

TRANSCRIPT

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Q: When Gen. Jones was here last year, it was about a year ago, he spent considerable amount of time with us talking about not just NATO but EUCOM, EUCOM matters. And specifically he talked about the transformation of EUCOM. So, a year's gone by, and you've been running the place day-to-day. Take some time here and update us on those two aspects of EUCOM operations.

A: Okay, well, thanks very much for that. I look forward to doing this. The past, well since Gen. Jones' last time here, it's really been a busy time in US European Command. And I think those aspects that were just talked to have clearly been predominant at what we're doing. If you would take the notion of one, the transformation, and that's probably an overused word, but the changes that have gone on in the US European Command, especially with respect to forces structure, etcetera, that has that momentum. This past summer, the first of those moves that Gen. Jones described, well not the first but the continuing series of those moves has occurred with the moving of the 1st Infantry Division out of Germany back to Ft. Riley. You know that division right now is heavily involved; its cadre in particular, and the training aspects of what goes on in Iraq, and so its cadre is doing a lot of that. So that aspect of the transformation has (inaudible) a pace.

Now in addition to that, the structure of facility locations in Germany, we've seen momentum there, with respect to changes in where the units are actually deployed. As an example, as the modernization program has taken hold, we've seen the standup of the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team maturing to its full status (inaudible) with

elements of it in Germany until we do some other things in the theater for consolidating their footprint at a single location. We've seen the arrival of the Stryker Brigade, the 2nd Cavalry Regiment into Vilseck, Grafenwoehr this summer, bring forward that force which is a light force, relatively speaking, as compared to the heavy armored divisions that have been in Europe historically, especially in the central regions. Now, you see the Stryker Brigade in place, in Vilseck, Grafenwoehr, beginning their certification, their workup for a full employment potential down the road as is determined that they could be employed. That will continue over the next I'd say three to four months so that by the end of the spring into the early summer, you know, we'll see that force able to do things. And in addition to what it's doing, it would be there serving as an example of, and I'm sure Gen. Jones talked to this, of the Army's and our nation's transformed activity moving to Europe and then serving as an example providing a model as we attempt to continue to work with our NATO allies as they transform their forces. So it's there working with them; it's in a location that provides good access to training areas, etcetera, etcetera.

In addition to that, the joint maneuver readiness center, continuing to evolve. And you see the work of the additional elements in theater from all over quite frankly. Our allies coming into Grafenwoehr, coming into (inaudible), they train. So that footprint has provided a good example, a very nice model for our partners. We've seen the continued focus east and south, so to speak, as we look at expanding what we do so that the footprint is more aligned with where our heaviest activity occurs in the east: Bulgaria, Romania, so that we can be postured to better do what we would want to do as we work with our allies and friends in that region. That has continued, and then if you look south, our focus there has continued, we've seen the maturation of some of our efforts into the Mediterranean, into Africa, with respect to the operations we're doing as well as the work we're doing in conjunction with our friends, you know, on the continent of Africa, to enhance their capabilities and so we continue to do those sorts of things that point to a restructured US European Command, a focusing of our efforts east and south; a migration of the forces and the footprint of the forces so that it is more suitable and adaptable to the missions of today (inaudible) that entire force so that we can do things with a lot of flexibility, a lot of agility, in order to meet the competing demands but to more importantly to be as pro-active as we can be at what we do, so that we can be a factor in causing our partners and neighbors to be effective at what they would like to do. So those things do continue.

This is an ongoing effort; the situation changes and again as we attempt to not to react to what happened yesterday, but to be out in front of what we see happening tomorrow. This will continue to evolve and change. And as the world set changes, (inaudible) changes we could look for more of that going on as well.

Q: You mention the restructure of the command, and I have to ask you, can you tell us

anything specific about US Africa Command?

A: What can I tell you? Well, the whole idea of the unified command plan as you all know so well is a continual popular debate. We have for several years within the department talked about how the geographic combatant commands, their lines of responsibility, lines of authority, the geographical areas in which they operate, how we want to ensure that we're doing it the very best we can. And so part of that discussion over time has included Africa, and so what has occurred over this past, I'd say three or four months, as that debate has continued, there has in fact been additional discussion, additional work, to look at what benefit would accrue in recognizing Africa by having a focused unified command working on the continent of Africa. There has been ongoing work with that. The Secretary of Defense asked for the proposal to the White House, on a potential way of redesigning the UCP to accommodate that, and we are waiting for a decision with respect to its implementation before additional work that would need to be done to answer a lot of the "eaches" of it, what would go on. That's kind of where we are at this point.

