



Bringing the Army Team to Africa

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Introduction

Our Nation's interests in Africa are as varied as the 53 nations that compose U.S. Africa Command's (AFRICOM's) area of responsibility (AOR). Within that AOR, AFRICOM's focus is on engaging in strategic competition, countering violent extremism, and combatting instability through humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. These challenges take place amidst a competitive landscape that is rapidly evolving both politically and economically. Complex as these challenges are, the benefits of American engagement are equally plentiful as we seek to promote economic development, strengthen partnerships, and challenge our strategic competitors' expansion on the continent in the coming years.

Bringing the Army Team to Africa

As the operational Army headquarters for AFRICOM and subordinate command of U.S. Army Europe and Africa (USAREUR-AF), the U.S. Army Southern European Task Force, Africa (SETAF-AF), has been tasked with—

- ◆ Setting and shaping the theater to gain and maintain operational access, presence, and influence.
- ◆ Maintaining an expeditionary combined joint task force command and control capability ready to execute contingency requirements.
- ◆ Developing land force institutions of African partners to accomplish security cooperation objectives, increasing U.S. influence and access.

SETAF-AF's lines of effort closely align with those of AFRICOM. This common approach, shared understanding, and similar objectives are critical, as SETAF-AF seeks to become the instrument by which AFRICOM can best compete in the land domain in indirect and narrative competition, and should the need arise, in direct competition (armed conflict) against global competitors. Through SETAF-AF's efforts to set the theater and maintain force posture through contingency locations and cooperative security locations on the continent, SETAF-AF ensures that AFRICOM experiences

improved operational conditions in the ever-present potential for crisis and armed conflict in Africa. This effort to gain an advantage is the direct manifestation of SETAF-AF's central role in AFRICOM's approach to indirect competition in Africa.

Following the consolidation of U.S. Army Africa and U.S. Army Europe, SETAF-AF transitioned its Army Service component command tasks to USAREUR-AF. MG Andrew Rohling, Commander of SETAF-AF and Deputy Commanding General for USAREUR-AF, was tasked to make capable a combined joint task force headquarters that could lead limited duration, small-scale contingency operations in Africa or Europe. The key is SETAF-AF's flexible and adaptable force packages, which provide a rapidly deployable command and control architecture for crisis response through the establishment of scalable command posts for small, medium, and large-scale contingencies.

Within the intelligence warfighting function, SETAF-AF remains consistently engaged in the African theater, supporting a full spectrum of military-to-military engagements, building partner capacity, and providing intelligence support to force protection across the continent. In the last 2 years, the 207th Military Intelligence (MI) Brigade supported half of the Secretary of Defense's named operations in Africa, deploying more than 200 collectors, agents, and analysts, which resulted in a 700 percent increase in intelligence reporting. The 207th established Field Office Africa to more efficiently provide intelligence support to chiefs of mission and defense attachés while executing the first U.S. Code Title 10 counterintelligence operations on the continent. The 207th's Africa Data Science Center provides tailored data analytics to support AFRICOM, SETAF-AF, and the wider intelligence community. Headquartered in Vicenza, Italy, the Africa Data Science Center serves as the United States Army Intelligence and Security Command's prototype for an expanded data-driven capability within MI brigades-theater.

SETAF–AF’s annual joint, multinational exercises on the African continent serve to adapt and expand SETAF–AF’s joint task force capability. The goal is to provide combatant commanders with a trained, validated, and rapidly deployable joint task force headquarters capable of conducting operations in Africa and potentially on European soil. These operations would be for small-scale humanitarian assistance/disaster response and noncombatant evacuation. Additionally, SETAF–AF contributes to the execution of AFRICOM’s campaign plan with the employment of land forces in engagements, exercises, and security cooperation with African partner nations.

AFRICOM’s and SETAF–AF’s flagship exercise in Africa is African Lion—the largest annual exercise on the African continent, featuring 3,300 U.S. Service members and a total of approximately 7,800 combined members of the Royal Moroccan Armed Forces, Tunisian Armed Forces, and Senegalese Armed Forces, and military members from Italy, the United Kingdom, and the Netherlands. African Lion is a multinational, multi-domain, large-scale global exercise involving numerous partner countries, executed across the three African host nations: Morocco, Tunisia, and Senegal. Led by SETAF–AF, African Lion is the premier joint force training event for the AFRICOM joint exercise program and is a strategic demonstration of partner commitment, interoperability, and strategic readiness.

The purpose of the exercise is to set the theater for access and interoperability among partner nations against adversarial networks intent on destabilizing the region and threatening freedom of movement and strategic access. African Lion is a Master Scenario Events List–driven, simulation-supported, live, virtual, and constructive exercise in which the training audience faces a near-peer adversary during large-scale combat operations in North Africa, along the North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s (NATO’s) Southern Flank. African Lion is a strategic demonstration of partner commitment to regional stability in North Africa and is an excellent opportunity to conduct realistic, dynamic, and collaborative readiness training in an austere environment at the intersection of four geographic combatant commands, strategic maritime choke points, and global shipping lanes. For the SETAF–AF G-2 and 207th MI Brigade, the exercise represents an opportunity to incorporate African, NATO, and joint partners into intelligence collection planning, analysis, and production. African Lion 21 featured the tactical deployment of the 207th MI Brigade’s deployable intelligence support element onboard Moroccan C-130s from Aviano Airbase, Italy, to Agadir, Morocco.

