

Strategic Communication Design: An Approach for AFRICOM

**A Monograph
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Abstract

A Strategic Communication Design: An Approach for AFRICOM by MAJOR Kathleen T. Turner, USA, 60 pages.

Since President Bush's announcement establishing AFRICOM, the Office of Secretary of Defense, the State Department, and European Command (EUCOM) began the initial planning of Africa Command (AFRICOM). As of October 1, 2007, the United States Government (USG) officially stood up AFRICOM as a sub-unified command of EUCOM and headquartered it in Stuttgart, Germany. By October 2008, AFRICOM is expected to be fully operational and will not locate its headquarters on the continent for the time being.

AFRICOM symbolizes a change in the DoD as far as how to structure its organizations. AFRICOM has the responsibilities of U.S. traditional COCOMs, but has additional staff and resources to provide more civil-military capabilities in Africa. This is a significant change in the way the USG conducts business that should be viewed as a transformation within the DoD and its efforts to improve interagency relations.

Because AFRICOM is a new combatant command and has been publicized as a command-plus, there has been a lot of suspicion concerning the motives behind the command from both on the continent of Africa itself, and throughout the world. In order to promote AFRICOM, DoD began its strategic communication plan back in 2006, with little success. AFRICOM's commander, General William "Kipp" Ward and his staff have campaigned in Africa and the U.S. to explain AFRICOM's mission and garner support for the command.

This monograph introduces an approach called strategic communication design that focuses on a detailed analysis and comprehensive understanding of the information environment. The problem facing the USG is that strategic communication is poorly defined and has not been effective in communicating a synchronized message amongst DoD, the State Department and other government agencies. In order to be effective in communicating, the USG (specifically DoD and the State Department), needs to share a common understanding of what strategic communication is.

In this monograph, strategic communication is broken down into five parts; the broadcaster, the message, the medium, the audience, and feedback. This study used strategic communication design to examine the ongoing effect to establish AFRICOM as a geographic combatant command to assess the feasibility and usefulness of the approach.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Gaining an Appreciation of the Information Environment.....	4
Strategic Communication – How effective is it?.....	6
Methodology – How to analyze?.....	15
The Audience – Who is Receiving the Message vice Who Should be Receiving the Message?..	17
Internal Audiences of Influence in Africa	24
External Audiences that have influence with Africans.....	28
The Message – Actions speak just as loud as words	33
Mediums – How does the message get to the audience?.....	35
Types of Mediums available within the system of Africa	36
Who Has Control of the Medium and how does this apply to Africa?.....	38
State Owned vs. Private Media – Controlling the message?	40
The Broadcaster – Who is sending the message?.....	44
Feedback or Relearning? Which is it?.....	47
Conclusion – How should AFRICOM proceed?.....	50
BIBLIOGRAPHY	55
Books, Articles, and Reports	55
Congressional Testimony	56
Department of Defense Publications and Reports	56
Interviews and Conversations.....	57
Websites	58

TABLE OF FIGURES

Strategic Communication Design.....	11
Rating the U.S. and Its People.....	21
Greatest Dangers in the World Today	23
Views of China.....	32

Introduction

This new command will strengthen our security cooperation with Africa and help to create new opportunities to bolster the capabilities of our partners in Africa. Africa Command will enhance our efforts to help bring peace and security to the people of Africa and promote our common goals of development, health, education, democracy, and economic growth in Africa.¹

President George W. Bush, 6 February 2007

Since President Bush's announcement establishing AFRICOM, the Office of Secretary of Defense, the State Department, and European Command (EUCOM) began the initial planning of Africa Command (AFRICOM). As of October 1, 2007, the United States Government (USG) officially stood up AFRICOM as a sub-unified command of EUCOM and headquartered it in Stuttgart, Germany. By October 2008, AFRICOM is expected to be fully operational and will not locate its headquarters on the continent for the time being.²

The purpose of this monograph is to outline a new approach to the strategic communication process using AFRICOM as a case study, and to provide recommendations to the AFRICOM staff for communicating its purpose and mission to audiences both internal and external to Africa.

The creation of AFRICOM is significant for both the United States and Africa. It takes into account the growing strategic importance of Africa, and reflects a change in attitude within

¹ The White House Office of the Press Secretary, "President Bush Creates a Department of Defense Unified Combatant Command for Africa." February 6, 2007.

² Lauren Ploch, *Africa Command U.S. Strategic Interests and the Role of the U.S. Military in Africa*. Library of Congress and Congressional Research Service, July 6, 2007(updated December 7, 2007. Internet on-line. Available from <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RL34003.pdf>, 1)

the Department of Defense (DoD).³ The United States cannot afford to wait for instability and ungoverned space to create a situation in which the United States Government (USG) is forced to react. The United States needs to be pro-active and place its resources and capabilities where they are most needed. AFRICOM should be seen as a good-faith effort by the United States to assist African nations across the spectrum of the national instruments of power.

AFRICOM symbolizes a change in the DoD as far as how to structure its organizations. AFRICOM has the responsibilities of U.S. traditional COCOMs, but has additional staff and resources to provide more civil-military capabilities in Africa. AFRICOM's Commander, General William E. Ward, has two deputies: Vice Admiral Robert Moeller, Deputy Commander for Military Operations, and Ambassador Mary Carlin Yates, Deputy to the Commander for Civil-Military activities. This is a significant change in the way the USG conducts business that should be viewed as a transformation within the DoD and its efforts to improve interagency relations.⁴

AFRICOM reinforces DoD's new strategy of focusing on conflict prevention by shaping the operational environment, or "Phase Zero," versus "fighting and winning wars."⁵ According to this concept, AFRICOM will work side-by-side with its State Department and USAID counterparts to ensure that the proper resources and capabilities is used to promote diplomacy and

³ Stephen J. Morrison and Kathleen Hicks, *Integrating 21st Century Development and Security Assistance, Final Report of the Task Force on Non-Traditional Security Assistance*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, December 2007.

⁴ Mark Bellamy, "Africa Command: An Idea Whose Time Has Come?" <http://www.atl.com.nl/site/English/nieuws/wp-content/artikel%20Bellamy.pdf>, (accessed February 18, 2008). Mark Bellamy is senior fellow in residence at the Center for Strategic International Studies as part of their Africa Program. He was also the ambassador to Kenya from 2004 to 2006, retiring from foreign service in 2007.

development programs on the continent of Africa.⁶ Currently, AFRICOM's proposed mission is to conduct sustained security engagement through military-to-military programs, military sponsored activities, and other military operations as directed to promote a stable and secure African environment in support of U.S. foreign policy.⁷

As they approach the Fully Operationally Capable (FOC) date of October 1, 2008, AFRICOM officials will work to dispel myths and answer questions that Africans have about the command. AFRICOM's strategic communication efforts will play a central role in establishing credibility as it develops infrastructure and operational capability in the coming year.⁸ AFRICOM is working on a strategic communication plan in order to re-evaluate Africa and its mission and will develop a comprehensive plan beyond what is written in this monograph due to its resources and capabilities.

AFRICOM will be the sixth geographic combatant command under the Unified Command Plan (UCP) of the United States. Under the old plan, Africa was divided up between three commands; Pacific Command (PACOM), which is responsible for the islands of Comoros, Madagascar, and Mauritius; Central Command (CENTCOM), responsible for eight countries in

⁵ Lauren Ploch, *Africa command U.S. strategic interests and the role of the U.S. military in Africa*. Library of Congress and Congressional Research Service, July 6, 2007(updated December 7, 2007). Internet on-line. Available from <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RL34003.pdf>, page 5.

⁶ Stephen, Hadley, *No AFRICOM Announcement Expected During President's Africa Trip*. Transcript from the National Security Advisor for the White House, dated February 13, 2008. <http://www.africom.mil/getArticle.asp?art=1643>. (accessed from the AFRICOM webpage on February 15, 2008).

⁷ Vice Admiral Robert Moeller (Deputy to Commander for Military Operations, AFRICOM), "Why AFRICOM Matters?" presentation given at the Transforming National Security, AFRICOM – An Emerging Command, held at the National Defense University on February 19-20, 2008.

⁸ Stephen Morrison and Kathleen Hicks, *Integrating 21st Century Development and Security Assistance, Final Report of the Task Force on Non-Traditional Security Assistance*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, December 2007.

Eastern and Northern Africa; and EUCOM, which is responsible for the remaining 42 countries in Africa. Under the new UCP, AFRICOM will be responsible for the continent of Africa, with the exception of Egypt, which will remain in the CENTCOM Area of Responsibility (AOR). The new UCP focuses the resources, capabilities and efforts of one combatant command on Africa.⁹

Combatant commands (COCOM) have changed and grown throughout the history of the United States. A combatant command is defined as “a command with a broad continuing mission under a single commander and composed of significant assigned components of two or more Military Departments that is established and so designated by the President, through the Secretary of Defense with the advice and assistance of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.”¹⁰

Gaining an Appreciation of the Information Environment

Understanding the information environment and how it affects AFRICOM’s role in Africa, is critical to developing a strategic communication plan. The information environment is a complex adaptive system that is not easy to understand because human beings are involved.¹¹ “A system composed of people is inherently complex because people have great freedom of

⁹ Lauren Ploch, *Africa Command U.S. Strategic Interests and the Role of the U.S. Military in Africa*. Library of Congress and Congressional Research Service, July 6, 2007(updated December 7, 2007. Internet on-line. Available from <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RL34003.pdf>, 1)

¹⁰ Department of Defense, Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms.

¹¹ Joint Chiefs of Staff. *Joint Pub 3-13: Information Operations*. Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1986, I-1 to I-5). JP 3-13 defines the Information Environment as individuals, organizations and systems that collect, process, disseminate, or act on information. The actors include leaders, decision makers, individuals, and organizations. It further states the Information environment is made up of three interrelated dimensions: physical, informational, and cognitive. The cognitive dimension is the one that applies to the CACD process.

action and links to many others in their society.”¹² Complex adaptive systems are non-linear and unpredictable. The relationships between cause and effect and second and third order effects are impossible to forecast.

In today’s global transformation, information is readily accessible and available to everyone. The technological advance the world has experienced over the last decade has brought an abundant amount of readily available information to our fingertips. In trying to prove a point concerning the USG’s inability to conduct strategic communication effectively compared to the enemy, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Admiral Mullen wrote, “With the aggressive use of technology, the tactical becomes the strategic in the blink of an eye.”¹³ The information environment can be challenging and overwhelming, one has to remember that when communicating a desired message to an audience.

When looking at the strategic level and the instruments of national power, the information instrument could now be considered the most important and the most powerful, especially due to the virtually unlimited access to information many have.¹⁴ Information is available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week across a spectrum of sources: print, television, audio, and internet.

¹² Department of the Army, *Training and Doctrine Command Pamphlet 525-5 (draft)* “Commander’s Appreciation and Campaign Design, July 20, 2007.

¹³ Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff Memorandum to Deputy Secretary of Defense, December 14, 2007.

¹⁴Richard J. Josten, “Strategic Communication: Key Enabler for Elements of National Power,” *Information Operations Center IO Sphere*, (Summer 2006)., 16-20.

Strategic Communication – How effective is it?

