

Testimony by

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Chairman Martinez, Senator Feingold, Members of the Committee, it is an honor to testify before you today on the role of African leadership and organizations in regional conflict management and peace operations. I applaud the Committee's attention to this topic, and hope this discussion will draw needed attention to African-led endeavors, to our interests in the region, and to how the US and international actors can better address and leverage success.

Overview: African Security and Peace Operations

First, let me offer some context. The world has increasingly turned to peace operations as tools to help support transitions from armed conflict to sustained peace. Today we see thousands of forces deployed worldwide, from Afghanistan to Haiti, from Iraq to the Sinai. As more civil wars end, regional crises calm, and democratic efforts look for support, peace operations are often the tool of choice for the international community. They are often sent to help prevent state failure, to support post-conflict reconstruction and to address aspects of humanitarian crises. Many of these multinational missions are large and complex, led as coalitions or by NATO, but increasingly by the United Nations and African actions.

Africa has seen dramatic growth in peace operations over the last six years, hosting more peacekeepers than any other region. The United Nations currently leads eight such operations on the continent: in Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ethiopia/Eritrea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Sudan and the Western Sahara.¹ Over 30 African nations contribute personnel to these missions, and in most cases, make up from one-quarter to one-half of UN forces.²

With the increased demand for security providers, the spotlight has also moved to African organizations and their efforts to manage regional crises. We see new African engagement in resolving conflicts, promoting democratic regimes, and strengthening multinational efforts. Fueled by ambitious leadership and prompted by multiple conflicts, the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) are developing greater capacity to tackle issues of regional peace and security. Both groups have deployed troops and led new peacekeeping missions, as seen in Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire, Darfur and Liberia. Other organizations are more focused on conflict resolution, such the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), with its efforts in Somalia and Sudan.

More than a decade after the Rwandan genocide, the crisis in Sudan again brings international attention to the questions of intervention and peace operations. Which African groups have the will and mechanisms to plan, deploy, manage, and sustain peace operations effectively? What is their relationship to the United Nations and other multinational organizations? What role can and should the United States play?

My testimony looks at three areas related to African security and peace operations.³ First, I will consider the emergence of African organizations in leading peace operations. Second, I will look at how these African organizations and their operations fit within the context of international efforts, especially those of the United Nations. Third, I will consider US goals and how our policies support these efforts in Africa, including the situation in Darfur with the AU, and offer some options for Congress.

¹ In September 2005 the UN reported 68,513 peacekeepers deployed worldwide, with 53,702 in Africa. Peacekeepers include troops, military observers and civilian police. These numbers do not include civilian staff in the field or at UN headquarters.

² Data from the United Nations as of 30 September 2005.

³ This statement draws on my work at the Henry L. Stimson Center, including a study conducted with support from the US Institute of Peace, *African Capacity-Building for Peace Operations: UN Collaboration with the African Union and ECOWAS* (2005).

Second, let me argue that these issues are very important to the United States. As Americans, we view peace operations as serving US strategic and security interests through preventing state failure, increasing stability, and moving conflicts into lively political expression rather than deadly armed warfare. We also view peace operations as a means to address our deep-felt concern for addressing humanitarian crises and supporting human rights, part of our commitment to act well in the world. These goals are inter-related, and serve both immediate and longer-term aims such as supporting democratic reforms and reducing terrorist havens, enabling trade and economic opportunity, and strengthening regional security and healthy governance.

Defining Peace Operations – A Tool For What?

Peacekeeping missions are intended to provide temporary security and enable political efforts to take hold for sustaining peace. Such missions range from military observers overseeing disputed border areas, as in the UN mission in Ethiopia-Eritrea, to more complex operations involving disarmament of forces and establishment of the rule of law, such as in Liberia. These operations should be married with concurrent *peacebuilding* efforts that continue after the troops have left.