Building on the successes of African Lion 21, African Lion 22 is set to include more European and African partners

and more Europe-based United States units. It will feature increasingly sophisticated aspects of multi-domain operations, including missile and air defense and cyberspace defense activities. SETAF–AF will continue to coordinate the DEFENDER-Europe and African Lion exercise scenarios based on the tenets of large-scale combat operations methodology.

Building Partner Capacity through the Intelligence Warfighting Function

The SETAF–AF G-2 MI Defense Institution Program is an indispensable tool to foster a capable regional intelligence enterprise of allies and partners. Such programs have proven instrumental in building institutional capacity, and such routine engagements facilitate the development of intelligence partners, enhance partner collection capabilities, and expand SETAF–AF’s intelligence enterprise and influence across the continent. The SETAF–AF G-2 MI Defense Institution Program is the U.S. Code Title 22 funded program to establish and develop professional MI curricula and to facilitate instructors for African partners at partner MI schoolhouses.

The objective of our MI programs is to team with partner nations that have similar security needs and interests, have a will and desire to partner with us, and have the near- and long-term potential to export regional security. Our success in meeting our objectives is readily demonstrated in multiple African partner countries where these programs have been successful at helping partners build improved MI schoolhouses and intelligence capabilities. Our key partners in meeting this objective are the AFRICOM J-2, 2nd Security Force Assistance Brigade (SFAB), 207th MI Brigade, U.S. Army Intelligence Center of Excellence (USAI CoE), Human Intelligence Training-Joint Center of Excellence, Army National Guard State Partners, Defense Intelligence Agency, National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, State Department, country teams, and National Security Agency. They all provide valuable capabilities and training opportunities to enhance what SETAF–AF, SFAB, and 207th MI Brigade are able to provide.

For example, in Ghana, the SETAF–AF G-2 MI Defense Institution Program focuses on Ghanaian MI Corps cadre training and professionalization for Ghanaian Forces at the MI school. The SETAF–AF G-2 is currently developing a secondary program to establish an Intelligence Fusion Center by providing needed materials, equipment, and instructional guidance for the implementation of equipment and software training within a 3-year period. We hope to integrate SFAB capabilities to enhance our ability to deliver quality intelligence partnership over the next several fiscal years.

In Kenya, SETAF–AF assists the Kenyan Directorate of Military Intelligence to refine curriculum and training programs at the MI Defense Intelligence Academy in order to better prepare the Kenyan Defense Forces’ (KDF) officers and soldiers to contend with regional terrorism concerns and develop an enhanced MI capability within the KDF. SETAF–AF support includes assisting the KDF in intelligence collection, sharing, and processing, exploitation, and dissemination capabilities. USAICoE has been instrumental in supporting our relationship building in Kenya. From 2019 to the present, the SETAF–AF G-2, USAICoE, and 207th MI Brigade have jointly conducted a total of 18 weeks of training and mentoring for more than 40 KDF Army officers, warrant officers, and senior noncommissioned officers. Common core concepts included language and tactics and techniques to improve intelligence support to stability operations through multiple intelligence disciplines. The students represented a cross section of the KDF intelligence enterprise, from all the services, from the strategic to the operational and tactical levels. Students and senior KDF officials said the skills and knowledge they gained had an immediate impact on the enterprise in the field, enabling intelligence-driven operations in Somalia. Senior KDF MI officers requested further training to enhance doctrine development at the Defence Intelligence Academy and to further streamline intelligence fusion at the operational level to better drive tactical operations.

intelligence support to Tunisian military doctrine, training exercises, and operations.

The Nigerian Army Intelligence and Cyberwarfare School Curriculum Development Program is a multiyear, joint endeavor to develop a common professional military education standard for all Nigerian MI professionals through a facility and staff development program. The California National Guard has been pivotal to our efforts in Nigeria to sustain and improve our intelligence partnership. The SETAF–AF G-2 coordinated with the California National Guard to help modernize the Nigerian Army Intelligence School curriculum. The California National Guard supported four train-the-trainer events, advising and instructing the Nigerian school faculty and cadre. The SETAF–AF G-2 assisted in building a 7-week resident course covering tactical intelligence for officers and enlisted personnel. The SETAF–AF G-2 also assisted in building a 14-week resident course equivalent to USAICoE’s MI Basic Officer Leader Course.

Finally yet importantly, in Burkina Faso, SETAF–AF provides the Burkinabe Military Intelligence Directorate with basic and advanced intelligence training for officers and noncommissioned officers to set the conditions for the eventual establishment of an MI school. This training is critical to assisting partners in an area under heightened pressure from violent extremists.