The process of strategic communication is not standardized across DoD. Currently, there is no doctrine outlining what strategic communication is and how to incorporate it into the planning process. Very little is written on strategic communication operations doctrine other than definitions from the various services.¹⁵ DoD has identified this as a problem and is working to resolve the issues concerning strategic communication. In a very pointed memorandum, written in December 2007, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, Admiral Mullen, expressed his frustration with strategic communication;

I share the SECDEF's frustration that we are not as nimble as Al Qaeda in communicating our message. But I believe the answer lies not in a static, separate SC organization – or even SC at all – but in the need to work harder, as the QDR put it, to instill communication assessments and processes into our culture. That task is better served by inculcating communication execution in existing functional areas and be decentralizing the effort. Only then can we hope to be nimble enough to reclaim the information battle space Al Qaeda has appeared to master.¹⁶

The Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) *Execution Roadmap for Strategic*

Communication stated that the,

U.S. military is not sufficiently organized, trained, or equipped to analyze, plan, coordinate, and integrate the full spectrum of capabilities available to promote America's interests. Changes in the global information environment require the Department of Defense (DoD), in conjunction with other U.S. Government (USG) agencies, to implement more deliberate and well-developed strategic communication processes.¹⁷

¹⁵ Joint Forces Command, Joint Warfighting Center. *The Operational Implications of Strategic Communication (Draft)*. Norfolk, Virginia, December, 2007.

¹⁶ Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff Memorandum to Deputy Secretary of Defense, December 14, 2007.

¹⁷ Department of Defense, *QDR Execution Roadmap for Strategic Communication*, September 25, 2006, para 1.3

Since the publication of the Execution Roadmap, DoD has sought to solve the problems identified in the document. This problem presents no easy answer but is becoming more important with the increasing number of nation states using soft power and information as a weapon. The USG and DoD need to ensure that the proper capabilities and resources are applied to strategic communication in order to propagate the same message with one voice.¹⁸

Strategic communication means different things to different people and organizations; coordinating the message through Public Affairs (PA), Information Operations (IO), Psychological Operations (PSYOP) and Public Diplomacy efforts to achieve the same objectives. The problem with strategic communication is that many people and organizations believe it is a process that some fancy words can accomplish. Detailed analysis needs to go into strategic communication to ensure that there is an understanding of the target audiences and the desired effect to achieve. Strategic communication is not just communicating; it also involves listening and doing.¹⁹

In order for strategic communication to be effective, the USG must understand who the audiences are and how they receive information. How an audience receives information is critical in determining how to communicate the message. The QDR *Execution Roadmap for Strategic Communication*, defines strategic communication as “focused United States’ government processes and efforts to understand and engage key audiences to create, strengthen or

¹⁸ Department of Defense, Defense Science Board Report on Strategic Communication, January 2008. In their final report, the Defense Science Board states in the cover memorandum that Strategic Communication is a dynamic process that must be executed with shared knowledge and strong, adaptive networks within government and between government and civil society. This requires a commitment not yet seen, though some steps have been taken to date. The board recommended six actions to enable a transformation in Strategic Communication.

preserve conditions favorable to advance national interests and objectives through the use of coordinated information, themes, plans, programs and actions synchronized with other elements of national power.”²⁰

The USG is not very good at understanding the Operational Environment when conducting strategic communication. In the case of AFRICOM, an analysis of African nations’ relationships and how they behave and interact, as well as determining how Africa perceives actors outside the continent, is necessary. Another requirement for effective analysis is the assessment of the cognitive factors of the system; cultural, social, and demographic.²¹

In the Joint Warfighting Center Pamphlet 10, “*Operational Impacts of Strategic Communication*,” dated December 5, 2007, the authors discuss the absence of doctrine that outlines the Strategic Communication process.²² Doctrine does exist within Information Operations, Public Affairs, and Psychological Operations, but nothing to describe strategic communication in detail.²³ The pamphlet also discusses the current systems’ perspective and PMESII analysis but does not provide the detail necessary to conduct strategic communication planning and be successful.

A new approach to analysis currently being introduced through the U.S. Army’s Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) is the Commander’s Appreciation and Campaign Design

¹⁹ Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff Memorandum to Deputy Secretary of Defense, December 14, 2007.

²⁰ Department of Defense, *QDR Execution Roadmap for Strategic Communication*, September 25, 2006, para 1.3.

²¹ Joint Forces Command, Joint Warfighting Center. *The Operational Implications of Strategic Communication (Draft)*. Norfolk, Virginia, December, 2007, 11.

²² Ibid, 11.

²³ Ibid, 13.

(CACD).²⁴ CACD is a process that assists in providing a different level of cognitive analysis to the commander and his staff.²⁵ CACD provides the commander with a holistic and cognitive understanding of the operational environment and the problem at hand.²⁶ “CACD creates a systemic and shared understanding of a complex operational problem and designs a broad approach for its resolution.”²⁷

This process can be used within the USG, specifically regarding AFRICOM, in order to gain a better understanding of Africa. In order to conduct strategic communication planning within AFRICOM, an understanding of all the actors and the relationships that define Africa is essential. CACD is different from the variables of the Contemporary Operating Environment (COE) or Effects Based Operations (EBO) because it analyzes relationships, rather than systems and nodes, providing the commander with more of a holistic and cognitive look into the operational environment.²⁸ CACD includes the commander in the discourse throughout the process. This way, the commander is involved in the discourse and provides understanding, a baseline, if you will for the commander to have as the assessment of the problem is conducted.

²⁴ Department of the Army, *Training and Doctrine Command Pamphlet 525-5 (draft)* “Commander’s Appreciation and Campaign Design, July 20, 2007, 4.

²⁵ Joint Chiefs of Staff. *Joint Pub 3-13: Information Operations*. Washington, D.C.: Joint Chiefs of Staff, 1986, I-2. The Cognitive Dimension is defined as the dimension in which people think, perceive, visualize, and decide. This dimension is also affected by a commander’s orders, training, and other personal motivations. In CACD this dimension is critical in understanding the operational environment and the problem.

²⁶ Department of the Army, *Training and Doctrine Command Pamphlet 525-5 (draft)* “Commander’s Appreciation and Campaign Design, July 20, 2007, 4.

²⁷ Department of the Army, *Training and Doctrine Command Pamphlet 525-5 (draft)* “Commander’s Appreciation and Campaign Design, July 20, 2007, 4.

Traditional planning processes assume the analysis; plans and orders from higher have framed the problem. CACD recognizes that system, but also recognizes that information flows from lower to higher as well. A commander is in a better position than his higher command to understand the scope of the complex problem and is able to better frame the situation. The goal of CACD is a shared understanding of complex problems.²⁹

CACD could provide AFRICOM with the understanding and appreciation that there are no boundaries that separate one country from another. The CACD approach analyses a problem without boundaries or borders initially to better understand how relationships interact with one another. Through this better understanding, the commander can appreciate the problem in order to redraw the boundaries to better fit to his problem set.

For this monograph, the author will use a process approach to strategic communication and recommend how it could be applied by AFRICOM to influence its various audiences. The objective of this process is to understand the nature of the Operational Environment and provide the framework to build the operational design and apply it to AFRICOM's operational environment.

Strategic communication can be identified as five parts, the Broadcaster, the Message, the Medium, the Audience, and the Feedback.³⁰ Through further explanation and analysis of this

²⁸ Wass de Czega, Huba and Yancey Rob, "Why Systemic Operational Design" Briefing April, 2006 (This briefing was part of the Systemic Operational Design given to SAMS students in AY 07-08 curriculum).

²⁹ Department of the Army, *Training and Doctrine Command Pamphlet 525-5 (draft)* "Commander's Appreciation and Campaign Design, July 20, 2007, 5.

³⁰ I developed the strategic communications model described above based on the communications models by political scientist Harold Lasswell and communications theorist David Berlo. Lasswell analyzed Nazi propaganda to determine why it made such an impact on those who heard it. He broke the communications process into five parts: Who says what, through which channel, to whom, with what effect. David Berlo published a simplified model in the 1960s, broken down into four parts; source-message-channel-receiver. From these models, along with my own military education and experience, I have broken down strategic communications into the broadcaster-message-audience-medium-feedback.

model (see Figure 1 below), this monograph will demonstrate that the process of strategic communication is far from simple and requires synchronization from all levels involved in the operational design and planning, but it is critical to understand if AFRICOM is going to develop an effective strategic communication program.

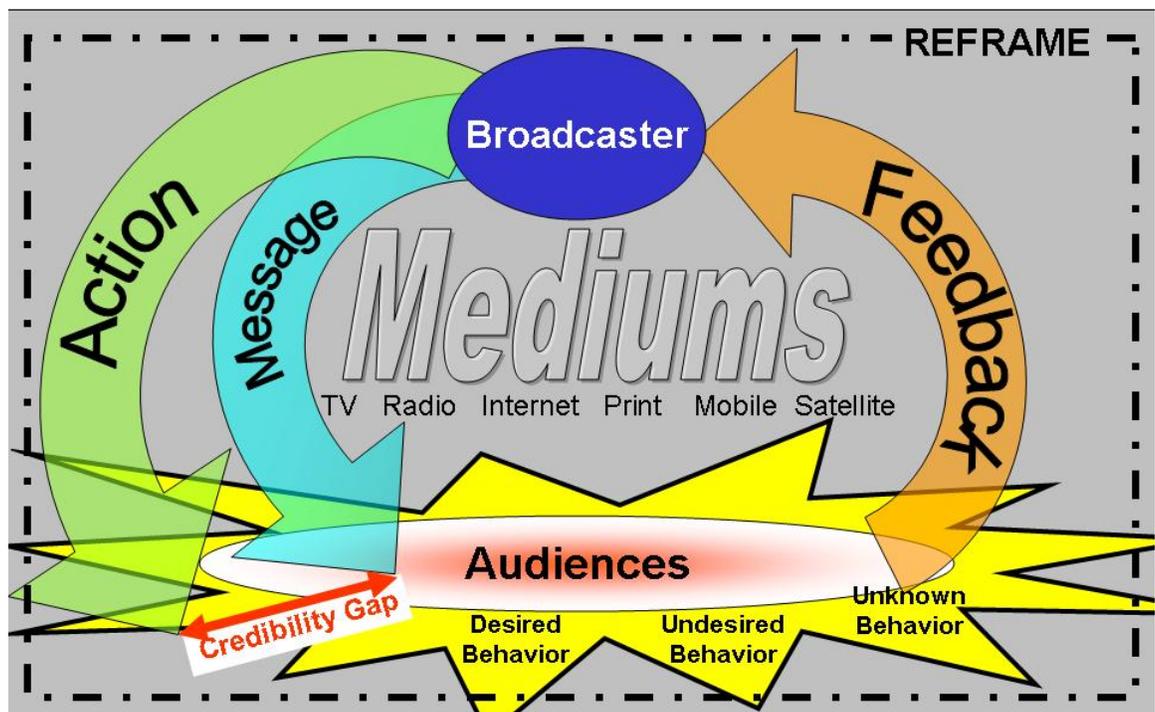


Figure 1

The most useful aspect of applying CACD to strategic communication is the way in which it provides a gained appreciation and understanding of the audience, and the broadcaster and how the relationships between the two interact with each other. Understanding the audience and its relationship with other actors is critical analysis that needs to occur before anything else. These relationships are called the historical narrative and provide a detailed analysis among all the identified actors in the system. An understanding of the historical relationships and how the relationships have changed over time is important. The historical narrative provides insight into

the current problem, and why it occurred.³¹ Learning the audience landscape and how it relates to the strategic guidance determines what type of design is required for the strategic communication plan. Only after the audience is understood, can one analyze the rest of the components of strategic communication.