Peace operations are never assured of success, however. Each mission is deployed with cautious optimism that a conflict can be brought to a conclusion – that peacekeepers will help the shift to a sustained peace – but the result ultimately rests with local actors. Even after international forces deploy, crises can remain challenging, as seen dramatically in Sudan and the DRC where conflict continues and keeps millions displaced, vulnerable and at risk of death. Peacekeepers should not be sent to wage war or substitute for political engagement, yet they often operate under difficult conditions, in dangerous neighborhoods with tenuous peace agreements, and with too little back-up. When peace operations are not married with political support from member states, their jobs become even more difficult, especially for the nations volunteering troops and police. Peacekeepers put their lives on the line, as seen by the 86 UN personnel who died this year.

I. African Organizations and Peace Operations

Matching Political Will and Operational Capacity

African leadership has helped bring a new era of engagement in security and support for peace efforts. Leaders such as Olusegun Obasanjo of Nigeria, Thabo Mbeki of South Africa and Alpha Konare of Mali have played public roles to bring the African Union and other initiatives into the forefront, in contrast to the criminal actions of Charles Taylor of Liberia and Charles Mugabe of Zimbabwe. Many others have contributed to peace efforts, such as Nelson Mandela's engagement with Burundi, as well as countless leaders who work in national roles or serve as envoys, diplomats and military leaders.

As African nations develop greater capacity for peace operations, two multinational organizations stand out: the African Union and the ECOWAS. Both have adopted formal mechanisms with wide-ranging peace and security responsibilities, unparalleled in Asia, South America or the Middle East. Other regional organizations, such as the South African Development Community (SADC) and IGAD, can play a significant role in conflict resolution but are not yet able to deploy peace operations.

The African Union. The African Union was born from the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 2002. With 53 founding members (all African nations except Morocco), the AU is headquartered in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. It has more authority to intervene in matters related to peace and security than its predecessor, which valued non-interference. The AU Constitutive Act embraces international cooperation, but also sets out an AU role ranging from mediation to forceful intervention.

The AU has an ambitious agenda on the continent, and has already deployed two peace operations. In April 2003, the AU launched a mission in Burundi which would grow to over 3,300 peacekeepers, led by

South Africa with troops from Mozambique and Ethiopia. The objective was to uphold the ceasefire agreement, support disarmament of armed forces, assist in establishing stability, coordinate with the UN and facilitate humanitarian assistance. More observers were supplied by Burkina Faso, Gabon, Mali, Togo and Tunisia. The AU mission in Burundi was established with the understanding that mission leadership would pass to the UN. Indeed, the AU relied heavily on outside support from the UN and Western countries (including the US and the United Kingdom) for logistics and funding. While there was cooperation among these actors, it was improvised, and the AU transitioned its mission to the UN in 2004.

Building off its success in Burundi, the African Union launched its second mission in Darfur in 2004. This mission was much more ambitious, with the aim of monitoring a ceasefire agreement in an area equivalent to the size of Texas, where conflict and a humanitarian crisis continued at a level considered genocide by the United States. Today that mission has grown to nearly 7,000 personnel, benefiting from both willing African nations and major financial, logistical and operational support from the West and other developed states. Even as it has succeeded at many tasks, the AU faces fundamental problems.

In addition, the African Union is also developing the African Standby Force (ASF), a force designed to be made of multidisciplinary contingents on standby in five regions of Africa. By 2010, the ASF forces are to be ready for swift call-up for missions ranging from observation to intervention against genocide. ECOWAS has endorsed a Standby Force, but has yet to develop specific doctrine or policies to support it. IGAD is slated to coordinate development of the Eastern African Standby Brigade (EASBRIG) and SADC is moving to create a standby brigade. Progress is slow, and coordination across the regions is challenging, reflecting the uneven distribution of support for the ASF and capability in regional groups.

ECOWAS. Made up of 15 West African states, ECOWAS is the most advanced regional organisation in Africa in terms of peace operations. Based in Abuja, Nigeria, ECOWAS put boots on the ground during the 1990s in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau, with mixed reviews. ECOWAS' security-related responsibilities were further outlined in its 1999 Protocol. They include resolving internal and interstate conflicts, strengthening conflict prevention, supporting deployment of peacekeeping operations and humanitarian relief missions. ECOWAS has also deployed peacekeepers to Côte d'Ivoire in 2002 and Liberia in 2003.

