

AFRICOM: Troubled Infancy, Promising Future

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The United States Unified Command for Africa – AFRICOM – was officially activated on 1 October 2008. A ‘command’ is the highest organization within the US Department of Defense in which policies, programmes, and personnel are focused on either a geographical region or functional area of responsibility.¹ Within the Department of Defense are six geographic commands and four functional commands.² Prior to the creation of AFRICOM, American military activity in Africa was organized through three different commands.³ Thus, it must be noted at the outset that AFRICOM is first and foremost an internal consolidation and reorganization of Defense Department personnel. Its primary mission is to help Africans address their security challenges. It is also important to recognize that AFRICOM differs from other Defense Department organizations by focusing primarily on activities that contribute not to war fighting, but to war prevention. Further, civilians are employed in critical leadership and decision-making positions – including one of the two deputy commanders – and the central themes of the organization’s mission address ‘building security partnership capacities, conducting theater security cooperation, building important counterterrorism skills and, as appropriate, supporting American government agencies in implementing other programs to promote regional stability’.⁴

We have been studying the evolution of AFRICOM since its inception, motivated by the opportunity to generate new insights about bureaucratic politics, military organizations, and national security policies. In the course of our research, we were struck by the apparently widespread lack of positive response to AFRICOM among Africans, our European allies, and within the United States. After years of what some have called benign neglect, the establishment of this new command represents one of several American initiatives pursued in recent years that demonstrate an ever-increasing commitment to helping Africans address the challenges of security on their continent. Under the leadership of General William E. Ward, with a budget of nearly \$400 million for Fiscal Year 2009 and over 1,000 military and civilian staff,⁵ AFRICOM is poised to help promote a stable and secure environment throughout Africa.⁶ However, this organization has struggled with controversy since its early days, and the views of key constituencies towards AFRICOM range from lukewarm acceptance to outright hostility.

Rather than celebrations to commemorate its inauguration, though, AFRICOM was met instead with accusations over the ill-conceived nature of the initial concept, subsequent planning shortfalls, and communication missteps. Among critics’ primary concerns were that the new command had been announced too fast, without consideration for a wide range of critical factors; that African leaders had not been adequately consulted and involved in the process; and that not

enough consideration had been given to how the United States might respond to negative reactions. How is it that such a major policy and organizational initiative has been – and remains – so slow to gain widespread support? As this article will describe, there are several rational explanations for this current state of affairs.

The analysis presented here draws from a much larger study of AFRICOM, prepared through extensive interviews with the leadership of this organization as well as with members of the US Department of Defense (DoD), Department of State and other American government agencies, and informed by analysing a broad array of documents. While a comprehensive assessment of our research findings will be published elsewhere, the purpose of this article is to highlight key events and contextual matters during the developmental years of AFRICOM, with particular attention to actions, statements, expectations, and perceptions that either facilitate or hinder the achievement of American security policies in Africa. Following a brief synopsis of the history of American involvement in Africa and how AFRICOM came to be, the discussion will describe how unrealistic expectations about planning, timeline, interagency coordination, and external support have combined with communication missteps to create daunting challenges for the success of AFRICOM's mission. Our analysis then leads to recommendations for consideration by a new presidential administration, organized around the themes of organizational learning and effective communication.

Overall, this discussion is meant to set the stage for the commentaries and scholarly responses provided throughout this special issue of *Contemporary Security Policy*. It also serves as a useful case study of how governments struggle to shape perceptions about the capabilities and intentions of their foreign policies. Clearly, if there is any central lesson that must be drawn from this research, it is that the views of foreign audiences towards American foreign policies have a direct impact on the success of those policies. First, in order to understand how American policies towards Africa are perceived, it is necessary to appreciate the historical context that informs these perceptions.

The Evolution of American Strategic Policy in Africa

American strategic policy towards Africa has undergone significant change in a short time. Compared to other Western powers, American involvement in the region was minimal through the first half of the 20th century. Multiple African independence movements during the late 1950s and early 1960s were embraced by the United States in the form of goodwill and modest amounts of aid and investment, but an underlying motive behind American involvement was its Cold War struggle with the Soviet Union. During the critical early years of African independent statehood, the focus of the world's most powerful countries was less on the development of local economies and the rule of law than on the respective strategic interests of the United States and the Soviet Union. The global struggles between communist and capitalist ideologies played a major role in parts of Africa from the 1960s through the 1990s, while American and Soviet financial and military assistance frequently strengthened corrupt and brutal regimes.

After the Cold War, American interest in Africa decreased considerably, punctuated by a few key events. From 1992 through 1994, the United States led operations Restore Hope and Continue Hope in Somalia as part of United Nations efforts to establish a secure environment for humanitarian relief operations, and to later attempt to establish a system of government. While the former was largely successful, the latter met with disaster. Unfamiliar with Africa in general, American forces found themselves working in an alien environment, with an enemy and civilians they often did not understand. The 1993 Battle of Mogadishu left 18 American service members dead and 78 wounded, and perhaps 1,000 Somali casualties.⁷ So vitriolic was the resulting public outcry that the Clinton administration terminated the American mission in Somalia in March 1994.⁸ Hesitant to become further involved in African affairs, the United States stood aloof during the 1994 Rwandan genocide.⁹ In 1995, the DoD Office of International Security Affairs published a report – *U.S. Security Strategy for Sub-Saharan Africa* – which began by stating that ‘America’s security interests in Africa are very limited . . . ultimately we see very little traditional strategic interest in Africa’.¹⁰

The turning point for United States security policy toward Africa came in August 1998, following the al-Qaeda attacks against the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. American policymakers understood that the nation’s security interests were inextricably linked with events on the African continent. As the most recent edition of the United States *National Security Strategy* acknowledges,

Africa holds growing geo-strategic importance . . . We are committed to working with African nations to strengthen their domestic capabilities and the regional capacity of the African Union to support post-conflict transformations, consolidate democratic transitions, and improve peacekeeping and disaster responses.¹¹

As a result of this shift in strategic importance, the United States launched a number of initiatives – including the Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa, established in Camp Lemonnier, Djibouti, and the Trans-Sahara Counter Terrorism Partnership – that provide training and equipment to African militaries.¹²

Essentially, the creation of AFRICOM can be viewed as a natural evolution of America’s increasing attention towards African security affairs. A reorganization was needed to consolidate a variety of security assistance and humanitarian assistance programmes under a central leadership, and serve as a conduit for better coordination with other organizations in the United States government. Thus, a change was needed in the way that the DoD organized itself to meet the needs of a dynamic global security environment.