Q: You and I both go back to the days of the rapid deployment joint task force in the Middle East, and there wasn't a central command. There was nothing in the Middle East, but the strategic situation changed in point where there was a need to form a command. And this sounds very similar to that, but for several years there was not a Central Command; there were joint task forces and such things before finally Bob Kingston was anointed as the commander of Central Command, I think that was '82. Do you see that similar timeline here for an Africa Command? There'd be a couple of years before it actually became a full unified command, or do you see that just from jump street?

A: That's tough. I really don't know. Again, I think the situation of the day and the discussion of the potential for an Africa Command recognizes the strategic importance of the continent. To be sure we're doing work in Africa now, there are things we're engaged, and so I think the issue would be, the question would be: the additional value added that a unified command--Should that decision be made would bring to the work that we do on the continent? And whether or not a timeframe for that occurring makes a difference in achieving our overall objectives. And right now, given the additional analysis that I think needs to occur before that decision's made is where we are. But again, it's not as if we're at a standstill, because I'm working there now and so what the issue is, how do we enhance that, and then whether or not a timeframe or timeline would make a difference when entered into that equation?

Q: I wonder if you would be able to answer a couple of questions from me. First I was curious to know about how the BRAC reorganization has affected your training for the new forces coming in? Do you have enough available area to do the training in? And I

wondered also if you could give us some kind of update on what work has been done on any potential missile defense site in Europe?

A: When you talk about the BRAC for the training of our forces, are you implying, talking about what goes into Europe? ("I was just wondering when you have troops in Europe and they need to train with all the BRAC activities, do you still have enough area to do your training?") Yes. The area in which we conduct our predominant training both combined arms in Europe when you think about the Grafenwoehr, Vilseck, (inaudible) Complex is there. It has not been impacted at all; in fact part of our transformation recognizes the importance of that area, and so those facilities are being modernized. They're being made more capable for not only training US forces, but also providing opportunities to train our European partners and allies as well. So the ability to train in Europe has not been impacted, and again as we look at our move to the east in particular we see greater capabilities that we can realize. So that aspect of our ability to train our forces has not been impacted. We're still training forces as we go into the Balkans, there as well. There has been no impact in any negative way at all in our ability to train our people. And so I would say that that's not (inaudible).

The Missile Defense Initiative is one that is in play, and how we look to employ that as a nation is an item of discussion. There are ongoing debates occurring right now. I'm not aware of any recent development that's put any additional fidelity on it other than to say that they'd be continually being discussed at policy level, State Department with potential host nations or partner nations where these systems could be employed. So that is going on, and it is continuing to occur.

Q: Back to Africa--additional analysis before the decision is made. If the White House is going to make a decision, what analysis--?

A: I think from the standpoint of where I was going, the decision to do it is one thing. The decision about the "eaches" of it, where it's located, what's its missions are, those are the additional things that need to occur before as we go down the road. So when I mention the term decision, there's one decision that says, "OK let's look at standing it up." Then there's another series of decisions that determine its operational duties, where it is, what it does, how it does it, who's involved--so those sorts of decisions that would need to occur as well. And then based on those sorts of decisions and analysis, they can (inaudible), you know, timelines, who's involved, and that fidelity and analysis has not occurred I think to the point that we can answer those sorts of questions.

Q: (Inaudible).

A: I think that's precisely what I'm pointing to. Talk of things is just that, talk of things. So as you get to the analysis, the troop-to-task analysis, those are the sorts of things that

I think need to be done to say, "this makes sense or this doesn't make sense." With respect to EUCOM's role and all that, EUCOM clearly is involved in Africa now, but one of the reasons why this is being discussed to begin with, I think, has to be the fact that in addition to EUCOM, CENTCOM, and PACOM likewise involved in Africa. So all of that, in a very comprehensive way, would need to be looked at to determine if there were to be a consolidation of that effort, then what role are the combatant commands that play there now or that operate there now in total would be affected, impacted, as we move ahead with it? That is the type of analysis, I think, is still to be done.

