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# Highlights

Highlights of [GAO-10-504](#), a report to the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, House of Representatives

## Why GAO Did This Study

Originally established in 2002 to fight terrorism, the Combined Joint Task Force-Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA), based at Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, is the military's main operational presence in Africa. The U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), created in 2007 to focus on stability in Africa, has been assessing existing activities—as well as CJTF-HOA—against its mission of sustained security engagement in Africa. This report discusses:

- (1) AFRICOM's decisions on CJTF-HOA's future and whether CJTF-HOA's activities align with the command's mission, and
- (2) benefits of the task force and challenges it faces. For its review, GAO analyzed AFRICOM and CJTF-HOA guidance, conducted interviews at the command's and task force's headquarters, and obtained perspectives from U.S. embassies in the region.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that AFRICOM, as part of its planning efforts, complete its evaluation of CJTF-HOA and determine the task force's future. If the Department of Defense determines that sustaining the task force is consistent with its goals, GAO recommends long-term activity assessments, a funding plan, and training guidance for the task force. The Department of Defense generally agreed with the recommendations.

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## DEFENSE MANAGEMENT

### DOD Needs to Determine the Future of Its Horn of Africa Task Force

#### What GAO Found

AFRICOM has been evaluating CJTF-HOA, but it has not yet made decisions on the future of the task force—including whether CJTF-HOA should continue to exist as a joint task force, and if so, whether changes are needed to the task force's mission, structure, and resources to best support the command's mission of sustained security engagement in Africa. AFRICOM officials said that decisions are pending but did not share details of their evaluation or provide a target date for decisions. Since the task force moved under AFRICOM, its status has not changed significantly. As of March 2010, CJTF-HOA had about 1,650 personnel. The Navy continues to fund the majority of its approximately \$80 million budget as well as most of Camp Lemonnier's \$238 million budget. The task force's activities have evolved over the years to focus on building relationships and fostering stability; for example, about 60 percent of its activities are civil affairs projects, such as community medical care and bridge construction. Other activities include military-to-military activities, peace support operations, personnel recovery, and counter-piracy activities. However, CJTF-HOA is currently not performing long-term follow up on activities to determine whether they are having their intended effects or whether modifications are needed to best align with AFRICOM's mission. Additionally, the task force is generally not setting specific, achievable, and measurable goals for activities. Some activities, such as military-to-military efforts, appear to support AFRICOM's mission. Others, such as a school built by CJTF-HOA but later found dilapidated, could have unintended consequences. Without long-term assessments of activities, it is difficult for AFRICOM to determine the effectiveness of CJTF-HOA, which is critical for overall planning efforts and decisions on the task force's future.

CJTF-HOA's force presence in the Horn of Africa provides several benefits, but the task force also faces challenges carrying out activities. CJTF-HOA's presence in Africa offers benefits such as its ability to respond to contingencies, provide forces for AFRICOM activities, and build U.S.-African relationships. However, the task force's sustainability is uncertain because AFRICOM, in concert with the Department of Defense or the Navy, has not developed options for funding the task force over the long term. It currently relies on overseas contingency operations appropriations, and GAO has previously encouraged that the projected costs of such ongoing operations be included in the military's base budget requests. Moreover, task force staff have made cultural missteps because they did not understand local religious customs and may have unintentionally burdened embassies that must continuously train new staff on procedures. These problems may be exacerbated by limited training and compounded by short tour lengths (generally 4-12 months). Should AFRICOM opt to retain the task force, addressing challenges associated with long-term funding and staff skills would help ensure that it is effectively supporting U.S. efforts in Africa with the appropriate resources and trained personnel.