The narrative defines how the audience makes decisions and how it reacts to the messages being sent. How can the behaviors of the audience be affected or changed to meet strategic objectives? Answers to these questions can be provided through the CACD process and the discourse that takes place between the commander and the staff.³²

Once the narrative for the audience is developed, it is necessary to understand how the broadcaster is being perceived by and affects the audience. In the design process, the author uses the term broadcaster rather than messenger. Broadcaster is a more useful term because of the number of mediums now available for use with the technology today. The broadcaster can be an individual, or a group of individuals, sending a message (verbal or non-verbal) to the audience. How that broadcaster is perceived needs to be analyzed to ensure the desired effects or behaviors occur. An analysis into the historical narrative of the broadcaster(s) and its relation with the system can aid in determining the credibility of the broadcaster. There can be a credibility gap between the broadcaster and the audience that needs to be recognized.³³ This is extremely important throughout the analysis of the design, as well as in the planning process. Words are important, but demonstrated actions are critical in strategic communication. Unfortunately, with

³¹Department of the Army, *Training and Doctrine Command Pamphlet 525-5 (draft)* “Commander’s Appreciation and Campaign Design, July 20, 2007, 17.

³²Ibid, 21.

³³ D. King, “*Four Principles of Interpersonal Communication*,” <http://www.pstcc.edu/facstaff/dking/interp.htm>. This reading was part of the curriculum at SAMS in 2007.

AFRICOM, the USG's credibility on the continent has affected the command's acceptance, a problem that only time and a more effective strategic communication effort can fix. A final aspect of the broadcaster piece that is worth analyzing is determining which broadcasters should send a message into the system. Competition between broadcasters will occur but the one with the most credibility with the audience achieves the desired affect.

The mediums range from radio, television, internet, newspaper, mobile phone and satellite. Mediums used to send the message are important because it determines which audiences will receive the message. Based on the audience narrative, certain mediums are more effective than others to ensure the desired audience receives the intended message. An understanding of the culture, type of government, and region will best determine the mediums that are used. Additionally, an understanding of the relationship between state run and privately-owned mediums; especially important in Africa, based on each country's type of government and how much control is exercised over the media.

The feedback portion of the strategic communication design is used in the CACD process to determine how the message is resonating with the audience. How effective or ineffective is the message and how does the user measure the effectiveness of the message? These are two important questions that the design should attempt to answer. If it cannot answer those questions, it should at least frame the issues for the planning process. Before message development, it is important to discuss the feedback loop to determine how it will be used. Once feedback is received, the commander needs to decide how to proceed and whether the message should be modified or follow-up messages sent to reinforce the original message.

In CACD, the feedback loop of the strategic communication design feeds into the reframing of the problem. The initial analysis of the aspects of the strategic communication design is the framing of the situation.³⁴ This framing of the situation provides the commander a baseline of understanding before planning occurs. Once the commander's knowledge of the problem expands, the process of reframing can occur. Reframing assists the commander in determining how others see the problem as well. Assessment of the strategic communication design ensures that the commander understands what has changed in the system, as well as determines the difference between how the system was viewed, and how the system actually was. As messages are sent, the audience's behavior triggers an effect, causing the broadcaster to respond. Reframing may be necessary in order to adapt to the complex system.³⁵ The design aspect of strategic communications causes the commander to continually access the audience, the broadcaster, the medium and the message.

The last piece of the strategic communication design is the message. Message development is important and should be conducted last. In order to create a message that achieves the desired effect of influencing or changing the behavior of the audience, the broadcaster must have an appreciation or understanding of the system. Certain aspects of message development can take place during the design process however it is in the actual planning process that messages are created. Overarching themes or guidance for subordinates can be generated during the design process. Themes are focused on the internal audience within the

³⁴ Department of the Army, *Training and Doctrine Command Pamphlet 525-5 (draft) Commander's Appreciation and Campaign Design*, July 20, 2007, 17.

³⁵ Department of the Army, *Training and Doctrine Command Pamphlet 525-5 (draft) Commander's*.

command to provide subordinate commands with a general understanding of the situation. More detailed messages are developed during the planning process.

The remaining sections of this monograph show how the strategic communication design process can be applied to AFRICOM. Understanding the complexities involved with strategic communication is about art. Admiral Mullen stated the importance of strategic communication in a memorandum written in December 2007. Communication is not just words, but actions designed to influence behavior. More time and thought need to be given to strategic communication in order to succeed.³⁶ Again, strategic communication, as presently being used by DoD, has been identified as a hollow process that is not very effective.

Methodology – How to analyze?

The analysis of the operational environment within Africa is necessary to assess the different regions, identities, functional divisions and the historical understanding that impact strategic communication and its effectiveness for AFRICOM. The next several sections discuss strategic communication, the information environment and how to apply it to Africa. This monograph analyzes the environment of Africa, as well as both the internal and external actors that play an influential role in Africans' perception of AFRICOM. This monograph does not conduct in-depth analyses on each country in Africa.

Section one addresses the importance of strategic communication, and how the analysis of the message, sender and receiver are critical to developing a communications plan. Analyzing the feedback from the president's announcement in February 2007 to the present demonstrates the value of understanding the range of receivers in the audience when developing a strategic

³⁶ Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff Memorandum to Deputy Sec Def, December 14, 2007.

communication plan. Section two defines Africa as a system and assesses how AFRICOM fits into this system. Section three focuses on what has been communicated to the numerous audiences concerning AFRICOM since the administration's announcement. Section four provides an analysis of the various mediums AFRICOM can use to transmit its messages to the appropriate audiences as well as the challenges of communicating to Africans across the continent. Section five discusses the various broadcasters within AFRICOM, OSD, DOS and USAID and how these organizations affect the message and what is received. The final section recommends a way ahead for a communication strategy that AFRICOM can use to change and influence the perceptions of African audience.

The research methodology employed in this monograph is primarily qualitative. Primary sources include unclassified documents about AFRICOM such as; Congressional testimonies, reports, interviews with African subject matter experts within the Pentagon, State Department, National Defense University, Office Secretary of Defense, Embassies, and students of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College.³⁷ A key purpose in conducting interviews with African specialists and students was to receive their perspectives on AFRICOM, as well as their comments on target audiences, engagement strategies and messages within the strategic communication plan.

³⁷ The author contacted African students at the Command and General Staff College (CGSC), however, due to the topic students did not feel comfortable discussing their views on AFRICOM. The author did speak to African subject matter experts from CGSC and Kansas University who were willing to discuss their knowledge of Africa and their views on AFRICOM.

The Audience – Who is Receiving the Message vice Who Should be Receiving the Message?

This section analyzes the potential audiences AFRICOM will encounter in developing its strategic communication plan. The road ahead is still long and difficult in establishing a new combatant command in a continent as large as Africa with such a diverse population and history. Africa is the second largest continent in the world, comprised of 54 countries, covering nearly 12 million square miles. Africans speak more than 2000 languages and regional dialects and have approximately 84 major and 470 minor ethnic groups.³⁸ These numbers illustrate how challenging targeting an “African” audience is, and how it is not easy to reduce its population into simple audiences. Cultural, societal, and historical differences make targeting strategic communication extremely difficult. Within Africa’s 54 countries, there are unique challenges and differences in how to conduct audience analysis.

It is important to understand the dynamics and complexities of the system in order to determine why AFRICOM is not being readily accepted by many African governments, organizations, and people.³⁹ An analysis into both internal and external audiences, will determine what influences is exerted in Africa, as well as how AFRICOM can engage with these audiences, to establish an acceptable level of tolerance toward AFRICOM, is necessary.

The way ahead for the Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) and the AFRICOM staff is for that office to communicate to specific audiences to educate them on the roles and

³⁸ Vice Admiral Robert Moeller (Deputy to Commander for Military Operations, AFRICOM), “*Why AFRICOM Matters?*” presentation given at the Transforming National Security, AFRICOM – An Emerging Command, held at the National Defense University on February 19-20, 2008.

³⁹ Department of the Army, *Training and Doctrine Command Pamphlet 525-5 (draft)* “*Commander’s Appreciation and Campaign Design*, July 20, 2007, 17.

responsibilities that AFRICOM encompasses. To date, what is being communicated about AFRICOM has not been well received, especially by the native African community.⁴⁰

Throughout Africa's history, the people have been controlled by many colonial powers and have not had a voice until their independence in the 1960s. Over the past forty years, the African continent has experienced independence, turmoil, violence, humanitarian crises, economic decline, and a growing population. However, they are a people suspicious of outside powers and want to help themselves. Naturally, doubts will be raised about the motives behind AFRICOM.⁴¹

Concerns from leaders, media, and interest groups, both in the U.S. and Africa, are legitimate and should illicit concern from within AFRICOM, and the United States Government. Consultations, seminars and open source, media have reported about AFRICOM's perceived intent to focus on a U.S. response to China's increased interests on the continent. They fear that AFRICOM signals significant numbers of U.S. troops on the continent, U.S. interests in Africa owing to its own self-interest in natural resources, and an increasing U.S. presence on the continent attracting terrorism to the continent.⁴² These concerns and perceptions began to be addressed by DoD and AFRICOM, especially in the last six months.⁴³ In order to continue to dispel these concerns and inform African leaders, media, interest groups and the many other audiences, AFRICOM needs a strategic communication plan aimed at listening to and consulting

⁴⁰ Elizabeth L. Colagiuri, "Coordinating On Africa," *Washington Times*, December 8, 2007, 9. Based on the author's extensive analysis of open source media reports and conversations with personnel with African regional expertise, she made the assessment used above.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Valerie Reed, "A Big Image Problem Down There: Prospects for an African Headquarters for AFRICOM," *Small Wars Journal*, (December 13, 2007),7.

with Africans to understand what they value and see as a priority for their people and their future.⁴⁴ According to an article written by Richard Halloran, in the Fall 2007 edition of *Parameters*, titled “Strategic Communication,” it is not just enough to identify an audience. The message intended for a desired audience will be received by others as well.

Strategic communicators should be aware of what might be called eavesdropping audiences. The pervasive nature of communication technology today - news agencies, radio, television, newspapers, magazines, the internet, movies, blogs, cell phones - makes it impossible to address a discrete audience. A single audience may be in mind but many other groups will hear, see, or read about the transmitted message. You cannot say one thing to one audience and something else to another.⁴⁵

Audiences that are both internal and external to Africa need to be identified across the political, military, economic, social, cultural, and informational spectrums. It is impossible, however, to develop the perfect message to satisfy all the audiences in such an environment.

Africa can be viewed through the lenses of regional actors, international actors, economic actors, its numerous ethnic groups, and society. Who are the major stakeholders? Are the key influencers within the five areas as described above?⁴⁶ How do they communicate? How does the audience view or perceive the broadcaster, (meaning AFRICOM), or the USG?

Polling data and/or market research is a valuable resource in understanding how the audiences view the broadcaster(s), key influencers, and themselves. The Pew Research Center in Washington D.C. conducted a national global attitudes survey published in June 2007. This

⁴⁴ Stephen J. Morrison and Kathleen Hicks, *Integrating 21st Century Development and Security Assistance, Final Report of the Task Force on Non-Traditional Security Assistance*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, December 2007.

