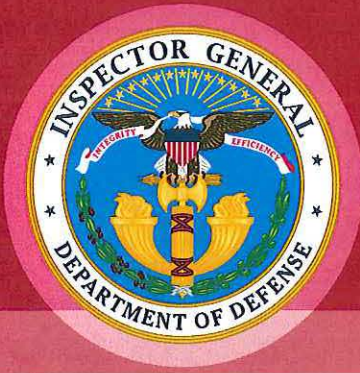


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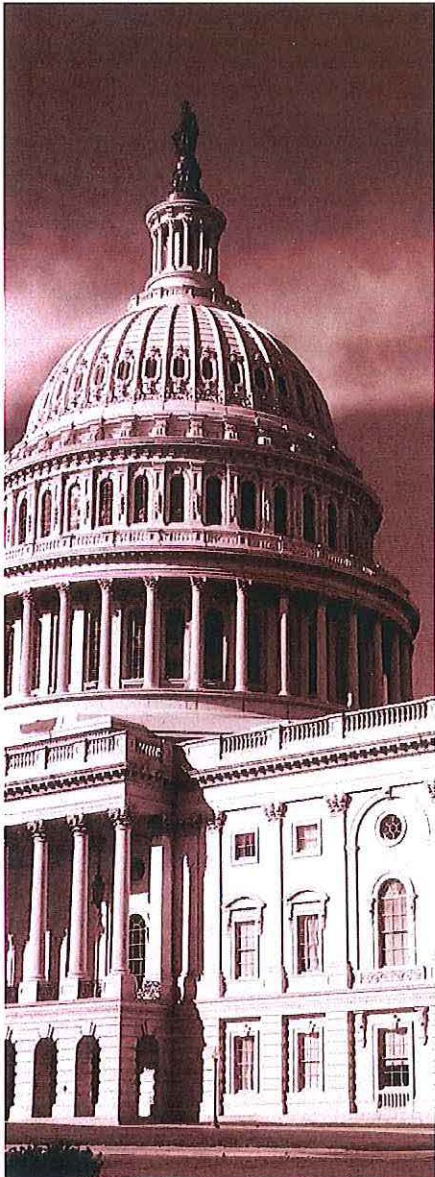
Report No. DODIG-2020-132



INSPECTOR GENERAL

U.S. Department of Defense

September 30, 2020



(U) Evaluation of the U.S. Africa Command's Response to the Coronavirus Disease—2019

Classified By: DoD OIG (b) (6)
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September 30, 2020

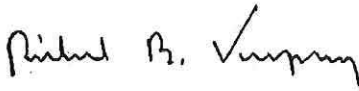
MEMORANDUM FOR COMMANDER, U.S. AFRICA COMMAND

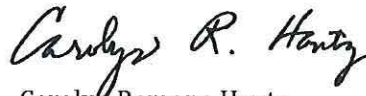
SUBJECT: Evaluation of the U.S. Africa Command's Response to the
Coronavirus Disease-2019 (Report No. DODIG-2020-132)

(U) On May 11, 2020, the Department of Defense Office of Inspector General (DoD OIG) began the subject evaluation to provide an early assessment of the efforts undertaken by U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM), U.S. Central Command, U.S. European Command, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, U.S. Southern Command, and the Joint Staff to maintain force, mission, and readiness while responding to the Coronavirus Disease-2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and the subsequent public health crisis. This evaluation was conducted as a joint project by the Evaluations and Audit Components of the DoD OIG. This report focuses on the USAFRICOM response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we will address the other Combatant Commands and the Joint Staff portions of this work separately.

(U) This report provides the results of the DoD OIG evaluation related to USAFRICOM. We provided a draft copy of this report to USAFRICOM and considered management's feedback when preparing this final report. USAFRICOM officials agreed to address the recommendation presented in the report; therefore, we consider the recommendation resolved and open. As discussed in the Recommendations, Management Comments, and Our Response section of this report, we will close the recommendation when you provide us documentation showing that all actions to implement the recommendation are completed. Therefore, please provide us your response concerning specific actions completed on the recommendation. Send your response to either DoD OIG (b) (6) if unclassified or DoD OIG (b) (6) if classified SECRET.

(U//~~FOUO~~) If you have questions, or would like to discuss this evaluation, please contact DoD OIG (b) (6) at DoD OIG (b) (6). We appreciate the cooperation and assistance received during our review.


Richard Vasquez
Assistant Inspector General for Audit
Readiness and Global Operations


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Overseas Contingencies Operations

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(U) Objective

(U) The objective of this evaluation was to determine whether USAFRICOM and its Component Commands executed a pandemic response plan (PRP); to identify the challenges encountered in implementing the PRP; and to identify the impact to operations resulting from COVID-19.¹

(U) Scope and Methodology

(U) We conducted this evaluation from May through August 2020 in accordance with the "Quality Standards for Inspections and Evaluations," published in January 2012 by the Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency. Those standards require that we plan and perform the evaluation to obtain sufficient appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our evaluation objective. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our evaluation objective.

(U) To answer the evaluation objective, the evaluation team obtained and reviewed USAFRICOM's Campaign Plan, Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP), and PRPs, including USAFRICOM's PRP and applicable supporting PRPs. We obtained and reviewed the USAFRICOM operational orders and force health protection guidance to obtain an understanding of how USAFRICOM responded to the COVID-19 pandemic beyond the measures included in the PRPs and COOP. We developed a request for information based on our evaluation's objective and analyzed USAFRICOM's responses to the request. To identify challenges, lessons learned, and impacts to operations and exercises, we conducted interviews with select personnel from USAFRICOM's Joint Directorates, Support Staff offices, and Service Component Commands. Additionally, we analyzed USAFRICOM input in the DoD's Joint Lessons Learned Information System, reviewed internal USAFRICOM taskers and associated documentation, and analyzed operational impact reports provided to the Joint Staff.

