

**QUESTIONS SUBMITTED BY MR. WITTMAN**

Mr. WITTMAN. Admiral, with the recent announcement that the United States Navy will be home port shifting four *Arleigh Burke* Class DDGs to Naval Station Rota, Spain, in the coming years, how do you see these ships impacting your theater operations? Do you envision these ships strictly supporting missions in EUCOM and AFRICOM. As you are well aware, these are very versatile and capable platforms outside of their BMD mission set. What operational and strategic advantage do these ships provide you as a Combatant Commander?

Admiral STAVRIDIS. The four destroyers planned to be forward deployed to Rota, Spain, will provide EUCOM with the ability to maintain a continuous BMD presence in the region, while minimizing the impact of our missions on the overall readiness of the fleet. While these ships will primarily be assigned BMD duties, the multi-mission capabilities of these ships provides EUCOM with the tactical assets capable of responding to any number of emergent threats in the region. I envision these assets will primarily be employed in two ways: first, in steady-state operations providing EUCOM with the ability to carry out its BMD mission as assigned by the Secretary of Defense; second, these ships may be employed in contingency operations supporting national objectives and military operations, such as last year's Operation ODYSSEY DAWN.

Mr. WITTMAN. Admiral, EUCOM conducts many exercises with the Israel Defense Forces. The instability in the region coupled with the numerous threats to Israel has increased in the last year. What is EUCOM doing to ensure the defense of Israel and ensure the stability of the region?

Admiral STAVRIDIS. First, while Israel is certainly in a volatile region of the world, I would argue that the threats to Israel have not increased in the last year. If you take the broad view of the history of the modern state of Israel, it is certainly more secure now that it was in 1948, 1967, 1973, or even during the First or Second Intifadas. Israel currently has signed peace treaties with two of its four neighbors. A third neighbor, Syria, is currently undergoing a period of serious internal unrest and is in no position to threaten Israel militarily. The terrorist threat posed by Lebanese Hezbollah from within the fourth neighbor has been deterred from overt attacks since the war in 2006. Moreover, the Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas has renounced violence. Unrest in the West Bank has subsided significantly over the last few years. Similarly, since Operation Cast Lead in 2008, rocket attacks from the Gaza Strip have never been more than sporadic. The most recent attack, from March 9–12, saw nearly 250 rockets launched without causing a single Israeli casualty.

Second, since the Arab Spring, Israel faces a more uncertain neighborhood. This effect, particularly in Egypt, combined with the continued Iranian nuclear program gives the Israeli government reason for concern about the future.

EUCOM's robust bilateral and multilateral military exercise program offers the Israel Defense Forces strong reassurances of the United States' strong commitment to the security of Israel. **The following list details the many EUCOM exercises and exercise planning conferences scheduled for 2012 in support of this commitment:**

March Organization JCET Execution SOCEUR NOBLE DINA 12 Execution NAVEUR NOBLE MELINDA 12 Initial Planning Conference NAVEUR RELIANT MERMAID 12 Initial Planning Conference NAVEUR

April NOBLE SHIRLEY 12–1 Initial Planning Conference MARFOREUR Senior Leader Meeting EUCOM

May CBRNE Enhanced Response Force—Package National Guard NOBLE SHIRLEY 12–1 Main/Final Planning Conference MARFOREUR NOBLE MELINDA 12 Main/Final Planning Conference NAVEUR

June RELIANT MERMAID 12 Main/Final Planning Conference NAVEUR

July NOBLE SHIRLEY 12–1 Execution MARFOREUR

August NOBLE MELINDA 12 Execution NAVEUR RELIANT MERMAID 12 Execution NAVEUR NOBLE SHIRLEY 13–1 Initial Planning Conference MARFOREUR

September None

October NOBLE SHIRLEY 13–1 Main Planning Conference MARFOREUR AUSTERE CHALLENGE 12 Phase III FTX EUCOM AUSTERE CHALLENGE 12 Phase III CPX EUCOM AUSTERE CHALLENGE 12 Phase III WFX EUCOM

November AUSTERE CHALLENGE 12 Phase IV CAX EUCOM AUSTERE CHALLENGE 12 Phase V Tech Demo EUCOM AUSTERE CHALLENGE 12 Phase V LFX EUCOM

Exercise Description:

NOBLE SHIRLEY: A biannual Marine Forces Europe (MARFOREUR) combined arms exercise, designed to enhance selective small arms shooting and small unit

movement tactics, training, and procedures (TTP) for employment in a counter-terrorism environment.