The Birth of AFRICOM

Although the idea of AFRICOM had been under discussion for over ten years,¹³ it was not until July 2006 that then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld requested a formal feasibility study on establishing a new organization that would centrally coordinate the DoD’s efforts in Africa. A few months later, an Initial Planning Team (IPT)

was established that included representatives from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Department of State, the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the US Agency for International Development (USAID). The IPT convened its first meeting in November 2006, and based on their recommendations, President George W. Bush formally announced the creation of AFRICOM on 6 February 2007.¹⁴ An AFRICOM Transition Team (ATT) was established, co-located with the US European Command in Stuttgart, Germany, under the leadership of Vice Admiral Robert T. Moeller, and it was announced that the new organization would become fully operational on 1 October 2008. As discussed later in this article, such an accelerated timeline was one of several unreasonable expectations placed upon AFRICOM.

The stated rationale and mission of AFRICOM included strengthening American security cooperation with African governments and regional organizations, helping increase the capabilities of African partners to provide their own stability and security, and building upon the many existing African–American security cooperation activities. By unifying programmes in regions previously divided by three separate combatant commands, the argument was made that AFRICOM would be able to better coordinate Defense Department support with other United States government agencies to make these activities more effective. Following traditional mechanisms, AFRICOM continues to administer security cooperation programmes funded by the Department of State. Within this framework, the commander of AFRICOM cannot conduct exercises or other military activities in Africa without the consent of the United States ambassador in each country. Unlike other Combatant Commands, AFRICOM is not positioning itself as the lead agency; rather, in support of Department of State-funded security assistance programmes, it will help provide assistance, advice, and training for African security forces on a bilateral and regional level.

According to Theresa Whelan, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for African Affairs, a primary focus of AFRICOM is on ‘preventing problems before they become crises and preventing crises before they become catastrophes’. Ultimately, ‘AFRICOM is about helping Africans build greater capacity to assure their own security’.¹⁵ The United States currently spends approximately \$9 billion dollars a year in Africa¹⁶ to support a variety of security and economic assistance initiatives. Whelan testified before Congress in 2007 that much of this funding is used to

train health care professionals and provide desperately needed hospital equipment, train teachers and provide educational materials, prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS through various awareness programs, train prosecutors in support of the legal reforms and the promotion of independent judiciaries, train police forces consistent with important human rights norms, and to train customs and border control officers to increase capacities to thwart illicit trafficking of weapons, narcotics, and even children across national borders.¹⁷

In addition, since 2005, the United States has trained over 39,000 African peacekeepers in 20 countries as well as over 80 per cent of the African peacekeepers who are currently deployed in African Union and United Nations missions both inside and outside of Africa.¹⁸

Overall, there is clearly a critical role for AFRICOM to play in helping Africa respond to its development and security challenges. As Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf noted,

Security and development are inextricably linked. There is no greater engine for development than a secure nation, and no better way to build a secure nation than through building professional militaries and security forces that are responsible to civilian authorities who safeguard the rule of law and human rights.¹⁹

However, addressing these challenges effectively requires the engagement of several American government agencies in addition to the DoD. This is a primary reason why interagency coordination and collaboration has been a central theme of AFRICOM's planning and organizational principles.

The Interagency Perspective

AFRICOM has been designed like no other American military organization. While other Defense Department commands work with a variety of interagency components, AFRICOM's unique unified command and staff structure is meant to fully integrate personnel from United States government organizations – to include USAID and the Departments of State, Commerce and Treasury – that play a role in developing and implementing American policy in the region. Civilians are hired for critical leadership and decision-making positions and will participate in the day-to-day formation of policy and plans; they are 'part of the command'.²⁰ The three top executive positions in AFRICOM are the Commander, a four-star general officer who maintains overall responsibility for the command; the Deputy Commander for Military Operations (DCMO), a three-star general officer who directs AFRICOM staff on matters related to military operations and military-to-military relationships and serves as the primary adviser to the AFRICOM Commander on military matters;²¹ and the Deputy Commander for Civil–Military Activities (DCMA), the senior civilian within the command and the DCMO's equivalent. Naturally, the DCMO and DCMA are expected to coordinate closely and transparently, to ensure the left hand and right hand are in sync.²²

A civilian (the DCMA) serving as a Deputy Commander (equivalent to vice president of a corporation) is a first for the Defense Department. By law, the DCMA cannot direct military operations or exercise military control over American military personnel, but will guide AFRICOM staff on matters related to security cooperation and capacity building, and will serve as the primary adviser to the Commander on these issues. The DCMA also undertakes the daunting task of building and managing AFRICOM's relationships with foreign government organizations and NGOs as well as with the Department of State, American missions in Africa, and other American civilian agencies.²³ Clearly, as described later in this article, managing the external and internal relationships of AFRICOM is an important contributor to how American foreign policies towards Africa are perceived.

The interagency relationships forged by the DCMA are particularly critical. During a conference held in Washington in April of 2008, Claudia E. Anyaso, the

Director of the Office of Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs for African Affairs, observed that the ‘interagency component of AFRICOM will provide an opportunity for continuous dialogue so that there will be a greater understanding of upcoming issues and afford an opportunity for better planning’.²⁴ Other American officials have consistently emphasized that AFRICOM is designed to integrate DoD and non-DoD personnel into the command in order to stimulate greater coordination among American government agencies to achieve a more whole-of-government approach.²⁵ One AFRICOM staff officer noted that ‘we need to emphasize that this is simply an internal command and control structure’.²⁶ As such, AFRICOM will support – not shape – American policy on the continent. Ultimately, the American ambassador in each country, as the President’s personal representative, retains control of diplomatic relations with host nations and is the final authority in determining the nature and extent of AFRICOM’s requested activities.²⁷

The American military does not employ a significant number of individuals who can duplicate the Africa-related expertise of the Department of State, USAID, NGOs, and others and will instead rely on their civilian counterparts (as part of the interagency process) to provide this expertise. As General Ward noted,

The U.S. military is not an instrument of first resort in providing humanitarian assistance but supports civilian relief agencies. We recognized the significant role and capabilities of USAID as the principal U.S. agency extending assistance to countries responding to and recovering from natural or man made disaster.²⁸

USAID should work closely with the military to ensure that AFRICOM ‘stays on track’ towards realizing improved economic growth, development, health, education, and democratic ideals. Officials in USAID – not the DoD – are trained in these areas and will be tasked with the majority of planning for the humanitarian side of AFRICOM.

