPS); Defense Satellite Communications Systems Phase II and III; and the Defense Meteorological Support Program. In

⁴⁵ http://www.stratcom.mil/service_components/.

addition, the Fourteenth Air Force has Atlas, Delta, and Titan launch vehicles at its disposal to put payloads into orbit. The Twenty-Fourth Air Force plans and conducts cyberspace operations in support of combatant commands.

U.S. Army Forces Strategic Command (ARSTRAT)

ARSTRAT conducts space and missile defense operations and provides planning, integration, control, and coordination of Army forces and capabilities in support of USSTRATCOM missions.

Fleet Forces Command

Fleet Forces Command is responsible for the entire Atlantic Ocean, the Caribbean Sea, and the waters around Central and South America extending into the Pacific to the Galapagos Island.

Marine Corps Forces U.S. Strategic Command (MARFORSTRAT)

MARFORSTRAT serves as the Marine Corps service component to USSTRATCOM.

Functional Components⁴⁶

U.S. Cyber Command (USCYBERCOM)

USCYBERCOM is a sub unified command that is subordinate to USSTRATCOM. USCYBERCOM plans, coordinates, integrates, synchronizes, and conducts activities to defend DOD information networks and also conducts cyber space activities to enable U.S. military activities.

Joint Functional Component Command-Global Strike (JFCC-GS)

JFCC-GS optimizes planning, integration, execution and force management of assigned missions to deter attacks against the United States, its territories, possessions, and bases.

Joint Functional Component Command– Integrated Missile Defense (JFCC-IMD)

JFCC-IMD synchronizes operational-level global missile defense planning, operations support, and the development of missile defense effects for DOD.

Joint Functional Component Command-Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (JFCC-ISR)

JFCC-ISR plans, integrates, and coordinates intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance in support of strategic and global operations and strategic deterrence.

⁴⁶ http://www.stratcom.mil/functional_components/, and U.S. Strategic Command “Snap Shot,”—A Summary of USSTRATCOM Facts and Information, March 2011.

Joint Functional Component Command- Space (JFCC-Space)

JFCC-Space is responsible for executing continuous, integrated space operations to deliver theater and global effects in support of national and combatant commander objectives.

Joint Information Operations Warfare Center (JIOWC)

JIOWC provides joint information operations planning, execution, and operational-level integration of Electronic Warfare, Operations Security, and Military Deception across DOD to support USSTRATCOM, joint force commanders, and U.S. national objectives. On September 12, 2011, President Obama signed Change One to the 2011 UCP which transfers the Information Operations, Military Deception, and Operations Security missions from USSTRATCOM to the Joint Staff so it is possible the structure and missions of JIOWC may change significantly in the near future.

USSTRATCOM Center for Combating Weapons of Mass Destruction (SCC-WMD)

SCC-WMD plans, advocates, and advises the USSTRATCOM commander on WMD-related matters.

Ongoing Operations⁴⁷

According to USSTRATCOM's commander, USSTRATCOM's major ongoing operation is to detect, deter and prevent attacks against the United States and to join with the other combatant commands to defend the nation should deterrence fail. One aspect of this operation is the "around the clock" command and control of U.S. nuclear forces. USSTRATCOM is also involved in implementing the new START treaty and efforts to sustain and modernize the nuclear triad and the nuclear weapons complex.

USSTRATCOM provides support to other combatant commanders in the areas of integrated missile defense and ISR operations. Not unlike its nuclear deterrence activities, USSTRATCOM and USCYBERCOM operate on a daily basis to improve their ability to operate and defend the DOD information network and make sure critical activities can continue, even in the face of adversary attempts to deny or disrupt them. USSTRATCOM is also responsible for U.S. military space operations on a day-to-day basis such as launching satellites and monitoring activities in space.

⁴⁷ Statement of General C. Robert Kehler, Commander, United States Strategic Command before the Senate Committee on Armed Services, March 27, 2012.

Selected Current Issues⁴⁸

Nuclear Weapons Sustainment⁴⁹

In March 2012, the USSTRATCOM commander noted during a Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) hearings his concerns over the sustainment of the nation's nuclear weapons. In testimony, he noted that as U.S. nuclear weapons age, the United States faces continued erosion of the nuclear enterprise's physical and intellectual capital, necessitating investment in stockpile certification, warhead life extension, and infrastructure recapitalization. Without these investments, USSTRATCOM will not be able to maintain the nation's nuclear deterrent.

Possible Shortfalls in Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) Analysts⁵⁰

During congressional testimony, the USSTRATCOM commander noted that the command's ability to process and analyze data from "increasingly capable ISR platforms is also a growing challenge." It was suggested not only are analysts dealing with more data but also with an increased operational tempo, which imposes even greater demands on the timeliness of their analysis and reporting. Conservative USTRATCOM estimates suggest the command would need a 100% increase in analysts to meet COCOM requirements—which USTRATCOM believes is "an unrealistic level of growth in almost any environment, let alone a fiscally constrained one."

USCYBERCOM Workforce⁵¹

The USSTRATCOM commander expressed about USCYBERCOM's technical capacity and workforce. Noting that USCYBERCOM needs the best trained and educated people in its cyberspace workforce, concerns were expressed that the U.S. education system might not be emphasizing the appropriate academic disciplines. A possible solution to this situation could be "encouraging and improving science, technology, engineering, and math education from an early age." Another factor contributing to workforce concerns was the belief that "traditional military recruitment and retention programs may not be the best or fastest way to build a stable cyber cadre for the long term."

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 13. For additional information on U.S. nuclear weapons, see CRS Report RL30345, *U.S. Nuclear Weapons: Policy, Force Structure, and Arms Control Issues*, by Amy F. Woolf.

⁵⁰ Statement of General C. Robert Kehler, Commander, United States Strategic Command before the Senate Committee on Armed Services, March 27, 2012, p. 16.

⁵¹ Statement of General C. Robert Kehler, Commander, United States Strategic Command before the Senate Committee on Armed Services, March 27, 2012, p. 25. For additional information on USCYBERCOM, see CRS Report R40836, *Cybersecurity: Current Legislation, Executive Branch Initiatives, and Options for Congress*, by Catherine A. Theohary and John Rollins.

U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM)

Website: <http://www.transcom.mil>

Mission⁵²

Develop and direct the Joint Deployment and Distribution Enterprise to globally project strategic national security capabilities; accurately sense the operating environment; provide end-to-end distribution process visibility; and supportive of joint, U.S. government and Secretary of Defense-approved multinational and nongovernmental logistical requirements.

History⁵³

World War II, the Berlin blockade, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War demonstrated the need for the United States to maintain a capable and ready transportation system for national security. A 1978 exercise exposed significant gaps in understanding between military and civilian participants: mobilization and deployment plans fell apart, and as a result, the United States and its NATO allies “lost the war.” Two major recommendations came out of the exercise. First, the Transportation Operating Agencies (later called the Transportation Component Commands) should have a direct reporting chain to the JCS. Second, the JCS should establish a single manager for deployment and execution. As a result, the JCS formed the Joint Deployment Agency (JDA) in 1979 at MacDill Air Force Base, FL.

Although the JDA had responsibility for integrating deployment procedures, it did not have authority to direct the Transportation Operating Agencies or Unified and Specified Commanders to take corrective actions, keep data bases current, or adhere to milestones. In April 1987 President Reagan ordered the SECDEF to establish a Unified Transportation Command (UTC), a directive made possible in part by the Goldwater-Nichols DOD Reorganization Act of 1986, which revoked the law prohibiting consolidation of military transportation functions.

Designated the United States Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM), its mission was to provide global air, sea, and land transportation to meet national security needs. It had three transportation component commands—the Air Force’s Military Airlift Command (replaced by Air Mobility Command in 1992), the Navy’s Military Sealift Command, and the Army’s Military Traffic Management Command, (renamed Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command in 2004). On June 22 1987, the President nominated Air Force General Duane H. Cassidy as the first USTRANSCOM commander. The commander of USTRANSCOM received operational direction from the National Command Authority (NCA) through the CJCS. There were, however, some deficiencies in this new command arrangement. The Services retained their single-manager charters for their respective transportation modes. Even more restrictive, USTRANSCOM’s authorities were limited primarily to wartime.

As a result, during peacetime, USTRANSCOM’s component commands continued to operate day-to-day much as they had in the past. They controlled their industrial funds and maintained

⁵² Information in this section is taken from <http://www.transcom.mil/about/whatIs.cfm>.

⁵³ Taken directly from <http://www.transcom.mil/about/briefHistory.cfm>.

responsibility for Service-unique missions, Service-oriented procurement and maintenance scheduling, and DOD charters during peacetime single-manager transportation operations. They also continued to have operational control of forces.

DOD learned much from the strategic deployment for Desert Shield/Desert Storm and foremost among those lessons was USTRANSCOM and its component commands needed to operate in peacetime as they would in wartime. Consequently, on February 14, 1992, the SECDEF gave USTRANSCOM a new charter. Stating the command's mission to be "to provide air, land, and sea transportation for DOD, both in time of peace and time of war," the charter greatly expanded the authorities of the USTRANSCOM commander. Under the new charter, the Service Secretaries assigned the components to the USTRANSCOM commander in peace and war. In addition, the military departments assigned to him, under his combatant command, all transportation assets except those that were Service-unique or theater-assigned. The charter also made the USTRANSCOM commander DOD's single-manager for transportation, other than Service-unique and theater-assigned assets.

On September 16, 2003, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld designated the USTRANSCOM commander as the Distribution Process Owner (DPO) to serve "as the single entity to direct and supervise execution of the Strategic Distribution system" in order to "improve the overall efficiency and interoperability of distribution related activities - deployment, sustainment and redeployment support during peace and war." As the DPO, USTRANSCOM partnered with other COCOMs, the Services, defense agencies, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Joint Staff and industry to improve the Joint Deployment and Distribution Enterprise

Since 2003, USTRANSCOM has gained additional responsibilities related to its role as the Distribution Process Owner. In 2004, USTRANSCOM became the portfolio manager for DOD logistics information technology systems, and received acquisition authority for procuring information technology systems, carrying out research projects and obtaining services needed to transform the DOD supply chain.

Subcomponents⁵⁴

Surface Deployment and Distribution Command (SDDC)

"SDDC provides ocean terminal, commercial ocean liner service and traffic management services to deploy, sustain and redeploy U.S. forces on a global basis. The command is responsible for surface transportation and is the interface between DOD shippers and the commercial transportation carrier industry. This includes movement of servicemembers household goods and privately owned vehicles. SDDC is the nation's largest customer to the moving industry with more than 500,000 household goods moves a year. The command also provides transportation for troops and materiel to ports of departure in the U.S. and overseas and manages 24 ports worldwide, including military terminals at Sunny Point, N.C., and Concord, Calif."

⁵⁴ <http://www.transcom.mil/about/cocom.cfm>.

Military Sealift Command (MSC)

“MSC provides sealift transportation services to deploy, sustain and redeploy U.S. forces around the globe. MSC provides sealift with a fleet of government-owned and chartered U.S.-flagged ships. MSC executes Voluntary Intermodal Sealift Agreement (VISA) contracts for chartered vessels. Sealift ships principally move unit equipment from the U.S. to theaters of operation all over the world. In addition to sealift ships, MSC operates a fleet of prepositioned ships strategically placed around the world and loaded with equipment and supplies to sustain Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and Defense Logistics Agency operations. These ships remain at sea, ready to deploy on short notice, which significantly reduces the response time for the delivery of urgently needed equipment and supplies to a theater of operation.”

Air Mobility Command (AMC)

“AMC provides strategic and tactical airlift, air refueling, and aeromedical evacuation services for deploying, sustaining and redeploying U.S. forces wherever they are needed. Many special duty and operational support aircraft are also assigned to AMC (including Air Force One). In addition, AMC contracts with commercial air carriers through Civil Reserve Air Fleet (CRAF) and other programs for movement of DOD passengers and cargo. AMC’s air fleet provides swift response as an element of America’s global reach.”