Q: (Inaudible)

A: I think the notion of how we look at Africa is an important consideration in this discussion, i.e., how do the Africans look at it? The way in which we work with the nations in Africa; the regional organizations in Africa, from the African Union, the various regional security organizations that try to do things--how we view it is, I think, a factor in that debate, and it is a discussion that has credible merit with respect to how it is we do look at it. I think that's part of what we're into right now.

Q: I think what John's saying: is it more than just a geographic expression? You know Africa's a big place. There's at least five or six different, it's like talking about the Americas, you know, very different areas.

A: To be sure. Currently, US European Command looks at Africa in a regional context, as you know. So I think that wouldn't necessarily change with respect to the various parts of Africa; there are different problem sets. But again, you know, how do the Africans look at it themselves as well? How do others of our partners and neighbors view it? How do others within our own government view it? You know, reconciling all those sorts of things I think as a part of this debate as well, and trying to do it the best we can, what would be perfect I think, because I think record's on the best we can, so that we can be as effective as we can be on the ground and then the operational areas of the continent.

Q: Could we turn to talk a little bit about the challenges of joint training with some of the former Soviet states and balancing the concerns that Russia repeatedly raises whenever EUCOM or NATO tries to engage the former Soviet states in joint training and other types of exercises. And are you making any progress on that front--I know that we've had a lot of operations that have been canceled or delayed or..?

A: I think one of the benefits of forward presence is the benefit that you accrue from being able to train, to operate, and to quite frankly be an example for those who want to partner with you. Our presence in Europe and our ability to train and work with our partners there is one that we see as beneficial in quite frankly both directions from what

we can offer to our partners and allies, as well as what they can provide and offer to us. And we continue to seek opportunities and ways to do that. And we are doing it. Right now in Georgia, for an example, the Georgia training program continues there, the SSOP right now, it's through I think it's June-July. The current mandate we have as we continue to work with the Georgian forces as they have so wonderfully continued to support our Global War on Terror effort with the bare formations, so we are working with our partners in that part of the world. As we talk to the challenges of joint training, I think in today's mindset and operations, we are through our example causing many of these countries, who quite frankly want to be with us. They value the training that they can get from being with us, that we likewise can best value what we can receive from them as we bring an additional partner to this scenario to assist in pursuing like goals and ideals around the globe and in particular, the Global War on Terror, as it pertains to how this is being received by the Russians and others, we are very very open and transparent in all that we do. And to include training that we do with the Russians, you mentioned a couple of things, exercises that have been impacted; but there are many others that have not been, and so we continue to work with the Russians as well as Russians coming to train with us, work with us, both at the individual level as well as the collective level.

Our component commanders are air, ground in particular, have continued interchanges with our Russian military so that military-to-military piece of that continues to, I think, be solid and as I said, our openness and our transparency of with respect to what we're doing with our friends in Eastern Europe in particular, is I think doing a pretty good job in ensuring or helping to ensure that this is what it is and nothing else. And so to relieve those concerns that might exist about what our motives are, or what our intentions are, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera.

Q: Do you think that it's improved though, you said it's solid--the military-to-military relationship. Is it improving, is it status quo?

A: Military-to-military relationship I think is, when you look at our trend line over time, our trend line has been up, now is there a dip here and there now and then, potentially so. But when you look at a trend line over time, that trend line has been a positive one, and I see no reason for that being altered right now either because it continues. I was with Russian, chief of their expeditionary training forces, who was in Stuttgart visiting me--a month and a half or so ago talking about these sorts of things, continuing ways to partner and train and conduct military-to-military operations, so I don't see it, I think the trend line is positive, and I can see it staying that way.

Q: Can I take you back to Bob's original question about quote on quote transformation of EUCOM. I got a chance to talk with Gen. Jones on his way out a couple of weeks ago, and he expressed some reservations and said that his last report, the sort of exit report,

that he thought that perhaps we're going too far in terms of downsizing in Europe; that he was a big fan of forward basing, and that we were pulling too many (inaudible) for political reasons. Do you share those concerns, and if so, would you have any thoughts as to how the global posture can be modified to deal with that?