Further, as General Ward explained in one of our interviews, the success of AFRICOM will require expertise and advice from a wide range of organizations and agencies, including NGOs, who currently work in Africa. Thus, AFRICOM’s Outreach office has been tasked with building and maintaining relationships to ensure its programmes and policies support when (or if) appropriate – but do not duplicate – ongoing efforts on the continent. At the same time, the Defense Department and InterAction – an umbrella organization for many United States-based NGOs – have developed guidelines to govern how the military and NGOs should interact in a hostile environment.²⁹ Also, preliminary discussions have suggested creating staff positions for representatives from African militaries, thus expanding even further this important aspect of collaboration and coordination.

In summary, a cursory snapshot of AFRICOM looks and sounds promising: a robust, collaborative response to Africa’s security challenges. However, as mentioned earlier, it has been fraught with difficulties from the very beginning. Analysing the source and scope of these difficulties is necessary before AFRICOM’s leaders can chart course corrections that will help ensure a brighter future.

What Went Wrong?

Our research uncovered a variety of shortcomings in how AFRICOM was conceived, planned, launched, and communicated. Plans and timelines were informed by expectations that in retrospect were wholly unreasonable. Disconnects have emerged between the ideals and the actual realization of the interagency vision. Assumptions were made that others – our allies in Africa, Europe, and elsewhere as well as NGOs and other American government agencies – would wholly embrace AFRICOM, which has not been the case. Many of these problems have already been discussed at length in academic journals and the mainstream media, and we have incorporated them as points of reference in our ongoing interviews with AFRICOM’s leaders and staff. Our research led us to categorize most of the primary concerns around two basic themes: (1) planning shortfalls and unrealistic expectations; and (2) consultation and communication issues, both within the United States and in various foreign contexts.

A Road Littered with Great Intentions

All planning processes require the making of assumptions. The initial vision and subsequent planning for AFRICOM were informed by a variety of optimistic assumptions regarding internal issues – including organizational capabilities, the likelihood of interagency cooperation, a feasible timeline, etc. – and the level of acceptance, support, and willingness to collaborate that would be found among African leaders and communities as well as other nations and NGOs with a significant presence in Africa. During our interviews, however, it became apparent that the AFRICOM planning process was not carefully thought out and deliberately planned for in the manner that would logically support a major American policy shift towards Africa. Rather, AFRICOM was created from an ad hoc process that did not take into account (for example) AFRICOM’s eventual relationships with the governments and organizations that it intended to support. Prior to its announcement, omissions in planning from the basic logistical considerations necessary for increasing the number of American personnel in Africa to how the strategic relationships with African governments and sister agencies would function were not adequately addressed, if at all.³⁰ Details such as where the headquarters would be located, exactly whom AFRICOM would work with and through what mechanisms, and how this new military command would be perceived within the African and global communities were not carefully vetted prior to AFRICOM’s official announcement. Rather, when AFRICOM was announced, its planners were apparently confident that it would be enthusiastically received and could progress on its own positive momentum.

Many of AFRICOM’s early challenges were reportedly caused in part by the Office of the Secretary of Defense’s (OSD) attempts to closely guide the planning process, but who frequently denied requests and obstructed initiatives from the AFRICOM Transition Team headquarters in Germany and generally created disconnects and difficulties in planning.³¹ A military staff member interviewed during the early months of the process reflected on how the AFRICOM Transition Team received a mix of direction with very little clarity, describing the planning guidance

received from OSD as ‘Go get me a rock. No, not that rock, a different rock. I’ll tell you when you have the right rock’.³² For OSD’s part, the office responsible for AFRICOM planning consisted of a mere handful of individuals tasked, from an office in Washington, to create a military headquarters in Germany, responsible for overseeing security cooperation activities for 53 countries on the continent of Africa.³³ Clearly, the complexities of the task and context should have warranted a much larger, integrated group of Africa security experts, including those from outside Washington, empowered to make key policy and planning decisions. Instead, our interviews revealed a disconnect between publicly introducing AFRICOM as a ‘new kind of command’ and a DoD tendency to make plans and PowerPoint briefings with the assumption that relevant governments and agencies would support their decisions.

Further, the timeline for establishing AFRICOM was fast by any standards. Building a military command takes time, and AFRICOM added the challenge of creating an entirely new type of interagency-centric organization within the DoD. As described earlier, the initial planning team was convened in November 2006, President Bush announced AFRICOM in February 2007, and AFRICOM was subsequently activated on 1 October 2008. During our early research, one AFRICOM Transition Team staff officer noted that ‘AFRICOM is something you and I have never seen before . . . I’ve never seen anything built so fast except in combat’.³⁴ This quick and artificially generated schedule for bringing AFRICOM into operation inevitably created problems and perceptions that the AFRICOM staff continues to grapple with.

Original forecasts for an immediate AFRICOM headquarters presence on the African continent have been postponed, and it was recently confirmed that AFRICOM will remain in Germany until at least 2012.³⁵ As of October 2008, just under 1,000 of the projected 1,304 staff positions have been filled.³⁶ Further, while the interagency dimension of AFRICOM is clearly central to its success, only 4 per cent of the positions approved for AFRICOM are now reserved for personnel from non-DoD agencies.³⁷ AFRICOM’s rosters will fill out as time progresses, but the interagency aspect did not evolve as AFRICOM’s planners envisioned, due largely to the fact that other American government agencies are not as robustly staffed as the DoD and do not have the resources or manpower to lend to the command. The interagency mechanisms and agreements central to this plan were practically nonexistent at the start, and needed to be built from the ground up. An official who observed the start-up process noted that ‘there [was] very little understanding in DoD how to stand up an interagency command . . . a clear line of division and responsibilities should have been set by the authorities at the outset . . . This takes time, and lawyers’.³⁸ Clearly, these details and other logistics of launching a new military organization – particularly on foreign soil – take time to sort out.

Issues of resource distribution have been important not only in terms of meeting expectations of interagency coordination, but also in the larger sense of shaping perceptions. For example, concerns were raised about the militarization of foreign policy – a common theme among critics of the Bush administration – and budget and funding patterns appeared to support these concerns. Testifying before the US

Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Mark Malan of Refugees International observed that ‘a glaring reality is that the resources of DoD dwarf those of DoS or USAID ... [there is a] fear that AFRICOM will marginalize and/or subordinate long-term development goals to short term political and security imperatives’.³⁹ And a recently released report from Refugees International, in an argument highlighting the American ‘civil-military imbalance’, notes that between 1998 and 2005, the percentage of official developmental assistance the Pentagon controlled rose from 3.5 per cent to nearly 22 per cent, while that of USAID declined from 65 per cent to 40 per cent.⁴⁰ In response to the disparity, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates commented that

It has become clear that America’s civilian institutions of diplomacy and development have been chronically undermanned and underfunded for far too long relative to what we spend on the military, and more important, relative to the responsibilities and challenges our nation has around the world.⁴¹

Although President Bush has requested an increase of 1,100 new Foreign Service officers and 300 new USAID officers, the DoD continues to tower over these agencies in terms of budget and personnel.⁴²

Perceptions of American foreign policy towards Africa are naturally framed by history and actions elsewhere. For example, American engagement with Africa over the last half century has largely been defined by national security interests, whether the context has been Cold War or Global War on Terrorism. Further, AFRICOM’s leadership is undertaking its new responsibilities at a time when American actions in Iraq and elsewhere, often taken unilaterally, have raised suspicions and eroded goodwill in many corners of the globe. The confluence of these events has created an environment in which questions are inevitable about the ‘true’ nature of AFRICOM and the ‘real’ reason that the United States is interested in Africa.