Leveraging the SFAB in Competition

SFAB operations in Africa are at the cutting edge of both narrative and indirect competition on the continent through military-to-military training events designed to improve the reputation of the United States, increase leverage, or expand influence. Recently, the 2nd SFAB began its latest rotational employment of advisors to SETAF–AF’s headquarters in Vicenza, Italy, in order to enable the assistance of mission command and provide situational awareness of advisor teams in the AFRICOM AOR. Typically, SFAB intelligence support teams include the force package intelligence noncommissioned officer, who serves as the liaison between the SETAF–AF G-2 and advisor teams deployed to their respective assigned countries in Africa. The intelligence section at the SFAB battalion and brigade proved critical to the execution of the SETAF–AF G-2’s priority of providing intelligence support to force protection across Africa. This liaison helped to convey a better understanding of the capabilities of the SFAB teams. The close association of the SFAB’s intelligence architecture within that of the SETAF–AF G-2 enterprise enables intelligence planners to incorporate the SFAB teams into long-term military-to-military engagement planning, defense institution building, and future advising missions in Africa. The SFAB’s knowledge of the atmospheric and working relationships with partners on the ground render SETAF–AF better prepared to set the theater.



A Cameroonian intelligence officer refines her group’s modified combined obstacle overlay, which is a visual depiction of terrain and key features, part of their intelligence preparation of the operational environment at the Regional All-Female Basic Intelligence Course, Tunis, Tunisia.

SETAF–AF, in cooperation with the 2nd SFAB, is providing training at the Intelligence Security Agency for defense school instructors to assist Tunisia in developing its MI capabilities in order to enable successful integration of Tunisian

With the assistance of the 207th MI Brigade and SETAF–AF theater analysis and control element in Wiesbaden, Germany, the SETAF–AF G-2 provides analytical intelligence support in the form of operational and tactical intelligence products to SFAB intelligence advisors on the ground in locations such as Tunisia, Senegal, Ghana, and Kenya. Advisors continue to work through the Office of Security Cooperation and the Ministry of Defense to better integrate and sustain collection efforts across the country. Because of the lack of adequate, forward-deployed resources and analytical systems at the intelligence advisor’s disposal, this reachback support has proven critical to the SFAB’s mission success in the intelligence warfighting function. This mutually beneficial, symbiotic relationship enables the SETAF–AF G-2 section to gain a better operational perspective of the missions in which the 2nd SFAB is involved, increase the situational awareness of the advisor teams on the ground, and extend the operational reach of the SETAF–AF intelligence enterprise.

In a relatively short period, SFABs have proven their worth repeatedly on the African continent and will become increasingly capable over time with consistent planning and allocation. As SETAF–AF continues to transform security force assistance to maximize efficiency and effectiveness, certain security force assistance responsibilities previously executed only by SETAF–AF can and should transition to the SFAB, being careful to ensure that those responsibilities do not exceed the capabilities or the intended role of the SFAB as it was designed.

Maintaining SETAF–AF’s ability to execute a robust engagement strategy, including maximum incorporation of the SFAB’s capabilities, is critical to keep an adequate level of diplomacy across Africa and to counter growing Chinese and Russian influence on the continent. Thus, in a region with ever-lower confidence in governance and institutions, the American flag increasingly represents a set of ideals

to which our partners can aspire. In narrative competition, SETAF–AF’s engagement strategy, along with its SFAB partners, serves to generate, expand, and improve upon the reputation of AFRICOM, the U.S. Army, and the United States as the security partner of choice among developing nations in Africa.

The Way Ahead

AFRICOM’s responsibilities in Africa center on expanding U.S. access and influence, countering violent extremists, strengthening relationships with security partners on the continent, and responding effectively to crisis. SETAF–AF, as a deployable, joint-capable headquarters, is a tailor-made organization purpose-built for crisis response in Africa or in Europe under certain conditions. The tools the United States will leverage must be as flexible and adaptable as is necessary to meet challenges regardless of scope and scale. SETAF–AF is fully capable of commanding and controlling small-scale, short-duration contingency operations anywhere in Africa or Europe. Through SETAF–AF’s persistent engagement on the continent, our African partners will view the U.S. Army as a reliable partner; and SETAF–AF’s actions support the efforts of AFRICOM and USAREUR–AF, enabling competition and enhancing regional security and stability. SETAF–AF advances U.S. influence, access, and partnerships, enabling the campaign and competition objectives of AFRICOM and USAREUR–AF in the AFRICOM AOR.

Through flexibility and adaptability, SETAF–AF will continue to serve as a tool by which AFRICOM advances U.S. influence, access, and partnerships across an increasingly critical theater of operations. By providing a trained, validated, and rapidly deployable joint task force headquarters capable of conducting small-scale humanitarian assistance, crisis response, and noncombatant evacuation operations, **SETAF–AF will remain *the* headquarters that brings the Army team to Africa.** 

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