A: I think as we look at what we want to do, we continually evaluate how we're postured to do that. And I think as we look at the work that we would like to do and being an example, the work that we would like to do and helping to increase the capacity of our friends and neighbors throughout the region, east and south, we would always want to be re-evaluating what we have in order to do that. Right now, where we are with the reduction of forces or the transformation of the forces has us on a particular roadmap. But we look at that every day quite frankly, and as we see the need for additional forces or changing in the force structure changes, we will make those recommendations back to the department. If there are alternatives to what we were proposed, then those alternatives will be likewise presented. But recently, I think that there is a discussion about, based on the current set today, different from three years ago with respect to when some of these decisions were made, do we need to relook in that? And I think that is an ongoing analysis, and the component commanders, both US Army Europe, Marine Forces Europe, Air Forces Europe, and Naval Forces Europe, continually assess that from a standpoint of a proper force structure.

Q: Can you talk about what dynamic may have changed from three years ago that might affect either Gen. Jones (inaudible) view on this yet? What has changed over these three years that might cause you to re-evaluate at this point?

A: Well I don't know if anything has necessarily changed, but there may be some factors or some things that we thought would have happened or might be happening, there were plenty of things that we haven't yet accomplished those lately that have occurred. I mean, from how we are committing our forces globally. Some assumptions were made three years ago--are those assumptions still valid today? Again, I don't have the "eaches" of all of those but it's that type of analysis that goes on that helps us say, maybe we'd look at ("Do you have a sense of whether Gen. Craddock has, bringing fresh eyes there; has he done his own evaluation of this? Has he come to a conclusion or made a recommendation that follows on to Gen. Jones?") Not that I'm aware. I do not think so, not at this point.

Q: General, you talked about trend lines with the former Warsaw Pact countries, national relations with Europe since the Global War on Terror began, (inaudible) Old Europe comments to the revelations of CIA prisons. From your perspective, though, from the military perspective, can you give us a sort of 50-thousand-foot view on how your relations with "Old Europe" forces have been and what the trend lines have been like that?

A: That's a great question, as all these have been. The military-to-military relationships with our traditional allies in Europe, our German friends, our French friends--those continue; they're there, they're solid. In Germany, based on what we did, meaning the United States of America and how we transformed and how we are positioning our forces in Germany, Germans made a decision so that their force structure footprint could be more aligned with ours and their transformation, i.e., where they position forces, their ground forces in particular down in this training complex I talked to, Grafenhoer/Vilseck, and they position their forces so that that compatibility, those training opportunities could be enhanced. We do things with our British friends, our French friends, I mean when we continue to work with our traditional European allies in very I think effective ways, we're all busy. So the level of that work is different now than it was because of the commitment of our force structure in other places, but the commitment to doing it where and when we can remains and that we do do it, where and when we can.

Q: Have you placed any barriers from a national government level to some of your activities; European militaries are obviously controlled by their governments; Have you placed any roadblocks on the land?

A: I don't see a pattern that exists; is there a situation or a particular event from time-to-time that might creep up, potentially so. I can't recall one off the top of my head right now other than what we (inaudible) what our Western European allies, what the situation that we've addressed here when we had to alter our Sea Breeze exercise in the Ukraine because of some of the political overtones--Ukraine said, better not do it now, and we wound up doing a different thing. I'm not seeing that type of thing from the rest of our European allies.

Q: Back to Africa. Trends in Africa. Putting more resources in there, and in between time, what kind of resources, I mean, equipment and people, do you see as being needed to address some of those (inaudible)?

A: I think, first, none of these scenarios are scenarios that I think are addressed by a single instrument of our national capability. The military instrument is clearly one from a security point of view, but I think security becomes a better word than military because in the days of (inaudible), the word security is more than just military. Many of our friends in Africa, their security has been (inaudible) by others in their military, police establishments, etc. etc. I think from the standpoint of the trends that you see, you know as these emerging democracies grapple with being legitimate within their borders, extending good governance within their borders, they need the sorts of things that they've asked us for that would enable them to increase their capacity to (inaudible).

