Congressman Rodney Frelinghuysen
Subcommittee on Defense
House Committee on Appropriations
Oversight Hearing – United States Africa Command
April 25, 2013
Opening Statement As Prepared

This morning the Committee will hold a hearing on United States Africa Command (AFRICOM). We will focus primarily on the unique mission within AFRICOM and the threats posed in that theater.

The mission of Africa Command is to protect and defend the national security interests of the United States by strengthening the defense capabilities of African states and regional organizations and, when directed, conduct military operations, in order to deter and defeat transnational threats and to provide a security environment conducive to good governance and development.

Although Africa Command is a relatively new command, the command comes with great responsibility, primarily due to the growing presence of Al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations spreading across the continent.

We are pleased to welcome General David M. Rodriguez, the Commander, U. S. Africa Command. This is General Rodriguez's first appearance before this subcommittee in his capacity as the AFRICOM Commander. He is a West Point graduate and has extensive combat experiences beginning with Operation Just Cause then Desert Shield/Desert Storm all the way through to Iraq and Afghanistan. He has commanded at every level and most recently commanded the U.S. Army Forces Command – the Army's largest organization. General, thank you for testifying before the Subcommittee today.

General, the Committee is concerned that certain African countries offer ready-made areas for terrorist training and recruitment activity. During a time in which our way of life has been threatened by those with radical beliefs, the area within your command because of its vastness and countries with unmonitored borders, is a prime target for terrorist activity.

General, we look forward to your testimony, but first, I would like to call on the ranking member, my friend, Pete Visclosky for his comments.

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