(U) Background

(U) DoD Preparedness Efforts

~~(S//NF)~~ DoD OIG (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g
[Redacted text block]

¹ (U) PRP refers to the Combatant Commands' Pandemic Influenza and Infectious Disease plans, which provide a strategic framework to prepare for, detect, mitigate, respond to, and recover from the effects of a pandemic. In this report, we will refer to USAFRICOM's Pandemic Influenza and Infectious Disease concept plan as its PRP.

~~(S//NF)~~ DoD OIG (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g

(U) DoD Response to COVID-19

(U//~~FOUO~~) Following the World Health Organization's declaration of a public emergency of international concern on January 30, 2020, the DoD took action to coordinate a global response to COVID-19. Specifically, on February 1, 2020, the Secretary of Defense approved the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Execute Order directing the DoD response to COVID-19. The Execute Order directed U.S. Northern Command to execute its Global Campaign Plan for Pandemic Influenza and Infectious Disease and Geographic Combatant Commands to execute their supporting PRPs in response to COVID-19. By the end of March 2020, the Secretary of Defense issued Departmental travel restrictions and raised the health protection condition levels at all DoD installations to signify that the COVID-19 disease presented a substantial threat and to outline additional actions DoD employees should take to respond to COVID-19.

(U) U.S. Africa Command

(U) Headquartered in Stuttgart, Germany, USAFRICOM is one of the DoD's six Geographic Combatant Commands. With an area of responsibility that includes 53 African nations, USAFRICOM's mission is to counter transnational threats and malicious actors, strengthen security forces, and respond to crises in order to advance U.S. national interests and promote regional security, stability, and prosperity.

(U) USAFRICOM Service Component and Subordinate Commands set the conditions for the success of USAFRICOM's security cooperation programs and activities on the continent. USAFRICOM's Service Component and Subordinate Commands are:

- (U) U.S. Army Africa,
- (U) U.S. Naval Forces Africa,
- (U) U.S. Air Forces Africa,
- (U) U.S. Marine Corps Forces Africa,
- (U) U.S. Special Operations Command Africa, and
- (U) Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa.

2 (U) Guidance for the Employment of the Force 2015-2017.

(U) Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 3110.01J, "Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan," September 25, 2015.

(U) USAFRICOM and its Subordinate Commands were responsible for developing, executing, and overseeing COVID-19 response efforts for DoD personnel on the African continent as well as implementing the U.S. European Command-directed response efforts for their headquarters staff in the U.S. European Command area of responsibility.

(U) U.S. Africa Command's Pandemic Response and Continuity of Operations Plans

(U//~~FOUO~~) Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, USAFRICOM took some action to prepare for a pandemic or other emergency situation by developing both a PRP and a COOP, as required by DoD policy. However, USAFRICOM's PRP was focused on foreign disaster relief and was not responsive to the situation presented by COVID-19, two of USAFRICOM's Service Component Commands did not prepare the required supporting plans, and the USAFRICOM COOP only focused on a relocation of headquarters and did not include the information necessary to respond to a pandemic, such as procedures for social distancing, telework, and alternative work schedules. Therefore, USAFRICOM used an operational approach to respond to COVID-19 that executed aspects from the PRP and COOP and provided directions to USAFRICOM staff through a series of orders and force health protection guidance.³

(U//~~FOUO~~) USAFRICOM's PRP Focused on Foreign Disaster Relief

(U//~~FOUO~~) USAFRICOM had a PRP, but it was not adequate for responding to COVID-19. In April 2018, USAFRICOM released its current PRP – CONPLAN 2351-18 – as the USAFRICOM Commander's plan to support U.S. Agency for International Development-led foreign disaster relief efforts in a pandemic environment.⁴ While the USAFRICOM PRP addresses the need to maintain mission assurance through medical preparedness and force health protection, it is largely focused on the assistance that USAFRICOM would provide to other countries in a foreign disaster event, such as an earthquake or hurricane, because USAFRICOM planners assumed that the capabilities required to respond to such an event would be similar regardless of whether it was a pandemic or non-pandemic event.

(U//~~FOUO~~) In addition, the USAFRICOM PRP was based on other assumptions that further diminished the function of the PRP during COVID-19. For example, USAFRICOM assumed that:

- (U//~~FOUO~~) a pandemic would be confined to the African continent and the operational environment would be permissive, and

³ (U) Joint Publication 5-0, "Joint Planning," June 16, 2017, defines an operational approach as a commander's description of the broad actions the force can take to achieve an objective or attain a military end state.

⁴ (U//~~FOUO~~) U.S. Africa Command CONPLAN 2351-18 "Pandemic Influenza and Infectious Disease/Foreign Disaster Relief Response," April 20, 2018.

- (U//~~FOUO~~) the Secretary of Defense would approve force augmentation and allow for force-sharing authorities between Combatant Commands.

(U//~~FOUO~~) However, these assumptions were not applicable to USAFRICOM's COVID-19 response. Specifically, instead of assisting other countries in foreign disaster relief, many of the measures necessary to respond to COVID-19 were focused on USAFRICOM protecting its own force. In addition, the global impact of COVID-19 resulted in environments that were no longer permissive due to host nation border closures and travel restrictions. Furthermore, such restrictions hindered the ability to augment USAFRICOM forces with forces from the U.S. or other Combatant Commands. Therefore, USAFRICOM's PRP was not responsive to the situation presented by COVID-19. As a result, USAFRICOM used the PRP as a framework, but ultimately used an operational approach to respond to COVID-19. To improve USAFRICOM's preparedness for future pandemics and to institute lessons learned from COVID-19, USAFRICOM should coordinate with the U.S. Northern Command to synchronize improvements to its PRP and integrate the updated PRP annually into USAFRICOM's Joint Exercise Program.