And it's not just the military; it's also the economic development that is a very essential piece of this construct effort. It's also the societal development from a standpoint of those things that impact the citizens, the people, from education, health--it's institutions of governance from rule of law, judiciary, (inaudible) mechanisms. The security aspect--as resources are discovered and used, safe-guarding those resources, from overfishing in the countries that have water situations that they can take advantage of, to the mineral resources, it's how did they cause those resources to be best used to advance their societies. And to that end, it's more than just a military endeavor. And so I think the trends that we see are trends that are increasingly recognized in that the requirement to integrate all those activities, and then how where they are coming and asked for our assistance, how do we get that government to buy our best ability to help them increase their capacity to govern? And I think that's where we're moving to.

Q: (inaudible)

A: Not necessarily. In some of the respects, it's a case of providing a training example, for instance, of how to manage a fleet, how to maintain a fleet, whatever that fleet might be. Changing a mind-set that they recognize they need to be better at maintaining things, so it could be a whole range of activities. It could be strategic airlift or some form of logistics support, but it's not just that. Again, it is a range of activities. There is something that over several years as I've been in these various places globally, Balkans, Africa, the Middle East, this thing that I kind of call, how do we establish a horizon of hope for a place, how do we assist them in establishing the horizon of hope? And that's where this whole notion, all of these (inaudible) working together, how do you integrate the activities of governance, security, economics, societal factors; how do we integrate those, and quite frankly in the days of environment I think any of us have to be considerate of all those factors and how our particular functionality plays into it because if we look at what we do as a clearly separate entity, then I think we won't get the effects in the environment that we would want to achieve.

Q: Talk to us a little bit about the security challenges that keep you awake at night--particularly thinking about Russia, which has been threatening to use its energy supplies as sort of a bludgeon. I have no idea what's going on in the Balkans and if that represents any kind of military challenge, and terrorism.

A: All that keeps me awake at night. (Laughter.) The good news is, a lot of folks are thinking about those very things. From the standpoint of the security challenges, you mentioned energy as an example. One thing that those potential threats causes folks to do is seek alternatives, and in so doing, you have other options that get created, and in creating those other options, the impact of the threat is a bit mitigated and reduced. Right now just like here where this winter, this winter it's less of an issue than it might

otherwise be, but it's allowing some additional time to look at alternatives--being things being put in place, in Eastern Europe to mitigate some of those potential threats.

In this global scenario that we're in, the ability to have these things impacted security-wise, from infrastructure, the protection of critical infrastructure, those are all things that are of concern, and when we talk about helping our friends and neighbors increase their capacity to deal with those things, that's precisely what we're getting at. Not that we would do, but that we can provide an assistance to them to do what they want to do for themselves, then how are we postured to do that, and what in fact do we do to assist them in doing those sorts of things. It's that--it's the global terror threat that keeps me awake. It's there; it's a reality. And so are we doing what we can do to best mitigate that, well obviously, you know, the ability (inaudible) but we continue to use our relationships with our friends and neighbors, understanding the environment, our intelligence mechanisms, to be as pro-active as we can be, so that we can prevent as much as we can prevent. So all those things are important, things we pay a lot of attention to.

Q: And the Balkans, is that still..

A: Well, you look at the Balkans, if you take the results of the recent Rega, the NATO Summit in Rega, where we had the, and it's progress, the admittance of three additional nations to a partnership for peace program, meaning there's progress. I was in Bosnia, first time almost 10 years ago, and I go back now, and they are now a PFP member. So is it perfect? No, but again, you know what direction that we're moving, and it's a positive direction. We'll wait and see what goes on in Kosovo obviously down the road here, but the rollout plan and the final status, we pay attention to that--the reaction. Working with the power structures there, the governments, to try to help them do as much as they can to ensure that the conditions that exist on the ground for the people, and I go back to this "horizon of hope" thing, that would cause the security situation to be OK. And it's those things working together that help us get to a more stable and secure Balkans. And as I said, the good news is, I mean we see it in places. It works faster in places than others, but we need to continue to work at it. And so we continue to watch the Balkans in a very substantial way.

Q: Somalia's across the border from you on the EUCOM front. Can you talk about the way forward there, the (inaudible) retreats (inaudible). Do you see who's on the ground in Somalia? And how do you see Ethiopia kind of continuing to shape its goal helping US interests?