As a result, perceptions about the militarization of American foreign policy towards Africa compounded the planning and interagency cooperation problems that AFRICOM has already faced. It was largely agreed by most of those we interviewed that AFRICOM had gone public too quickly and with too little consultation with African partners. Indeed, suspicion towards AFRICOM grew among other agencies and international partners in large part because of how this organization was unveiled to the world.

Strategically Communicating AFRICOM

According to a 2004 Defense Science Board report,

strategic communication requires a sophisticated method that maps perceptions and influence networks, identifies policy priorities, formulates objectives, focuses on ‘doable tasks,’ develops themes and messages, employs relevant channels, leverages new strategic and tactical dynamics, and monitors success ... It will engage in a respectful dialogue of ideas that begins with listening and assumes decades of sustained effort.⁴³

AFRICOM could have been introduced on the world stage as an organization designed to incorporate a balanced interagency and multinational approach to addressing security challenges in Africa, and potentially capable of helping make a sizeable difference in the lives of millions of ordinary African citizens. By shifting its considerable human and financial resources from war fighting to strengthening partner coalitions and building security institutions, its mission is to help Africans help themselves create stronger democratic institutions in support of peace and security, which in turn can lead to greater economic development and prosperity on the continent. But in the initial haste to create the new command, coupled with the unique contemporary operating environment of the 21st century, AFRICOM's initial intent was misunderstood by most of those it sought to benefit and was met with allegations that the United States was militarizing policy on the African continent in order to fight terrorism, secure American oil interests, and to counter growing Chinese influence.

Perhaps one of the first and gravest mistakes that the early planners of AFRICOM committed was to present the plan *fait accompli*, without consultation. AFRICOM's planners seemed to assume that African governments and militaries would warmly accept and support the new command, and did not stop to consider the potential for negative African reactions. However, Africa is a continent comprised of sovereign states that are not bound to accept foreign initiatives, regardless of how beneficial the United States perceives them. As a result, the way in which AFRICOM was unveiled led to the perception that the United States was already armed with solutions worked out in Washington and the Pentagon, and had not taken into account the needs or strategic concerns of the African people it intended to support.

In truth, a consistent theme in many of the interviews we conducted and documents we analysed – the challenge of consulting with allies, communicating shared expectations, and influencing public perceptions about American foreign policy – is a familiar one to anyone studying American national security under the Bush administration.⁴⁴ The early stages of AFRICOM – from Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld requesting a committee to consider its feasibility in the summer of 2006 to President Bush's announcement of the command in February of 2007 – were undertaken rapidly, and largely without consulting with or gaining consensus of the African states involved. Even American policymakers and organizations were relatively uninformed until the formal announcement. Representative Donald Payne (Democrat, New Jersey) reported that he was 'shocked and dismayed when [he] learned from a newspaper of the administration's plans to establish AFRICOM'.⁴⁵

In retrospect, this course of events is not surprising. The military is known to develop plans and operations behind (often unintentionally) closed doors. From an interagency perspective, the faults with this approach are clear – leaders and staff of other organizations may resent taking their cues from the Department of Defense. Further, the initial impression that AFRICOM desired to significantly involve itself in humanitarian affairs by working with NGOs on the continent gave rise to considerable mistrust and speculation within that community since NGOs have historically preferred to remain neutral from political or military entities in order not to 'take sides'. According to Mark Malan, 'there can at best be good

liaison and perhaps coordination between humanitarian, developmental and military actors – but not integration’.⁴⁶

In addition to AFRICOM’s troubled start, most of the military and civilian leadership with whom we met early in the course of this research also expressed concern about the early lack of effectiveness in managing perceptions of what this organization would and would not be. After the backlash of the initial announcement, forward momentum stalled while AFRICOM planners in Washington reconsidered their goals and expectations of what the command would accomplish and how it would interact with its intended partners. In Stuttgart, the Transition Team Public Affairs Office received constant requests from the media for information; callers were handled in an open manner and information was not held back, but most often the team had no news to offer.⁴⁷ With nothing beyond repeated policy statements and quotes from Washington to the effect that ‘we’re looking into it’, a media hungry for news filled the void by creating their own. The issues of troops and basing took centre stage, while AFRICOM’s apparent desire to insert itself into the development realm alarmed the civilian aid community. Negative perceptions – often based more on speculation than facts or policy statements – began circulating in the media or by informal communications channels like Internet blogs. Planners were confronted with newspaper headlines such as ‘Global Cop USA Seeks more Presence in Africa’, ‘The Americans Have Landed’, and ‘The Scramble for Africa’s Oil’.⁴⁸

The result was that rather than using AFRICOM’s transition period to further explain the benefits that this organization could bring to Africa and to develop solid coordination mechanisms to further strengthen ties between AFRICOM and its partners, AFRICOM officials instead found themselves on a strategic communications defensive. AFRICOM’s announcement and subsequent plan to search for a suitable headquarters location on the African continent quickly devolved into the widely held belief among international audiences that the United States was seeking to militarize American policy on the continent. Journalists and media sources exploited African political sensitivities to fuel the perception that the United States wanted to base large numbers of troops and military equipment on the continent and play a more dominant role in the humanitarian and development realm. The loud and overtly negative response of the African news media was not foreseen, and AFRICOM personnel struggled to muster an effective ‘rumour control’ effort. As a result of misunderstandings of AFRICOM’s motives, the public diplomacy effort was compelled to repeatedly state that its intent was to support – not shape – American policy on the continent. As one AFRICOM Transition Team member stated early in our research, ‘It is very, very frustrating trying to get the word of AFRICOM out in the face of so much perception of the “real” reason the U.S. is interested in Africa’.⁴⁹