(U//~~FOUO~~) USAFRICOM Components Did Not Have Supporting PRPs

(U//~~FOUO~~) U.S. Army Africa and U.S. Marine Corps Forces Africa did not prepare the required support plans to the USAFRICOM PRP. The USAFRICOM PRP requires U.S. Army Africa, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Africa, and Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa to develop support plans to CONPLAN 2351-18 within 180 days of plan approval to ensure preparedness among key commands in support of a potential pandemic response. However, both U.S. Army Africa and U.S. Marine Corps Forces Africa stated that they had not prepared support plans for the PRP and did not intend to create support plans in the future. Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa did complete a support plan in December 2019 and updated the plan in July 2020, but it should also continue to update its support plan based on lessons learned from COVID-19 and on updates that USAFRICOM makes to the PRP. To better prepare USAFRICOM for future pandemics, USAFRICOM should obtain and review the Subordinate Commands' PRPs to ensure the plans contain sufficient details to respond to a future pandemic and are synchronized with USAFRICOM's PRP.

(U//~~FOUO~~) USAFRICOM's COOP Did Not Include Information on Social Distancing and Maximum Telework

(U//~~FOUO~~) USAFRICOM had developed a COOP prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, but the plan did not include the information necessary to respond to a scenario that required social distancing and maximum telework, such as COVID-19.⁵ The Global Campaign Plan required

⁵ (U) U.S. Africa Command Continuity of Operations Plan 2301-19, February 1, 2019, defines the actions necessary to continue mission-essential functions across the spectrum of hazards that may affect or threaten normal operations. USAFRICOM's COOP is structured as a response plan to scenarios believed to most likely require a USAFRICOM headquarters relocation.

(U//~~FOUO~~) each Geographic Combatant Command to develop personnel policies related to social distancing, such as alternative work schedules, telework, leave, guidance for supervisors, and accountability measures to mitigate the impact on personnel in a pandemic. In the USAFRICOM COOP, USAFRICOM stated that not all continuity events will require a relocation and that some disruptions may involve implementation of a social distancing strategy, which would require the implementation of a telework policy or delay in reporting to duty. In addition, USAFRICOM's COOP directed the USAFRICOM J-1 to develop COOP-specific guidance that would address the social distancing requirements and include that guidance in the USAFRICOM J-1 COOP.⁶ However, despite this direction to the USAFRICOM J-1 in the February 2019 COOP, as of February 1, 2020, when the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff ordered USAFRICOM to execute its PRP, USAFRICOM's COOP was focused only on headquarters relocation and did not include policies for continuing its mission-essential functions in a socially distanced environment, such as the development of a telework policy, alternative work schedules, and accountability measures.

(U//~~FOUO~~) To better prepare USAFRICOM for future scenarios requiring social distancing, USAFRICOM should update its COOP or include an annex in its PRP that addresses the policies, procedures, and responsibilities for executing mission-essential functions in a socially distanced environment. In addition, USAFRICOM should annually integrate the socially distanced COOP procedures into USAFRICOM's Joint Exercise Program.

(U) USAFRICOM Used an Operational Approach to Respond to COVID-19

(U//~~FOUO~~) The PRP and COOP did not include the information necessary to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. Because the plans did not include all of the information necessary to respond to COVID-19, USAFRICOM used an operational approach that executed aspects from both plans and provided directions to staff through USAFRICOM orders and force health protection guidance, which provided directions for minimizing the risk of contracting COVID-19 and breaking the chain of transmission.

(U//~~FOUO~~) Specifically, for its pandemic response efforts, USAFRICOM issued its initial Tasking Order in February 2020, directing USAFRICOM Components, Joint Task Forces, and Subordinate Commands to execute their supporting PRPs.⁷ USAFRICOM subsequently issued 16 orders to provide additional operational direction that was not addressed in the PRP, such as protecting forces at headquarters and on the African continent, updated travel restrictions, reporting requirements, and updated procedures for identifying and relocating high-risk personnel. In addition, USAFRICOM's Chief of Staff issued guidance that was not included in the COOP, such as direction on telework policies and work scheduling. Personnel at USAFRICOM and its Service Component Command headquarters in the

⁶ (U) USAFRICOM J-1 is the Manpower and Personnel Directorate.

⁷ (U) A tasking order is a method used to task components, subordinate units, and command and control agencies general and specific instructions for accomplishment of the mission.

(U//~~FOUO~~) U.S. European Command area of responsibility also followed U.S. European Command's orders and force health protection guidance, as required by the PRP.

(U) USAFRICOM's Primary Challenges During COVID-19

(U//~~FOUO~~) USAFRICOM experienced many of the same challenges as other Federal entities during the pandemic, such as the closure of schools and day care facilities, difficulties in tracking and reporting COVID-19 cases, and insufficient quantities of personal protective equipment, such as N95 masks. However, USAFRICOM also experienced unique challenges that could be addressed by adapting its own internal practices and by improving its pandemic planning efforts. Specifically, USAFRICOM's lack of an established telework program and reliance on its fixed facilities resulted in significant challenges in USAFRICOM's transition to a maximum telework environment. In addition, COVID-19 revealed weaknesses in USAFRICOM's knowledge management program, which led to redundancies, such as multiple people working on the same thing, and inefficiencies, such as time wasted searching for information in multiple places.⁸

(U//~~FOUO~~) USAFRICOM Did Not Have Adequate Telework Program and Capabilities

(U//~~FOUO~~) Because USAFRICOM relies heavily on its fixed facilities and classified network (SIPRNet), the Command had not developed the personnel policies related to social distancing, such as telework, alternative work schedules, and accountability measures, as required by the Global Campaign Plan. This lack of personnel policies related to social distancing ultimately created significant challenges in transitioning to a maximum telework environment, including an insufficient quantity of telework-capable laptops, the inability of USAFRICOM personnel to remotely access information because it was stored on the SIPRNet, difficulties with transitioning work across the Command due to various alternative work schedules, and complications in accounting for the status of its personnel.

(U//~~FOUO~~) On March 25, 2020, USAFRICOM established an interim telework policy and personnel were instructed to complete telework training and execute a telework agreement. However, it is important that USAFRICOM takes the lessons it learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and formalizes the policy into an official USAFRICOM instruction. Therefore, to better prepare USAFRICOM for future events that require mass telework and to comply with the Global Campaign Plan's requirements, USAFRICOM should develop an official telework policy that includes guidance on telework agreements and training.