A: I was in Somalia as a brigade commander, 10th Mountain Division, 1992-1993, and so that's a place that I have a bit of familiarity with. And I was very very pleased to see what happened over the past couple of weeks with some stability being recognized. The role that Ethiopia's played in that is one that helped create some conditions that I think

are positive for that country. I know that the Asst. Secy. of State for African Affairs is in the region right now working with the Ethiopians, the Ugandans, I think, to look at ways to how the US might be involved in doing just what you just said. I don't know the results of all those discussions yet, but I think those are positive to the degree that neighbors of Somalia are assisting them in creating security. That too is from my point of view, a positive development in Somalia.

Q: But given the baggage that this country has as a country, Do you see there's any way that we would send troops actively in there?

A: I don't see it now. But again, what we say, situations change. But I do not see it now, and there's been nothing that I've heard that implies that at all.

Q: We've heard that you might be the first commander of Africa Command. Can you talk about that a little and what you would bring to the table; you mentioned some of your experiences in Somalia?

A: Yeah. No. (Laughter.)

Q: I understand the President had approved the concept of the African Command on Dec. 15th, and now defense officials are working on the changing UCP. Do you have an idea about how long that might take before it goes back to the President's desk for a signature?

A: I don't. And as I said, what I've been aware of is that obviously we've looked at it, we've sent some proposals over to the President for his consideration and decision, and then based on that and how that comes back to the department, those next steps will be determined. But at this point, and, it is a complex issue that we talked about, so that's where we are.

Q: Ballpark: 6 months, 12 months?

A: No. (Laughter.)

Q: General, the Army and the Marine Corps say they really don't have enough forces to carry out the QDR, the global strategy, and I'm wondering--what kinds of missions are you seeing in Africa, in Europe, that are not being accomplished? I was there sometime ago and it was very difficult, I know, and some missions were being canceled in the (inaudible) exercise in Africa because not enough forces were available. Will you just talk about the needs, given your (inaudible) experience, your view of the needs of both the Army--?

A: The Chief of Staff of the Army as well as the combat and Marine Corps both made statements with respect to the size of their respective services. For me, as a member of a geographic command, I'm a consumer of those forces. And as well as in the current set, given the assigned forces that are in the command that are being used in global missions, we also provide those forces. So I see the stress on that force. I think at this point in time, there are very serious discussions being taken that would affect our potential future missions; what we do both from a conventional way as well as those foreign internal missions that our special operations forces, traditionally do. We can continue to look for ways to enhance those opportunities as well as to enhance the activities that we conduct. Being an infantryman, I'm always looking for more, and so I think if you have a force structure that is capable to do what you want to do, then it's probably never where you would have wanted to be, so you always look at ways to enhancing it. Right now, the force structure that we have, that we can employ, from time to time, things that we would like to do, we don't do. But then we make up for it in other ways, and we continue to look for ways to do that when those shortfalls exist.

Q: Can you give any examples of that, and in the ideal world, how you would want to change your force structure to better accommodate it?

A: Well other than basically being able to respond to every request that, as I visit our friends in Eastern Europe, in Africa, and I visit with chiefs of defense, ministers of defense, they all would like to have US forces training with them, helping them establish their systems. Recently we had down in Southern Africa, US Air Forces working with the Botswanan Air Force, helping them establish their logistics systems and what not. And there are always those sorts of things, and as I travel around, that there's a demand for with respect to our partners trying to increase their capacity capability.

Q: What are your thoughts on interoperability in your region right now, and also where do you see that going as different countries (inaudible) different rates?

A: Quite frankly, I see goodness. Interoperability is more than about equipment. It's about a mind-set, it's about how you think about things. We did something in our AOR here a couple of months ago, we had a conference for the Gulf of Guinea countries. And we got the ministers together there, US Naval Forces Europe, in conjunction with US European Command, the Africa Center for Strategic Studies, co-hosting this event there in Nigeria. The interoperability starts with a mind-set, and I saw that out at that conference, nine ministers of defense who all saw a similar situation along their borders and their countries that dealt with Gulf of Guinea security from the maritime peace to how it affected their economic capabilities--all these countries had kind of different approaches to it. Some of them used their militaries, others used their interior structures, but the common point was that through our involvement with them, there was some interoperability activity going on with respect to how they see their territory,

this notion of maritime domain awareness, getting common systems, a common radar system that they, when one radar spots something, they all can share that knowledge so that these vessels are moving. They have common, a picture of that. That's (inaudible). That's happening, and so I think it's there and the minister was in Benin, not Nigeria, I'm sorry. I went to Nigeria right from Benin, so that's why I mentioned Nigeria. But this minister in Benin where these ministers came together to look at a common scenario problem for them, and that is issues of maritime safety and security--they developed common approaches to dealing with that. And as a part of that construct, tools and systems to help them discuss, an agreement was made.