Ongoing Operations⁵⁵

USTRANSCOM conducts military and commercial transportation, distribution process integration, terminal management, aerial refueling, and global patient movement on a daily basis. In 2011, the Air Mobility Command (AMC) deployed a rotational force of over 60 C-130 tactical airlift aircraft, plus 120 KC-135 and KC-10 aerial refueling aircraft. AMC also employed 21 C-17 transport aircraft in dedicated support of USCENTCOM and across all COCOMs, on a daily basis, at least one-third of AMC’s air mobility fleet was used to support global operations. The Military Sealift Command (MSC) and the Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command (SDDC) moved over 19.9 million tons of cargo worldwide. USTRANSCOM noted MSC tankers delivered 1.6 billion gallons of fuel to support global operations and SDDC had moved over 3,500 pieces of mission essential cargo by commercial sealift and then used airlift to transport this cargo to Afghanistan.

Selected Current Issues⁵⁶

Ground Supply to Afghanistan

The Pakistan Ground Lines of Communication (PAK GLOC), when open, remain the quickest and most cost-effective route for surface transportation into Afghanistan. Ground transportation through Pakistan had been curtailed since November 2011, and in early July 2012 the PAK GLOC was reopened after extensive negotiations. It should be noted there is no guarantee the

⁵⁵Statement of General William Fraser, USAF, Commander, United States Transportation Command Before the House Armed Services Committee on the State of the Command, March 7, 2012.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

Pakistani government will not close the PAK GLOC if there are future disputes with the U.S. government or NATO. USTRANSCOM continues efforts to expand surface networks that supply Afghanistan. Called the Northern Distribution Network (NDN), USTRANSCOM's stated priority is to enhance and improve this network. In 2011, over 40% of all cargo supporting Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) moved through the NDN's truck, water, rail, and air routes. In 2011, a total of 27,000 containers were delivered via NDN surface transportation—an increase of 15% from 2010. The importance of the NDN to USTRANSCOM's operations will likely grow as U.S. forces begin leaving Afghanistan in preparation for handing over security responsibilities to the Afghan government by 2014.

Guam and Building Toward USTRANSCOM's Future⁵⁷

As part of the Administration's shift in strategic emphasis to the Asia-Pacific region, USTRANSCOM noted during testimony the importance of Guam as a key multimodal logistics node. USTRANSCOM expressed its support of infrastructure improvements to ensure successful distribution operations in the region. USTRANSCOM has partnered with the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) and, with congressional approval, has invested \$101.3 million in the recapitalization of the fuel hydrant infrastructure and \$61 million in a JP-8 pipeline between Apra Harbor and Anderson Air Force Base.

Geographic Combatant Commands

U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM)⁵⁸

Website: <http://www.africom.mil>

Mission

“Africa Command protects and defends the national security interests of the United States by strengthening the defense capabilities of African states and regional organizations and, when directed, conducts military operations, in order to deter and defeat transnational threats and to provide a security environment conducive to good governance and development.”⁵⁹

“USAFRICOM is responsible for U.S. military relations with 54 African countries including the islands of Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, and Sao Tome and Principe, along with the Indian Ocean islands of Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, and Seychelles. U.S. Central Command maintains its traditional relationship with Egypt, though USAFRICOM coordinates with Egypt on issues relating to Africa security.”⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ For additional information on USAFRICOM see CRS Report RL34003, *Africa Command: U.S. Strategic Interests and the Role of the U.S. Military in Africa*, by Lauren Ploch.

⁵⁹ Fact Sheet: United States Africa Command, <http://www.africom.mil/getArticle.asp?art=1644>.

⁶⁰ AFRICOM FAQs, <http://www.africom.mil/AfricomFAQ.asp>.

A Different Kind of Combatant Command⁶¹

Dr. Cynthia Watson, a professor at the National War College and author of “Combatant Commands: Origins, Structure, and Engagements,” observes USAFRICOM has a different type of mission, noting

USAFRICOM allows the U.S. government, particularly DOD, to work toward a more stable environment in which political and economic growth can take place with three former U.S. commands consolidated into a single new one to best work out the U.S. government efforts. Africa Command hopes to avoid that traditional combatant command goals of warfighting in favor of war prevention, making its orientation quite different from other parallel organizations.

History⁶²

Africa’s previous command arrangements [USEUCOM has had responsibility for most of Africa since the end of World War II]⁶³ reflect the relatively low level of importance assigned to the African continent within the U.S. military structure. Before the creation of USAFRICOM, Africa generally received less attention than other regions under the three aforementioned military commands. USCENTCOM was focused on U.S. security priorities in Iraq and Afghanistan. USEUCOM was preoccupied with NATO, relations with European allies and Russia. USPACOM was primarily focused on regional powers such as China, India and North Korea. There was a consensus that the previous command arrangements for Africa represented a “suboptimal organizational structure.” Secretary of Defense Robert Gates observed that previous command arrangements for the African continent were “an outdated arrangement left over from the Cold War.” U.S. foreign policy in the region, like its military involvement, was primarily concerned with Cold War geopolitics rather than African policy and development. Scholars have referred to this policy attitude as “benign neglect,” designating Africa as the “stepchild” of U.S. foreign policy. This attitude continued after the end of the Cold War, when the opportunity to articulate coherent policy was overlooked. While the transformation of the geopolitical landscape was significantly altered by the fall of the Soviet Union, America’s attention was focused on the newly freed Eurasian states. In 1995, in its U.S. Security Strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa, DOD noted that “ultimately we see very little traditional strategic interest in Africa.”

Events in the late 1990s began to change U.S. perception of security interests in Africa. In 1998, two U.S. embassies in Africa were bombed. While many scholars believe these twin bombings marked a turning point in U.S. strategic policy toward the region, the domestic terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, forced a reassessment of U.S. policy vis-à-vis Africa and its role in the global war on terrorism. The growing strategic importance of Africa for the United States was subsequently articulated in government documents. In the 2002 National Security Strategy, the concept of weak states and their role in global instability was an important theme. The 2006 National Security Strategy solidified the newly important role of Africa, observing, “Africa holds growing geo-strategic importance and is a high priority of this administration.” The National

⁶¹ Cynthia A. Watson, p. 174.

⁶² Information in this section is taken from Milady Ortiz, “U.S. Africa Command: A New Way of Thinking,” National Security Watch, Association of the U.S. Army Institute of Land Warfare,” March 13, 2008.

⁶³ Cynthia A. Watson, p. 174.

Security Presidential Directive (NSPD 50) signed by President Bush in September 2006 provided the first update to overall U.S. strategy toward Africa since 1992.

Africa's abundance of natural energy resources has made it an attractive region for countries the United States, China, and India seeking additional resources. U.S. officials note three areas are of particular concern: (1) the number of soft targets (e.g., embassies and consulates); (2) the recruiting potential for young, angry, marginalized youth from Somalia to Morocco; and (3) the potential of sanctuary for international terrorists (particularly in large ungoverned spaces). Africa has also been a target terrorist activity: there were attacks on the U.S. embassies in Tanzania, and Kenya, in 1998; on targets in Mombasa, Kenya, in 2002; and in Algiers in 2007. In particular, the Horn of Africa is of concern to terrorism experts and military personnel.⁶⁴ In addition to terrorism concern, the growth of international piracy in the region has become a serious problem for the international community.⁶⁵

On February 6, 2007, the White House announced a presidential directive to create a new unified combatant command in Africa. U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM) commenced official operations on October 1, 2007, and remained a sub-unified command under U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) until October 2008. On October 1, 2008, USAFRICOM was declared fully mission capable and took over the role of geographic combatant command for Africa. While the USAFRICOM headquarters remains in Germany, there are aspirations to possibly move it to Africa sometime in the future but regional sensitivities and security concerns have made this a challenging proposition.

Subcomponents

U.S. Army Africa (USARAF)⁶⁶

Headquartered in Vicenza, Italy, USARAF is the Army component to USAFRICOM. In concert with national and international partners, it conducts sustained security engagement with African land forces to promote peace, stability, and security in Africa. If required, USAFRICOM can deploy as a contingency headquarters in support of crisis response. USAFRICOM is staffed by the Southern European Task Force (SETAF), which prior to August 2008 was an airborne task force that supported NATO in both combat and humanitarian operations.

U.S. Naval Forces, Africa (NAVAF)⁶⁷

“NAVAF is part of a combined U.S. Naval Forces Europe (NAVEUR)/NAVAF headquarters and is tasked with the conduct of the full range of maritime operations and theater security cooperation in concert with coalition joint interagency and other partners in order to advance security and stability in Europe and Africa. Their combined areas of responsibility cover approximately half of the Atlantic Ocean, from the North Pole to Antarctica; as well as the

⁶⁴ For additional information on regional terrorism see CRS Report R41473, *Countering Terrorism in East Africa: The U.S. Response*, by Lauren Ploch.

⁶⁵ For additional information on piracy around the Horn of Africa see CRS Report R40528, *Piracy off the Horn of Africa*, by Lauren Ploch et al.

⁶⁶ <http://www.usaraf.army.mil/>.

⁶⁷ <http://www.naveur-navaf.navy.mil/>.

Adriatic, Baltic, Barents, Black, Caspian, Mediterranean and North Seas. NAVFUR-NAFVAF [headquartered in Naples, Italy] covers all of Russia, Europe and nearly the entire continent of Africa. It encompasses 105 countries with a combined population of more than one billion people and includes a landmass extending more than 14 million square miles.” The U.S. Sixth Fleet supports NAVFVAF operations in the AFRICOM AOR and is headquartered in Naples, Italy.

U.S. Air Forces, Africa (AFAFRICA)⁶⁸

“AFAFRICA, or 17th Air Forces, conducts sustained security engagement and operations to promote air safety, security, and development in Africa. AFAFRICA is located at Ramstein Air Base in Germany.”

U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Africa (MARFORAF)

MARFORAF, located Stuttgart, Germany, is the Marine’s service component headquarters for USAFRICOM. “MARFORAF conducts operations, exercises, training, and security cooperation activities throughout the African Continent.”⁶⁹

Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA)

“CJTF-HOA is USAFRICOM’s forward operating task force located at Camp Lemonnier in Djibouti. It is one of more than 23 tenant organizations. CJTF-HOA has approximately 2,000 people assigned on rotating tours. While the core staff works at Camp Lemonnier, most of the service members assigned to CJTF-HOA are “embedded” in partner nations performing a range of activities—building partner security capability, capacity, and infrastructure through regional cooperation; military-to-military programs; civil-military affairs projects; and professional military education programs. Through an indirect approach, the task force, along with coalition and other U.S. defense components, provides support to regional organizations to help foster cooperation, enhance collective peace-keeping, improve humanitarian assistance, and support civil-military operations.”⁷⁰

Special Operations Command-Africa (SOCAFRICA)

“On October 1, 2008, SOCAFRICA was established as USAFRICOM’s Theater Special Operations Command—a functional, sub-unified special operations command for Africa. SOCAFRICA contributes to USAFRICOM’s mission through the application of the full spectrum of special operations forces capabilities including civil affairs, information operations, theater security cooperation, crisis response, and campaign planning.”⁷¹ SOCAFRICA is headquartered in Stuttgart, Germany.

⁶⁸ <http://www.africom.mil/pdfFiles/AFRICOMfactsheet05AUG2011.pdf>.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ AFRICOM FAQs, <http://www.africom.mil/AfricomFAQ.asp>.

⁷¹ USSOCOM 2011 Fact Book, <http://www.socom.mil/News/Documents/USSOCOMFactBook2011.pdf>.

Ongoing Operations

U.S. Deployment to Central Africa⁷²

On October 14, 2011, President Obama informed Congress on October 12, 2011, a small team of U.S. military personnel began deploying to Uganda and that by November about 100 U.S. military personnel—primarily U.S. Special Forces—would be deployed to Central Africa to act as advisors to partner forces who are attempting to kill or capture the leadership of the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA). The LRA is a nonreligious terror group that routinely kidnaps children and forces them to serve as soldiers which has committed multiple acts of terror in the region over the past two decades. U.S. forces are operating in Uganda, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the mission has been characterized as a mission of “months as opposed to years.”

In the past, USAFRICOM has provided training and equipment to a variety of central African militaries. USAFRICOM’s involvement has been credited with helping central African forces attrite the LRA to about 200 core fighters and about 600 supporters. USAFRICOM notes that about 100 U.S. service members continue to operate in Uganda, South Sudan, the Central African Republic, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo as advisors. While not characterized as an “open-ended commitment” USAFRICOM regularly “reviews and assesses” the effectiveness of this effort to determine if continued involvement is warranted.