⁸ (U) Knowledge management is the deliberate approach of employing technology and enabling effective staff processes to develop, capture, and maintain a shared understanding to support operational performance and command decision making.

(U//~~FOUO~~) Insufficient Laptop Availability

(U//~~FOUO~~) USAFRICOM experienced significant shortages of telework-capable Government laptops as the Command shifted to a telework environment. USAFRICOM personnel stated that the expectation was to work from home when the mission and resources permitted, but USAFRICOM faced laptop shortages at the beginning of the pandemic.

(U//~~FOUO~~) USAFRICOM, with a headquarters staff of approximately USAFRICOM (b)(1) 1.7e

[REDACTED]

(U//~~FOUO~~) The USAFRICOM Deputy Chief of Staff acknowledged that USAFRICOM was not resourced to purchase and maintain the lifecycle costs of Government laptops to enable a prolonged mass-telework scenario prior to COVID-19. However, USAFRICOM received funding through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act to purchase additional Government laptops, as well as Web Accessible Virtual Infrastructure systems that

9 (U) DoD Instruction 8170.01, "Online Information Management and Electronic Messaging," January 2, 2019, states that an employee may use personal, nonofficial accounts, to conduct DoD communications when the following combined three conditions are met: 1) Emergencies and other critical mission needs; 2) When official communication capabilities are unavailable, impracticable, or unreliable; and 3) It is in the interests of DoD or other U.S. Government missions.

(U//~~FOUO~~) will allow USAFRICOM personnel to use personal computers or Government laptops to access resources on the unclassified network (NIPRNet). The USAFRICOM Deputy Chief of Staff also stated that USAFRICOM has already purchased and received 1,000 additional Government laptops that will be used to support future mass telework scenarios and plans to have the Web Accessible Virtual Infrastructure fully operational by the summer of 2021.

(U//~~FOUO~~) While the purchase of an additional 1,000 laptops will improve deficiencies related to laptops, there may be other equipment and capabilities required to support a mass telework scenario. Therefore, USAFRICOM should direct its staff, Subordinate Commands, and Joint Task Forces to identify and resource any other necessary equipment and capabilities to support mass telework scenarios. In addition, although USAFRICOM has purchased an additional 1,000 laptops at this time, there may be scenarios in the future that still require USAFRICOM personnel to use their personal computers to access work-related resources. Therefore, to ensure that USAFRICOM personnel are able to properly access the NIPRNet while teleworking, USAFRICOM should develop guidance on accessing and using the Web Accessible Virtual Infrastructure system and include the guidance in its official telework policy.

(U//~~FOUO~~) USAFRICOM Personnel Had Limited Capabilities When Working in an Unclassified Environment

(U//~~FOUO~~) USAFRICOM was limited in its ability to complete work in an unclassified environment and ^{USAFRICOM (b)(1) 1.7e}

[REDACTED]

(U//~~FOUO~~) To improve operations in a telework environment, the USAFRICOM J-1 and J-6 recommended that USAFRICOM update its cyber security policies and train personnel on transferring documentation from the SIPRNet to the NIPRNet. Furthermore, USAFRICOM

10 (U) The USAFRICOM J-6 is the Command, Control, Communications and Computer Systems Directorate.

11 (U) The USAFRICOM J-4 is the Logistics Directorate.

(U//~~FOUO~~) personnel from multiple directorates also recommended that the Command maximize future use of the NIPRNet for unclassified information to the greatest extent possible. To provide USAFRICOM staff with access to as much work as possible while teleworking, USAFRICOM should conduct a review of the Command's use of the classified network for unclassified activities to determine whether official guidance on using the unclassified network is adequate.

(U//~~FOUO~~) Difficulties with Coordination of Alternative Work Schedules

(U//~~FOUO~~) USAFRICOM personnel experienced difficulties in coordinating and transitioning work across the various staff directorates during its COVID-19 response. On March 16, 2020, the USAFRICOM Chief of Staff directed the implementation of a minimum essential manning construct at approximately 50-percent manning in each Joint Directorate under a weekly rotation schedule. However, the USAFRICOM Chief of Staff also delegated each directorate the authority to determine appropriate alternative work schedules, which allowed flexibility in how each directorate would implement the minimum essential manning construct to achieve social distancing and maintain a ready workforce. USAFRICOM personnel stated that most directorates split their personnel into teams and established schedules where teams would work 1 week in the office and then 1 or 2 weeks in a telework environment.

(U//~~FOUO~~) While delegating manning constructs to the directorates increased flexibility and allowed directorates to decide what was best for their directorate's workload, USAFRICOM personnel also reported that the constant rotation of teams across each of the directorates and the lack of a standardized schedules led to challenges in transitioning work within the directorates and in coordinating work across directorates. Specifically, USAFRICOM personnel stated that the transitions between rotating teams was often time consuming and impacted productivity. In addition, USAFRICOM personnel stated that the information on each directorate's schedules was not shared across the Command, which led to confusion when trying to obtain points of contact in other directorates to collaborate on Command-wide initiatives. This was particularly challenging for the Operational Planning Team, which included members from multiple directorates and offices. As a result, personnel from the Operational Planning Team reported that the added time of coordinating who was in the office on any given day impacted USAFRICOM's COVID-19 response.¹²

(U//~~FOUO~~) To enable better coordination among directorates' alternative work schedules, USAFRICOM personnel recommended in their formal lessons learned submission that USAFRICOM establish and distribute a Command-wide work schedule by division that details the 75-percent, 50-percent, and 25-percent manning rosters. In addition, USAFRICOM personnel recommended that USAFRICOM establish common e-mail groups

¹² (U//~~FOUO~~) The Operational Planning Team, which included representation from various USAFRICOM directorates and special staff groups, was responsible for synchronizing the staff, enabling an understanding of the operational environment, building senior leader situational awareness, and fostering staff planning momentum during the COVID-19 response.