As the public diplomacy office continuously repeated messages to assuage negative public opinion, strategic communication planning focused on shifting attention from the basing issue to focus instead on the already existing security assistance programmes on the continent that the command would consolidate and oversee.⁵⁰ African leadership, taken largely by surprise by the announcement of this new organization and not entirely sure themselves of AFRICOM’s intentions,⁵¹ were

unable to assist. Further, they were offered little incentive to do so. In order to understand the driving forces behind such reactions to AFRICOM, it is important to appreciate how context influences perceptions. The creation of an American military command focusing exclusively on the African continent created scrutiny by observers in the United States and Europe – and of course, among Africans themselves – of the nature and purpose of Defense Department activities there. As a report to the United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations observed, ‘African sensitivity to colonial imperialism and suspicion of foreign intrigue to exploit resources runs deep’.⁵²

Unfortunately, the criticism that the United States has little regard for, or even understanding of, African needs resonates broadly in light of the global impression that the United States acts unilaterally worldwide. A recent international poll revealed that solid majorities in most countries surveyed feel that ‘the U.S. gives little or no consideration to the interests of countries like theirs when making foreign policy decisions’.⁵³ This sentiment was even found among allies of the US – for example, in France and Sweden, roughly nine in ten express this opinion.⁵⁴ While we Americans tend to see ourselves as a benevolent superpower, there is validity in the claim that we tend to limit our efforts to convince others about the intentions of our policies and actions. Overall, the data in the survey indicates that the environment in which a robust strategic communications effort must take place is less than hospitable. Clearly, it would have been in AFRICOM’s best interest to carefully plan the command and craft the message well before official plans were revealed.

In sum, AFRICOM was introduced onto the world stage with great intentions, but in the ensuing media fury quickly lost its strategic communications battle before it had even begun to comprehensively form it. In so doing, it compromised its initial effectiveness long before it ever gained official status. Under the spotlight of international attention, AFRICOM’s planners were forced to publicly pick up the pieces, temper their message, and adjust AFRICOM’s mission to more closely align with goals and policy directives important not only to the Defense Department, but with the United States agencies and African nations with whom they wished to partner. Their strategic objectives were (and often still are) misunderstood and misrepresented by a variety of media, political analysts and others. Beyond those who are directly engaged in the conception and development of the command, there are still too few who can accurately articulate its intentions and capabilities. As our research highlights, the issue of perceptions is a serious challenge faced by the military and civilian leadership of AFRICOM.

For all but the most informed citizens of the world, perception is reality. In the global information age, governments, corporations, and many others are in a constant fight to control how their policies and actions are perceived. The leadership of AFRICOM is under continued pressure from the responsibility of publicly creating a new American military command under the glaring spotlight of international opinion and speculative journalism, and the Department of Defense must constantly strive to positively influence the narrative of its intentions, policies, and values. What remains to be seen is how quickly AFRICOM can overcome its inauspicious debut to win respect and relevance among the communities it seeks to support.

Steps Towards Meeting Challenges

Our observations about AFRICOM's past and present, and more generally about implementing American policy in Africa, lead to recommendations for consideration by President Barack Obama's administration, and particularly the leadership teams at the Departments of Defense and State. To begin with, the success of AFRICOM will require a renewed commitment to using what Joseph Nye (the former dean of Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government) has defined as 'soft power', a term which refers to the nuanced world of negotiated relationships among nations and transnational actors (like multinational corporations, non-governmental organizations, and multinational regimes like NATO, the World Trade Organization, the International Monetary Fund, and the European Union).⁵⁵ Soft-power activities include offering economic and financial incentives (or in some cases, imposing sanctions) as well as traditional state-to-state diplomacy and more broad-based information efforts such as public diplomacy. The overall objective of these kinds of activities is to extend a nation's strategic influence. As Brad Ward notes, this requires 'an integrated, synchronized and interagency-vetted information campaign using the tools of public diplomacy, public affairs and [psychological operations]'.⁵⁶

Unfortunately, as illustrated earlier in this discussion, the integrated development and use of these soft-power tools has been a shortcoming not only for the Department of Defense, but for the Bush administration writ large. Further, recent experience has demonstrated that when these tools are put in use, soft-power activities must be directly relevant to local conditions, not strictly tied to the War on Terror or dogmatic democratization agendas. In other words, gaining strategic influence within a particular community (a central objective of soft-power activities) requires messages that are communicated effectively and persuasively within a cultural, socio-economic, and political environment that can enable the resonance of those messages. Thus, consulting and communication should be integrated activities, in order to ensure the local resonance of AFRICOM's message. Clearly, African views matter here, because how else would the United States know what the context is, what the needs are, and thus how to craft messages that resonate? And of course, the views of interagency, NGO, and European partners are also vital to consensus-building around the policies that will guide AFRICOM's actions.

Thus, in order to ensure a brighter future for AFRICOM, our research suggests a variety of recommendations for organizational learning (consult, listen, and learn) and effective communication (to include managing expectations and ensuring transparency) – activities which fall largely beneath the rubric of soft power. Implementing the recommendations provided below will require significant effort, resources, and leadership from the White House, Congress, the Pentagon, the Department of State and other organizations.

1) Consult, Listen, and Learn

First and foremost, AFRICOM requires mechanisms and formal encouragement to consult with all constituencies – internally and externally – and listen actively to suggestions about what AFRICOM should be and do. Global superpowers are

sometimes not the most effective listeners, but our attitude and language today will set the stage for tomorrow's relations. How AFRICOM personnel present themselves to their African counterparts in the near future will matter greatly. It is imperative that AFRICOM become more consultative – externally (among Africans, allies, the NGO community, etc.) and internally (within the interagency) – and that AFRICOM be perceived as consultative and respectfully interested in what others have to say.

Clearly, how Africans and others see American policy in Africa has a direct impact on the potential for future success of AFRICOM. Gathering input first from key constituencies will help ensure a more positive reception of policies. Improving positive perceptions and mitigating suspicions towards AFRICOM requires that its personnel and American policymakers 'see Africa as Africans see it', since African priorities often do not mirror American interests. For example, most African governments do not consider al-Qaeda-style terrorism as a domestic threat, but rather as a Western problem. Indeed, a common refrain among those we have interviewed for this study is that Africans do not view terrorism, in the form defined by the US, as a threat to their sovereignty or to their way of life. Rather, Africans face a daily *mélange* of social, political, and physical ills that are, in the 21st century, practically unheard of in the West. Poverty, disease, hunger, infant mortality, to name but a few, all play a part in the daily life of many African citizens. As a result, our African counterparts may be chagrined that the United States puts significant resources into counterterrorism training rather than using those dollars to help African governments work through their domestic challenges, such as food security or educational initiatives.