Operation Enduring Freedom-Trans Sahara (OEF-TS)

“OEF-TS is the US Military regional plan against terrorist and violent extremists. OEF-TS is the military component to Trans Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP), together with other USG organizations, OEF-TS will help enhance stability and deter terrorist activity on the African continent, with an emphasis on greater security in North Africa. USAFRICOM is working with international partners in a regional approach to common areas of concern such as commerce, education and economic development. OEF-TS works with the partner nations to expand military-to-military cooperation, ensure adequate resources are available to train, advise, assist regional units, and establish mechanisms to promote better regional cooperation, communications, and intelligence-sharing.”⁷³

Exercises⁷⁴

USAFRICOM planned 14 major joint exercises in Africa for 2011. USAFRICOM uses these exercises to encourage the development of partner nation’s security capabilities and instilling professionalism in Africa’s various military and security forces. These exercises range from traditional land combat operations, to logistics and medical operations, humanitarian aid and disaster response, to counterterrorism training.

⁷² Information in this section is taken from The White House Office of the Press Secretary to the speaker of the House of Representatives and the President Pro Tempore of the Senate, October 14, 2011; and Lisa Daniels, “Official: Troops in Central Africa for Months, Not Years,” *American Forces Press Service*, October 26, 2011 and USAFRICOM Information Paper, “U.S. Military Support to African Efforts to Counter the Lord’s Resistance Army,” February, 2012.

⁷³ USAFRICOM, OEF Trans-Sahara, <http://www.africom.mil/fetchBinary.asp?pdfID=20100526130828>.

⁷⁴ Fact Sheet: USAFRICOM 2012 Exercises, February 2012.

Selected Current Issues

Regional Threats⁷⁵

The USAFRICOM commander testified that Africa accounts for 14 of the world's 20 weakest states and these fragile states lack the capacity or political will to confront demographic, political, social, and economic challenges. Threats in the region include activities of Al Qaeda and its affiliates in East Africa, the Maghreb, and the Sahel. Illicit trafficking and violent extremist organizations (VEOs) also pose threats to regional security and U.S. national interests. Of further concern, many man-portable air defense systems (MANPADS) disappeared from unsecured storage sites during the 2011 Libyan conflict and could potentially be trafficked to extremist groups.

Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) Challenges

The USAFRICOM commander testified that ISR continues to be a challenge.⁷⁶ USAFRICOM is reportedly seeking an expansion of ISR activities in Africa and is seeking additional assets, particularly unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) to adequately cover the continent.⁷⁷

U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM)

Website: <http://www.centcom.mil>

Mission

“With national and international partners, U.S. Central Command promotes cooperation among nations, responds to crises, and deters or defeats state and nonstate aggression, and supports development and, when necessary, reconstruction in order to establish the conditions for regional security, stability, and prosperity.”⁷⁸

History

The Iranian hostage crisis that played out from 1979 to 1981 and the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan served to underscore the need to strengthen U.S. presence in the region, President Carter established the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF) in March 1980 and President Reagan took steps to transform the RDJTF into a permanent unified command over a two-year period. USCENTCOM was formally established on January 1, 1983.

⁷⁵ Statement of General Carter F. Ham, USA, Commander United States Africa Command Before the House Armed Services Committee, February 29, 2012.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Craig Whitlock, “Military Expands Spying in Africa,” *New York Times*, June 14, 2012.

⁷⁸ <http://www.centcom.mil>.

By late 1988, the regional strategy largely focused on the potential threat of a Soviet invasion of Iran. The new USCENTCOM commander, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf, believed an invasion of Iran was unlikely and began to focus on the possible emergence of a new regional threat—Iraq. On August 2, 1990, these beliefs became a reality when Iraq invaded Kuwait. The U.S. and other nations responded quickly by forming a coalition and deploying forces to Saudi Arabia to deter further Iraqi aggression. On January 17, 1991, U.S. and coalition forces launched Operation Desert Storm with an air interdiction campaign, which prepared the theater for a coalition ground assault. The primary coalition objective, the liberation of Kuwait, was achieved on February 27, and the next morning a cease-fire was declared, just one hundred hours after the commencement of the ground campaign.

Even though formal hostilities ended after the hundred hour war, there were other security concerns. Operation Provide Comfort was implemented in April 1991 to provide humanitarian assistance to the Kurds and enforce a “no-fly” zone in Iraq. In August 1992, Operation Southern Watch began in response to Saddam’s noncompliance with U.N. Security Council Resolution 688 condemning his brutal repression of Iraqi civilians in southeastern Iraq. In January 1997, Operation Northern Watch replaced Provide Comfort and focused on enforcing the northern no-fly zone. Throughout the decade, USCENTCOM operations such as Vigilant Warrior, Vigilant Sentinel, Desert Strike, Desert Thunder (I and II), and Desert Fox responded to Iraqi threats to its neighbors or to enforce U.N. Security Council resolutions.

To prevent widespread starvation attributed to clan warfare, USCENTCOM undertook Operation Provide Relief in 1992 to supply humanitarian assistance to Somalia and northeastern Kenya as sanctioned by the U.N. In 1993, despite of some U.N. success in the countryside, the situation in Mogadishu worsened, and a series of violent confrontations compelled President Clinton to order the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Somalia. Throughout the decade following the Gulf War, terrorist attacks had a major impact on USCENTCOM forces in the region. In 1996, the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia were bombed, killing 19 U.S. airmen. In 1998 terrorists attacked the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, killing 250 persons, including 12 Americans. The October 2000 attack on the USS Cole, resulting in the deaths of 17 U.S. sailors, was linked to Osama bin Laden’s al Qaida organization.

The September 11, 2001, attacks compelled the U.S. to initiate a war against international terrorism. USCENTCOM launched Operation Enduring Freedom in October 2001 to expel the Taliban government in Afghanistan, which was harboring al Qaida terrorists, hosting terrorist training camps, and repressing the Afghan population. In the wake of 9/11, some members of international community found Iraq’s lack of cooperation with United Nation Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions regarding weapons of mass destruction unacceptable. Continued Iraqi resistance led the UNSC to authorize the use of force by a U.S.-led coalition. Operation Iraqi Freedom began March 19, 2003.

Following the defeat of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan (November 9, 2001) and Saddam Hussein’s government in Iraq (April 8, 2003), USCENTCOM continued to provide security to the new governments in those countries, conducting counterinsurgency operations and assisting host nation security forces to provide for their own defense.

Beginning in October 2002, USCENTCOM conducted operations in the Horn of Africa to assist host nations there to combat terrorism, establish a secure environment, and foster regional stability. USCENTCOM also provided disaster relief such as the October 2005 earthquake in Pakistan and the large-scale evacuation of American citizens from Lebanon in 2006.

On October 1, 2008, DOD transferred responsibility for Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Kenya, and Somalia to the newly established USAFRICOM while Egypt remained in the USCENTCOM AOR.⁷⁹

Subcomponents

U.S. Army Central (ARCENT)⁸⁰

ARCENT, in addition to being the Army component, has the mission to serve as an expeditionary headquarters to handle operations across the full spectrum for limited duration operations. The U.S. Third Army forms the basis of this subcomponent command and also serves as the Coalition Forces Land Component Command. ARCENT has a forward headquarters in Doha, Qatar.

U.S. Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT)⁸¹

NAVCENT has its headquarters in Manama, Bahrain, the homeport of the U.S. Fifth Fleet. NAVCENT forces in the region normally include either a Carrier Strike Group, Expeditionary Strike Group, or an Amphibious Strike Group. NAVCENT also serves as the command element for the Combined Maritime Forces, which is comprised of naval forces from about two dozen nations that are responsible for combating terrorism, piracy, and illegal drug trafficking in the region.

U.S. Air Forces Central (AFCENT)⁸²

“Located at Shaw Air Force Base, South Carolina, the 9th Air Force is the headquarters for AFCENT and serves as the air component for a 27-nation area within the USCENTCOM AOR. The 9th Air Force is also an intermediate headquarters under Air Combat Command and is responsible for five active-duty flying wings, as well as overseeing the operational readiness of 18 designated units of the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve.”

U.S. Marine Corps Forces Central Command (MARCENT)⁸³

“MARCENT is designated as the Marine Corps service component for USCENTCOM. MARCENT is responsible for all Marine Corps forces in the CENTCOM AOR. MARCENT provides Marine Expeditionary Forces capable of conducting a wide range of operations, offering the command a responsive and unique set of capabilities.” MARCENT has a forward headquarters in Bahrain.

⁷⁹ <http://www.centcom.mil/en/about-centcom/our-history/>.

⁸⁰ Cynthia A. Watson, p. 142.

⁸¹ Ibid., pp. 141-142.

⁸² <http://www.afcent.af.mil/main/welcome.asp>.

⁸³ http://www.marines.mil/unit/marforcent/Pages/MARCENT_Main.aspx.

Special Operations Command Central (SOCCENT)⁸⁴

“SOCCENT is headquartered at MacDill Air Force Base, FL and is a subordinate unified command of U.S. Central Command. It is responsible for planning Special Operations throughout the USCENTCOM AOR, planning and conducting peacetime joint/combined Special Operations training exercises and orchestrating command and control of peacetime and wartime Special Operations as directed. SOCCENT exercises operational control of assigned and attached SOF that deploy for the execution of training and for operational missions in the USCENTCOM area of operations as directed by the USCENTCOM commander. When directed by the USCENTCOM commander, SOCCENT forms a Joint Special Operations Task Force (JSOTF).”

Ongoing Operations⁸⁵

USCENTCOM forces are conducting a theater-wide campaign in conjunction with other partner nations against Al Qaeda and its extremist allies. USCENTCOM’s stated main effort is in Afghanistan where U.S., NATO, and coalition allies are conducting a counterinsurgency campaign as well as training, equipping and advising Afghan military and police forces so they can eventually take over security responsibilities for their country. With U.S. forces out of Iraq, USCENTCOM notes it will take on an increasing maritime character with special operations forces and air forces supporting operations. USCENTCOM believes that naval forces—with embarked troops—will provide a physical presence and a cost-effective means of projecting power in the event of a crisis.

Selected Current Issues⁸⁶

Middle East Unrest

Concern has been expressed over past and current unrest in Egypt, Bahrain, Jordan, Syria, and Yemen spurred by people’s demands for democratic rights in those countries. In the case of Egypt, a long standing regime was deposed and is now moving to a more democratic form of government. Of critical concern to many is, despite overtures towards democracy, widespread demonstrations have resulted in varying degrees of instability in these countries. In the case of Egypt, Jordan, Yemen, and Bahrain, they are considered crucial counterterrorism partners and long term unrest and possible political changes could have a detrimental impact on U.S. counterterrorism efforts in the region. Despite international pressure, open conflict continues in Syria, with some suggesting that it could eventually turn into a long-term, full-fledged civil war that could pose a threat to regional security and stability. While there have been calls for outside military intervention, the pervasive approach appears to be “hands off” in nature. Given the volatility of these countries, USCENTCOM could be called upon in short order to protect U.S. national interests in the region.

⁸⁴ <http://www.socom.mil/News/Documents/USSOCOMFactBook2011.pdf>.

⁸⁵ Statement of U.S. Marine Corps General James N. Mattis, U.S. Central Command Commander, before the House Armed Services Committee on March 7, 2012, about the posture of U.S. Central Command.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

Iranian Interference⁸⁷

U.S. intelligence agencies and USCENTCOM have long held that Iran has provided arms, ammunition, money, and improvised explosive device (IED) components to insurgents opposing U.S. efforts in Afghanistan. Iran also stands accused of exploiting the Arab Awakening, undermining democracy in Iraq, and supporting the Asad regime in Syria, behaviors that some believe are the primary catalyst in pushing the region toward an arms race or armed conflict. The challenge to USCENTCOM is how to best mitigate Iranian interference to promote long-term regional stability.

U.S. European Command (USEUCOM)

Website: <http://www.eucom.mil>

Mission⁸⁸

The mission of USEUCOM is to conduct military operations, international military partnering, and interagency partnering to enhance transatlantic security and defend the United States . USEUCOM forces constitute the United States military contribution to NATO.

USEUCOM Commander and NATO

The USEUCOM Commander also traditionally serves as the Supreme Allied Commander of NATO (SACEUR). SACEUR's responsibilities are outlined as follows:⁸⁹

SACEUR is responsible for the overall command of NATO military operations. He conducts the necessary military planning for operations, including the identification of forces required for the mission and requests these forces from NATO countries, as authorized by the North Atlantic Council and as directed by NATO's Military Committee. SACEUR analyzes these operational needs in cooperation with the Supreme Allied Commander Transformation.