(U//~~FOUO~~) for continued workflow and standardized dashboards to better capture the information that is needed to make decisions. To implement these recommendations and to comply with the Global Campaign Plan, which requires Combatant Commands to develop alternative work schedules, USAFRICOM should include guidance on developing alternative work schedules in its revised PRP.

(U//~~FOUO~~) Inability to Conduct Reliable Personnel Accountability

(U//~~FOUO~~) USAFRICOM's personnel accountability systems at headquarters and in Africa were unreliable for the pandemic response, resulting in inaccurate status reports. USAFRICOM's PRP required the USAFRICOM J-1 to manage personnel accountability and strength reporting to ensure USAFRICOM maintains accurate accountability of its personnel, civilians, and contractors during a pandemic. However, USAFRICOM officials reported that during its COVID-19 response, the Command did not have accountability systems that were capable of tracking USAFRICOM personnel and contractor accountability in its headquarters or in the USAFRICOM area of responsibility. Specifically, USAFRICOM officials stated that the current accountability system at its headquarters, which resides on the SIPRNet and could not be consistently accessed by personnel on a daily basis, was unusable, rigid, and inflexible during the COVID-19 response. Therefore, USAFRICOM personnel acknowledged that the personnel status reports were likely inaccurate, particularly at the beginning of the pandemic. Furthermore, USAFRICOM acknowledged that personnel accountability was a problem in the USAFRICOM area of responsibility. For example, Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa personnel expressed concerns that the existing contract databases are not standardized or robust enough to maintain accountability of contractor employees in Africa, making it impossible to comprehensively track accountability information in a timely manner.

(U//~~FOUO~~) Personnel accountability ensures that the command knows the whereabouts and status of its personnel at all time, which is not only important for ensuring the safety and well-being of the staff during a pandemic, but is also important for determining readiness of its assigned forces. Therefore, it is imperative that USAFRICOM has effective personnel accountability systems during normal operations and not just in a pandemic scenario. To maintain accurate personnel accountability at all times, USAFRICOM should conduct a review of its current personnel accountability systems and implement improvements for accounting for all of its personnel, to include its contractors, in a timely manner.

(U//~~FOUO~~) Ineffective Knowledge Management Program Hindered Information Sharing and Response Planning

(U//~~FOUO~~) The USAFRICOM J-3, J-4, J-6, and its Service Components reported in their formal lessons learned submission that USAFRICOM did not have an effective knowledge

(U//~~FOUO~~) management program prior to COVID-19, which impeded the sharing of observations, insights, and lessons learned during the pandemic.¹³ The aforementioned USAFRICOM Directorates and its Service Components identified the need for better knowledge management, such as a management tool and one designated repository on the NIPRNet, to allow for efficient information storage and sharing. For example, USAFRICOM J-1 personnel stated that they stored documents in various locations on the NIPRNet SharePoint site, but did not have defined processes and business rules in place for document storage, sharing, and use prior to the pandemic. In the absence of a collaborative knowledge management process, USAFRICOM personnel resorted to mass e-mails and storing documents in various areas of the NIPRNet portal, which led to redundancies, such as multiple people working on the same thing, and inefficiencies, such as time wasted searching for information.

(U//~~FOUO~~) USAFRICOM's reactive approach to re-establishing its lessons learned program also impacted its knowledge sharing and management. The DoD's knowledge management process has a bottom-up focus, where lessons learned and best practices filter up from its directorates and components. However, USAFRICOM did not have an established lessons learned program in place prior to the pandemic. USAFRICOM personnel stated that the previous lessons learned program was discontinued in 2016 as part of a reduction of forces and was only reinstated on March 27, 2020, in response to COVID-19.

(U//~~FOUO~~) In USAFRICOM's consolidated lessons learned that were presented to the USAFRICOM Commander and Deputy Commander in June 2020, USAFRICOM highlighted the need for improvements to its knowledge management program. In an August 2020 meeting, the USAFRICOM Deputy Chief of Staff stated that a USAFRICOM Knowledge Management Working Group was in the process of developing a USAFRICOM instruction to establish a formal knowledge management program. Additionally, he stated that two of the three positions in USAFRICOM's Knowledge Management Office had been vacant during the COVID-19 response, but that USAFRICOM was working on filling those positions, with one employee already on-boarded in August 2020.

(U//~~FOUO~~) Knowledge management supports operational performance and command decision making by enabling effective staff processes to develop, capture, and maintain a shared understanding. To promote better performance and informed decision making in the command, it is important that USAFRICOM has an effective knowledge management program during normal operations and not just in a pandemic scenario. Therefore, to promote the sharing of information, insights, and lessons learned across the Command, USAFRICOM should develop and issue an instruction that establishes and guides USAFRICOM's knowledge management program.

¹³ (U) The USAFRICOM J-3 is the Operations and Cyber Directorate.

~~(S//NF)~~ COVID-19 Impacted USAFRICOM's Efforts

~~(S//NF)~~ USAFRICOM reported that COVID-19 has ^{USAFRICOM (b)(1) 1.4g} [REDACTED], damaged African economies, presented opportunities for ^{USAFRICOM (b)(1) 1.4g} [REDACTED] and opened new windows of malign Global Power Competition counter-messaging and influence building. ^{USAFRICOM (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4d, (b)(1) 1.4g} [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

~~(U//FOUO)~~ COVID-19 Impact on USAFRICOM's Security Cooperation Efforts

~~(U//FOUO)~~ USAFRICOM executes security cooperation through a broad set of activities with partner security forces that build relationships to promote U.S. interests, improve U.S. access, or build partner capacity. USAFRICOM implements the security cooperation program through Security Force Assistance activities, Foreign Military Sales, and Military Education and Training. USAFRICOM and its Service Component Commands reported that COVID-19 impacted Security Force Assistance and Military Education and Training activities.