Q: Do you have any concerns, either in Africa or in Europe? (Concerns?) About interoperability, equipment or mind-set or otherwise.

A: Again, you know, I always have concerns because we can always make it better. And that's what we want to do, so I think the notion that it's working is the good baseline here. Now, how we continue to work to make it better, and there's a mind-set that says, "Let's do that." So to know that mindset exists, I think we will continue to make progress, and that's a path that we're on.

Q: Africa Command--(inaudible) There's been some talk about it possibly being more experimental in nature, even being run by a civilian, or at least (inaudible) staffers or that sort of thing at the command? Is that the direction the military is headed in at this point, or do you think it will be more of a conventional military command?

A: That's part of those additional decisions that I spoke to earlier that need to be taken. I think from the standpoint of the construct of the, whatever it is that we do in Africa, that it is truly an interagency requirement for that and again as I said, and I apologize for going back to this "horizon of hope" that I talked to, but I think it's the integration of the effort that causes the effects on the ground that you need to have happen. And that is not a purely military requirement. I think it requires the entirety of our government at work until the degree a command or a structure can help assure, coordinate the effects on the ground, then that's where I think, what we would be looking to do as we move ahead.

Q: Just to make sure I have it straight on the timeline, so Africa Command--(Who has it straight on the timeline? You have it straight on the timeline? Laughter.)

A: I think that's where we are. Right now the Secretary of Defense has proposed to the President a UCP alteration that would look at Africa in a different way; now what that would be and how it'd be, it's still to my knowledge not known, and there are no timelines that I'm aware of that are associated with it because some of this additional analysis that would need to be done to help put fidelity on that timeline so it's not

something that's purely abstract.

Q: Is there definitely going to be an African Command? Or is there some possibility--

A: Don't know.

Q: Can you talk about the GSPC aerodynamic with Europe and also the countries surrounding them? Does EUCOM believe that the GSPC is using other countries as bases, like Mali and Mauritania, are they kind of transitory figures there? And also, what kind of threat they pose to Europe?

A: You have to pardon me; I'm trying to think about how much of this I can say in this environment. The GSPC is a terrorist group operating in Northern Africa. I think the fact that the borders are as they are--they operate freely. And so the fact that the countries there worked together to address that is something that's perfectly logical. I think whether or not they're using these other countries, clearly the potentiality for that is there, and that in given how these folks operate globally, any other assumption I think would be faulty to think that they would not be operating across borders. And so I think that's how we approach the situation with the GSPC.

And are they a threat to Europe? Again this is a global environment, and I think these guys anywhere are a threat anywhere. And so I think if you look at the traditional lines of drift in Africa, from immigration to smuggling other things from humans to drugs to weapons, and by in large, you see some terrorist activity style in the same criminal lines of drift, if you will, then the assumption is likewise that they are a threat to Europe and I think that's something that we must pay attention to, as we are, operational, as well as the way in which we work with, the nations in the region.

Q: Morocco, there are some elections coming up there, and I believe the Islamist parties have widespread support. How much concern do you have that we may have a potential, for lack of a better example, Hugo Chavez-type government democracy coming back and radically changing Morocco's (inaudible)?

A: Our hope would be that where you have elections, you have societies that are taking care of their people, that are abiding by international law for behavior and law and order, and I think any place that an election would exist, we would hope that that would be the outcomes. I don't know enough about the internal Moroccan politics right now to say, offer a thought on the outcome of Moroccan elections other than to say democratic processes hopefully produce stability, security, and governments that we could live with and we can seek common objectives.

Q: The chiefs of the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps have expressed concerns on Capitol

Hill about the inability to pass the '07 military construction bill, which means it will be (inaudible) a resolution. I wanted to see what concerns you have in European Command for overseas basing moves, specifically but also in the Command in general as a point of impact in training or transformation or anything?