ECOWAS forces deployed to Liberia in July 2003 with troops from Ghana, Senegal, Mali and Nigeria, backed up by US Marines, and later by UN personnel and the multinational group, the Standby High Readiness Brigade. The ECOWAS forces made a strong impact, stabilizing the country even as they faced deployment delays, equipment shortages and limited communications and information systems. The mission later transitioned to UN leadership, with ECOWAS forces being "rehabbed" as UN troops.

Common Challenges. With these operations, African organizations can be misunderstood as having more capacity than they actually possess. Certainly progress is clear: the AU and ECOWAS have adopted frameworks, increased their headquarters staff, built better planning capacity, and worked with member states and outside partners to organize, deploy and manage peace operations. But both organizations face substantial hurdles.

The AU and ECOWAS have deployed troops, but they are not self-sustaining and require outside logistical support. They face fundamental gaps in their planning and management capacity to lead peace operations. Their headquarters staff total a few dozen professionals; the most skilled are taxed by the requirements of their (often multiple) responsibilities. The AU and ECOWAS are reliant on external sources to finance their operations, since they lack sufficient funding from their member states. Ambitious plans for coordinating peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions are still in the early stages of being operationalized.

In short, there is striking contrast between the AU and ECOWAS willingness to deploy troops and their capacity to plan and support such deployments. For these African organizations to play a stronger role in peace operations, they require baseline capacities: management and planning, financing, logistics and transportation, command and control, skilled and available personnel, and clear leadership. The AU and ECOWAS would also benefit from clearer concepts of operations, mandates, leadership qualifications and doctrine for their missions, as well as from more development of deployable police and other personnel.

Outside Partners. Donor governments are looking to support successful efforts in Africa, and have offered bilateral support directly, through regional venues (e.g., the European Union, or EU) and via the G8 process, to leverage African national, regional and continent-wide capacities.⁴ The G8 nations are pledged to their 2002 *Africa Action Plan*, an ambitious effort to provide bilateral funding and support peace and security tools in Africa, especially the ASF and added forces for peace operations.

Outside partners can address some needs (e.g., logistics and transportation support). Other areas require development of skills within the organizations (e.g., command and control, leadership) and support from member states. Support from the West includes military training, such as the recent French-led RECAMP exercises, which involved 1,800 troops from 12 African nations, as well as training programs run by the United Kingdom, Norway and the United States.

ECOWAS and the AU have had difficulty responding to outside offers of assistance, however, and often partner countries can be unsure how to approach them. Bilateral donors could improve their impact with better coordination of competing bilateral efforts to train and equip African forces, which can lack coordination, be duplicative, and not focus on where real gaps exist. A headquarters database and tracking system to handle incoming offers of financial, material and personnel support could be useful for partner countries, African organizations and the United Nations.

II. Link to International Efforts

How do African regional organizations and operations fit within the context of international efforts?

African organizations are taking on a role in peace operations where few other multinational organizations act. NATO and the EU, for example, have only recently become active in Africa, with NATO support to the AU mission in Darfur and the EU authorizing a peacekeeping operation, *Operation Artemis*, led by the French to help stabilize the town of Bunia in the DRC in the summer of 2003. The primary organization with a role in Africa is the United Nations.

The Prominence of Africa in UN missions. Africa dominates the UN's peace operations agenda. Seventy-five percent of UN peacekeepers today are in Africa. The United States and other members of the Security Council have approved an unprecedented number of complex, Chapter VII peacekeeping operations since 2003, adding African operations in Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Burundi, and most recently, Sudan. The Security Council has also tripled UN forces in the DRC since 2000.