~~(U//FOUO)~~ USAFRICOM Security Force Assistance Activities

~~(S//NF)~~ USAFRICOM J-3 personnel stated that ^{USAFRICOM (b)(1) 1.4a} [REDACTED]. Specifically, the ability of the ^{USAFRICOM (b)(1) 1.4a} [REDACTED] to conduct its mission was severely impacted as USAFRICOM temporarily redeployed the ^{USAFRICOM (b)(1) 1.4a} [REDACTED] to its home station in the United States until the operational environment becomes conducive to resuming operations.¹⁴ According to U.S. Army Africa personnel, the inability of the ^{USAFRICOM (b)(1) 1.4a} [REDACTED] to establish a persistent presence in Africa hindered USAFRICOM's security cooperation efforts in Africa.

¹⁴ (U) A ^{USAFRICOM (b)(1) 1.7e} [REDACTED] is a specialized unit with the core mission to conduct training, advising, assisting, enabling, and accompanying operations with our allies and partner nations.

(U//~~FOUO~~) USAFRICOM Military Education and Training

(S) USAFRICOM personnel reported moderate to significant negative impacts related to Military Education and Training programs due to cancellations of events in [REDACTED] USAFRICOM (b)(1) 1.4a [REDACTED] as a result of COVID-19. The USAFRICOM Military Education and Training program supports security cooperation efforts by providing funds for international personnel to attend U.S. military professional training programs. USAFRICOM (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4d [REDACTED]

(U//~~FOUO~~) COVID-19 Impact on USAFRICOM's Exercises

(S) USAFRICOM's Joint Exercise Program supports both the Global and USAFRICOM Campaign Plan with the primary focus of building sustainable readiness of assigned and attached forces. USAFRICOM exercises are designed to improve the Command's operational readiness, strengthen the defense capabilities of African partners, increase access and cooperation, and serve as a method to build and assess African partner capacity and interoperability. USAFRICOM reported significant impacts to its FY 2020 Joint Exercise Program as a result of COVID-19 restrictions that required the cancellation or postponement of several planned exercises. Specifically, in addition to multiple smaller exercises that were cancelled, postponed, or de-scoped, USAFRICOM cancelled major joint exercises due to COVID-19 restrictions, including AFRICAN LION, PHOENIX EXPRESS, OBANGAME EXPRESS, and JUSTIFIED ACCORD. According to USAFRICOM J-3, cancellation of these four major exercises forced USAFRICOM to miss face-to-face engagements with 25 African partner nations, USAFRICOM (b)(1) 1.4d [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. Additionally, USAFRICOM reported fiscal impacts for the cancelled exercises, identifying \$13.85 million in unexecuted funds that needs to be returned or reapplied, \$15.07 million that was returned to the Joint Staff, and \$4.11 million in FY 2020 funding that is being applied to offset FY 2021 exercises.

(U//~~FOUO~~) COVID-19 Impact on USAFRICOM's Engagements

(S) USAFRICOM conducts numerous engagements throughout the year to strengthen partnerships and facilitate execution of other campaign ways. USAFRICOM and its Service Component Commands reported significant impacts to its engagements with senior leaders due to COVID-19. Specifically, as of June 3, 2020, USAFRICOM reported that 55 of 62 engagements scheduled between March and September 2020 had been cancelled as a result of COVID-19. As an example, the cancellation of the AFRICAN LION exercise resulted in

15 (U) The USAFRICOM J-5 is the Strategy, Engagements and Programs Directorate.

(S) missed opportunities for Senior Leader Engagements with both USAFRICOM (b)(1) 1.4a from the USAFRICOM Commander, Chief of the National Guard Bureau, and the U.S. Army Africa Commander.

(U//~~FOUO~~) COVID-19 Impact on USAFRICOM's Operations

(S) USAFRICOM conducts operations to deter and defeat transnational threats and to provide a security environment conducive to good governance and development. USAFRICOM conducts operations and activities along six Campaign Plan Lines of Effort, as well as other enduring support activities. USAFRICOM J-3 personnel stated that operations continued to be conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, but that the scope and rate of the operations were dependent on the DoD and host nation travel restrictions.

USAFRICOM (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4c
[Redacted]

(U//~~FOUO~~) Medical Treatment of COVID-19 Patients

(S) USAFRICOM reported significant shortfalls in the Combatant Command Trauma System that were exacerbated by COVID-19. Specifically, the USAFRICOM Command Surgeon stated that the COVID-19 environment highlighted gaps in the Combatant Command Trauma System that could only be mitigated with external support. USAFRICOM personnel stated that USAFRICOM (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g

[Redacted]. Additionally, these military medical teams are lean and mobile and USAFRICOM (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g [Redacted]. As a result, USAFRICOM had to request additional capability through the Global Force Management process to enable treatment of critically-ill COVID-19 patients and protect its trauma system from exposure to infectious disease.

(U//~~FOUO~~) Personnel Recovery and Casualty Evacuation

(S) USAFRICOM identified significant impacts to the USAFRICOM (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4g [Redacted]

16 (U) On January 5, 2020, al-Shabaab militants attacked U.S. forces at the Kenyan Naval Base at Manda Bay, resulting in three American casualties.

(S) USAFRICOM (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4c, (b)(1) 1.4g
[Redacted]

(U//~~FOUO~~) USAFRICOM Intelligence Operations

(S//NF) USAFRICOM (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4c, (b)(1) 1.4g
[Redacted]

(S//NF) USAFRICOM (b)(1) 1.4c
[Redacted]

(U//~~FOUO~~) COVID-19 Impact on USAFRICOM's Efforts to Mature the Theater

(U//~~FOUO~~) Maturing the Theater ensures that USAFRICOM can effectively conduct day-to-day operations, activities, and investments and is prepared to execute crisis response or contingency operations by aligning forces, authorities, capabilities, footprints, agreements, and understanding. USAFRICOM and its Service Component Commands

17 (U) The USAFRICOM J-2 is the Intelligence Directorate.

(U//~~FOUO~~) reported the following impacts to Maturing the Theater efforts in the USAFRICOM area of responsibility.