A: We have in these military construction bills we do have projects and programs. Any delay impacts (inaudible) to be sure. It won't stop us from doing what we do, it won't stop us from continuing to move ahead; it will obviously delay those timelines, and so we would hope that we could see continued progress on the military construction aspect. A lot of what we wanted to do has in fact (inaudible) in the plan. It won't be impacted but there are additional things out there that we would want to see continue to occur both as we look to the south and as we look east, our pact (inaudible). Again, it won't stop what we're doing, but it could potentially delay us, so we would look for (inaudible) level of support for our military construction programs to allow us to proceed in good and steady ways.

Q: Could you give any specific examples--you mentioned that you were being moved to the south and to the east? But any programs in particular?

A: Some of our consolidation activities are in Italy with the station, we have the 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team. Some of the work that we were doing in the east, Bulgaria, Romania, or how we look for our JTFE, Joint Task Force East, where we bring in the rotation of the brigade to do things, to train as well as to work with our Eastern European partners. The military construction requirements and those sorts of things, they would be impacted.

Q: And do you see problems moving soldiers from European Command back to the US because of--?

A: One of the things that we never want to do is move a soldier, sailor, airmen, marine, or their family to a situation that doesn't afford them the very best quality of life and well-being opportunity. And I think that's certainly something that I would always advocate for and if impacting anything that (inaudible) impacts that we should be very very concerned about that.

Q: What are the benefits of increased military cooperation with the Eastern European nations; Bulgaria and Romania, that are different from your traditional relationships with Germanys, Italys, and Belgiums of the world?

A: Well one of the things that we see, many of these nations are very valuable partners of ours in the Global War on Terror. As they look at redesigning and transforming their security apparatus, where there are capabilities that are either less than we might hope

for or where we need additional capabilities, there's a potential then that as these militaries and security structures develop, they can develop in such way that those additional capacities can be met and filled by them and I think, so again, as we work with them, as they work to build their capacities, again, (inaudible) the umbrella of the security alliances that they're in, they can then focus in particular areas that will help increase the overall capacity of our collective efforts and things that we do to hopefully bring security and stability in these areas that require it. So they are very very valuable in that regard.

Q: How receptive are they to fill in these gaps?

A: Very receptive. It's not as if we go out and ask them; they understand the scenario and they offer these sorts of capabilities and obviously, what comes with that is, a request for our assistance in helping them to get there.

Q: Back to Africa again. Most of the list of things that you said Africa needs help with, issues of governance, rule of law, have nothing to do with the military. You also said later (inaudible) that of course there'd have to be an integrated interagency effort, and you said to the extent that setting up a military command would help (inaudible). Is that really the argument, that the only way for the US government to integrate (inaudible) is to have a military command set up? You're aware of all the talk about the expansion of (inaudible)? Is that what you're looking at--is that the only way for the US to integrate its efforts in Africa?

A: No, if I led you to that conclusion, then I misstated it. The security aspects of what goes on clearly is essential to those other things occurring. And so what you have here is and in effect (inaudible) to Africa, the security structures take on pretty important roles in helping create stability in the environment. That is an essential that has to occur for these other things then to take hold. My point with respect to the entire interagency effort is that that in of itself won't produce the long-term effect that we're looking for, and if those other things also don't come along and are integrated, then the security situation will only be steady for so long. To be sure, to be sure, the securities piece of it performs backdrop other things must be a part of it in equal proportion relative to what they do to bring stability and security to a society. They clearly won't exist if you don't have security, and therein lies the importance of being secure, having security. Outside investors coming in, won't be there if there's not security. But if you don't get eventually outside investors, the security situation deteriorates because you don't get horizon hope for the people. They become restless, it becomes fertile grounds for other nefarious things to go on, etcetera, etcetera. That's the inter-connector. That's the relationship. And then the current environment that we see in Africa will be null of security structures, being as important as it is, we see that as where this work can begin.

Q: Do you see that any other part of the US government see the problem with Africa in a holistic way? I must say I don't.

A: I think that's part of where we all need to go. We looked at it in functional line, stovepipe ways. We need to look at it in an integrated way. And that's partly where we want to go, and where we need to take this.

END TEXT