The UN manages nearly 80,000 personnel around the world with a headquarters staff of about 600 people in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO). While overstretched, the UN still has more political leverage and organizational reach to support peace operations and run multiple efforts simultaneously than any other organization. The UN has programs related to relief, development, health, and peacebuilding, for example. No African group has this breadth or the ability to yet leverage peacebuilding efforts, which are needed to sustain post-conflict security and support rule of law. This role continues to require UN engagement.

⁴ The G8 includes Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States.

UN Collaboration with Regional Efforts. With the UN peacekeeping budget at about \$4 billion (and growing), the benefit of collaboration between African organizations and the UN is clear. Some progress has been made. The United Nations has held high-level meetings on regional cooperation; the Security Council has identified Africa as a priority; and varied UN initiatives have looked at collaboration. Last year the Secretary General's *High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change* urged improving UN relationships with regional groups, developing a 10-year effort to support African regional capacities, and considering the provision of UN stocks and funding, to African-led operations.⁵

The UN has helped match countries offering troops for African-led operations with countries that can provide airlift to deploy troops, and assisted with mission planning. For the AU mission in Darfur, the UN Secretariat provided unusually strong mission planning support after the Security Council approved that role via a unique UN special political mission.

So far, however, collaboration is *ad hoc*. The United Nations is designed and funded to focus on *UN operations* rather than those led by other multinational groups – even when such missions are authorized or welcomed by the Security Council – which makes collaboration more difficult.

Getting Serious: Create a Plan. The UN needs two tools. First, the UN needs a *strategy* for providing support to regional organizations such as the African Union. Second, the UN needs a *mechanism to trigger support* and a *means to provide it* consistently.

This is straightforward. The strategic vision already is the working notion of many UN member states: create an international architecture of capacity for peace operations, and adopt an “all boats rise” approach to regional groups who are willing to take on missions relative to their capacity. The Security Council already has a trigger that could be brought to life: citation of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, which recognizes the role of regional actors. Finally, the means is fairly simple: add a few personnel to the UN Secretariat whose job it is to plan and work with regional organizations effectively.

There are plenty of areas ripe for better collaboration. The UN could help facilitate improving AU and ECOWAS headquarters capacity, with a focus on mission planning and support. Other areas include: use of logistics sites (such as the UN Logistics Base at Brindisi and African depots); development of the African Standby Force capacities; integration of participation in the UN Standby Arrangements System, a database of national capacities of member states; design of pre-deployment training; systems for hand-offs between African-led and UN-led operations; sharing of lessons learned; use of early warning and analytical information in Africa; harmonization of national training and doctrinal materials; identification of command and control issues; and coordination of funding.

In many areas, the continuing UN effort to modernize and reform its peacekeeping capacity is instructive. As UN missions have grown in numbers, size and complexity since 1999, the UN has scrambled to fill shortages in available, well-trained military and civilian personnel, funding, ready equipment and logistics. Lessons could also be learned from NATO, the EU and other member states.

III. US Leadership and Policy Issues

The United States and other developed states are deciding how best to support peace operations and related efforts, as well as allocate resources to African-led efforts, the UN and other multinational operations, and their own initiatives to address such conflicts and transitions to peace.

⁵ *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*, Report of the High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, the United Nations, December 2004, page 85. The Panel suggested collaborations ranging from information exchanges to co-training of civilian and military personnel to the use of NATO to help train and equip regional organizations.

US Approach. Since the end of the Cold War, the United States' only major peacekeeping role in Africa has been in Somalia. The US remains very cautious about participating in peace operations. With more attention after 9/11 to preventing state failure, helping prevent terrorism, and post-conflict reconstruction, US policy has focused on supporting other actors to conduct and manage peace operations. There are four major approaches:

- *Training African Forces.* The US has trained African military forces, primarily through the African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance (ACOTA) program, which began in 2002 and followed the earlier African Crisis Response Initiative. That program is expected to expand as part of the new Global Peace Operations Initiative (GPOI), which aims to train roughly 75,000 troops worldwide, with two-thirds in Africa.
- *Bilateral Support to Operations.* The US has provided some bilateral assistance to African-led multinational operations in Africa, such as support to ECOWAS forces in Cote d'Ivoire, providing airlift to help Ethiopians deploy with the AU into Burundi, and offering contracted support for AU forces in Darfur today.
- *Direct Assistance to African Organizations.* The United States has provided some support to regional multinational organizations, such as funding a US advisor at ECOWAS headquarters.
- *Funding of UN Peacekeeping Operations.* As a member of the Security Council, the US supports UN peace operations and pays a percentage of the UN peacekeeping budget.