(U//~~FOUO~~) USAFRICOM Relief in Place/Transfer of Authority

(S//~~NOFORN~~) USAFRICOM (b)(1) 1.4a
[Redacted]

(U//~~FOUO~~) USAFRICOM West Africa Logistics Network

(S//~~NOFORN~~) USAFRICOM (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4(d)
[Redacted]

(U//~~FOUO~~) USAFRICOM Operational Contract Support

(S//~~NOFORN~~) USAFRICOM identified impacts to multiple Operational Contract Support activities as a result of travel restrictions. USAFRICOM's Operational Contract Support program is designed to plan for and execute contract support requirements to deliver goods and services in support of the USAFRICOM Campaign Plan efficiently and effectively in all operational phases. USAFRICOM reported cancellation of multiple Operational Contract Support staff assistance visits that were scheduled to improve component Operational Contract Support programs to enable commercial support to operations.

(U) Conclusion

~~(S//NF)~~ USAFRICOM took actions to prepare for a pandemic by developing both a PRP and a COOP, as required by DoD policy. However, the planning assumptions and procedures established in the PRP and COOP did not include sufficient information and were not always applicable to a pandemic, such as COVID-19. In addition, USAFRICOM's response to COVID-19 resulted in numerous challenges with telework and knowledge management, many of which could be improved with more comprehensive internal procedures, such as an established telework program. USAFRICOM (b)(1) 1.4a, (b)(1) 1.4b, (b)(1) 1.4d, (b)(1) 1.4g

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

(U) Recommendation, Management Comments, and Our Response

(U) Recommendation 1

(U) We recommend that the Commander, U.S. Africa Command:

- a. (U//~~FOUO~~) Coordinate with the U.S. Northern Command to synchronize improvements to its pandemic response plan and annually integrate the updated pandemic response plan into the U.S. Africa Command's Joint Exercise Program. In addition to updating the annexes required by the Global Campaign Plan, the updated pandemic response plan should include guidance on developing alternative work schedules and on communicating work-related information over nonofficial messaging platforms.
- b. (U//~~FOUO~~) Obtain and review the Subordinate Commands' pandemic response plans to ensure the support plans contain sufficient details to respond to a future pandemic and are synchronized with U.S. Africa Command's pandemic response plan.
- c. (U//~~FOUO~~) Update the U.S. Africa Command's Continuity of Operations Plan or include an annex in the pandemic response plan that addresses the policies, procedures, and responsibilities for executing mission-essential functions in a socially distanced environment. In addition, annually integrate the updated continuity of operations procedures into the U.S. Africa Command Joint Exercise Program.
- d. (U//~~FOUO~~) Develop and implement an official telework policy that, at a minimum, includes guidance on telework agreements, telework training,

(U//~~FOUO~~) and how to properly access and use the Web Accessible Virtual Infrastructure system.

- e. (U//~~FOUO~~) Direct staff, Subordinate Commands, and Joint Task Forces to identify and resource necessary equipment and capabilities to support mass telework scenarios.
- f. (U//~~FOUO~~) Conduct a review of U.S. Africa Command's use of the classified network for unclassified activities to determine whether official guidance on using the unclassified network is adequate.
- g. (U//~~FOUO~~) Conduct a review of U.S. Africa Command's current personnel accountability systems and implement improvements for accounting for all U.S. Africa Command personnel in a timely manner.
- h. (U//~~FOUO~~) Develop and implement an instruction that establishes and guides U.S. Africa Command's knowledge management program.

(U) U.S. Africa Command's Comments

(U//~~FOUO~~) The USAFRICOM Deputy Chief of Staff agreed with the recommendation, stating that USAFRICOM is compiling lessons learned and holding ongoing discussions with the U.S. Northern Command to improve and synchronize the USAFRICOM PRP with the Global Campaign Plan. The Deputy Chief of Staff stated that USAFRICOM will convert the interim telework policy to an official USAFRICOM Instruction and that USAFRICOM has already purchased 1,000 telework-capable Government laptops and a Web Accessible Virtual Infrastructure that will be operational by summer of 2021. Additionally, the Deputy Chief of Staff stated that USAFRICOM has scoped an assessment of the USAFRICOM's Boards, Bureaus, Centers, Cells, and Working Groups to identify the activities and information that are suitable to transfer from the classified to the unclassified networks. Finally, the Deputy Chief of Staff stated that USAFRICOM has initiated development of a USAFRICOM Instruction to establish and guide a formal knowledge management program.

(U) Our Response

(U) Comments from the USAFRICOM Deputy Chief of Staff addressed the specifics of the recommendation; therefore, the recommendation is resolved but will remain open. We will close the recommendation once we receive documentation showing the actions to implement the recommendation are completed.

(U) List of Classified Sources

(U) Source 1: (U) Guidance for the Employment of the Force 2015-2017 (SECRET//NOFORN)

Declassification Date: February 3, 2040

Date of Source: February 3, 2015

(U) Source 2: (U) Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 3110.01J, "2015 Joint Strategic Capabilities Plan" (SECRET)

Declassification Date: September 25, 2040

Date of Source: September 25, 2015

(U) Source 3: (U) U.S. Africa Command Campaign Plan 2000-19 for Fiscal Years 2019-2023 (SECRET//REL TO USA, FRA, FVEY)

Declassification Date: May 1, 2044

Date of Source: May 1, 2019

(U) Source 4: (U) U.S. Africa Command Continuity of Operations Plan 2301 19 (SECRET//NOFORN)

Declassification Date: 25X8

Date of Source: February 1, 2019

(U) Source 5: (U) U.S. Africa Command Tasker AC-200511-KG4D, "Mission Impacts Due to Cancellation of Operations, Activities, and Investments Across Africa Due to COVID-19" (SECRET//NOFORN)

Declassification Date: June 4, 2045

Date of Source: June 4, 2020

(U) Source 6: (U) U.S. Africa Command Execute Order to Implement USAFRICOM CONPLAN 2351-18 (SECRET//REL TO USA, FVEY)

Declassification Date: May 8, 2045

Date of Source: May 8, 2020

(U) Source 7: (U) U.S. Africa Command Combatant Commander's Conference Minutes and Tasking Guidance Summary (SECRET//NOFORN)