**NOBLE DINA:** An annual Naval Forces Europe (NAVEUR) trilateral combined exercise scheduled with the maritime forces of the United States, Israel, and Greece and focused on Maritime Interdiction Operations (MIO) and Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) operations.

**NOBLE MELINDA:** An annual NAVEUR bilateral exercise scheduled with the maritime forces of the United States and Israel, focused on Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD), mine warfare, and salvage skills. The exercise often includes both land-based EOD teams and divers.

**RELIANT MERMAID:** An annual NAVEUR trilateral combined exercise scheduled with the maritime forces of the United States, Israel, and Turkey and focused on maritime Search and Rescue (SAR) and Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief (HA/DR) operations.

**JCET:** An annual SOCEUR Joint Combined Exchange Training encompassing Air, Ground and Maritime Special Operations Forces (SOF) engagement with IDF counterparts.

**CERF-P:** A bilateral Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, Explosive (CBRNE) exercise coordinated by the National Guard Bureau involving units from the Indiana National Guard.

**AUSTERE CHALLENGE:** A bilateral joint Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) and Noncombatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) exercise that encompasses exercises JUNIPER COBRA 12 and JUNIPER FALCON 13.

**Mr. WITTMAN.** General, East Africa remains a key operating and training area for Al Qaeda associates, and specifically, the Somalia-based terrorist group al-Shabaab. How concerned is the Department about al-Shabaab's ability to attract and train foreign fighters—including recruits from the United States—who may project violence outward from East Africa and what exactly is the Department doing to counter this threat? Do you have a sufficient amount of Department resources—including intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) and SOF assets—working to mitigate the spread of Al Qaeda's influence in the AFRICOM AOR?

**General HAM.** [The information referred to is classified and retained in the committee files.]

**Mr. WITTMAN.** General Ham, the new strategy calls for us to build innovative partnerships in order to maintain our global force posture. In attempting to build these partnerships, how are AFRICOM and U.S. military efforts in Africa perceived by Africans and by other foreign countries, including China? Do you feel that we are winning or losing when compared to China in attempting to build relationships, trust and influence throughout Africa?

**General HAM.** We do not view China as a military adversary in Africa. I believe our African partners value a diverse set of relationships when it comes to meeting their security needs. Both the United States and China have the ability provide this support. I believe we should look for opportunities to partner with China in areas where our interests are similar.

The operations, exercises and security cooperation engagements of the U.S. military are, in large measure, warmly received across the continent. We have developed and continue to maintain strong relationships with many key African partners as we address shared threats. We also look to establish partnerships with the new governments and militaries in such countries as Libya, Tunisia, and South Sudan. I have discussed with the National Guard Bureau the expansion of the State Partnership Program by two additional state partners this year. The long term relationships developed through this program would be beneficial to the development of the militaries in these nations.

We also look to maintain strong relationship with non-African nations, non-governmental organizations and international organizations. We have strong relationships with the United Kingdom, France, the Netherlands, Canada, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and the European Union in order to partner to accomplish common goals in Africa. We are developing a relationship with the International Red Cross. In the future, I expect such combined efforts to increase.

**Mr. WITTMAN.** General Ham, according to the International Maritime Bureau, 56% of global piracy attacks conducted from January to October 2011 were orchestrated from the coasts of Somalia, and as of January 31, 2012, Somali pirates held 10 vessels and 159 hostages. Do you feel that this global piracy problem, resonating out of Somalia, which is continuing to cost the United States, its allies, and international commerce millions of dollars and numerous resources to combat; is improving, deteriorating, or remaining unchanged? Additionally, since this problem will not