All of these programs are solid approaches to security challenges. But the State Department is chronically faced with difficult choices about resources due to its limited funding. US budgets for these programs have not kept pace with the dynamic growth in African-led efforts, UN operations, and the need to accelerate support to such efforts. One exception is GPOI, which may bring substantial new resources to bear in the region, especially if it supports regional organizations and their operations, as well as training. Even so, the United States is unlikely to play a major role in this area of African security without more support for these programs.

US Programs & Funding. Within the State Department budget, two accounts before the Committee resource the current US approach and deserve support:

- *The Voluntary Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) account*, requested at \$196 million for fiscal year 2006 (FY06), is the primary source of US support to regional efforts and organizations worldwide. Funding for the *African Regional* account is requested at about \$41 million, to provide support to African operations, regional initiatives and African organizations, an amount insufficient to meet US interests in this area. Also requested within this account is \$114 million in funding for the Global Peace Operations Initiative, with activities in Africa including the ACOTA program, for training of African forces
- *The Contributions for International Peacekeeping Activities (CIPA) account*, requested at \$1.036 billion for FY06, provides the US share of contributions for UN-led peace operations. The request is less than the \$1.3 billion projected as needed for the coming year – before taking into account the UN mission in Sudan, new or expanded missions. This budget lacks room for initiatives that invest in capacity-building and long-term reform efforts, which limits the US ability to promote such reforms at the United Nations or within specific missions. To avoid new arrears for operations we support, Congress also needs to lift the “cap” on payment of our UN peacekeeping share, and realign our funding with the UN assessment rate we negotiated and agreed to pay.

Enough Support? When one considers all these two accounts are trying to accomplish in Africa, they are an excellent investment. Even in a time of limited budget resources, however, this funding is less than needed to meet our interests in the continent most faced with post-conflict operations. The PKO Africa Regional funding could easily be doubled for good use, such as providing some of the \$50 million needed to support the AU in Darfur, which many in Congress have sought to provide. The US would also benefit and maximize its impact if the State Department office for the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization was fully supported and funded (which it is not).

The Administration is also increasing US training for counter-terrorism activities in Africa, first through the Pan Sahel Initiative and more recently through the Trans-Saharan Counterterrorism Initiative. Both programs offer training to African militaries in areas that include skills useful for peace operations. At the same time, the US has cut off our International Military Education and Training (IMET) funding to some African countries, including South Africa, further reducing our military-to-military relations and preventing their leaders from participating in peacekeeping seminars hosted by the US War Colleges and related programs. This is counterproductive to our goals.

See the Bigger Picture. As Africa draws greater US resources and attention, a better strategic vision is needed to marry disparate programs and objectives. This Committee does not benefit from a single source of information on the varied US efforts, put in the context of parallel international efforts. To understand where US policy is leading us, this Committee would be well-served to ask for a comprehensive review of US security assistance in Africa, of US funding for peacekeeping efforts and related US counter-terrorism accounts, as well as the rationale for these programs, and hopefully, how they are coordinated and working together toward a shared strategic vision.

Sudan. In Sudan today we see an on-going crisis in Darfur, where the US declared that genocide has occurred. Roughly two million people have been forced from their homes. The international community has supported deployment of peacekeepers in Darfur by the African Union, recognized as the only force likely to be acceptable to the government of Sudan.