SACEUR makes recommendations to NATO's political and military authorities on any military matter that may affect his ability to carry out his responsibilities. For day-to-day business, he reports to the Military Committee, composed of Military Representatives for Chiefs of Defense of NATO member countries. He also has direct access to the Chiefs of Defense and may communicate with appropriate national authorities, as necessary, to facilitate the accomplishment of his tasks.

In the case of an aggression against a NATO member state, SACEUR, as Supreme Commander, is responsible for executing all military measures within his capability and authority to preserve or restore the security of Alliance territory.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ <http://www.eucom.mil/documents/fact-sheets/EUCOM-Factsheet-Command-2010.pdf>.

⁸⁹ http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_50110.htm.

History⁹⁰

USEUCOM was established August 1, 1952 to provide unified command and authority over all U.S. forces in Europe. For several years after World War II the services had maintained separate commands in Europe that reported directly to the JCS. After the end of the occupation of Germany in 1949, some questioned the U.S. commitment to the defense of Western Europe against the Soviet Union. The Berlin Crisis of 1948-49 exacerbated these concerns and in 1949 the allies established the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), but little else was done to address the Soviet threat.

The June 1950 surprise attack on South Korea by Communist North Korea served as a catalyst and in 1951 NATO established Allied Command Europe and the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE). General Dwight D. Eisenhower was recalled from retirement to become the first Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR).

Even as the war in Korea raged, the U.S. reinforcements to Europe to deter the Soviet Union from similar aggression there and between 1950 and 1953, U.S. military personnel in Europe grew from 120,000 to over 400,000. To provide for national command within NATO, and to help control this build-up of forces, Eisenhower proposed a separate command for all U.S. forces in Europe. Because the senior U.S. commander would continue as Supreme Allied Commander Europe, Eisenhower recommended giving “a maximum of delegated authority” to a four-star deputy.

The first U.S. Commander-in-Chief Europe (USCINCEUR) was General Matthew B. Ridgway, former commander of Eighth Army and the Far East Command during the Korean War. USEUCOM used the Military Assistance Program to help its NATO partners build their military capabilities. USEUCOM also conducted out-of-sector operations such as a major contingency operation to Lebanon in 1958. In 1961 Berlin once again became a flashpoint when the Soviets erected a wall to stop people fleeing Communist rule.

In the early 1960s, policy disagreements emerged within NATO, and in 1966 France demanded the removal of all U.S. and NATO headquarters and forces from France. The following year SHAPE moved to Mons, Belgium, while Headquarters USEUCOM moved to Patch Barracks. USEUCOM continued to prepare for the defense of Europe and began a series of annual REFORGER (Return of Forces to Europe) exercises in 1967. Cold War crises continued, including the 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia. But the readiness of U.S. forces in Europe slowly declined due to the Vietnam War and balance of payment problems. Troop strength in Europe fell to 265,000 by 1970.

During the 1970s, the Cold War transitioned to an era of détente and negotiations although tensions remained high as both sides modernized their conventional and nuclear forces. In the late 1970s the Soviet Union deployed SS-20 intermediate-range ballistic missiles into Eastern Europe and in 1979 invaded Afghanistan. NATO responded with a “two-track” decision to step up negotiations while deploying U.S. intermediate-range Pershing II missiles and ground-launched cruise missiles to counter the Soviet threat.

⁹⁰ <http://www.eucom.mil/documents/fact-sheets/EUCOM-Factsheet-History-2010.pdf>.

During the 1980s, the armed forces began to recover from the Vietnam War and U.S. forces in Europe grew to over 350,000. The UCP was changed in 1983 to transfer responsibility for the Middle East from USEUCOM to a new combatant command, USCENTCOM, but USEUCOM retained responsibility for the “confrontation states” of Israel, Lebanon and Syria. At the same time USEUCOM was formally assigned responsibility of Africa, south of the Sahara.

In 1989, the Soviet Union and its empire in Eastern Europe collapsed and the Cold War came to an end. In 1991 USEUCOM and its components provided forces to USCENTCOM for another out-of-sector operation, Desert Storm. USEUCOM reached out to the emerging democracies through programs such as the Joint Contact Team Program, NATO Partnership for Peace and the National Guard Bureau State Partnership Program. It was also active in peace and stability operations in the Balkans, including Bosnia, Macedonia and Kosovo. But it had to conduct these new missions with fewer assigned forces as its strength fell below 120,000.

After the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, USEUCOM provided major forces for operations in Afghanistan and Iraq and stepped up its efforts to protect U.S. interests in Europe and Africa. Subsequent terrorist attacks in the USEUCOM theater in Casablanca, Madrid, London and Algiers made it clear that terrorism demanded a collective response. USEUCOM worked to build partner capacity in Europe and Africa for peacekeeping operations and deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. USEUCOM launched Operation Enduring Freedom and Trans-Sahara in 2007 while continuing to provide rotational forces to Afghanistan and Iraq.

Subcomponents⁹¹

U.S. Army Europe (USAEUR)

Located in Heidelberg, Germany, USAEUR trains, equips, deploys and provides command and control of forward-deployed land forces, able to support and conduct the full spectrum of joint, and combined multi-national operations, and engagement activities.

U.S. Naval Forces Europe (NAVEUR)

Located in Naples, Italy, NAVEUR, the U.S. Navy component command, conducts a full range of maritime operations as well as theater security cooperation operations with NATO allies. The U.S. Sixth Fleet, which is also a subcomponent of AFRICOM, forms the basis of this subcomponent command.

U.S. Air Forces in Europe (USAFE)

Located at Ramstein Air Force Base in Germany, USAFE, the Air Force component command, operates from five main operating bases that supports nine air wings. These wings provide a full spectrum of air support, including strategic airlift as well as air support to ground forces and

⁹¹ <http://www.eucom.mil/documents/fact-sheets/EUCOM-Factsheet-Command-2010.pdf> and House and Senate Armed Services Committees Testimony of Admiral James G. Stavridis, United States Navy, Commander United States European Command Before the 112th Congress, 2011, March 2011.

intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance support. The Third Air Force forms the basis of this subcomponent command.

U.S. Marine Corps Forces Europe (MARFOREUR)

Located in Stuttgart, Germany, MARFOREUR employs pre-positioned assets to rapidly deploy expeditionary forces and equipment and conduct a wide array of operations, including building partner capacity.

Special Operations Command Europe (SOCEUR)

Located at Patch Barracks, Stuttgart, Germany, SOCEUR provides flexibility throughout a full range of military operations including combat, special operations, humanitarian assistance, noncombatant evacuations and joint-combined military operations.

Ongoing Operations⁹²

Support to NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan⁹³

USEUCOM's support to ISAF is significant. About 90% of the 40,000 non-U.S. troops deployed to Afghanistan are from the European theater. USEUCOM's support to ISAF is primarily focused on preparing these nation's forces for deployment to Afghanistan. These supporting activities include sending mobile planning teams to assess partner nation equipment and training requirements and working with these countries to develop a comprehensive pre-deployment plan.

Multi-National Joint and Interagency Exercises

Multi-national and joint interagency exercises constitute the most significant form of peacetime interaction with NATO allies and other partners. In 2011, USEUCOM conducted 22 major exercises involving almost 50,000 U.S., allied, and partner nation personnel from 42 nations. These exercises focused on preparing partner nations for ongoing coalition operations including ISAF, enhancing overall NATO interoperability, and improving NATO's military interoperability with Israel.

Exercises in the Baltics, Balkans, and Caucasus

In support of NATO initiatives, USEUCOM provides U.S. forces for nine NATO and Partnership for Peace training events in the Baltics. In addition, USEUCOM provides forces for major exercises in the Balkans which not designed to help to improve these nation's military capabilities but also to ease regional tensions.

⁹² House Armed Services Committee Testimony of Admiral James G. Stavridis, United States Navy, Commander United States European Command, February 29, 2012.

⁹³ For more information on NATO in Afghanistan see CRS Report RL33627, *NATO in Afghanistan: A Test of the Transatlantic Alliance*, by Vincent Morelli and Paul Belkin.

Selected Current Issues⁹⁴

Afghanistan

USEUCOM currently has about 12,000 U.S. troops forward deployed to Afghanistan serving in a variety of capacities. As previously noted, USEUCOM plays a central role in training and deploying non-U.S. forces and the USEUCOM Commander, in his SACEUR role, is a central figure in persuading NATO allies to provide troops and resources for ISAF. As overall U.S. involvement in Afghanistan begins to wind down, NATO involvement will also likely follow suit and, in some instances, some NATO nations might opt for an abrupt end to their support to ISAF. USEUCOM's and SACEUR's primary challenge will likely be to develop plans for and manage a smooth transition as NATO forces draw down and transition security functions to the Afghan National Army. It is possible USEUCOM and NATO might have some residual support requirements in Afghanistan after the transition and these efforts will also require resources and management.

The Balkans

USEUCOM has participated in NATO operations in the Balkans since the 1995 Dayton Peace Accords. At the height of Operation Joint Endeavor in 1996, the United States had over 20,000 troops in the Balkans. While current USEUCOM troop commitments to the Balkans are negligible, continued engagement in the region is viewed by most as essential in keeping the region stable. As such, USEUCOM participation in NATO exercises and training teams in this region is deemed essential not only to improve capabilities and diffuse tensions but also to signify U.S. long-term interest and commitment to the Balkan region.

Missile Defense⁹⁵

USEUCOM notes an increasing and expanding ballistic missile threat to USEUCOM's area of focus, citing missile-related activities in Iran and Syria, as well as those of non-state actors such as Hizbollah. In response to this threat, the U.S. and Poland have initiated a cooperative air and missile defense partnership whereby the U.S. rotates Patriot anti-missile and anti-aircraft batteries to Poland on a quarterly basis and conducts training with their Polish counterparts. In September 2011, Romania agreed to the stationing of 24 interceptor missiles on Romanian soil and Turkey agreed to accept a sophisticated U.S. radar, which is now operational. In the spring of 2012, the U.S. Navy added two ballistic missile defense (BMD)-capable ships to the theater to further improve NATO missile defense. These events as well as plans to expand coverage to other countries, has elicited opposition from Russia and has complicated NATO's relationship with Moscow. USEUCOM's challenge will likely be to continue to play a role in developing European ground-based missile defense while at the same time maintaining an effective military relationship with Russia under potentially trying circumstances.

⁹⁴ House Armed Services Committee Testimony of Admiral James G. Stavridis, United States Navy, Commander United States European Command, February 29, 2012.

⁹⁵ For additional information see CRS Report RL34051, *Long-Range Ballistic Missile Defense in Europe*, by Steven A. Hildreth and Carl Ek.

U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM)

Website: <http://www.northcom.mil>

Mission⁹⁶

“USNORTHCOM’s mission is to conduct homeland defense, civil support and security cooperation to defend and secure the United States and its interests. USNORTHCOM was established Oct. 1, 2002, to provide command and control of DOD homeland defense efforts and to coordinate defense support of civil authorities.

USNORTHCOM’s area of operation includes air, land and sea approaches and encompasses the continental United States, Alaska, Canada, Mexico and the surrounding water out to approximately 500 nautical miles. It also includes the Gulf of Mexico, the Straits of Florida, portions of the Caribbean region to include The Bahamas, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The commander of USNORTHCOM is responsible for theater security cooperation with Canada, Mexico, and The Bahamas.”

North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD)⁹⁷

“The commander of USNORTHCOM also commands NORAD, a joint U.S.-Canadian command responsible for aerospace warning, aerospace control, and maritime warning for Canada, Alaska and the continental United States. For the aerospace warning mission, the commander of NORAD provides an integrated tactical warning and attack assessment to the governments of Canada and the United States. To accomplish the aerospace control mission, NORAD uses a network of satellites, ground-based radar, airborne radar and fighters to detect, intercept and, if necessary, engage any air-breathing threat to Canada and the United States. In conjunction with its aerospace control mission, NORAD assists in the detection and monitoring of aircraft suspected of illegal drug trafficking. This information is passed to civilian law enforcement agencies to help combat the flow of illegal drugs into North America. The Command has developed an initial concept for implementing the new maritime warning mission.”

Missile Defense

USNORTHCOM is the combatant command responsible for the operation of the Ground-Based Midcourse Defense System (GMD) designed to defend the United States against the threat of a limited ballistic missile attack from nations such as North Korea and Iran.