⁴⁵ Richard Halloran, “Strategic Communication,” *Parameters*, Vol. XXXVII, No. 3, (Autumn 2007).

survey is beneficial for understanding attitudes and perceptions Africans have of the U.S., China, and what Africans see as their priorities.⁴⁷ With the announcement of AFRICOM by President Bush in February 2007, the administration received mixed views of their decision to create the new command. Even towards the end of 2007, a variety of news media and African leaders publicly criticized AFRICOM and the U.S., accusing it of trying to militarize the continent.⁴⁸

African leaders are not convinced about the promised gains of stationing U.S. troops on the continent, said writer Ikechukwa Eze in Nigeria's *Business Day*. "Apprehension exists about the extent to which AFRICOM may violate rules of sovereignty and its attempts to replace the AU," he said.⁴⁹

A slightly different picture emerges when one conducts further research into African perception of the U.S., and its priorities in Africa. According to the Pew Global Attitude Survey, the image of the U.S., has declined in parts of the world, however in Africa the U.S. continues to remain popular. Ten African countries participated in the study (Ethiopia, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda) and the majority of them

⁴⁶ Sarah Griswold, "The Two-Step Flow of Communication Theory," http://www.ciadvertising.org/studies/student/00_spring/theory/griswold/twostep.html.

⁴⁷ The Pew Research Center, *The Global Attitudes Project, The Rising Environmental Concern in 47-Nation Survey* (Washington, D.C., June 27, 2007), 19. (Received copyright permission January 22, 2008). The Global Attitudes Project was a study completed using 47 nations assessing their opinions on a variety of topics (world threats, U.S. foreign policy, United Nations, Israel, etc.) This survey was a valuable resource in determining what Africans view as a priority, as well as how African perceive the United States and China.

⁴⁸ Valerie Reed, "A Big Image Problem Down There: Prospects for an African Headquarters for AFRICOM," *Small Wars Journal*, (December 13, 2007), 1. Mark Bellamy, "Africa Command: An Idea Whose Time Has Come?" <http://www.atl.com.nl/site/English/nieuws/wp-content/artikel%20Bellamy.pdf>, (accessed February 18, 2008).

⁴⁹ Saeed Shabazz, "Africa countries to reject U.S. military Command" *FinalCall.comNews*, January 14, 2008, http://www.finalCall.com/artman/publish/article_4289.shtml (accessed January 16, 2008).

gave the U.S. high approval ratings ranging from 46% to 88%. Tanzania provided the lowest rating for the U.S.⁵⁰ (See Figure 2).

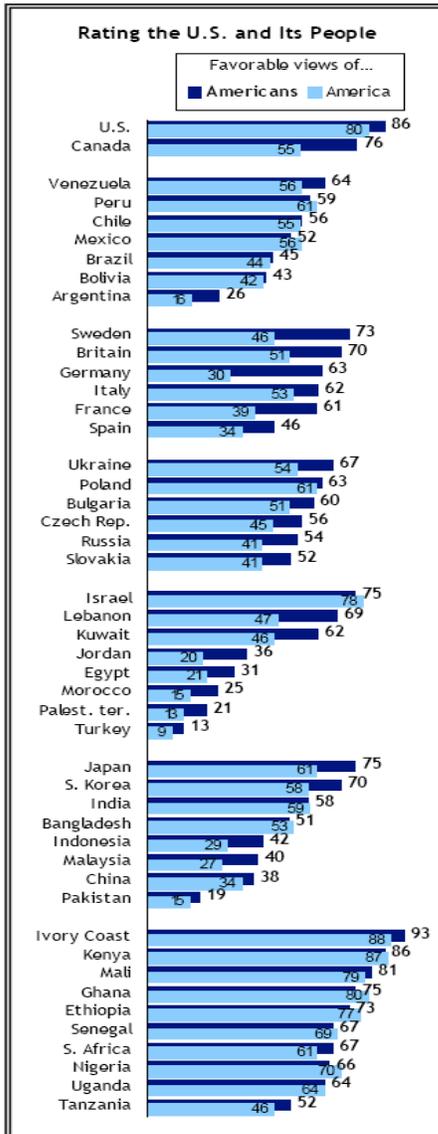


Figure 2

⁵⁰ The Pew Research Center, *The Global Attitudes Project, The Rising Environmental Concern in 47-Nation Survey* (Washington, D.C., June 27, 2007), 13. (Copyright permission received January 22, 2008).

Understanding the audience and determining what the various groups of Africans want must be a key component to AFRICOM's strategic communication plan. Media analysis plays a role, however it is not the only representation of the African audiences. What AFRICOM should consider, is how Africans prioritize their regional concerns. As part of the PEW study, nations were asked what it considered AIDS and disease dominated as the number one concern. The gap between the rich and poor came in second (refer to the Figure 3 on the next page).⁵¹ With AFRICOM's unique structure and interagency partners, working with Africans and NGOs to reduce AIDS, disease and poverty could alleviate the perception of a militarized AFRICOM. Listening to what Africans want and need at all levels is the key to AFRICOM's success.⁵²

⁵¹ The Pew Research Center, *The Global Attitudes Project, The Rising Environmental Concern in 47-Nation Survey* (Washington, D.C., June 27, 2007), 33. (Received copyright permission January 22, 2008).

⁵² Stephen J. Morrison and Kathleen Hicks, *Integrating 21st Century Development and Security Assistance, Final Report of the Task Force on Non-Traditional Security Assistance*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, December 2007.

Greatest Dangers in the World Today					
	Spread of Nukes	Relig./ ethnic hatred	AIDS/ Disease	Pollution/ Environ.	Gap Rich/Poor
	%	%	%	%	%
U.S.	45	45	29	37	33
Canada	32	47	26	54	33
Argentina	31	16	43	53	51
Bolivia	29	38	41	42	42
Brazil	46	25	36	49	43
Chile	40	19	36	44	56
Mexico	42	23	54	45	28
Peru	40	19	48	55	32
Venezuela	47	27	58	42	26
Britain	32	67	19	46	32
France	21	55	26	52	45
Germany	34	58	9	45	50
Italy	46	45	20	51	33
Spain	40	34	27	46	46
Sweden	26	47	14	66	38
Bulgaria	44	21	35	45	47
Czech Rep.	45	50	23	49	30
Poland	47	23	37	33	54
Russia	31	33	38	43	48
Slovakia	50	38	25	50	32
Ukraine	34	17	45	57	42
Turkey	57	39	21	27	43
Egypt	41	39	35	40	43
Jordan	54	51	27	30	38
Kuwait	57	66	30	22	21
Lebanon	57	74	14	13	41
Morocco	29	26	43	31	44
Palést. ter.	40	64	18	28	37
Israel	66	48	20	26	35
Pakistan	38	46	22	18	51
Bangladesh	37	32	50	30	46
Indonesia	23	48	34	32	57
Malaysia	32	39	47	37	29
China	29	N/A*	39	70	51
India	30	33	42	49	36
Japan	68	20	11	70	28
S. Korea	29	14	7	77	68
Ethiopia	12	49	78	7	52
Ghana	28	26	73	22	45
Ivory Coast	46	38	65	14	36
Kenya	16	24	82	17	61
Mali	44	44	51	19	41
Nigeria	29	45	62	17	40
Senegal	34	35	62	13	50
S. Africa	22	18	83	22	50
Tanzania	28	22	87	24	36
Uganda	24	19	75	22	46

Percent in who cite each as the first or second greatest danger facing the world.
*This option not allowed in China. Respondents selected from the other four.

Figure 3

Internal Audiences of Influence in Africa

Of the many regional African actors, the most influential is the African Union (AU). The AU is a collective body within the Africa region that has legitimacy on the continent. The AU was established in 2001, in order to integrate all the countries within the continent to address social, economic and political problems. The main objectives of the AU are promoting unity among African states, coordinating future development, protecting the sovereignty of member states and promoting international cooperation with the United Nations.⁵³ The AU is headquartered in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and was visited by General Ward in October of 2007. Media reports have speculated that there is a concern that AFRICOM may overstep its bounds and try to dictate to the AU. However, it appears that the AU is not opposed to AFRICOM and may even welcome the capabilities and resources it could bring to the continent. In an article written by Valerie Reed, posted on the Small Wars Journal in December of 2007, the AU discusses its interactions with AFRICOM to date:

As a concept, we've talked about it with U.S. officials. Its strategies have been explained to us. We've discussed its form and its objectives. But all we've had is tentative discussions; we have yet to work out the details. Now the next step is to take what has been presented to us about AFRICOM and present it to our member states in a way that is clear to them and see what they think.⁵⁴

The AU divides Africa into five regions for governance and sees Africa as Africans. The AU is working with NATO and the United Nations to establish an African Standby Force for each of the five geographical regions within Africa to assist in responding to crises as they arise

⁵³ African Union Homepage, <http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/index/index.htm>, (accessed December 12, 2007).

⁵⁴ Valerie Reed, "A Big Image Problem Down There: Prospects for an African Headquarters for AFRICOM," *Small Wars Journal*, (December 13, 2007).

throughout the continent. This is one way that AFRICOM could be seen as assisting the AU in their development of a Standby Force by advisors, trainers, and logistical support. In accordance with AFRICOM's theater security cooperation program and the State Department's security assistance programs.

Within Africa, there are sub-regional economic organizations that are influential, and should be considered as potential target audiences to assist AFRICOM in communicating. AFRICOM can also work with these sub-regional organizations to determine how best to prioritize their resources across the continent. The next few paragraphs briefly discuss these sub-regional organizations and their influence.

In the northern region, the main organization is the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU). It is comprised of the following five countries; Algeria, Libya, Morocco (Headquarters), Mauritania, and Tunisia. The AMU was created following a treaty signed in February 1989 between the five member states. The AMU aims to protect the region's economic interests as well as promote cooperation between member states. Currently, the AMU is not an active organization since most of its members want to be integrated more north and south with Europe than east and west with each other. The Community of Sahel-Saharan States (COMESSA) is also becoming a major player in the North African Region. Countries such as Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia have publicly stated they are against the headquartering of AFRICOM within their borders.⁵⁵ These countries expressed opposition to AFRICOM in an article posted on Free Market News on November 30, 2007.

The U.S. efforts to seek a home for the Africa Command (AFRICOM) have suffered one more blow as the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) stated strong

⁵⁵ Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) Website, <http://www.dfa.gov.za/foreign/multilateral/africa/amu.htm>, (accessed January 15, 2008).

opposition Tuesday to any foreign military establishments on the soil of African countries. The AMU, founded in 1989 by Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia, said through its consultative committee that such foreign establishments would not bring any benefit to the AMU or the African Union countries. Instead, they will risk catastrophic results for host countries and might be used as an excuse for certain factions to launch attacks on organizations of foreign, especially U.S. interests.⁵⁶

In the eastern region, the main organization is the East African Community (EAC) and has the following five members; Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda, and Tanzania. The EAC was created by a treaty in 1999, with its most recent members (Burundi and Rwanda) joining the organization in 2007. The EAC aims at developing cooperation among member-states specifically within economic, social, and cultural areas. The EAC has established a Customs Union in 2005, and is developing other economic initiatives to promote economic stability and progress in the region.⁵⁷

Until recently, Kenya was considered the most influential member in this organization and was one of the countries that also voiced concern about AFRICOM and its presence in Africa. The current political instability, coming from its December 2007 national elections, resulted in extensive nation-wide violence. Kenya will be a critical factor in the future of this region as well as requiring possible assistance from AFRICOM.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Saeed Shabazz, "Africa countries to reject U.S. military command," *FinalCall.comNews*, January 14, 2008, http://www.finalCall.com/artman/publish/article_4289.shtml (accessed January 16, 2008).