Declassification Date: May 15, 2045

Date of Source: May 15, 2020

(U) Source 8: (U) U.S. Africa Command Intelligence Directorate (J2) Revised and Updated Lessons Learned (SECRET//NOFORN)

Declassification Date: May 8, 2045

Date of Source: May 8, 2020

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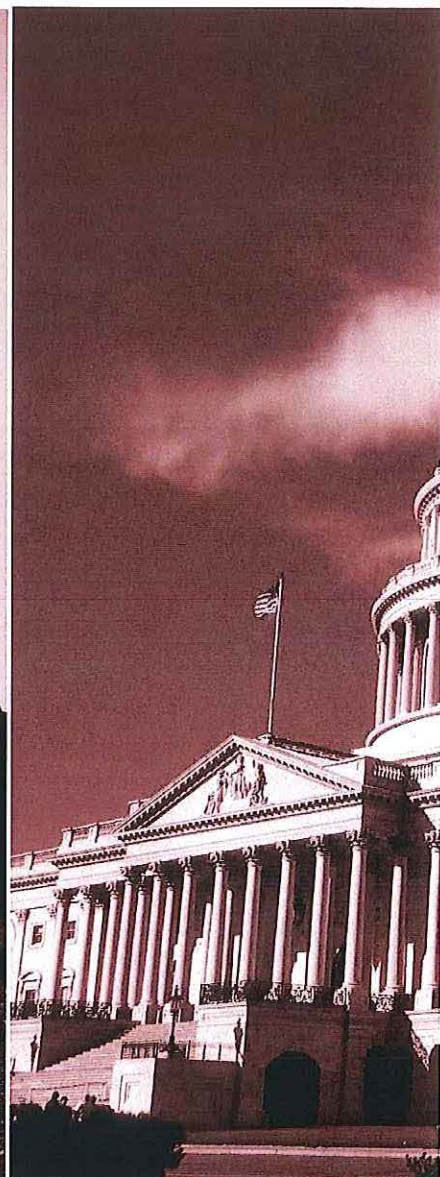
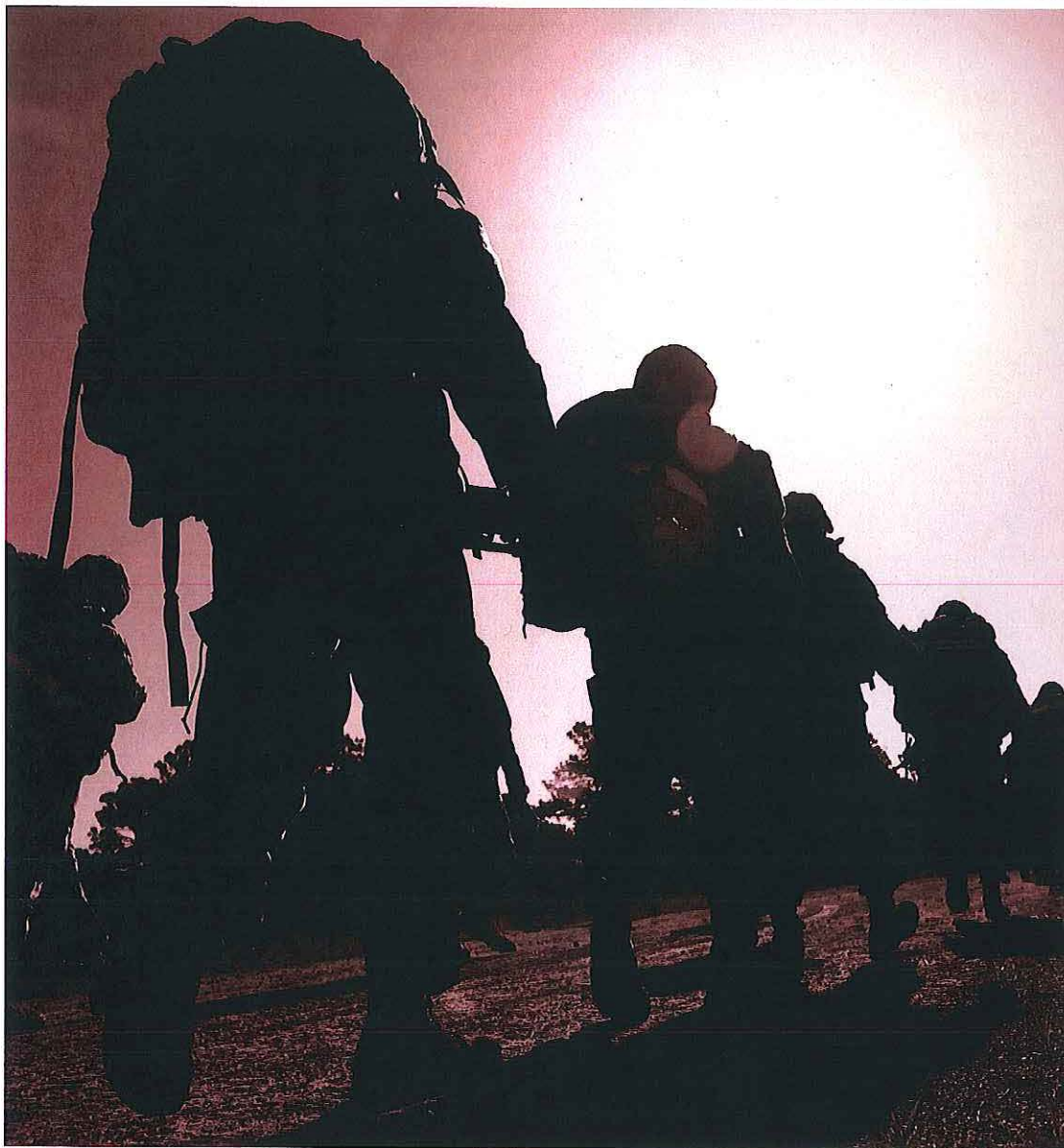
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