AFRICOM must also learn from the numerous multinational entities, including third-country government and military forces and NGOs that have been in Africa for decades. An increased amount of cooperation to date with French military forces is a step in the right direction, but this needs to increase to the point where it is taken for granted that we work alongside our coalition partners and that multinational coordination is a matter of course and not something that requires considerable effort to plan. Lines of communication must be firmly established and relationships built with our coalition partners, much as they will be with African leadership.

Consulting with interagency partners will also be key to the success of AFRICOM. Ensuring support and cooperation with the Department of State is particularly vital, and thus far has been forthcoming. AFRICOM's Outreach directorate is responsible for facilitating the integration and synchronization of activities of the United States government agencies, partner nations, and international agencies working within AFRICOM. Its civilian director manages the international, interagency, and non-governmental partnerships, strategic communication, and a Washington office.⁵⁷ In essence, unlike other US Combatant Commands, AFRICOM has dedicated an entire directorate to serve as the focal point for interagency coordination, led by a civilian and comprised of a military and civilian staff. However, an important question that has been raised in our research is whether this one office can do all that is required effectively. Preferably, interagency coordination will become standard procedure throughout the organization, and second nature among all its personnel.

Finally, and most importantly, AFRICOM must demonstrate the attributes of a learning organization by formally capturing new knowledge generated from external and interagency consulting efforts, and then incorporating this knowledge into doctrines, plans, strategies, programmes, and internal training products. In order to foster a culture of collaborative learning and communication, AFRICOM must be given time to build a shared knowledge base and learning infrastructure, particularly since the majority of military personnel assigned to AFRICOM are not Africa specialists. Indeed, given the frequent nature of personnel turnover in any military command, there will be a constant need for education and training regarding Africa's history, political, and cultural geography, and the perspectives of Africans towards their own challenges and needs.

Indeed, most American military staff officers assigned to AFRICOM are not there because they are Africa regional experts, but rather because it is the next stop in their military career. In order to receive promotions, most American military officers must work in a unified command during the course of their career and AFRICOM represents an assignment of this type. In this respect, an officer reporting to AFRICOM may know very little about Africa, but arrive in Stuttgart and find his or her desk piled high with backdated and overdue projects that must be started the day they report for duty. Joint Commands are a furious hive of activity, and there is little time for extracurricular education. In reality, most AFRICOM staff officers will probably fulfill their two- or three-year assignment then return to their primary military career field. From this perspective, not only must the Department of Defense invest in teaching languages, cultural geography, or history, it must also incentivize and reward learning in these areas among the officers assigned to AFRICOM.

According to our interviews, AFRICOM is aware of the shortcomings in its knowledge about Africa. In addition to the State Department, USAID and other civilian experts, the command has a small cadre of Foreign Area Officers (FAOs), individuals from a small and little-known American military career field who become experts in a particular geographic region of the world, to include Africa. It often falls to the FAOs, who have usually lived and worked on the continent, to put into proper perspective the challenges of operating within the African working environment. Newly assigned staff officers, frequently armed with a 'fix-it' mentality, are often eager to implement ambitious programmes but base their solutions on assumptions of how like programmes would work in a Western environment and do not take into consideration the unique conditions found in Africa. Indeed, it is difficult for many Westerners to comprehend that extensive areas stretching over the African continent exist largely without dependable electricity or Western style sanitation or health facilities. This is all to say that while some have criticized AFRICOM for being ignorant of Africa, the Command's leaders recognize their shortcomings but must continue to struggle with challenges inherent in the military personnel system.

Naturally, training efforts are already underway aimed at helping American military personnel assigned to AFRICOM gain a greater understanding of Africa. In addition to a variety of organizations in Africa and Europe, training is being provided by members of the Africa Center for Strategic Studies, located at the National Defense

University, along with an ad hoc group of academics in the United States and abroad who specialize in Africa's security challenges. However, as of November 2008 AFRICOM has still not been able to provide a comprehensive list of its Africa-related training needs.⁵⁸ The culture within the military must support this kind of education, and the Defense Department should reward those who go above and beyond the norm in acquiring this knowledge – in short, emphasize and reward learning.

As AFRICOM works towards becoming a more effective 'listening and learning organization',⁵⁹ it will need to incorporate an *ethos of flexibility and adaptability*. A key challenge stems from crafting a new kind of organization in which traditionally trained military officers are asked to undertake non-traditional military missions, such as provide infrastructure development assistance, or work extensively with non-military entities. As stated earlier, AFRICOM is meant to be a new kind of command with a focus on non-kinetic (non-traditional) military missions. But this flexibility requires a level of ambiguity, something quite uncommon among military organizations. In order to reach its potential, AFRICOM must be visionary and see the art of the possible. As a prominent writer of African affairs noted, 'the mission of AFRICOM will necessarily require a major break with conventional doctrinal mentalities both within the armed services themselves and between government agencies'.⁶⁰

AFRICOM will not be able to make appreciable changes overnight. In an interview, General Ward noted that '[We] cannot make things happen unless they're ready to happen . . . we must grow into this thing and take into account our challenges based on the local conditions'. He emphasizes that the creation of AFRICOM must be undertaken in a methodical manner, much more so than what came out of the 'big, initial ideas . . . we must manage expectations on the continent. Each country is different, and regional planning is important'.⁶¹ The current challenge is to continue the deliberate construction of the command in a manner that will allow it to effectively navigate the complex issues that surround any involvement in Africa, and to train its staff to intelligently respond to the many challenges that lie before them without reacting to pressures for quick success. Specifically, AFRICOM must develop solid partner relationships, increase resources to bolster a solid security assistance program on the continent, and work with African partner nations to further train and professionalize African forces in a manner that in turn can strengthen the security and sustainability of the political and economic institutions of Africa. These are the expectations that should be communicated to both American and foreign participants and observers of AFRICOM.

2) *Improve Communication and Public Diplomacy*

Managing expectations, both externally and within the interagency community, will require effective communication and transparency. For external constituencies, traditional diplomacy must be augmented by a robust public diplomacy effort. Public diplomacy is an activity that involves the promotion of a state's interests, culture, and policies to the general public of foreign nations in the hopes of generating understanding, and perhaps sympathy, towards that state's policy and actions.⁶² According to a recent report produced by the Princeton Project on National Security, the goal of

American public diplomacy is 'to understand, inform, and influence foreign publics in promotion of U.S. national interests and to broaden dialogue between Americans and U.S. institutions and their counterparts abroad'.⁶³ According to most professionals in the field, public diplomacy requires a long-term commitment to building relationships, rooted in trust and consistency. It is very much a human-to-human endeavour, one that necessitates effective communication.