⁵⁷ East African Community (EAC) Website, http://www.eac.int/about_eac.htm, (accessed January 15, 2008).

⁵⁸ U.S. Congress. Senate. Committee on Foreign Relations. Subcommittee on Africa and Global Health. February 6, 2008. The author drew this conclusion based on her discussions with African SMEs, as well as articles published on the topic, to include the testimony listed in this footnote.

In the southern region of Africa, the main regional organization is the Southern African Development Community (SADC), it has fourteen member states; Angola, Botswana (Headquarters), the Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. SADC was formed in 1980 with the main aim to coordinate development and lessen economic dependence on, then, apartheid South Africa, as well as to implement programs to enhance the region, mobilize member states' resources and to secure international support.⁵⁹

SADC has matured significantly since its creation and can be viewed as one of the most influential organizations (even more than the AU) in Africa. Discourse with SADC and South Africa, specifically over the next year, will be crucial in determining how other countries in Africa welcome AFRICOM.⁶⁰ South Africa has the resources and influence that AFRICOM could leverage in communicating with audiences throughout its AOR. AFRICOM should recognize how other countries within Africa view South Africa and how that could be used to AFRICOM's advantage in its strategic communication program.

In the western region, the main organization is the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) that includes the following fifteen members: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Togo. ECOWAS was founded in 1975 with the aims of economic integration and development, as well as enhancing relations amongst member states.

⁵⁹ Southern African Development Community Website (SADC), https://www.sadc.int/about_sadc/index.php, (accessed January 15, 2008).

⁶⁰ Ibid.

The most influential states regarding AFRICOM within ECOWAS are Nigeria, Ghana, and Senegal due to their stability, economy and military capabilities.

In the central region, the main organization is the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) which has the following eleven member states: Gabon (headquarters), Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe and Angola. The ECCAS was founded in 1983, but did not begin functioning until 1985. Its aims are to raise the standard of living for their member states population, maintain economic stability, security and peace. Since its founding, instability and violence have caused the organization to be inactive and function poorly.⁶¹ The Democratic Republic of Congo and Angola are arguably the most vocal and influential in this organization.

Officials and organizations within Africa, such as the ones mentioned above, acknowledge AFRICOM and seem willing to listen. AFRICOM needs to be in a listening mode as well to ensure all concerns are taken into account.

External Audiences that have influence with Africans

The international actors that are part of the system include China, Portugal, the United Kingdom, France, U.S., NATO, the United Nations, as well as Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). France, Portugal, Spain, and the United Kingdom are post-colonial powers that still exert influence in specific regions of Africa where they ruled prior to independence in the latter

⁶¹ Economic Community of Central African States, <http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/RECs/eccas.htm>, (accessed January 15, 2008).

half of the 20th century. China was a significant supporter of many liberation movement, and has endeared itself to many African governments and their people.⁶²

NATO and the UN are organizations and groups of powerful influencers within the system that will play a key role in communicating AFRICOMs role to the African people, as well as members of the international community. The UN currently has eight active peace keeping missions in Africa with established relationships in those countries and with the AU.⁶³

Analyzing how the UN conducts operations and how it is perceived is something that might be clearly understood and incorporated into AFRICOM's planning process.

NGOs (both U.S. and international) like Doctors without Borders, organizations like the Peace Corps and missionary groups are considered some of the most influential in Africa due to their altruism and long standing involvement in Africa.⁶⁴ Such groups have a personal relationship with the African people that the USG does not. Africans think positively about the aid provided by these groups. This positive influence, as part of Africa's historical narrative, should be used in planning and seen as a positive aspect that AFRICOM lacks. These organizations have an established relationship with African people down to the tribal level. They have found a way of communicating a message backed up with an action, receiving positive feedback, which in turn produces the desirable outcome.

⁶² Princeton N. Lyman, "China's Rising Role in Africa," Presentation to the U.S.-China Commission, July 21, 2005, Council of Foreign Relations website (accessed January, 2008). Peter Brookes and Ji Hye Shin, "*China's Influence in Africa: Implications for the United States*," The Heritage Foundation, No. 1916, February 22, 2006. <http://www.heritage.org/research/asiaandthepacific/bg1916.cfm>. (accessed January 5, 2008).

⁶³ United Nations website, <http://www.un.org/depts/dpko/dpko>, (accessed January 5, 2008). The UN has eight peace keeping missions in Africa, the largest being in the DRC with more than 16,000 troops. The peacekeeping missions are as follows; MINUCART (Central African Republic and Chad), UNAMID (Darfur, Sudan), UNMIS (Sudan), UNOCI (Cote d'Ivoire), UNMIL (Liberia), MONUC (Democratic Republic of Congo), UNMEE (Ethiopia and Eritrea), and MINURSO (Western Sahara).

Economically, there are many benefits to analyzing specific business practices of international and U.S. owned corporations that operate in Africa. Corporations have been conducting business in Africa for years and have established relationships that could assist in AFRICOM's acceptance on the continent. An evaluation into their communication plans and strategies, specifically market analysis, research and demographics would be useful to AFRICOM. How these companies were successful in marketing a brand to Africans is something that AFRICOM should view as a tool in conducting its own analysis. Partnerships with companies such as Exxon, Coca-Cola, and Johnson & Johnson could assist in building a positive reputation focusing on the support to humanitarian efforts aspect of AFRICOM versus the military aspect. Johnson & Johnson has done an extensive amount of work with organizations in Africa to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS.⁶⁵ This type of work focuses on what Africans see as important. Dialogue with the Corporate Council of Africa (CCA) and the World Bank Organization (WBO) can help determine areas or projects that AFRICOM resources could assist, that would prove beneficial for the command.⁶⁶

AFRICOM and the USG should open a dialogue with China. China is exerting an increasing amount of soft power in Africa, as well as many other regions globally.⁶⁷ AFRICOM

⁶⁴ Peace Corps website, <http://www.peacecorps.gov>, (accessed January 5, 2008).

⁶⁵ Johnson & Johnson website, <http://www.jnj.com/community/aids/countries/africa>, viewed January 31, 2008.

⁶⁶ Corporate Council on Africa, <http://www.africacnl.org/programs/index.asp> (accessed January 18, 2007). The CCA is a NGO that focuses on enhancing relationship between Africa and the United States. The CCA was created in 1993 and has approximately 200 U.S. companies as their members. The CCA represent approximately 85% of U.S. private sector investments in Africa. World Bank Organization website, <http://www.worldbank.org/africa>, viewed January 15, 2008.

⁶⁷ Princeton N. Lyman, "China's Rising Role in Africa," Presentation to the U.S.-China Commission, July 21, 2005, Council of Foreign Relations website (accessed January, 2008). Peter Brookes and Ji Hye Shin, "*China's Influence in Africa: Implications for the United States*," The Heritage

and the U.S. cannot afford to ignore China and its efforts in Africa. Another aspect of the Pew Study was the view of China and its increasing influence.⁶⁸ China's economic investments and influence in Africa have grown significantly over the last few years.⁶⁹ It is important for AFRICOM, as well as the USG, to realize and understand the importance of how Africans view China. The majority of countries surveyed overwhelmingly view China as a positive influence in Africa. South Africa was the only country to have a lower view of China's influence (one regional hegemony, emerging and threatened by an emerging global hegemony). Even though many of the countries view the U.S.' influence positively, China received higher ratings in the survey (refer to Figure 4 on the next page).⁷⁰ An upcoming engagement strategy for AFRICOM could be the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. The Olympics will be seen and listened to all over the world, specifically in Africa. AFRICOM could showcase recent humanitarian projects to promote its successes on the continent. This is a way for Africans to identify with AFRICOM, to see its usefulness and what it can bring to Africans. Along with that, an analysis into what China is doing will prove to be worthwhile, if AFRICOM is to be effective with the African population.

Foundation, No. 1916, February 22, 2006. <http://www.heritage.org/research/asiaandthepacific/bg1916.cfm>. (accessed January 5, 2008).

⁶⁸ The Pew Research Center, *The Global Attitudes Project, The Rising Environmental Concern in 47-Nation Survey* (Washington, D.C., June 27, 2007), 41.

⁶⁹ Princeton Lyman, "China's Rising Role in Africa," Presentation to the U.S.-China Commission, July 21, 2005, Council for Foreign Relations website (assessed January, 2008). Peter Brookes and Ji Hye Shin, "China's Influence in Africa: Implications for the United States," The Heritage Foundation, No. 1916, February 22, 2006. <http://www.heritage.org/research/asiaandthepacific/bg1916.cfm>. (accessed January 5, 2008).

⁷⁰ The Pew Research Center, *The Global Attitudes Project, The Rising Environmental Concern in 47-Nation Survey* (Washington, D.C., June 27, 2007), 39. (Received copyright permission January 22, 2008).

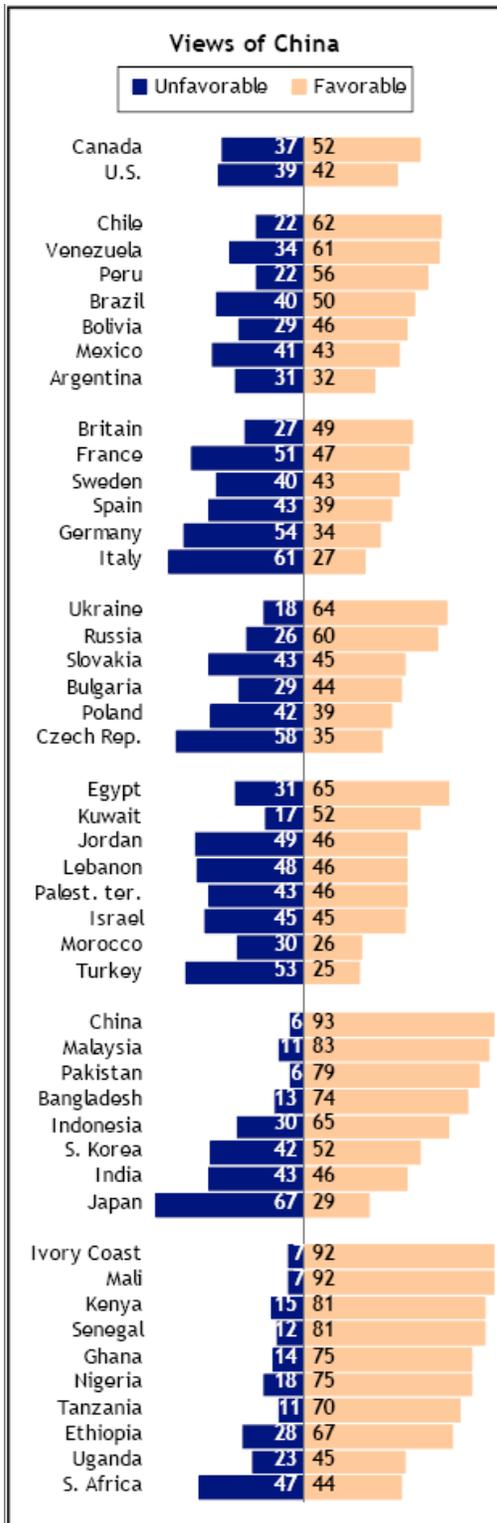


Figure 4

The Message – Actions speak just as loud as words

Desired and undesired effects need to be assessed in the planning process. In today's information environment, the message is both verbal and nonverbal. Actions are part of the message, affecting the audience in a variety of ways. Deeds sometimes mean more than actual words. Messages are used to inform, influence, and reinforce opinions while seeking to change the target audience's behavior.⁷¹

“Commanders should communicate key messages down to the individual level, but, in general, leaders and Soldiers should be able to tell their stories unconstrained by overly prescriptive themes.”⁷² Themes and messages developed should be seen as a guide or an area of focus for the broadcaster. A theme or message should not be seen as a script to be used by the broadcaster, causing robot-like behavior. A broadcaster needs to be seen as credible and transparent, not programmed and uncaring.⁷³

Developing the message is critical in strategic communication. Once the message is sent, the ownership of the message is lost. The message can also be misinterpreted, modified or misused by other broadcasters and the audience. Proper analysis needs to happen to ensure that

⁷¹ Joint Publications 3-13, *Information Operations*. Department of Defense: Washington, D.C. 2006, Chapter 2.

