

Southern European Task Force Transformation Ceremony

9 December 08

Major General William B. Garrett III

Where possible, U.S. strategy is to employ indirect approaches -- primarily through building the capacity of partner governments and their security forces -- to prevent festering problems from turning into crises that require costly and controversial direct military intervention.

--Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, *A Balanced Strategy*

Benvenuti! Welcome!

Thank you all for joining us on this historic day. A few moments ago we uncased our new SETAF colors, representing who we are today - U.S. Army Africa - while recalling our proud heritage of service.

On behalf of the entire SETAF team, I would like to thank the leadership at U.S. Africa Command and U.S. Army Europe, who have been instrumental in helping us transform to assume our new role.

We are honored and privileged to be the first members of U.S. Army Africa. This is a huge responsibility, as our decisions and actions will establish the foundation that others will build upon in the years ahead.

In Africa, we face a set of security challenges that may be unprecedented in complexity and scope – presenting dilemmas that do not lend themselves to a simple choice between use of force or diplomacy.

Members of the international community have long asked for increased global attention to African issues – particularly since genocide, ethnic cleansing, rape, acts of terror, and crimes against humanity have come to symbolize modern conflict in Africa.

The creation of Africa Command, and now U.S. Army Africa, reflects our Nation's determination to commit to a lasting security relationship with Africa – a long neglected continent whose impoverished people remain vulnerable to the ideology of violent extremism.

If SETAF does its job properly, we will become members of an effective new team working with the international community, who are dedicated to protecting the rights and lives of African people.

This international team includes our Italian allies. And I would like to personally thank our Italian partners who have courageously supported us and helped us launch this transformation. Partnering with our allies to advance shared interests and values has never been more important.

Italy is a key member of the United Nations, the G-8, the European Union, and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization – each of which is engaged in Africa.

For reasons of history, humanity, and geography, Italy recognizes and appreciates the complexities of Africa, and this is very evident right here in Vicenza.

The Center of Excellence for Stability Police Units, COESPU, a joint Italian-U.S. initiative, is located on Caserma Chinotto, just a few kilometers from here.

COESPU is focused on increasing African capacity for sustaining peace support operations. General Borghini, the Director of COESPU, and I are committed to a new and more effective partnership in our capacity building efforts.

As we go forward, SETAF will sustain and enrich our already good relations with the Italian civil and military communities.

We will actively collaborate with Italian military planners and participate in mutual initiatives on the African continent that achieve our common objective of stability and peace.

We will also support the kind citizens of Vicenza who so generously volunteer their time, talent and treasure in support of humanitarian assistance projects in Africa.

So I am confident the enduring relationship between the United States and Italy will only get stronger; new opportunities will spring from common objectives and a shared vision for a prosperous Africa.

Our future success will also depend upon collaboration and cooperation with U.S. Africa Command, U.S. Army Europe, our AFRICOM teammates, our joint partners, our allies, our partner nations in Africa – as well as organizations as disparate as the Department of State, the African Union, the Office of Foreign Disaster Relief, and a host of nongovernmental organizations, think tanks, and academia – just to name a few.

We are already gaining a better appreciation for these organizations and institutions, their personalities, their business cultures and their operating procedures.

Our goal is to develop enduring relationships that will enable us to lend a hand in Africa in a more comprehensive and effective way.

Finally, to the SETAF team – every soldier, civilian, and family member – thank you for your patience and determination over the past few months.

Our transformation into U.S. Army Africa – a team like no other – is a direct result of your hard work.

As we mature this year, our mission is clear. Along with our national and international partners, we will bring U.S. Army capabilities to the continent in support of U.S. Africa Command – to promote peace, security, and stability in Africa.

SETAF is well suited for this task. As you saw in the video, we have trained and exercised in Africa for years. At times, we have also deployed to Africa in response to crises. But times have changed.

SETAF is now a different kind of command with a different focus. We are America's premier Army team dedicated to achieving positive change in Africa.

Instead of simply responding to crises, we will seek out opportunities to strengthen the capacity of African land forces and their institutions so they can prevent conflicts and contribute to peace.

There are many challenges ahead. But one thing is certain: HOW we do WHAT we do will be our fate in Africa.

Success in our new environment will require us to uphold our Warrior Ethos, exemplify our Army's Values, and provide an inspiring example of a skilled and disciplined military that others may choose to emulate.

Success will also require a more sophisticated awareness of African cultures, a deeper understanding of African perspectives, and a patient, long-term approach in which we may very well be the "junior partner" in a multinational, multiagency operation or security campaign.

Throughout, what is important to keep in mind is we ARE a force for good; we WILL make a positive difference - for the people in Africa, and for our Nation.

YOU, the individual on this team, are the ultimate key to our success!

Thank you for what you do.

And thanks again to everyone for joining us here on this historic day.

Major General Garrett is the Commander, Southern European Task Force – US Army Africa.



Southern European Task Force – U.S. Army Africa Q&A Endnotes

What is it?

‘A team like no other,’ the Southern European Task Force (SETAF) is the Army’s premier organization dedicated to achieving positive change in Africa. As the Army component to United States Africa Command (USAFRICOM), SETAF, in concert with national and international partners, conducts sustained security engagement with African land forces to promote peace, stability and security in Africa. As directed, SETAF will deploy as a contingency headquarters in support of crisis response.

What has the Army done?

Acknowledging the strategic importance of Africa, USAFRICOM was formed Oct. 1, 2007. SETAF was the Army’s natural choice as the land component to further develop, organize and unify the military capability for USAFRICOM. Stationed in Vicenza, Italy since 1955, SETAF has a long history of operating on the continent. Since the 1990’s, SETAF has partnered with African nations as part of its operational focus, and has executed crisis response, disaster relief and humanitarian assistance operations in Africa.

What continued efforts does the Army have planned for the future?

SETAF is developing capacity and capabilities to coordinate U.S. Army activities in Africa. SETAF will strengthen existing relationships and build new ones with African army organizations, and national and international partners, promoting a stable and secure Africa.

While refining operational practices, SETAF will focus on four areas: Grow, Partner, Engage and Act. It will lay the foundation for future success while assuming full responsibility for all U.S. Army operations in Africa. SETAF will establish trusted and reliable partnerships with African militaries and security institutions, allies, our USAFRICOM teammates, and other governmental agencies and international organizations working in Africa. SETAF will collaborate with African partner nations to

transform security forces into contributors to peace, with the capacity and capabilities required to accomplish objectives in support of lawful authorities.

Amid transformation, SETAF will sustain and grow our enduring bilateral relationships with Italian military and civil institutions and among the Italian communities where we live. SETAF will collaborate with on-going Italian initiatives on the African continent and support African stability and capacity-building programs in Italy and abroad.

Why is this important to the Army?

The transformation to U.S. Army Africa allows SETAF to focus primarily on emerging African nations and build the capacity of our African partners, and better enable them to both improve security and prevent conflict.