By all accounts, the AU has achieved a great deal, providing eyes and ear on the ground and carrying out important work to report on ceasefire violations, offer presence and deter violence in the areas they are deployed, bolstered by Western support and funding. Yet the AU force is primarily an observer force with some deterrent ability. Their mandate gives them only a limited ability to intervene on behalf of civilians and offer them protection. Even as the AU operation grows to nearly 7,000 personnel, the force is too small and ill-equipped to effectively cover the area of Darfur. The peacekeepers there are hampered without greater mobility and communications. In short, the AU force is not a force prepared or equipped to help bring stability to a region with ongoing conflict and a tremendous humanitarian crisis.

The US has argued strongly for peace in Sudan and in Darfur, and backed up the AU troops with funding and logistical support. We see renewed political attention with Deputy Secretary Zoellick's recent trip to Darfur. The US supported a UN team to work with the AU to develop its plans, including Americans with experience and practical expertise. The US has helped keep world attention on the crisis and organized with others governments to identify financial and materiel needs of the African Union. But no matter how much support the US offers the African Union – and we could offer much more – the AU mission is fundamentally ill-suited to act as much more than a monitoring force in the region.

In short, the AU can do extremely well but still fail to solve the larger problem of violence against civilians in the region. No one wishes to see the AU fail, especially in a mission where it has staked its credibility. Until a political settlement takes hold, the AU force needs to be backed up by a credible deterrent against continuing acts of violence by the Janjaweed, the Government of Sudan and the rebels. These measures would also support humanitarian efforts, including the return of refugees and those

displaced by the war to their homes. This job requires the mobility, command and control, support and credibility of a well-trained coherent military force.

Many options have been offered. Proposals include doubling the AU force and backing it up with better equipment, transportation, communications, and a credible military deterrent; creation of a no-fly zone to deter and police incursions; stationing of a rapid reaction force able to respond on short notice to attacks; and development of a NATO bridging force to support the AU better. Such options require action by the Security Council, clearly not an easy task. Nevertheless, the Council could use expansion of the current UN peacekeeping mission in Sudan to address the situation in Darfur. Otherwise, we need to be honest that the AU will continue to be limited in what it can do in Darfur. Where else in the world would we ask a new multinational organization with little experience to lead a mission that would be challenging to NATO?

A few trends are clear. There is genuine growth in African ambitions and willingness to deploy peacekeeping forces. There is greater multinational engagement in Africa, especially through the UN, which needs to be developed further. And there is increased support from developed states and the US to support African capacity-building. The challenge is to support and leverage this political energy into tangible results.

Strengthen US Tools. The United States has a vital role to play in Africa and in peace operations. We will benefit from increasing our funding of US initiatives, especially those supported through the State Department's PKO and CIPA accounts, to train, support, and enhance African peacekeeping missions. We can and should offer political and materiel resources to Africa organizations and operations, to support lead countries and leaders in Africa, and to the UN and other multinational efforts to build capacity and a better-working international capacity. The US also should take a leadership role in strengthening the capacity and effectiveness of the AU mission in Darfur.

Understand US Strategy and Policy. This Committee could benefit from a central source of information on the funding and programs in Africa in this area, since programs are spread across offices and even Departments. The Committee should request a review of US security assistance to Africa, including support for regional capacities, training and bilateral aid for peace and stability operations. This review should be put in the context of US strategy toward Africa, to help consider policy options.

Create a Mechanism to Enable Better UN Collaboration with Regional Groups. UN mechanisms to work with regional organizations are still in their infancy. Even citation of Chapter VIII by the Security Council does not trigger UN collaboration. This should change. The UN needs a strategy and formal means of providing support to organizations such as the African Union and ECOWAS on a consistent basis. To identify these areas of potential support, the United States should urge the UN to conduct a full assessment of how it could work more effectively with African organizations in the early planning and start-up phase of an operation; during the initial deployment and as forces ramp up; and, when appropriate, during hand-offs of leadership from regional to UN peace operations. UN member states should agree to use Chapter VIII of the UN Charter to trigger real support to regional peace operations authorized by the Security Council. On a case-by-case basis, the Council could also direct the use of assessed funding through the United Nations to support these missions.

Thank you.