⁷² Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3-0: Full Spectrum Operations*. (Approved Draft) Washington D.C.: Army Chief of Staff, 2008, Chapter 7, page 7-1.

⁷³ Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff Memorandum to Deputy Secretary of Defense, December 14, 2007.

“the message itself needs to say precisely what is meant. It must be clear, thought through, and tested for possible misunderstanding.”⁷⁴

In a commentary discussing “why communication fails, except by accident” Wiio gives a number of reasons why the message is misunderstood or misinterpreted by the audience.⁷⁵

Language, cultural and personal differences account for most of the failure in communicating, compounding by the loss of data between the transmissions. Just one misunderstanding in the message can change everything.

Message development needs to occur after the analysis of the audience and determining the second and third order effects of the message being received. Different messages may need to be developed for the various audiences. A challenge for AFRICOM will be understanding and communicating, to such a diverse group that are resident in the continent. Messages created by a western broadcaster may not resonate with another culture. That is why messages must be tested and reviewed to ensure correctness for the specific audience that is targeted.⁷⁶ However, messages must be coordinated with the same overarching concept intended to achieve the same strategic objective.

The messages posted on AFRICOM’s website, focus on Africans and organizations within Africa. The messages attempt to address concerns that have been raised involving AFRICOM’s mission and purpose. “AFRICOM will add value and do no harm to the collective

⁷⁴ Richard Halloran, “Strategic Communication,” *Parameters*, Vol. XXXVII, No. 3, (Autumn 2007).

⁷⁵ Jukka Korpela, “How All Human Communication Fails, Except by Accident,” <http://www.cs.tut.fi/~jkorpela/wiio.html>. A Commentary on Wiio’s Laws, (accessed November 3, 2007). Professor Osmo A. Wiio was a Finnish researcher of human communication who published Wiio’s Laws in the late 70s.

⁷⁶ Richard Halloran, “Strategic Communication,” *Parameters*, Vol. XXXVII, No. 3, (Autumn 2007).

and substantial on going efforts on the continent.”⁷⁷ When Africans hear this message, there needs to be an analysis as to what this message means to Africans in order to determine the effectiveness of the message.

Mediums – How does the message get to the audience?

As you conduct analysis into the system and determine who the audience is, an understanding into how the audience will receive the message will be valuable in gaining an appreciation for the types of communication infrastructure available for AFRICOM to use. A recent article published in *Small Wars Journal*, quoted Theresa Whelan, Assistant Secretary for Defense for African Affairs, commenting on African media outlets’ reporting of AFRICOM:

What you should note about the African media is it tends to be incestuous. They pick up the same story and repeat it over and over – it’s not necessarily a very sophisticated media out there and it also tends to be dominated by – in the West Africa area, the Nigerian media; Southern Africa, the South African media; and in the East, the Kenyan media. And they all tend to deal in rumor oftentimes more than fact.⁷⁸

Another view of Theresa Whelan’s comment is to view the African media as a young and eager tool. Stories may run repeatedly because no one has taken the time to assist in infrastructure development and education programs for journalists. This could be an untapped resource with a great amount of potential.

⁷⁷ AFRICOM website, <http://www.africom.mil/africomDialogue.asp?entry=20>, (assessed February 15, 2008). This entry was obtained from the dialogue portion of AFRICOM’s website. General Ward submitted the entry on December 21, 2007.

⁷⁸ Valerie Reed, “A Big Image Problem Down There: Prospects for an African Headquarters for AFRICOM,” *Small Wars Journal*, (December 13, 2007). (This article published in *Small Wars Journal* quoted Theresa Whelan, Assistant Secretary for Defense for African Affairs, commenting on African media outlets reporting of AFRICOM. As you conduct analysis into your system and determine who your audience is; you need to understand how your audience will receive your message.)

A medium is used to broadcast a message to a desired audience. Mediums cover the spectrum of radio, terrestrial and satellite television, internet, cellular phone, and person-to-person. In utilizing these mediums, one must understand the challenges involved: ownership of a message can never be retained once it is sent over the medium. That is a fundamental challenge in strategic communication. The message sent is not necessarily the message received. This disconnect occurs when messages cross with different cultures, languages, and education. What is said in one language could be totally unacceptable in another. Attention needs to be paid to what medium is being used and if the message, is received by the right audience.

Types of Mediums available within the system of Africa

In order to understand the mediums, it is necessary to define each one and to explain the differences between them. Radio focuses on the audience listening to the message the broadcaster is trying to send. Radio can be one of the expensive in both labor, and equipment. Also, radio can be used to reach audiences at different social, economic and educational levels. A radio is relatively inexpensive for the potential audiences to purchase; consequentially, one has a far more expansive audience that can receive the intended message.

Television is an expanding medium, due to satellite transmission and the amount of news and entertainment channels established across the globe.⁷⁹ There are two types of television; terrestrial and satellite. More countries are gaining access to satellite television but there are still

⁷⁹ The BBC World Service Trust, *The Africa Media Development Initiative* (London, England, 2006), 25. <http://www.bbcworldservicetrust.org>. (accessed December 2007). This study's analysis assisted in determining what mediums are available and used by Africans. The study also provided analysis into specific areas that AFRICOM could assist Africans in developing to further the communications field.

terrestrial television users in Africa. The benefit of using television is the audience utilizes two of their senses to receive the information. Through listening and seeing, an audience can receive a message and make a decision. The audience sees pictures and video that reinforces the message, and it can determine the credibility of the broadcaster sending the message.

Newspapers are a good medium to use, if the particular newspaper is seen as a credible source of information by the audience. Newspapers also facilitate the use of photographs, which reinforces a message to the audience. Photographs can be an extremely useful in getting a point across to the desired audience. A disadvantage with newspapers is that the audience is narrowed owing to limited literacy rates, social systems and the reality that the majority of Africans do not live in urbanized areas.

An increasingly popular medium is the internet. An increasing number of people are using the internet to receive and send information. The internet allows people to access information from several sources, process that information and make a decision. A growing trend over the last few years is blogging. People can go to a particular website and submit entries on a variety of topics that can be read by anyone with internet access. This is a new type of medium that has proven very popular with today's younger audiences. The internet provides the broadcaster with a large audience. The only limitations with this type of medium, is accessibility.⁸⁰ Even though the internet is available across the global information environment, not everyone has access due to where they are located.

Another popular medium is the cellular phone. The cellular phone industry is growing and mobile communication is becoming available to more people. One way to communicate via

⁸⁰ The BBC World Service Trust, *The Africa Media Development Initiative* (London, England, 2006), 45. <http://www.bbcworldservicetrust.org>. (accessed December 2007).

cellular phones is by text messaging. Text messaging uses key words and short sentences to get the message to the intended audience. It is quick and simple and has the advantage of reaching a large number of people. An analysis of the cellular availability is necessary to determine how much potential this medium has for communication.

One of the most credible mediums is person-to-person contact: Credibility and transparency of the broadcaster is readily apparent. Delivering a message in person to the intended audience is one of the only ways that it is possible to ensure a message is received by an audience. Through this medium, delivery of the message is a guarantee, but how the messages are interpreted is not.⁸¹ Word choice and body language are critical in person-to-person engagement with an audience. How the broadcaster relays the message, is received by the audience in different ways.⁸² Analysis of audience demographics will assist in message formulation and delivery.

Who Has Control of the Medium and how does this apply to Africa?

One can create messages and themes and integrate them into the planning process to ensure that the aims of the commander are met, however controlling how the medium will send the product to be received by the audience(s) is very difficult to accomplish. This is the challenge with strategic communication that never goes away. The USG cannot censure or control the various mediums or how the message is distributed due to constitutional and regulatory statutes.

⁸¹ Jukka Korpela, "How All Human Communication Fails, Except by Accident," <http://www.cs.tut.fi/~jkorpela/wiio.html>.

⁸² Richard Halloran, "Strategic Communication," *Parameters*, Vol. XXXVII, No. 3, (Autumn 2007).

In a democratic society, there should not be government censorship. Democracies exercise freedom of the press to report and inform the public at large.

In the book, “Information Operations, Warfare and the Hard Reality of Soft Power,” Leigh Armistead discusses the importance of information and how technology has changed who has control over information flow. “There are many other organizations outside the government that now have a much greater influence on the flow of information, and it is now the government more often than not that is on the defensive. Because it cannot control the information, it must therefore react, and because the government is a bureaucracy, it cannot act fast enough to stay on the offensive.”⁸³

There are many technical challenges to communicating throughout the African continent itself. Understanding the lack of communications infrastructure is a concern when planning how to communicate with Africans. Both nonverbal and verbal communications need to be understood and to reach the appropriate audiences through appropriate mediums. According to Richard Halloran, “the most difficult part of strategic communication is finding a means to get the message across to the intended audiences.”⁸⁴

Although it is limited, there is some established communications infrastructure in Africa and systems that can be used in AFRICOM’s strategic communication plan. There are also established media organizations working to improve the communications infrastructure within the continent to inform the growing population. Organizations such as the African Union of Broadcasters, Africa Public Broadcasting, and the BBC, to name a few, could be approached by

⁸³ Leigh Armistead, editor, *Information Operations, Warfare and the Hard Reality of Soft Power*, [Brassey’s Inc., Dulles Virginia, 2004].

⁸⁴ Richard Halloran, “Strategic Communication,” *Parameters*, Vol. XXXVII, No. 3, (Autumn 2007).

AFRICOM to work together to assist Africans in improving their communications infrastructure and systems.⁸⁵ Due to Africa's size, diversity, infrastructure, culture and constant instability, using a traditional medium is difficult and presents significant challenges.

Over the last several years, the communications industry experienced growth in Africa. Radio is the most popular and accessible form of medium due to its ability to reach audiences in both rural and urban areas. Television is the second most popular; however, it is more difficult in rural areas and not as easily accessible as radio. Newspapers are more concentrated in urban areas and cellular mobile phones are experiencing high growth ahead of the internet, owing to the lack of internet supporting infrastructure.⁸⁶

State Owned vs. Private Media – Controlling the message?