Unique Civil Support Mission⁹⁸

USNORTHCOM’s civil support mission includes domestic disaster relief operations during fires, hurricanes, floods and earthquakes. Support also includes counter-drug operations and managing

⁹⁶ <http://www.northcom.mil/About/index.html>.

⁹⁷ Ibid. and <http://www.norad.mil/about/index.html>.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

the consequences of a terrorist event employing a weapon of mass destruction. The command provides assistance to a nonmilitary Primary Agency when tasked to do so by DOD. Per the Posse Comitatus Act,⁹⁹ military forces can provide civil support, but cannot become directly involved in law enforcement.¹⁰⁰

History¹⁰¹

On April 17, 2002, DOD announced the establishment of USNORTHCOM to consolidate under a single unified command those existing homeland defense and civil support missions that were previously executed by other military organizations. On May 8, 2002, U.S. Air Force General Ralph E. Eberhart, the commander of the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) and U.S. Space Command, was nominated to be the first commander of USNORTHCOM. USNORTHCOM attained initial operational capability on October 1, 2002.

USNORTHCOM provided support in response to the Space Shuttle Columbia disaster in February 2002, and in May 2003 participated in a comprehensive terrorism response exercise States—Top Officials 2, or TOPOFF 2. USNORTHCOM conducted Exercise Determined Promise 03 in Clark County, NV, and Colorado Springs, CO. This major exercise was designed to evaluate the command's ability to command and control multiple homeland defense and defense support of civil authorities missions simultaneously. Following Exercise Determined Promise 03, USNORTHCOM announced full operational capability on September 11, 2003.

In February 2004, USNORTHCOM conducted Exercise Unified Defense 04. This major exercise allowed the USNORTHCOM, Fifth Army, Joint Task Force Alaska and associated units to practice the homeland defense and defense support to civil authorities missions. The exercise involved the Department of Homeland Security and more than 50 federal, state and local organizations. During the summer of 2004, USNORTHCOM supported interagency efforts to deter and defeat any possible threats against several National Security Special Events. Exercise Determined Promise 04, conducted in August 2004, tested USNORTHCOM's ability to assist civil and federal authorities in a coordinated response to simulated chemical, radiological, and explosive hazards, conducted in California and Virginia. In the same month, USNORTHCOM supported the Federal Emergency Management Agency's efforts to provide relief to areas in Florida most impacted by Hurricane Charley.

In September 2005, as directed by the secretary of defense and in accordance with the National Response Plan, USNORTHCOM supported the Department of Homeland Security and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other federal agencies in disaster relief efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. More than 21,400 active-duty servicemembers and 45,700 Army and Air National Guard members supported the effort in the U.S. Gulf Coast.

In May 2006 USNORTHCOM participated in Exercise Ardent Sentry 06, which involved numerous federal, provincial, state and local agencies in Canada and the United States. The exercise required participants to respond to simulated terrorist activities and manage the

⁹⁹ For a definition of the Posse Comitatus Act that limits the use of military force in law enforcement, see http://www.northcom.mil/About/history_education/posse.html.

¹⁰⁰ For additional information on Posse Comitatus, see CRS Report RS22266, *The Use of Federal Troops for Disaster Assistance: Legal Issues*, by Jennifer K. Elsea and R. Chuck Mason.

¹⁰¹ http://www.northcom.mil/About/history_education/history.html.

consequences of a range of simulated man-made and natural disasters. Exercise Ardent Sentry 06 helped military and civilian officials prepare to respond to a variety of national crises.

On July 4, 2006, the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea launched six ballistic missiles, including a long-range Taepodong-2 missile. USNORTHCOM personnel were immediately able to detect the launch of all the missiles. While Ground-based Midcourse Defense System interceptors at Fort Greely, AK, and Vandenberg Air Force Base, CA, were operational during the launches, top officials from the command were able to quickly determine the missiles posed no threat to the United States or its territories.

Subcomponents¹⁰²

Joint Force Headquarters National Capital Region (JFHQ-NCR)

“JFHQ-NCR, based at Fort McNair, Washington, D.C. is responsible for land-based homeland defense, defense support of civil authorities (DSCA), and incident management in the National Capital Region. JFHQ-NCR is responsible for protecting the District of Columbia and neighboring counties and cities of Maryland and northern Virginia. JFHQ-NCR draws together the existing resources of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and NORAD into a single point headquarters for planning, coordination and execution of the mission in the National Capital Region.”

Joint Task Force Alaska (JTF-AK)

“JTF-AK is headquartered at Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska. JTF-AK’s mission is to, in coordination with other government agencies, deter, detect, prevent and defeat threats within the Alaska Joint Operations Area (AK JOA) in order to protect U.S. territory, citizens, and interests, and as directed, conduct Civil Support operations.”

Joint Task Force Civil Support (JTF-CS)

“JTF-CS, was originally formed as a standing joint task force under USJFCOM. JTF-CS was transferred to USNORTHCOM when USNORTHCOM was established October 1, 2002. The task force consists of active, Guard and Reserve military members drawn from all service branches, as well as civilian personnel, who are commanded by a federalized (Title X) National Guard general officer. JTF-CS plans and integrates DOD support to the designated Primary Agency for domestic chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear, or high-yield explosive (CBRNE) consequence management operations. When approved by the secretary of defense and directed by the commander of USNORTHCOM, JTF-CS deploys to the incident site and executes timely and effective command and control of designated DOD forces, providing support to civil authorities to save lives, prevent injury and provide temporary critical life support.”

¹⁰² <http://www.northcom.mil/About/index.html>.

Joint Task Force North (JTF North)

“JTF North, based at Biggs Army Airfield, Fort Bliss, TX, is the DOD organization tasked to support our nation’s federal law enforcement agencies in the interdiction of suspected transnational threats within and along the approaches to the continental United States. Transnational threats are those activities conducted by individuals or groups that involve international terrorism, narcotics trafficking, alien smuggling, weapons of mass destruction, and the delivery systems for such weapons that threaten the national security of the United States.”

Army North (ARNORTH)

“ARNORTH is the Army component of NORTHCOM and is located at Fort Sam Houston, TX. ARNORTH’s mission is to conduct homeland defense, civil support operations and theater security cooperation activities. ARNORTH is responsible for developing and unifying the military response capability for chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and high-yield explosives (CBRNE) incidents. In addition, the Civil Support Readiness Directorate trains National Guard Weapons of Mass Destruction Civil Support Teams, which are state first responders for chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear or high-yield explosive incidents.”

Air Force North (AFNORTH)

“Headquartered at Tyndall Air Force Base, near Panama City, FL, 1st Air Force is assigned to Air Combat Command. It has the responsibility of ensuring the air sovereignty and air defense of the continental United States. As the CONUS geographical component of the bi-national North American Aerospace Defense Command, it provides airspace surveillance and control and directs all air sovereignty activities for the continental United States Fleet Forces Command (USFF).”

U.S. Fleet Forces Command (USFF)

“USFF is the Navy component of USNORTHCOM and is located at Norfolk, VA. USFF’s mission is to provide maritime forces prepared to conduct homeland defense, civil support operations and theater security cooperation activities when directed by USNORTHCOM. Additionally, USFF has responsibilities to generate ready Navy forces for assignment to global Regional Combatant Commanders, execute the Fleet Response Plan (FRP) using the Fleet Training Continuum, articulate to the Chief of Naval Operations the integrated Fleet warfighting requirements as coordinated with all Navy Component Commanders, and provide operational planning support to USTRATCOM.”

Ongoing Operations

USNORTHCOM’s and NORAD’s missions of homeland defense, air and missile defense, and maritime warning involve a multitude of continuous operations in a variety of domains. These operations are best described as monitoring, detection, and warning, and, in the case of air-breathing threats, interception. According to the USNORTHCOM commander:

Our daily efforts include countering terrorism and transnational criminal organizations, preparing to support our federal and state partners in the wake of a natural or manmade disaster, air defense against both internal and external threats, maritime and ballistic missile defense and of course, a growing focus on the Arctic.¹⁰³

Selected Current Issues¹⁰⁴

Countering Transnational Criminal Organizations¹⁰⁵

Mexican transnational criminal organizations (TCOs) and their involvement in the illicit trafficking of drugs, weapons, money, and human beings into the United States is one of USNORTHCOM's primary homeland security concerns. USNORTHCOM, in keeping with U.S. law and working with and through other U.S. government agencies, is working with the Mexican government to defeat the TCOs. USNORTHCOM efforts include providing the Mexican military with material solutions as well as sharing operational insights and experiences. In addition to efforts along the southern U.S. border, USNORTHCOM has been providing support to U.S. law enforcement agencies along both southern and northern borders. This support includes sensors, radar, forward-looking infrared, and manned and unmanned aerial border surveillance. Because access to these platforms is not unlimited, concerns exist that if a greater level of support is required along one border, assets available for the other border might become constrained.

The Arctic¹⁰⁶

Because of the growing geo-strategic importance of the Arctic, the USNORTHCOM Commander has designated the Arctic as a key focus area. Along these lines, USNORTHCOM is currently examining how to support other U.S. government agencies in the region with search and rescue assets, humanitarian assistance, disaster response, and law enforcement. As part of this examination, USNORTHCOM has identified deficiencies in all-domain awareness, communications, infrastructure (including a deepwater port), mobility (including an adequate national icebreaking capability), search and rescue enabling capabilities, Arctic Ocean charting, and the ability to observe and forecast Arctic environmental change.

¹⁰³ Statement of General Charles H. Jacoby, Jr., Commander United States Northern Command and North American Aerospace Defense Command before the House Armed Services Committee, March 6, 2012.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ For additional information on Mexican operations against TCOs, see CRS Report R41576, *Mexico's Drug Trafficking Organizations: Source and Scope of the Rising Violence*, by June S. Beittel.

¹⁰⁶ For additional information on the Arctic see CRS Report R41153, *Changes in the Arctic: Background and Issues for Congress*, coordinated by Ronald O'Rourke

U.S. Pacific Command (USPACOM)

Website: <http://www.pacom.mil>

Mission¹⁰⁷

“USPACOM protects and defends, in concert with other U.S. Government agencies, the territory of the United States, its people, and its interests. With allies and partners, USPACOM is committed to enhancing stability in the Asia-Pacific region by promoting security cooperation, encouraging peaceful development, responding to contingencies, deterring aggression, and, when necessary, fighting to win. This approach is based on partnership, presence, and military readiness.”

USPACOM’s AOR covers half of the earth and is home to three billion people living in three dozen countries with five of these nations being U.S. allies and with many more important economic and security partners. USPACOM’s AOR contains the world’s three largest economies and almost one-third of U.S. two-way trade in goods and services. In addition, much of the world’s trade and energy that fuels the global economy transits Asia’s sea and air lines of communication.

History¹⁰⁸

USPACOM was established as a unified command on January 1, 1947, and is the oldest and largest of the United States’ COCOMs. The present USPACOM includes areas originally assigned to two other unified commanders. The Far East Command, which had been established on January 1, 1947, was disestablished on July 1, 1957, and all its responsibilities were assumed by the Pacific Command. That same day the command assumed some of the responsibilities of the Alaskan Command and individual Army and Air Force component commands for the Pacific also were established in Hawaii.

Added responsibilities were assigned to USPACOM on January 1, 1972, for military forces and elements in the Indian Ocean, Southern Asia, and the Arctic. The Pacific Command’s AOR was further expanded on May 1, 1976, to the east coast of Africa. This enlarged the Pacific Command to more than 50% of the earth’s surface, an area of over 100 million square miles.

Another enlargement of the USPACOM area took place in October 1983, when CINCPAC was assigned responsibility for the People’s Republic of China, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, Mongolia, and the Republic of Madagascar. CINCPAC was also redesignated Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Command (USCINCPAC).

A new Alaskan Command (ALCOM) was established on July 7, 1989, at Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska, as a subordinate unified command responsible to USCINCPAC. This placed the defense of Alaska and its surrounding waters under the leadership of one commander, providing a unity of command absent from the state since the early 1970s.

¹⁰⁷ http://www.pacom.mil/web/Site_Pages/USPACOM/Facts.shtml.

¹⁰⁸ http://www.pacom.mil/web/site_pages/uspacom/history.shtm.