As described earlier, a lack of effective communication has emerged as a central theme of this study. Our interviews and other research highlight a need to communicate reasonable expectations – both at home and within Africa – and address misperceptions. Unfortunately, significant difficulties arise in this arena when both the messenger and the message are viewed with suspicion. As AFRICOM develops a sense of identity and purpose, it continues to suffer from the spectre of its inauspicious debut and the controversy generated in its early days. In order to successfully move ahead, AFRICOM must manage expectations of what capabilities it possesses, to what extent it can effectively employ them, and how (or whether) it will do so in concert with the innumerable government and multilateral organizations that also operate on the continent.

A strategic communications plan has been developed to help pre-empt allegations instead of responding to them, and AFRICOM has moved from a defensive posture and towards a more proactive engagement with key constituencies. Nevertheless, all who work within AFRICOM should be responsible for effective communication, and credible proxies should be enlisted to help communicate key messages in multiple languages. Success in strategic communication requires context-appropriate messaging. Having learned from the consulting and listening activities described earlier, AFRICOM must develop the capacity and political will to communicate often and in multiple languages to internal and external constituencies, explaining what AFRICOM is doing and why. As Africa expert Stephen Morrison of the Center for Strategic and International Studies recently observed,

AFRICOM must communicate effectively and convincingly to all interested parties how AFRICOM will advance democratic governance, respect for human rights, and poverty alleviation; how the interagency process will actually operate; how AFRICOM's work will be answerable to civilian policy-makers in Washington; and how AFRICOM's transparency will be guaranteed.⁶⁴

One of the early and frequent criticisms of AFRICOM focused on how officials in the Bush administration and within the Defense Department characterized the creation of AFRICOM as having nothing to do with American interests in Africa's natural resources, competition with other countries seeking these resources, and the potential spread of terrorism. This is at best disingenuous and insults the intelligence of the global community, particularly Africans themselves. American military and political leaders must be honest about its intentions in Africa. Peter Pham cautions American officials to 'be up front about our self interests. Africans are a pragmatic people. They control commodities and work within a market structure'.⁶⁵ Mark Malan notes that African officials assume that the United States must be hiding

something by not admitting to a desire to secure natural resource rights, or by not mentioning terrorism.⁶⁶ American policy concerns and interests in China, oil, and terrorism should be communicated within a broader terrain of issues that matter most to Africans – like human security, the fundamental elements of life free from hunger, violence, and so forth. Further, it should be emphasized that the importance of geopolitical borders is decreasing, and an increasingly interconnected global economy means that events in one part of the world can have a cascading impact on multiple countries elsewhere. Thus, the security of Africa's resources – including oil, timber, fish, and precious metals – is important to all nations for whom these resources are economically vital, and not just the United States.

Effective communication also requires a new commitment from the Department of Defense to drop its shroud of secrecy and allow the public to observe. Inasmuch as the United States government has repeatedly called for transparency in the affairs of African governments, so too will transparency be a key factor to the success of AFRICOM. The tendency within American military organizations to cultivate a culture of secrecy is perhaps one of the greatest challenges to improving communication about AFRICOM. The American military's habitual use, at unified command level, of almost exclusively classified computer systems for daily work is counterproductive to cooperative planning among interagency partners, as well as within the wider range of international partners with whom AFRICOM is seeking to cooperate. During an interagency workshop on 'Humanitarian Operations during Conflict' hosted by the Center for Stabilization and Reconstruction Studies at the Naval Postgraduate School, one of the most persistent challenges discussed by military and civilian participants was the classification of information, particularly by the military. It was agreed that 'information sharing . . . represents perhaps the greatest challenge to operational success'.⁶⁷ The establishment of the Africa Transition Team was largely an unclassified endeavour and the ongoing operations of AFRICOM should remain open source. However, the military maintains a mentality of remaining discreet to the extreme.

With the events of 9/11 and the American actions after, it is understandable that military commands must not broadcast operational objectives and troop movements, but working almost exclusively on a classified system is simply not practical when many organizations are not a direct part of the United States military command. AFRICOM leadership admits that this is an issue, and they are working to rectify the problem. However, it will be necessary to break from this paradigm and populate the unclassified side of the network system, and then to maintain new operating standards without backsliding into former habits. If information cannot be easily distributed via email to unclassified public computers, the type used almost exclusively by the civilian NGO and American civilian development agencies, coordination will be difficult and AFRICOM's ability to communicate will suffer.

It is ironic that a military organization which places such high value on classification of information, the 'need to know' syndrome, is probably not the right choice to lead a global multimedia strategic perceptions management effort, especially one focused on American policies in Africa. Yet neither the Department of State nor any other arm of the American government has been charged with crafting the image of

AFRICOM and communicating it to the world. This could be for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is that the DoS lacks the budgetary and human resources of the Department of Defense.

To its credit, AFRICOM has developed a media campaign to highlight its programmes in Africa and to spread the message of its intentions. In addition to an informative Public Affairs Office, it sponsors a public website that contains a wealth of information about the command, to include links to official documents and sites relating to AFRICOM. This site encourages comment and welcomes reader response, and accepts negative opinions as well as positive. In addition, the Magharebia website – openly sponsored by AFRICOM in English, French, and Arabic, with approximately 447,000 visitors a month⁶⁸ – features news, information, and in-depth analysis of the region, with particular focus on Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Mauritania.⁶⁹ The command is already moving towards a vastly improved communication effort aimed at accounting for opinions and perceptions in today's globally interconnected world. Clearly, the new administration should encourage these and other efforts through which effective strategic communications and perceptions management can enable the long-term acceptance and success of AFRICOM.

Conclusion

Conceived largely through the efforts of Donald Rumsfeld and his Department of Defense advisers, and launched with high hopes by American policymakers, AFRICOM quickly lost its momentum and became entangled in accusations that African leaders had not been adequately consulted during the initial decision-making processes; that this was a covert attempt to militarize American aid and development assistance in Africa; and that AFRICOM was created to chase terrorists. Soon after President Bush announced the creation of AFRICOM, it was publicly spurned by much of the African community and met with a fusillade of resistance from the NGO community with whom it had originally intended to partner.

Now that AFRICOM has weathered poor policy decisions, survived a media firestorm, endured the cold shoulder initially offered by much of the African continent, begun with hindsight to determine where it can most effectively support American policy and reached official command status, the real work begins. One of its most difficult tasks may be to convince its key audiences – to include African governments and militaries, the United States government agencies with whom it is partnered, NGOs, the international media audiences, and not least the US Congress – that the effort and funding thus far put into this command were worthwhile and should continue. Confusion still remains over exactly what AFRICOM is and what it wants to do, and sorting this out will require consulting, listening, and learning.

