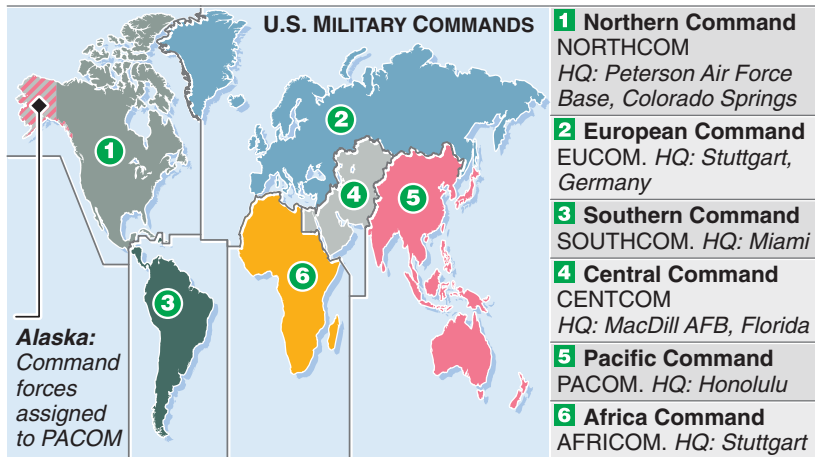


U.S. Africa Command launched

Billed by U.S. officials as a sign of Africa's strategic importance, the Pentagon's new command centre, AFRICOM, is viewed by sceptics as an expansion of U.S. military might across the continent to counter growing Chinese influence and to secure sources of energy supply



Previously, responsibility for Africa operations was divided among three regional commands

From Oct 1, AFRICOM will be responsible for entire continent with exception of Egypt, which remains under CENTCOM