From 1989 through 2000, three UCPs slightly reduced USPACOM's AOR. With the focus of attention shifting to the Middle East, the August 16, 1989 plan assigned responsibility for the Gulf of Oman and Gulf of Aden to Commander, USCENTCOM. The January 1, 1996, plan transferred the Seychelles and adjacent waters to USCENTCOM. On October 1, 2000, responsibility for Indian Ocean waters off Tanzania, Mozambique, and South Africa was transferred from USPACOM to USEUCOM.

The UCP changed as a result of the events of September 11, 2001, and the ensuing war on terrorism, as well as the new defense strategy articulated in the 2001 Quadrennial Defense Review. For the first time the entire surface of the earth was divided among the various unified commands. A new USNORTHCOM was created for homeland security and other changes in the various commands' responsibilities resulted in significant changes for USPACOM. The West Coast of North America was reassigned from USPACOM to USNORTHCOM. While Alaska was included in the reassignment to USNORTHCOM, Alaskan Command forces remained assigned to USPACOM in the Forces for Unified Commands Memorandum. Antarctica was also added to USPACOM's AOR. Approved in April 2002, the new UCP became effective October 1, 2002.

The 2008 UCP, signed on December 17, 2008, documented the transfer of all areas of the Indian Ocean previously assigned to USPACOM west of 68 degrees east to the newly established USAFRICOM. As a result, four island countries off the east coast of Africa that were formerly assigned to PACOM were reassigned to AFRICOM: Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, and Reunion.”

Subcomponents¹⁰⁹

U.S. Army Pacific (USARPAC)

Located in Fort Shafter, Hawaii, USARPAC is the Army's component command in the Pacific and supplies Army forces for full-spectrum security operations. USARPAC is the most forward deployed unit in the Army still on U.S. soil in Hawaii.

U.S. Forces Korea (USFK)

USFK is a subcommand within USPACOM responsible to U.S. forces in Korea. While this is a joint headquarters, command has traditionally been held by a three-star, U.S. Army general.

U.S. Eighth Army

The U.S. Eighth Army operates in conjunction with USFK and the United Nations Command in Korea. U.S. Eighth Army's stated mission is described as

Eighth Army supports deterrence of North Korea aggression against the Republic of Korea. Should deterrence fail, Eighth Army supports Non-combatant Evacuation Operations (NEO), transitions to hostilities, generates combat power to support Commander in Chief United Nations Command/USFK's campaign, and provides combat support and combat service

¹⁰⁹ Cynthia A. Watson, pp. 49-55.

support to assigned, attached, and other designated forces within the Korea Theater of Operation and on order, conducts combat operations.¹¹⁰

U.S. Pacific Fleet (PACFLT)

PACFLT consists of the California-based Third Fleet and the Fifth Fleet in Japan. It is the world's largest fleet command responsible for 100 million square miles, more than half the Earth's surface, from the West Coast of the United States into the Indian Ocean. PACFLT consists of approximately 180 ships, nearly 2,000 aircraft and 125,000 Sailors, Marines and government civilian employees.¹¹¹

U.S. Pacific Air Force (PACAF)

PACAF is headquartered at Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii, where it plans, conducts, and coordinates defensive and offensive air operations in the Asian and Pacific region. PACAF's components consists of the Seventh Air Force in South Korea, the Fifth Air Force in Japan, the Eleventh Air Force in Alaska, and the Thirteenth Air Force in Guam.

U.S. Marine Forces Pacific (MARFORPAC)

MARFORPAC, the Marine component headquarters, includes the First Marine Expeditionary Force in California and the Third Marine Expeditionary Force based in Okinawa.

Special Operations Command Pacific (SOCPAC)

SOCPAC, located at Camp H. M. Smith, Oahu, Hawaii, is a sub-unified command and serves as the SOF component command for USPACOM.

Special Operations Command Korea (SOCKOR)

SOCKOR, located at Camp Kim in Yongsan, Korea, is the Theater Special Operations Command responsible for special operations on the Korean peninsula and, when established, the Korean Theater of Operations.

Other Major USPACOM Organizations¹¹²

Joint Intelligence Operations Center (JIOC)

The JIOC is the central clearing house for intelligence throughout the theater and is responsible for managing intelligence requirements at the strategic level and supports USPACOM Subcomponents and Subordinate Commands.

¹¹⁰ <http://8tharmy.korea.army.mil/mission.asp>.

¹¹¹ <http://www.cpf.navy.mil/about/facts/>.

¹¹² Statement of Admiral Robert F. Willard, U.S. Navy, Commander, U.S. Pacific Command Before the Senate Armed Services Committee on U.S. Pacific Command Posture, April 12, 2011, pp. 27-29.

Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (APCSS)

APCSS supports USPACOM security cooperation and capacity-building efforts by means of international executive education and specialized assistance programs that are intended to both educate and foster relationships between key regional security officials.

Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command (JPAC)

JPAC's mission is to achieve the fullest possible accounting of all Americans missing as a result of past conflicts.

Joint Interagency Task Force West (JIATF-West)

JIATF-West is the USPACOM executive agent for countering drug-related transnational crimes in the Asia-Pacific region primarily by supporting U.S. law enforcement agencies operating in the region.

Ongoing Operations¹¹³

While USPACOM has significant on-the-ground presence in Korea as well as a variety of naval and air activities throughout its AOR, its primary focus is exercise and engagement programs. USPACOM's current program consists of 18 major exercises involving joint military forces as well as other U.S. government agencies. These exercises are conducted with 27 of 36 USPACOM partner nations.

On the operational side, USPACOM played a crucial role in helping Japan in the aftermath of the March 11, 2011, earthquake and resultant tsunami which devastated parts of Japan. USPACOM and its subordinate commands provided direct disaster relief support on the ground, at sea, and in the air. Of note, Joint Special Operations Task Force-Philippines continues its eight-year-old non-combat role in supporting Filipino armed forces in their efforts to contain violent extremist organizations (VEOs) in their country.

Selected Current Issues

Regional Challenges

In his March 2012 testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee, the USPACOM commander indicated current major issues in his AOR.¹¹⁴ These issues included the threat to the United States and its allies posed by North Korea's nuclear and missile capabilities, its proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and associated technologies, and its potential for instability.¹¹⁵ Another issue was transnational violent extremist organizations (VEOs)

¹¹³ Statement of Admiral Robert F. Willard, U.S. Navy, Commander, U.S. Pacific Command Before the House Armed Services Committee on U.S. Pacific Command Posture, March 1, 2012,

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ For additional information on North Korean nuclear weapons see CRS Report RL34256, *North Korea's Nuclear Weapons: Technical Issues*, by Mary Beth Nikitin.

undermining stability and threatening Allies and emerging partners. The USPACOM commander voiced concern with China's significant military modernization associated with its unclear intent.¹¹⁶ He also noted that territorial disputes, and increasingly assertive actions to resolve them, present the potential for conflict and instability. Cyber threats and transnational criminal activity—to include piracy and trafficking in narcotics and persons—were cited as growing areas of concern. Finally, humanitarian crises such as pandemics and famines, as well as natural disasters such as tsunamis, earthquakes, and volcanoes; and environmental degradation presented unique challenges to USPACOM.

U.S. Strategic Shift to the Pacific¹¹⁷

On January 26, 2012, senior DOD leadership unveiled a new defense strategy based on a review of potential future security challenges, current defense strategy, and budgetary constraints. This strategy will rebalance the Army's global posture and presence, emphasizing where potential problems are likely to arise, such as the Asia-Pacific region and the Middle East. The major focus of this new strategy is the Asia-Pacific, and the Navy plans to rebalance its fleet. Secretary of Defense Panetta recently told Asian leaders, "By 2020, the Navy will re-posture its forces from today's roughly 50/50 split between the Atlantic and Pacific to about a 60/40 split between those oceans—including six aircraft carriers, a majority of our cruisers, destroyers, littoral combat ships and submarines."¹¹⁸ It is not known if such a change in strategic emphasis will require additional resources or authorities for USPACOM.

U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM)

Website: <http://www.southcom.mil/appssc/index.php>

Mission¹¹⁹

"USSOUTHCOM is responsible for providing contingency planning, operations, and security cooperation for Central and South America, the Caribbean (except U.S. commonwealths, territories, and possessions), Cuba; as well as for the force protection of U.S. military resources at these locations. USSOUTHCOM is also responsible for ensuring the defense of the Panama Canal and canal area."

History¹²⁰

During World War II, the Roosevelt administration established the U.S. Caribbean Defense Command (1941-1947), a prototype unified military organization, to defend the Panama Canal

¹¹⁶ For information on Chinese naval modernization see CRS Report RL33153, *China Naval Modernization: Implications for U.S. Navy Capabilities—Background and Issues for Congress*, by Ronald O'Rourke.

¹¹⁷ For additional information, see CRS Report R42448, *Pivot to the Pacific? The Obama Administration's "Rebalancing" Toward Asia*, coordinated by Mark E. Manyin.

¹¹⁸ Jim Garamone, Panetta Describes U.S. Shift in Asia-Pacific," *American Forces Press Service*, June 1, 2012.

¹¹⁹ <http://www.southcom.mil/AppsSC/pages/about.php>.

¹²⁰ <http://www.southcom.mil/AppsSC/factfiles.php?id=76>.

and surrounding area. The command organized and implemented an active system of regional defense, including antisubmarine and counterespionage operations.

Located in Panama, the U.S. Caribbean Defense Command also established military training missions in Latin America; distributed military equipment to regional partners through the Lend Lease program; and opened U.S. service schools to Latin American soldiers, sailors, and airmen. At the height of the war, U.S. military planners assigned 130,000 uniformed personnel to duty stations in Latin America and the Caribbean. Roughly half of those forces were under the direct control of the U.S. Caribbean Defense Command.

In 1947, U.S. strategists adopted a national security plan that transformed the wartime headquarters into the U.S. Caribbean Command. Beyond defending the Panama Canal, it assumed broad responsibilities for inter-American security cooperation in Central and South America. During the 1950s, defense officials also removed the Caribbean basin from the U.S. Caribbean Command's area of focus. In the event of a global war with the communist powers, they reasoned, U.S. Atlantic Command, based in Norfolk, VA, needed the Caribbean basin to conduct hemispheric antisubmarine operations.

By 1960, the U.S. Caribbean Command carried a name that incorrectly described its geographic interests, Central and South America. The Kennedy administration changed the name to USSOUTHCOM on June 6, 1963. During the 1960s, the USSOUTHCOM mission involved defending the Panama Canal, contingency planning for Cold War activities, and the administration of the U.S. foreign military assistance program in Central and South America. In particular, USSOUTHCOM personnel undertook civic-action projects with partner nation forces to accelerate regional development. During the 1970s the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommended disestablishing the command to trim the U.S. military presence abroad. For political reasons, the command narrowly survived, albeit with limited responsibilities and resources.

In the 1980s, internal conflicts in El Salvador, Nicaragua, and elsewhere rekindled U.S. military interest in Latin America and the Reagan administration revitalized USSOUTHCOM. When the Cold War ended, the command, like other U.S. military organizations, entered a period of dramatic change. In rapid succession, USSOUTHCOM was assigned responsibility for counter-drug operations, expanded its area of geographic focus to include the Caribbean, and enhanced its capacity for humanitarian missions. In September 1997, USSOUTHCOM moved to Miami, FL.

Subcomponents¹²¹

U.S. Army South (ARSOUTH)

ARSOUTH is located at Ft. Sam Houston, Texas, where its primary mission is to support regional disaster and counterdrug operations. ARSOUTH also is responsible for oversight, planning, and logistical support for humanitarian and civic assistance projects throughout the region.

¹²¹ <http://www.southcom.mil/AppsSC/pages/team.php>.

U.S. Naval Forces Southern Command/U.S. Fourth Fleet (COMUSNAVSO/COMFOURTHFLT)

COMUSNAVSO/COMFOURTHFLT is located in Mayport Naval Base in Florida and supports USSOUTHCOM with a full range of naval capabilities. Its primary responsibility is to provide sea-based forward presence to ensure freedom of maneuver as well as developing cooperative relationships with partners in the region.

Air Forces Southern/ Twelfth Air Force (AFSOUTH)

AFSOUTH is located at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Arizona and is responsible for Air Force forces in the region. AFSOUTH serves as the executive agent for forward operating locations in the region and provides joint and combined radar surveillance and intra-theater airlift.