There are positives and negatives with both state owned and private media. Obviously, state-owned media's editorial content is under stricter controls than private media; however, state owned media has a wider reach and greater influence on the audience. The biggest challenge for state owned media is to "serve all sections of the population and to become genuine public service broadcasters, impartial and free from government interference. In addition to

⁸⁵ The African Union of Broadcasters or the Union of National Radio and Television Organizations of Africa (URTNA). <http://www.urtna.org>, Organization renamed in November 2006 with the aim of creating an all inclusive broadcasting union, contributing to quality of life and projects the true image of Africa. (accessed February 15, 2008). The African Public Broadcasting Foundation. <http://www.abnafrica.tv/apbf.htm>. The foundation encourages and stimulates social and economic change across sub-Saharan Africa through terrestrial free-to-air television and radio broadcasting. (accessed February 15, 2008).

⁸⁶ The BBC World Service Trust, *The Africa Media Development Initiative* (London, England, 2006), 25. <http://www.bbcworldservicetrust.org>. (accessed December 2007).

broadcasting, most governments in Africa own or control newspapers and news agencies, and most of them operate with a pro-government bias.”⁸⁷

Private media are viewed as independent and are believed to be impartial, ensuring the government is accountable for its actions. Most countries across Africa have state owned radio broadcasts. Community radio has become an increasingly popular way for Africans to be informed and empowered with information. Countries such as Cameroon, DRC, South Africa and Sierra Leone enjoy high growth rates of community radio.⁸⁸

Radio Okapi is a national radio station operating in the DRC. In February 2002, the United Nations and Foundation Hironnelle initiated a project in the Democratic Republic of Congo to build a radio station.⁸⁹ Radio Okapi is a network of radio stations designed to cover DRC’s 62 million population.⁹⁰ Programs contain non-partisan, credible information ranging from health, education, human rights, culture and music. The U.N. and Foundation Hironnelle trained and educated the Congolese people to operate the station. Radio Okapi has been up and running for the last five years and is the responsibility of the Congolese people. It is a very popular station with news and entertainment. It serves as a “good news story” for future endeavors in which AFRICOM could partner with local governments or NGOs to assist Africa in developing better communications infrastructure to inform their people. By conducting projects such as Radio Okapi, AFRICOM would be helping Africans communicate with each other, as

⁸⁷ The BBC World Service Trust, *The Africa Media Development Initiative* (London, England, 2006), 14. <http://www.bbcworldservicetrust.org>. (accessed December 2007).

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 14.

⁸⁹ The Foundation Hironnelle website, <http://www.hironnelle.org> (accessed January 16, 2008). Foundation Hironnelle is an organization whose aims are to establish independent media organizations in areas of conflict or instability. The foundation, in concert with the U.N. and other international donors has created several other radio stations across Africa (Sierra Leone, Sudan, and Liberia).

well as providing education, training and a variety of other skills that are necessary to improve their life and bring some stability to the African people.

In order to understand the medium available for use, it is necessary to understand the demographics of Africa. Populations are increasing in great numbers, experiencing growth rates between 8 and 12%. The populations also tend to be very young: Uganda, for example, has 50% of its population under the age of 14.⁹¹ Based on these statistics, analysis into which medium would be best in targeting the young populations of Africa would be an essential element in AFRICOM's communication strategy.

Another challenge to understanding the audience and medium is the difference in the rural and urban communities. Communication infrastructure is more difficult in the rural communities versus the urban communities. Most rural communities in Africa do not have access to media; when they do, it is not the best of circumstances. According to the BBC World Service Trust analysis of Africa media, the report states that,

the media in the countries surveyed are serving populations that are primarily young, rural and non-literate. Radio dominates the mass media spectrum with regionally-based commercial stations demonstrating the largest consistent growth in numbers, followed by community radio, where increases have been reported only in certain countries and growth is inconsistent. Television is becoming more widespread. Newspapers remained concentrated in urban sectors. The adoption of mobile telephones has been exceeding the growth of the internet. Satellite television is also causing an influx of foreign channels in countries such as Kenya, Senegal, Somalia and South Africa.⁹²

⁹⁰ Radio Okapi's homepage, <http://www.radiookapi.net> (accessed December 12, 2007).

⁹¹ The BBC World Service Trust, *The Africa Media Development Initiative* (London, England, 2006), 24. <http://www.bbcworldservicetrust.org>. (accessed December 2007).

⁹² *Ibid*, 34.

Newspapers are common in the urban centers across Africa and vary in rates of distribution and content. Most newspapers are aimed at the urban population centers with high literacy rates and educated office worker populations.⁹³ Newspapers are also expensive, but have a long shelf life for the readership due to the fact that newspapers are shared amongst large groups of people within communities.

The profession of journalism is one of the biggest challenges for media communicating in Africa. The number of journalists in Africa, both trained and untrained has grown. Countries such as DRC, Kenya, Nigeria, and Senegal had an increase of 50% or greater of practicing journalists over a five year period.⁹⁴ There is a consensus among journalists that low pay and lack of educational facilities discourage professional growth on the continent.

Media infrastructure, equipment and technology are required to assist Africa in further developing its capability to compete globally in the communications market.⁹⁵ AFRICOM could provide assistance with the state of the media infrastructure in Africa. Working with foreign investors or organizations, such as the African Union of Broadcasters, is necessary to determine what assistance is required by Africans to further develop the communications network on the continent.

AFRICOM needs to utilize the mediums in Africa, to ensure Africans receive the messages that it sends, are radio, being the number one medium of preference for Africans, television being the second, with cellular phone coming in third.⁹⁶ AFRICOM would also benefit

⁹³ The BBC World Service Trust, *The Africa Media Development Initiative* (London, England, 2006), 35-37. <http://www.bbcworldservicetrust.org>. (accessed December 2007).

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 37.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 69-75.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 25.

from programs that provide some sort of education or on-the-job training for African journalists. This could be done through the American embassies and State Department personnel. Most embassies have a staff with a public affairs officer that could provide basic skills to journalists working for local radio, television and newspaper media outlets. By doing this, AFRICOM would demonstrate behavior to Africans that is not military to military. These types of educational projects would send messages to Africans about non-traditional tasks that AFRICOM is willing to do.

The Broadcaster – Who is sending the message?

Effective communication must build and maintain credibility and trust...through an emphasis on consistency, veracity and transparency both in words and deeds.⁹⁷

Admiral M.G. Mullen, December 14, 2007

AFRICOM must appreciate the credibility of broadcasters that will assist in the delivery and may affect the message. The internal command relationships within the State Department, USAID, and the military is a good news story. By understanding the broadcaster, AFRICOM should be able to harness all of the USG capabilities consistently as they exert energy into the system without causing unwanted rippling second and third order effects into the system.

It is important to conduct analysis of the audience, develop synchronized messages, determine available mediums, and understand the broadcasters and their influence. Analyzing the many broadcasters within AFRICOM, understanding the history of the USG and its policy towards Africa over the last few decades prove useful.

⁹⁷ Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff Memorandum to Deputy Secretary of Defense, December 14, 2007.

It was not until the 2002 National Security Strategy, that Africa was mentioned by the U.S. Administration. However, the USG conducted operations in Africa, provided funding towards humanitarian aid, and provided military-to-military training, but Africa was not a real priority in USG policies. In 2002, the NSS stated, “In Africa, promise and opportunity sit side by side with disease, war, and desperate poverty.” The NSS was directing a more strategic approach to Africa.⁹⁸ The 2006 NSS actually identified Africa as “a high priority of this Administration.”⁹⁹

Prior to 2002 the memories of the USG in Africa were not very positive. Pictures of dead U.S. Soldiers killed in Somalia in 1993 from a mission gone terribly wrong during the Clinton administration, to the genocide in Rwanda in 1994 that killed almost a half of a million people that the U.S., and the rest of the world turned a blind eye to. Africans still remember those events, and unfortunately they limit USG credibility as a trusted broadcaster on the continent.

In order to repair these memories, an understanding of the broadcasters involved with AFRICOM and how previous broadcasters are viewed will be essential in AFRICOM’s strategic communication plan. Broadcasters that had dealings on the continent range from EUCOM, CENTCOM, PACOM, USAID, the State Dept, and OSD. Those are the primary broadcasters within the USG that will have an impact in AFRICOM’s strategic communication plan. Of course, AFRICOM is the newest broadcaster and is still struggling to win credibility on the

⁹⁸ Lauren Ploch, *Africa command U.S. strategic interests and the role of the U.S. military in Africa*. Library of Congress and Congressional Research Service, July 6, 2007. (updated December 7, 2007), Internet on-line. Available from <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/natsec/RL34003.pdf>.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 12.

continent owing to previous messages of other broadcasters.¹⁰⁰ AFRICOM needs to get past what has been previously done and said on the continent and focus on what AFRICOM can do on the continent. Africa is waiting to see what AFRICOM can do and if AFRICOM will keep to its word of “enabling the work of Africans in providing for their own security.”¹⁰¹

The Combined Joint Task Force for the Horn of Africa (CJTF-HOA)¹⁰² was created in October of 2002, under the command of CENTCOM, with the mission of preventing conflict, promoting regional stability, and protecting coalition interests in order to prevail against extremism in the Horn of Africa. CJTF-HOA is a broadcaster that has proven its credibility and legitimacy through humanitarian assistance efforts in the region. To date, CJTF-HOA has supported approximately 11 humanitarian missions, as well as civil-military operations. The civil-military operations range from digging wells, building schools and roads and are part of the initiative to counter terrorism in the eastern region of the continent.¹⁰³ A look into how CJTF-HOA is perceived as well as the relationships with local government and tribal officials is important to AFRICOM in planning.

USAID has been working in Africa since the 1960s responding to natural disasters and providing humanitarian aid assistance. USAID in Africa can be seen as credible based on their experiences and work on the continent. USAID has recently partnered with CJTF-HOA to work

¹⁰⁰ Stephen J. Morrison and Kathleen Hicks, *Integrating 21st Century Development and Security Assistance, Final Report of the Task Force on Non-Traditional Security Assistance*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, December 2007.

¹⁰¹ U.S. Congress. Senate House Armed Services Committee, *AFRICOM Hearings*. November 14, 2007. (General Ward Testimony)

¹⁰² CJTF-HOA Website, <http://www.hoa.centcom.mil/>, (accessed November 2007).

¹⁰³ Stephen J. Morrison and Kathleen Hicks, *Integrating 21st Century Development and Security Assistance, Final Report of the Task Force on Non-Traditional Security Assistance*, Center for Strategic and International Studies, December 2007.

on educational projects in Djibouti, Ethiopia and Kenya, building schools, training teachers and refurbishing buildings.¹⁰⁴ AFRICOM will be in a support role to agencies like USAID to ensure programs continues. USAID had over \$3 billion dollars programmed for Africa projects for the fiscal year 2007, demonstrating its commitment to native Africans. Discussing USAID's communication strategy and its history could provide AFRICOM with additional engagement strategies or leverage points that would be beneficial for future use.

An assessment by AFRICOM into the various broadcasters of strategic communication plans and how they are viewed is necessary. This type of analysis assists in its strategic communication planning as well as records lessons learned in Africa.

Feedback or Relearning? Which is it?

