

# U.S. Africa Command and the Principle of Active Security



By WILLIAM E. WARD and THOMAS P. GALVIN

In 2000, the Zambezi River experienced significant flooding, and the nation of Mozambique was ill equipped to deal with the humanitarian disaster that followed. Homes were swept away, thousands of people were displaced, and 700 perished, leading to the deployment of a U.S. civilian disaster assistance response team and U.S. military forces to provide medical assistance and security to help Mozambique stabilize the situation. Although floods on the Zambezi have been routine, Mozambique had developed neither the infrastructure nor the response capabilities to handle such tragic events. Consequently, the episode caused tension between the government and the people. Left unresolved, this tension could have led to instability.

At Mozambique's request, the U.S. Government and international partners provided various programs over several years to bolster

Mozambique's capabilities to mitigate and respond to the next major flood. Several American agencies got involved. The U.S. Agency for International Development established the Mozambique Integrated Information Network for Decision-Making, which enhanced the nation's ability to prevent human losses and economic disruptions from natural hazards. The project strengthened early warning systems for cyclones and flooding, improved disaster management and contingency planning, and expanded local early warning and response networks. It educated and involved communities in disaster preparedness and mitigation, training community volunteers in early warning reporting and educating children in schools. The Geological Survey was a major contributor.

On the Department of Defense (DOD) side, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers helped Mozambique build the infrastructure

to channel the waterways so the impact of flooding could be reduced. It also collaborated with Mozambique on a land management program to move people, as practicable, out of hazardous areas and provide them with suitable homes in safer locations. Separately during later years, other DOD activities served to enhance Mozambique's humanitarian assistance capacity. U.S. medical officers exercised in Mozambique under the Medical Civil Action Program (MEDCAP) to train their first responders, and the United States also helped build hospitals and clinics that could absorb the impact of the next disaster.

The Zambezi River flooded again in 2008. Although the deluge was even more severe than in 2000, Mozambique was better prepared. Boats and helicopters swiftly responded to evacuate 90,000 from affected areas. The death toll was reduced to about 30, far fewer than it could have been. The numbers affected by the flood were reduced from more than a million to about 115,000. Overall, Mozambique managed the disaster mostly by itself. The request for assistance from the United States was dramatically reduced due to Mozambique's capabilities. No U.S. military assets deployed.

Since the 2008 flood, the government of Mozambique has been working to become even better prepared as the Zambezi River will surely rise again. It is enlisting the support of various aid organizations to ensure quicker access to and distribution of food and relief supplies. It is encouraging displaced families to build their homes in safe areas instead of returning to low-lying areas near the river. Should these efforts succeed, the impacts of future floods will be reduced, as will any potential for instability or insecurity.

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Nigerian soldiers participate in State Department's Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership training program

Fleet Combat Camera Group (Michael Larson)

**Addressing Real Needs**

This vignette illustrates the ultimate purpose of U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM). In support of U.S. foreign policy and as part of a total U.S. Government effort, USAFRICOM's intent is to assist Africans in providing their own security and stability and helping prevent the conditions that could lead to future conflicts. The command will do this by employing the principle of *Active Security*, which governs who we are and what we plan to do. It is the basis for our theater strategy.

The types of activities described above fall within the spirit of *security assistance* as defined in DOD Publication 5105.38-M, *Security Assistance Management Manual*, dated October 2003. However, these activi-

ties did not all follow the strict definition of "programs, authorized by law, that allows the transfer of military articles and services to friendly foreign Governments."<sup>1</sup> While the assistance provided did "increase the ability of our friends to . . . help foster regional stability," much of the above involved the transfer of subject matter expertise and not necessarily the "transfer of articles or services."

**Commander, Joint Task Force Operation Atlas Response, inspects flood damage to hospital in Machanga, Mozambique, 2000**



U.S. Air Force (Cary Humphries)

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Unfortunately, this has led to a cultural paradigm where security assistance and the management thereof are defined and resourced based on a very narrow definition of "program," which regards only the sales, grants, leases, or loans of goods or services

that are essential to the security and economic well-being of allied governments. As a partner requests a particular good or service, a program is established or expanded. Program managers are assigned to execute the transfer, usually in the form of an Office of Security Cooperation (OSC).<sup>2</sup> When the program is complete, the management mission is concluded, and the OSC is disbanded or moved.