U.S. Marine Forces South (USMARFORSOUTH)

USMARFORSOUTH is located in Miami, Florida, and advises USSOUTHCOM on the proper employment and support of Marine forces operating in the region. In addition, USMARFORSOUTH conducts deployment/redeployment planning and supervises mission execution for assigned Marine forces.

Special Operations Command South (USSOCSOUTH)

USSOCSOUTH is located near Miami, Florida, and provides primary theater contingency response forces and plans for and conducts special operations in support of USSOUTHCOM. USSOCSOUTH can also serve as a Joint Special Operations Task Force when required.

USSOUTHCOM Task Forces and Direct Reporting Units¹²²

Joint Task Force Bravo (JTF-Bravo)

JTF-Bravo is located at Soto Cano Air Base, Honduras, and operates a forward, all weather, day/night C-5 Galaxy-capable air base. JTF-Bravo organizes multilateral exercises and, with partner nations, supports humanitarian and civic assistance, counterdrug, contingency and disaster relief in Central America.

Joint Task Force Guantanamo (JTF–Guantanamo)

JTF-Guantanamo is located at the U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo, Cuba, and conducts detention and interrogation operations in support of world-wide U.S. counterterrorism operations.

¹²² Ibid.

Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF South)

JIATF-South is located in Key West, Florida and is an interagency task force that integrates and synchronizes U.S. counterdrug operations and is responsible for the detection and monitoring of suspect air and maritime drug activity in the region. JIATF South works in coordination with USNORTHCOM's JTF North on a variety of counterdrug and counter trafficking operations.

Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies (CHDS)

CHDS is located in Washington, DC, and provides education, outreach, and research and knowledge-sharing activities on defense and policy making with regional military and political leaders.

Ongoing Operations¹²³

Exercises and Military-to-Military Activities

USSOUTHCOM is involved in a variety of exercises and military-to-military operations in support of the Theater Engagement Plan. On an annual basis, USSOUTHCOM conducts medical readiness training exercises, engineering exercises, and disaster relief and humanitarian assistance exercises. For example, USSOUTHCOM conducted civic assistance exercises Beyond the Horizon and New Horizons in El Salvador, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti. In addition USSOUTHCOM conducts medical readiness training exercises and other annual military exercises designed to facilitate interoperability, build capabilities, and provide opportunities to share best practices with regional military and security forces.

Task Force-Oriented Activities

JTF-Guantanamo continues to serve as a detention and interrogation center for suspected terrorists. JTF-Bravo and JIATF-South are involved in a wide variety of day-to-day activities and operations designed to counter illicit trafficking of people, narcotics, money, and weapons. In addition to operations against Transnational Criminal Organizations, USSOUTHCOM task forces also work to counter violent extremist organizations from the Middle East which have been active in Latin America and the Caribbean and are considered a potential threat.

Selected Current Issues¹²⁴

Counter-Trafficking

The USSOUTHCOM Commander noted that illicit trafficking of drugs, weapons, and people and their associated TCOs constitute the primary threat to regional security. Working in conjunction with regional partners, USSOUTHCOM is combating these criminal organizations through demand

¹²³ Posture Statement of General Douglas M. Fraser, United States Air Force, Commander, United States Southern Command, Before the 112th Congress, Senate Armed Services Committee, March 6, 2012.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

reduction; eradication and regulation of source materials; suppression of money laundering; and interdiction of illegal shipments as they transit to the U.S. and other end-user countries. These efforts not only involve regional partners but also various U.S. Interagency offices.

Natural Disasters, Poverty, and Violence

The USSOUTHCOM Commander testified that natural disasters, poverty, and violence in the region have a negative impact on regional security and stability. Widespread and frequent natural disasters in the region have worsened economic and social conditions in countries that can ill-afford these types of setbacks and when governments can not make discernable progress recovering in the aftermath of these events, citizens lose faith in government. While economic conditions in some countries have improved, poverty, particularly in Central America, creates conditions for social stagnation. These social conditions create openings for criminal organizations to recruit new members who both undermine legitimate governance and contribute to increasing violence against private citizens.

Extra-Regional Actors

While the USSOUTHCOM Commander noted there are economic benefits for countries in his AOR in establishing or renewing relationships with extra-regional actors such as China, Russia, and Iran, it also presents a number of challenges. Currently, 18 countries in Central and South America and the Caribbean receive military training from China, and in 2011 Venezuela became the largest importer of Russian arms in the world. In addition to extra-regional state actors, violent extremist organizations from the Middle East are active in Latin America and the Caribbean and are involved in fund-raising activities to finance worldwide activities.

Potential Issues for Congress

Congress is presented with a wide range of national security policy issues that are impacted by the provisions of the UCP as well as the COCOM construct. As the U.S. arguably moves to a post- Iraq/Afghanistan era where global military operations against terrorists could be the new “steady state,” it might prove prudent to re-examine the UCP and COCOMs. The Administration’s decision to shift U.S. national strategic emphasis to the Asia-Pacific region and Middle East also presents considerations for Congress. As new threats such as cyber attacks and TCOs take center stage and new international actors such as China and India emerge while established actors such as Russia and Iran transition to different types of security challenges, such a re-examination could serve to increase the efficacy of U.S. national security policy.

What Are the Implications of the Asia-Pacific Strategic Shift for the UCP and COCOMs?

The Administration’s decision to shift strategic focus to the Asia-Pacific while maintaining an active role in the Middle East raises a number of issues for possible congressional consideration. Potential issues include the following:

- In terms of the UCP, will a new UCP need to be issued in the near future to codify this change in strategic emphasis?

- Will new Title 10 authorities be required to facilitate this shift?
- Does Headquarters, USPACOM require additional staff and resources to implement the Administration's new strategy?
- Is USPACOM's command infrastructure adequately geographically positioned to take on this new strategic challenge?
- Compared to USCENTCOM and USAFRICOM, the USPACOM region can be viewed as somewhat peaceful. In this regard, is focusing on the Asia-Pacific region the best course of action when there are, at present, a number of volatile conflicts and potential civil wars in the Middle East and Africa?
- What are the impacts to the other COCOM's as a result of the Asia-Pacific shift? What resources will they lose due to this shift and how do respective combatant commanders plan to compensate for a possible loss of resources?
- Are there UCP-directed missions and responsibilities that COCOM commander will no longer be able to accomplish as a result of shifting resources to the Asia-Pacific region?
- What has been the response of our allies and potential adversaries as a result of the announced strategic shift?

Is Greater Interagency Involvement in the UCP Process Needed?¹²⁵

In the Fall 2010 edition of the *Interagency Journal*, former U.S. Ambassador Edward Marks noted

The geographic commands have essentially two tasks: war planning and fighting, and military engagement programs. Both tasks remain, and will always remain, fundamental responsibilities of the Department of Defense and the military services. However while the war planning and fighting responsibility obviously remains uniquely a duty of the Department of Defense and the military services, the engagement programs no longer can be handled as a discrete military activity. In today's world, military engagement programs with other countries can only be seen as part of the overall engagement activity of the U. S. government. The so-called "nexus" of security challenges—terrorism, narcotics, smuggling, international criminal networks, etc.—can no longer be managed as single agency programs but must be integrated into "whole of government" programs.¹²⁶

The concept of a "whole of government approach to national security" has taken on renewed emphasis since September 11, 2001. Past and current senior military leadership have repeatedly called for greater participation in national security matters from other U.S. government agencies, even going so far as to publically advocate for greater funding levels for the State Department and U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) so they can play a greater role in military operations.

¹²⁵ For additional information on U.S. Interagency issues see CRS Report RL34455, *Organizing the U.S. Government for National Security: Overview of the Interagency Reform Debates*, by Catherine Dale, Nina M. Serafino, and Pat Towell.

¹²⁶ Edward Marks, "Rethinking the Geographic Combatant Commands," *InterAgency Journal*, Vol. 1, Issue 1, Fall 2010, p. 20.

In the current strategic environment, COCOMs are being faced with security challenges that fall outside the traditional military realm. One such challenge, transnational criminal organizations or TCOs, is a stated concern of Combatant Commanders both in a domestic and international context. In this regard, if TCOs are expected to become a central security issue for COCOMs and the President and DOD include TCO-related responsibilities in the UCP, enhanced interagency involvement in the UCP process from the Justice Department, other U.S. law enforcement entities and others could prove to be beneficial.

It can be argued while greater resources for other U.S. government agencies are important, of equal importance is participation in the UCP process. It has been noted that military engagement programs are at the forefront of geographical COCOM's responsibilities and as hostilities in Iraq and Afghanistan diminish over time, and the U.S. defense budget decreases, military engagement could become the primary focus of all geographical COCOMs. Under the current UCP development process, the U.S. Interagency has a degree of visibility but participation is limited. While Interagency participation in developing regional war plans might not be appropriate, a greater role in planning for military engagement activities might not only enhance these programs but might also identify areas of redundancy with other U.S. government regional engagement programs. This enhanced role could include more Interagency representatives in the early stages of the UCP review and development process and increasing military presence in key Interagency positions, particularly directorates that are responsible for strategic planning and resourcing. While the Interagency might welcome the opportunity to play a greater role, DOD might be less than enthusiastic with including a greater role for other U.S. government agencies in what it likely considers fundamental strategic military planning.

In this regard, Congress might consider an in depth examination of the UCP development process. This examination could focus on the current level of Interagency participation and identifying areas in the process where greater Interagency involvement could be beneficial.

Has U.S. Foreign Policy Become “Too Militarized” as a Result of the Geographic COCOMs?

In September 2000, Washington Post reporter Dana Priest published a series of articles whose central premise was Combatant Commanders yielded an inordinate amount of political influence within the countries in their areas of responsibility and “had evolved into the modern-day equivalent of the Roman Empire’s proconsuls—well-funded, semi-autonomous, unconventional centers of U.S. foreign policy.”¹²⁷ Some national security experts consider this series as the catalyst of the continuing debate as to whether or not COCOMs have assumed too much influence overseas, thereby diminishing the roles other U.S. government entities play in foreign and national security policy. Despite the post-September 11, 2001, ascendancy of the Interagency in foreign policy and national security matters, the debate over the COCOM's role continues. In 2007, testimony from Mark Malan from Refugees International before the Senate Subcommittee on African Affairs of the Foreign Relations Committee he noted

¹²⁷ Dana Priest, “A Four-Star Foreign Policy? U.S. Commanders Wield Rising Clout, Autonomy,” September 28, 2000; “An Engagement in 10 Time Zones: Zinni Crosses Central Asia, Holding Hands, Building Trust,” September 29, 2000; “Standing Up to State and Congress,” September 30, 2000, *Washington Post*.

In some parts of the world, like Iraq and Afghanistan, the face of U.S. foreign policy is clearly a military one. In Africa, the DOD appears to be putting a civilian mask on the face of a combatant command, with its marketing pitch for USAFRICOM. This disingenuous strategy is not working. The veneer of the mask is simply too thin, and attempts to patch the holes that have emerged—by telling us “what AFRICOM is not about” and re-emphasizing a humanitarian and developmental role for the U.S. military in Africa—simply make the face of U.S. foreign policy much shadier.

The notion of a benign U.S. combatant command is an enigma to those who clearly understand (and accept) the need for the U.S. to secure access to Africa’s natural resources, especially oil; and to establish bases from which to destroy networks linked to Al-Qaeda. When the U.S. promotes a combatant military command in terms of development and humanitarianism, Africans will inevitably suspect that the true story is being kept from them.¹²⁸

The assertion that COCOMs have usurped other U.S. government entities in the foreign policy arena may deserve greater examination. Geographic Combatant Commanders generally agree their role is more political than military. A former USEUCOM and Supreme Allied Commander, Europe (SACEUR) estimated he spent about 70% of his time on political-military issues, despite having ongoing combat operations in the Balkans.¹²⁹ USCENTCOM commanders have reportedly spent a significant amount of time meeting with the senior Iraqi and Afghan political leadership over the past ten years discussing issues of building and maintaining armed forces, civil-military relations, and other national security matters. While these discussions might not conform to what have been traditionally considered war fighting-related topics, the complexities of U.S. involvement in these two countries suggests Combatant Commanders have been required to play a more pronounced political role.