Once a message is crafted and sent out, an analysis of the feedback is necessary to determine the effectiveness of the message. This is often hard to do, especially if the operating environment does not have the infrastructure to support the strategic communication plan. Feedback can provide the fodder for reframing.¹⁰⁵

Feedback can be received through many ways. Some of AFRICOM's feedback has been received through media reports and articles over the past year. Organizations such as SADC and ECOWAS have shared their views on AFRICOM publicly. SADC expressed negative opinions about AFRICOM. South Africa, in particular, has been the most vocal. In an article published on January 14, 2008, the Zambian government was cited as criticizing AFRICOM. "In October, the Zambian government's chief spokesman, Mike Mulongoti, speaking on behalf of SADC, said

¹⁰⁴U.S. Congress, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on African Affairs. *U.S. Africa Command Hearing*. August 1, 2007 (Michael Hess Testimony, USAID).

allowing AFRICOM to be based on the continent would be like allowing a giant to settle in your home.”¹⁰⁶

ECOWAS countries have also been quite vocal on the issue of AFRICOM. Liberia has been the only African country to comment publicly about hosting AFRICOM headquarters.¹⁰⁷

Nigeria has publicly protested its establishment on the continent and was quoted in the same article along with the Zambian government.

In November, Nigerian Gen. Andrew Azazi, ECOWAS chief of defense, said the organization’s defense ministers would have the “final say” on AFRICOM, in response to President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf telling reporters Liberia would welcome AFRICOM.¹⁰⁸

Consultations and visits were started last year and continue to occur with more details developing on AFRICOM’s structure and mission. DoD and State Department officials met with officials in Nigeria, South Africa, Kenya, Ethiopia, Ghana, and Senegal in April 2007. In June 2007, officials visited Algeria, Morocco, Libya, Egypt, and Djibouti and met with AU officials. Meetings were also held with 40 defense attaches serving in Paris. Officials reportedly provided feedback regarding the design of AFRICOM and how it could complement the AU structure of regional teams. In September 2007, DoD hosted officials from more than 35 governments, the AU and other African regional organizations to expand upon AFRICOM’s missions, answer

¹⁰⁵ Department of the Army, *Training and Doctrine Command Pamphlet 525-5 (draft)* “Commander’s Appreciation and Campaign Design, July 20, 2007, 17-18.

¹⁰⁶ Saeed Shabazz, “Africa countries to reject U.S. military Command,” *FinalCall.comNews*, January 14, 2008, http://www.finalCall.com/artman/publish/article_4289.shtml (accessed January 16, 2008).

¹⁰⁷ Economic Community of Western States, <http://www.state.gov/p/af/rls/fs/1543.htm>, (accessed January 15, 2008).

¹⁰⁸ Saeed Shabazz, “Africa countries to reject U.S. military Command,” *FinalCall.comNews*, January 14, 2008, http://www.finalCall.com/artman/publish/article_4289.shtml (accessed January 16, 2008).

questions and dispel rumors concerning the command. Consultation with these organizations should continue in order to create a dialogue among all parties.¹⁰⁹

Reuters quoted General Ward in a February 18, 2008 article commenting on how initial attempts to explain the purpose of AFRICOM were misunderstood. He further acknowledged failures of communication and that AFRICOM had modified the message, focusing on “added value” and “improved coordination” in providing U.S. security assistance.¹¹⁰ Based on the feedback being received, General Ward and his staff acknowledged that the message did not fit the audience. By admitting this failure, General Ward is showing honesty and commitment to the people of Africa. This statement could be seen as a good-faith effort by AFRICOM to continue to dialogue with Africans in order to be successful. General Ward is the most credible broadcaster AFRICOM and USG has to communicate on the continent. Based on General Ward’s experience as the deputy commander for EUCOM, he should be quite familiar with Africa.

AFRICOM must not interpret negative feedback as a failure. Criticism signals engagement. Engagement with Africans is a positive step in the right direction towards an effective strategic communication plan. Too often, criticism is seen as a negative action, instead of a positive one.

¹⁰⁹ Valerie Reed, “A Big Image Problem Down There: Prospects for an African Headquarters for AFRICOM,” *Small Wars Journal*, (December 13, 2007). 4. This article provided detailed information on the numerous visits and consultations OSD, State Dept. and AFRICOM officials have made concerning AFRICOM.

¹¹⁰ Mark Trevelyan, “US Africom chief admits role was misunderstood,” *Reuters (South Africa Bureau)*, February 18, 2008. <http://www.africa.reuters.com/top/news/usnBAN.857374.html>, (accessed February 18, 2008).

Conclusion – How should AFRICOM proceed?

This monograph outlines a new approach to the strategic communication process using AFRICOM as a case study to provide recommendations to the AFRICOM staff for communicating its purpose and mission to audiences both internal and external to Africa. The following paragraphs present the author's recommendations on how AFRICOM could further analyze the operational environment of Africa to be successful in its strategic communication efforts. Understanding the operational environment of Africa and how it affects AFRICOM's role in Africa, is critical to developing a strategic communication plan.

On the present course, as AFRICOM approaches the October 1, 2008 Fully Operational Capability (FOC) date, how it is perceived on the continent will continue to be viewed with skepticism and suspicion by Africans. Receiving acceptance from Africans is something DoD failed to gain prior to standing up AFRICOM. Creating a new combatant command on a continent with a long history of colonization requires extensive consultation with the African people. AFRICOM's initial efforts in this process were poorly received and continue to degrade its credibility.

AFRICOM must continue to educate audiences on the roles and responsibilities the command intends to fulfill on the continent. Based on the analysis and identification of the problem, AFRICOM must consider what Africans prioritize as their concerns. The diversity across the continent makes this task easy to identify, but difficult to accomplish. Understanding the complexities of Africa's historical relationships with the colonial powers, its tribal communities, and interactions with the rest of the world involves detailed analysis. Within Africa, there are five regions with varying priorities based on tribal, cultural, and social differences. The first step is to shift from a continental focus and move toward a regional focus. AFRICOM should determine what each region views as their priorities and needs, then analyze the best way to provide the assistance. Listening to what Africans want, instead of deciding what is best for them should alleviate the initial concerns and fears about the intent behind AFRICOM.

An analysis of the key influencers on the continent by region is another critical component of AFRICOM's audience analysis. Within Africa, specific regional and sub-regional economic organizations maintain more influence and tend to sway decision makers across the continent. One important organization is the African Union (AU), Africa's largest collective organization that accomplishes many administrative and works to provide resources and capabilities to solve some of Africa's problems. Unfortunately, the AU is not as effective as it could be. AFRICOM could bolster their importance by providing increased military-to-military training and support to the AU's Standby Force in accordance with their theater security cooperation program. The southern region of Africa is the most influential region on the continent. The most influential organization is the Southern African Development Community (SADC) organization. Since the AFRICOM announcement SADC been outspoken against the AFRICOM effort. Direct engagement and consultation with SADC may improve the discourse about AFRICOM and encourage their support for quality of life initiatives for Africans. AFRICOM must recognize in the importance of the regional institutions and organizations and work to gain their support as they refine their strategic communications effort.

Externally, there are many nations and organizations that exert significant influence in Africa. The post-colonial powers of France, Portugal, Spain and United Kingdom who still exert influence in specific regions of Africa. Their support could improve credibility to AFRICOM's message. Bolstered by their foreign investment, China's has become increasingly influential across Africa over the past decade. China's approach has been low key, but received almost universal positive feedback from both the African people and government elites. The USG may not share the same overarching beliefs as China, but they cannot afford to ignore Chinese efforts on the continent. AFRICOM should analyze the relationships that corporations and businesses have built and maintained in Africa. Multinational and U.S. owned corporations have operated in Africa for decades and have proven extremely successful in marketing their brands. AFRICOM should evaluate their communications methods and strategies, specifically their market analysis,

research, and demographics. Lastly, communicating with the Corporate Council of Africa (CCA) and the World Bank Organization (WBO) in determining the areas or projects where AFRICOM can best apply its resources will reinforce the benevolence of the AFRICOM effort and leverage their institutional knowledge of the regional and local problems and priorities on the continent. AFRICOM should explore how to enlist the support of the former colonial powers, China, multinational organizations, and international organizations that all have vast experience working with Africans.

AFRICOM's recent track record for message development and delivery on the continent has been disappointing. In addition to crafting and broadcasting messages, AFRICOM must develop the means to determine the effectiveness of the message. This iterative process will involve constant reframing based on the analysis and feedback. A challenge for AFRICOM appears to have been in understanding how the messages will resonate with Africans. A message created with a western mindset may not resonate the same in other cultures. For example, my research found that the term AFRICOM scares Africans, because it reminds them of darker aspects or rule under the post-colonial powers. AFRICOM needs to determine what their messages mean to Africans. One resource within the United States that could assist AFRICOM is the Diasporas populations. These groups are concentrated in specific regions in the United States; for example, Somalis reside in Columbus and Minneapolis, Nigerians reside in Houston, and Ethiopians reside in Alexandria/Arlington VA. Although this aspect of research was only highlighted briefly, its potential merits consideration. Not all messages are going to produce the desired effects; AFRICOM will need to exercise patience during this iterative process.

The analysis of the mediums to determine how the message will be delivered to the audience is another critical element in this strategic communication approach. Within African underdeveloped communications infrastructure exists unequally throughout the entire continent. Efforts by AFRICOM to improve the existing infrastructure will build tremendous good will. In addition to working to improve the infrastructure, AFRICOM should become active with the

existing media leaders. My research found that the Voice of America has lost considerable influence in Africa. AFRICOM should review this effort and try to emulate the BBC's approach. The African Union of Broadcasters and Africa Public Broadcasting should be included as important advisors to this effort. A comprehensive communications analysis is a low cost, quick growth field. Although radio generally has the most penetration, other mediums like cell phone and internet can assume roles of greater influence.

The final recommendation in this monograph deals with the broadcaster and their trust with the audience(s). AFRICOM must understand the credibility of the broadcasters used to deliver their messages in their strategic communication plan. By understanding the variety of broadcasters and their historical relationships with Africans, AFRICOM could better harness capabilities throughout the USG. AFRICOM is the newest broadcaster delivering messages to Africa and have struggled to regain credibility since the initial announcement of the command in February 2006. AFRICOM needs to focus on what AFRICOM can do on the continent. Africans are waiting to see what AFRICOM does and whether they keep their word. Ultimately, AFRICOM cannot view Africa through with an American-centric perspective if they want to be successful.

AFRICOM will be accepted over time, if they take the opportunity to listen and engage with Africans; listening to what is said, what is asked, and operating with transparency is the key. Start out with small projects in areas in most need that will generate success. Once AFRICOM shows some success in different regions across Africa, Africans will see the benefit of having the command around. That is critical to AFRICOM's acceptance. They must show Africans the command wants to assist the African people, vice taking over the continent with military force. In dealing with Africa, there must be an understanding that there is no "silver bullet" when developing solutions to the continent's problems. Only through a small, baby-step approach can AFRICOM make a difference.

The suspicions and concerns of Africans about the timing and motives behind the creation of AFRICOM present a significant challenge for the new command. Instead of directly focusing on those suspicions and concerns, AFRICOM should focus on the deeds and actions that will help to restore optimism and hope for the future. Democracy may not be the solution for everyone in Africa, but helping provide Africans with opportunities for a better way of life is.

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