While effective consultation and communication are vital, the ultimate goal should be transparent initiatives that demonstrate positive impact towards the issues that matter most to Africans. Actions will always speak louder than words, and will demonstrate real commitment, as well as capabilities, of American policies in Africa. AFRICOM must demonstrate what it can do for Africa. Further,

AFRICOM's policies and programmes must prove its commitment to effective interagency coordination as well as to developmental aspects of Africa's security challenges.

Despite the challenges identified in this article, we must conclude our analysis by emphasizing the positive impact already made by AFRICOM's new commander, General William E. Ward. A thoughtful, social science-trained military officer, Ward displayed a significant degree of humility soon after taking command. Rather than aggressively moving ahead with a 'hard power' approach to the establishment of AFRICOM, he openly acknowledged that the command did not have all the answers and stepped back to listen to alternate, non-military opinions. Under his leadership, AFRICOM's mission has gained vision and clarity that sets it apart from its early days, and can now more fully undertake its mission of 'sustained security engagement . . . to promote a stable and secure Africa in support of U.S. foreign policy'.⁷⁰ As a result, in a short period of time, he effectively rescued AFRICOM from what looked like an imminent crash landing to the point where it is today – still not wholly accepted on the international scene (and as a military command, it may well never be), but no longer reviled to the extent that it was during its inaugural period.

Without making light of the difficult road ahead, Ward is quick to point out the positive change that can come as a result of AFRICOM's presence on the continent. When all around him critics were pointing to how AFRICOM would bring little but controversy to the continent, and when many in the American military and civilian communities despaired at its ever truly coming to fruition, General Ward stood firmly on his visionary notion that 'you don't know what you can do until you try'.⁷¹ He has also conceded, both in official statements and during our interviews, that the United States does not have an in-depth understanding of the complex issues in Africa, and that it is AFRICOM's duty to listen to and learn from the wider African, American, and international community stakeholders and adjust its mission as needed.

Perhaps President Obama's administration will adopt a similar tone towards American policy in Africa. Ward and the command he leads will require presidential leadership driven by a solid understanding of what Africans want and need from the United States. He will also need this support in order to effectively develop and lead a new type of organization that runs counter to the traditional instincts of senior personnel in the Department of Defense and elsewhere who continue to resist the notion of interagency coordination. In sum, we remain hopeful that the past need not predict the future of American policies in Africa.

Disclaimer

The views expressed herein are those of the authors and do not purport to reflect the position of the United States Military Academy, the Department of the Army, the Department of Defense, or the United States Government. Unless otherwise noted, United States officials interviewed for this study have been kept anonymous.

NOTES

1. Since the end of World War II, US military engagement has been historically framed by an organizing structure within the DoD known as the 'Combatant Command', or COCOM. Each geographic region of the world is overseen by a COCOM. Each COCOM is led by a four-star general, or 'Combatant Commander' who is directly responsible to the Secretary of Defense, who in turn is responsible to the President of the United States. For more information on the history of the US Unified Command Structure, see Lauren Ploch, 'Africa Command: U.S. Strategic Interests and the Role of the U.S. Military in Africa', CRS Report for Congress, updated 10 March 2008.
2. Lauren Ploch, 'Africa Command: US Strategic Interests and the Role of the US Military in Africa', CRS Report for Congress, 10 March 2008.
3. Between 1952 and 2006, the African continent was frequently divided and realigned between geographically unrelated COCOMs in order to comply with ever-shifting US national security priorities. In 1983, the United States European Command (EUCOM) gained responsibility for the African continent minus the countries of Egypt, Sudan, Djibouti, Somalia, Kenya, and Ethiopia, which were assigned to the US Central Command (CENTCOM). The islands off Africa's eastern coast (Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, and The Comoros) were assigned to the US Pacific Command (PACOM), and the western islands were assigned to the former US Atlantic Command (LANTCOM). See Theresa Whelan, 'Why AFRICOM? An American Perspective', Institute for Security Studies, 17 August 2007.
4. Theresa Whelan, 'AFRICOM's Rationales, Roles and Progress on the Eve of Operations', Testimony before the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, Washington, DC, 15 July 2008.
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14. The White House, 'President Bush Creates a Department of Defense Unified Combatant Command for Africa', 6 February 2007, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2007/02/20070206-3.html> (accessed 15 October 2008).
15. Theresa Whelan, 'Exploring the U.S. Africa Command and a New Strategic Relationship with Africa', Testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Subcommittee on African Affairs, 1 August 2007.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*
18. The White House, 'Africa Policy' website, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/infocus/africa/> (accessed 23 November 2008).
19. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, 'Africom Can Help Governments Willing to Help Themselves', AllAfrica.com, 25 June 2007, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200706251196.html> (accessed 23 November 2008).
20. Interviews with AFRICOM staff, Stuttgart, Germany, July 2007.
21. 'Headquarters USAFRICOM Organization and Functions Overview', Memorandum, HQ USAFRICOM Organization and Functions, Stuttgart, n.d. [2007].
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23. 'AFRICOM Academic Symposium', held in Leesburg, VA, 9–11 June 2008.

24. Claudia E. Anyaso, 'An Overview of AFRICOM: A Unified Combatant Command', WIIS-U.S. Army War College AFRICOM Conference, Washington, DC, 22 April 2008, <http://www.state.gov/p/af/rls/rm/2008/103890.htm> (accessed 20 October 2008).
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27. AFRICOM Homepage, Fact Sheet, 'United States Africa Command', <http://www.africom.mil/getArticle.asp?art=1644>.
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32. *Ibid.*
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34. Interviews with AFRICOM staff, Stuttgart, Germany, July 2007.
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38. Interviews with AFRICOM staff, Stuttgart, Germany, July 2007.
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40. Mark Malan, 'U.S. Civil-Military Imbalance for Global Engagement', Refugees International, July 2008.
41. Robert M. Gates, 'Warning against "Militarization of Foreign Policy"'.
 42. Eric Edelman, Testimony Statement, 'Defense Undersecretary for Policy Edelman Urges Strengthening of Civilian Capacities', Washington, DC, 31 July 2008. Edelman notes, however, that it is the Department of State, not the DoD, that provides the majority of the funding and authority for security assistance and peacekeeping operations on the continent, and AFRICOM executes the programmes. Further, much of the reason that the DoD's budget has risen substantially in the past few years comes as a result of the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the DoD's reconstruction efforts in these two countries.
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46. Mark Malan, 'AFRICOM: A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing?'
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61. Interviews with AFRICOM staff, Stuttgart, Germany, July 2007.
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