Some U.S. government officials suggest the Combatant Commander/State Department relationship, as it currently exists, has proven beneficial. A former Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs noted he was

a huge fan of the [regional commanders]. I was the ambassador to Turkey; in EUCOM, when the deputy [commander, the commander], and I were on the same page—there was nothing we couldn’t achieve. In 6 years in Turkey as [deputy chief of mission] and ambassador, there was never a single conflict. Now, I’m dealing with Colombia; I’ve made five of my six visits with SOUTHCOM’s commander. We do everything together. Yes, someone could goof. But the system works wonderfully—the [regional commanders] are some of the finest America has to offer. When the [commander] and ambassador are on the same page, it’s a very powerful combination. I’m a complete believer.¹³⁰

Congress has examined aspects of this COCOM-State Department relationship in terms of the broader topic of civil-military relations as well as how it pertains to USAFRICOM and its role in U.S. foreign policy. In a broader context Congress might wish to consider the role Geographic COCOMs play in U.S. foreign policy abroad. This consideration could take into account more

¹²⁸ Testimony from Mark Malan, Refugees International, Washington, DC, “AFRICOM: A Wolf in Sheep’s Clothing?” before the Subcommittee on African Affairs, Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate, at a hearing entitled “Exploring the U.S. Africa Command and a New Strategic Relationship with Africa,” August 1, 2007.

¹²⁹ Howard D. Belote, “Proconsuls, Pretenders, or Professionals? The Political Role of Regional Combatant Commanders,” Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Strategy Essay Competition, 2004.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

than just the State Department, but also other U.S. government agencies that play a foreign policy role. While presence and access to resources have been cited as positive attributes for COCOM involvement overseas, it is possible a reallocation of resources might put a more “civilian” face on U.S. engagement and development efforts, possibly resulting in greater acceptance and efficacy in regions that are sensitive to U.S. military presence. In examining the respective roles of COCOMs, the State Department, and others, it might be possible to identify both areas of redundancy as well as areas requiring greater emphasis, thereby enhancing overall U.S. effectiveness in political-military relations with nations in respective regions. With many experts predicting shrinking or flat U.S. military and State Department budgets over the next few years, such an examination might lead to a more cost effective approach to U.S. foreign policy.

Are There Other Regions or Functions That Merit a Separate COCOM?¹³¹

While Geographic COCOMs suggest their regional perspective is their primary virtue, others argue the “strict geographic regionalism” the COCOMs were aligned under is no longer how the world is organized.¹³² These critics contend globalization at one end and localism (tribalism) at the other end has made the Geographic COCOM construct less than ideal.¹³³

Given this view, some suggest there are opportunities to address this disparity. The Subcontinent or Indian Ocean or western Asia has been cited as one AOR that could merit a separate command. With long-term strategic emphasis on countering violent extremism in Afghanistan and Pakistan, it might be in the nation’s best interest to establish a separate command rather than continuing to include them in USCENTCOM where the command’s planners and decision makers must also focus on issues such as Iran’s pursuit of nuclear weapons and regional influence, the Israel-Palestine impasse, and the fate of Syria and Egypt. India might also figure into this strategic recalculation as its relationships with Pakistan and China have a significant political-military impact in the region. Some believe India—currently the responsibility of USPACOM—might be a better fit under a separate Subcontinent COCOM.

Another area where a new COCOM could be warranted is Central Asia. Such a new command could include Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan—all presently under USCENTCOM—and could be a natural complement to a Subcontinent COCOM as many of the region’s issues are more “localized” as tribes in the region tend not to conform to established political borders. These cross-border tribal and ethnic issues are viewed by many as key contributors to regional instability.

While the establishment of new COCOMs might have an academic appeal, critics note such a course of action might not be fiscally sustainable. Establishment of new COCOMs is viewed as being a resource-intensive undertaking—even if resources are taken from existing COCOMs. New COCOMs would require additional Joint-qualified senior and mid-level officers as well as supporting military, civilian, and possibly contractor staff. New COCOMs would also likely require additional physical infrastructure and if there is an intent to headquarter these new

¹³¹ Unless otherwise noted, information in this section is taken from Cynthia A. Watson, “Combatant Commands: Origins, Structure, and Engagement,” Praeger Security International, 2011, pp. 185-186.

¹³² Edward Marks, p. 21.

¹³³ Ibid.

COCOMs in their AORs, there might also be political and diplomatic issues to consider. In a fiscally-constrained environment, these considerations might outweigh any operational benefits that might be derived from the establishment of new COCOMs.

Aside from Geographic COCOMs, there might also be cause to re-examine Functional COCOMs. One area for possible examination is if U.S. Cyber Command—currently a Subunified Command under USSTRATCOM—should be elevated to a full-fledged Combatant Command.¹³⁴ Proponents cite the following five benefits of this course of action:

- **Unity of Command/Effort:** The current DOD approach to cyberwarfare is scattered across the Services and defense agencies. The Services, the Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA), the National Security Agency (NSA), the Intelligence Community, and the other COCOMs have unsynchronized cyberspace warfighting capabilities. A separate and distinct USCYBERCOM would have greater authority, responsibility, legitimacy, and visibility than the current arrangement.
- **Synchronization:** Under the current command arrangement, USCYBERCOM might not have sufficient authority to fully synchronize cyber operations across the Services and COCOMs. This could lead to a situation in which a COCOM decides to conduct cyber operations within its AOR and, because there are no physical boundaries in cyber space, these actions could have an adverse impact on the other COCOMs.
- **Mass:** A central COCOM with exclusive authority could mass the cyber activities of the other COCOMs, Services, and DOD agencies into a coordinated effort to achieve mass effects on their intended target.
- **Offensive Operations:** One perceived benefit of elevating USCYBERCOM to full combatant command status is it would enable the U.S. government to place greater emphasis on offensive cyber operations as opposed to the current disparate emphasis on defensive cyber operations which are viewed by some as less effective than offensive operations.
- **Diverse Mission Focus:** Supporters argue the current command arrangement results in a lack of direction and discipline amongst DOD and government entities that makes oversight and, ultimately, funding more difficult. An elevated USCYBERCOM could serve to provide a single mission focus for the U.S. military.

While proponents suggest, in the long run, a separate USCYBERCOM would be cost efficient, such an undertaking in a fiscally-constrained environment could prove to be a difficult undertaking. There might also be resistance from the other COCOMs to ceding their cyber-related responsibilities to an elevated USCYBERCOM, arguing that they better understand the cyber threats in their specific regions than would a single entity responsible for a wider range of cyber threats. Because it might be difficult to identify, recruit, and retain cyber-qualified personnel that would likely be needed for a separate USCYBERCOM, cyber professionals from the COCOMs

¹³⁴ Information in this section, unless otherwise noted, is from David M. Hollis, “USCYBERCOM: The Need for a Combatant Command Versus a Subunified Command,” *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Issue 58, 3rd Quarter 2010, pp. 48-53.

might be sought after to staff a new USCYBERCOM which could cause resentment from the COCOMs.

Is There an Alternative to COCOMs?

Some experts believe the COCOM construct is a relic of the Cold War where the central mission of the U.S. military was to prepare for and conduct combat operations in specific geographical regions against conventional armed forces. These experts suggest a more radical approach to the issue of COCOMs is required so they remain relevant in a post-September 11, 2001, world. Two possible alternatives to the current COCOM construct are usually discussed.

Replacing Subcomponent Commands with Joint Task Forces (JTFs)¹³⁵

This proposal advocates retaining the COCOM headquarters and substituting a number of JTFs for the Service-centric Subcomponent Commands. This approach could streamline and reduce infrastructure and simplify command channels. These JTFs could be designed on a regional, functional basis, for specific operational tasks and would be more flexible and reduce response time to crises in the region. Larger COCOM AORs might also benefit from several JTFs that could provide focused planning and operational execution in smaller, more manageable portions of their AORs. Another perceived benefit of this construct is if a specific condition within a COCOM's AOR is resolved, the JTF established to address the issue could be rapidly disestablished, thereby reducing personnel, infrastructure, and operations and maintenance (O&M) costs.

Replacing COCOMs with a Joint Interagency Organization¹³⁶

This proposal advocates replacing COCOMs with permanent standing, civilian-led interagency organizations that would have regional responsibility for all aspects of U.S. foreign policy. These organizations would be led by highly-credentialed civilians, potentially with a four-star military deputy and would report directly to the President through the National Security Council (NSC). These organizations would include representatives from all major U.S. government agencies, including DOD. This construct would change only the authority to integrate all elements of U.S. national power and DOD would continue to exercise its Title 10 authority by means of JIATFs.

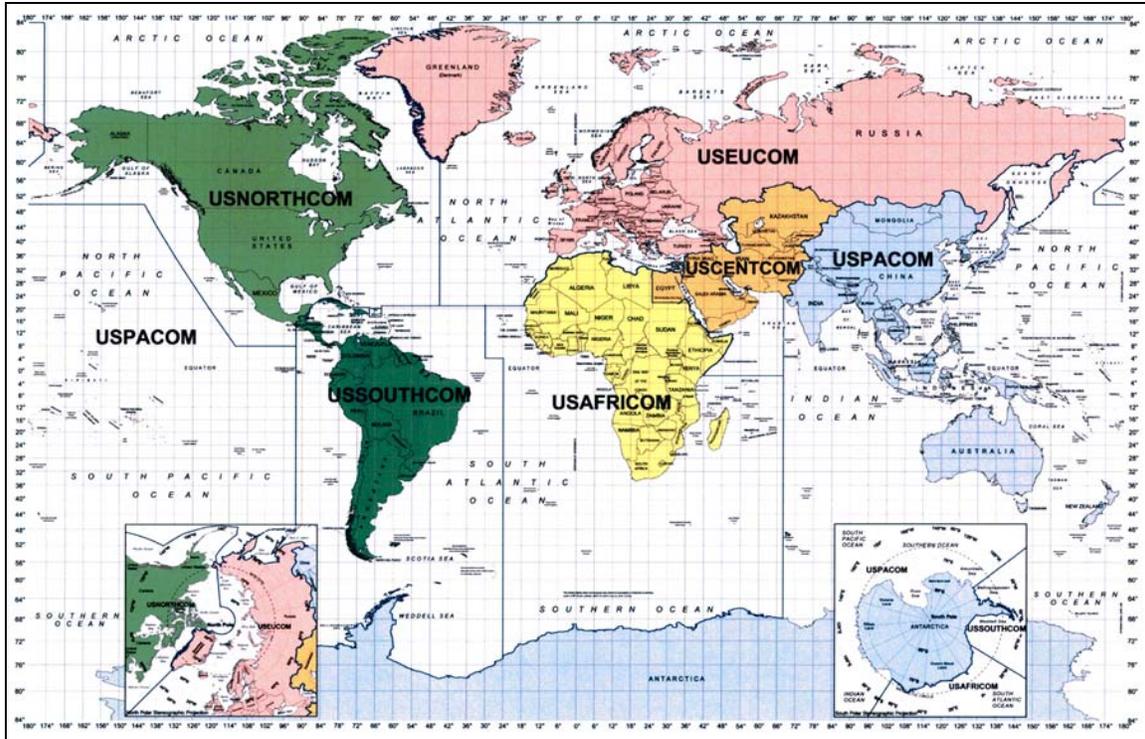
A perceived benefit of this approach is it could result in a significant increase in unity of effort across all the instruments of U.S. national power through all phases of an operation to include pre and post-conflict. Another benefit is such an organization might better facilitate both coalition and alliance-based operations from a political standpoint as it may be more palatable for some nations to work with a civilian-led organization rather than a military-centric one. This new construct might also have benefits for both regional engagement and developmental efforts thereby reducing the military "face" of these operations, particularly in regions that are sensitive to U.S. military presence.

¹³⁵ Information in this section, unless otherwise noted, is taken from W. Spencer Johnson, "New Challengers for the Unified Command Plan," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Summer 2002, pp. 62-70.

¹³⁶ Brigadier General Jeffery Buchanan, U.S. Army, Captain Maxie Y. Davis, U.S. Navy, and Colonel Lee Wright, U.S. Air Force, "Death of the Combatant Command? Toward a Joint Interagency Approach," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Issue 52, 1st Quarter 2009.

These are but two possible alternatives to the current COCOM construct. While Congress might not choose to directly address COCOM reform (particularly if there is a general belief the current COCOM construct meets current and future security needs) it is possible that, as Congress, the Administration, and DOD continue to pursue government-wide efficiencies aimed at reducing federal spending, these and other alternatives might inform the debate.

Appendix. 2011 UCP COCOM Areas of Responsibility



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