But the real needs of our partners go beyond receiving goods or services; these nations are exercising a vision of their security goals and objectives. Many of the requirements that emerge are nebulous because their perspectives are different from ours, although we often have mutual interests. While existing program vehicles such as Foreign Military Sales and International Military Education

and Training (IMET) can provide means by which our partners can meet specific objectives, these partners also look to us for subject matter expertise and other intangible forms of assistance. Furthermore, many of our partners have security concerns whose resolutions fall outside of the DOD purview or that overlap multiple U.S. agencies. The narrow view of programs reaffirms stovepiped responsibilities, predetermining who administers a program and causing all others to step aside. The modern dynamic security environment requires that we address security from a holistic perspective and integrate our efforts horizontally across the U.S. Government.

**Building Capacity**

Active Security is a persistent and sustained level of effort focused on security assistance programs that prevent conflict in order to contribute to an enhanced level of dialogue and development. The goal of Active Security is to enable our partners to marginalize the enemies of peace; minimize the potential for conflict; foster the growth of strong, just governments and legitimate institutions; and support the development of civil societies.

The meaning of the term *programs* is greatly expanded beyond that inferred from the *Security Assistance Management Manual*. It refers to the combination of all actions a unified command conducts to address partner needs in support of U.S. foreign policy. A program results in the creation or improvement of a partner's capability, which may or

*USAFRICOM's intent is to assist Africans in providing their own security and stability and helping prevent the conditions that could lead to conflicts*

may not include procurement of a system. The land management program for Mozambique was an example where the result was the creation of a process within the Mozambican government that permitted greater indigenous crisis response in the event of another Zambezi River flood. For USAFRICOM, potential focus areas for programs include enabling Africans to defend their homelands, defeat terrorists, and address regional conflicts through further development of peacekeeping capacities. Command programs will also build local capacity to protect civilian populaces, conduct disaster relief, and respond to health crises.

The components that could comprise a program include procurement (sales, grants, leases, and loans), training, education, logistics and sustainment, exercises, activities, employment, and communication. The goal of these components is to further the partners' abilities to build the capacity to self-sustain their newly gained capabilities, which broadens the context of these components. For example, training is more than supporting the acquisition of new skills by the partners' servicemembers and train-the-trainer capabilities of their leaders; it is about assisting the partners' development of the training base to ensure these skills are retained. Education is more than offering IMET slots; it is about fostering the develop-

ment of comparative educational programs that further military professionalism across the total force, officer and noncommissioned officer, in accordance with the partners' needs.

A component worth further explanation is activities. These are events that achieve the objective of a program by demonstration or example. An example is the deployment of medical personnel to perform humanitarian assistance in a grief-stricken region. They do not necessarily transfer skills or expertise as do training or exercise events, but they establish goodwill and further relationships with our partners. However, such activities conducted in isolation and not as part of an overall program normally fail to produce lasting positive benefits and therefore do not further our objectives.

Employment, the use of a newly gained capability to meet a real-world need, is often thought of as an end result or measure of a program's success. By this thinking, the program concludes with the capability being put to use in operations with sustainment from the United States, and the program is then assessed according to whether the capability is proven. In reality, many of the capabilities gained through our programs are employed immediately or continuously to meet current partner needs, and the results of that employment must be fed back into the communication process to refine the requirements and adjust the program.

Communication is an important but often underappreciated component. It expresses the breadth of communications between us and our partners related to the development of a capability. It includes contacts that focus on learning about, refining, developing, and promulgating requirements that become a program, as well as the series of assessments and followup contacts that keep the program on track or that adjust it as needed. It includes mentorship that establishes developmental relationships between U.S. subject matter experts and partner leaders, encouraging broader understanding of the capabilities built and their employment. But most importantly, it includes dialogue in which we talk with our partners in order to explore our respective assumptions and promote greater understanding without necessarily achieving conclusion, as one seeks in a debate. Dialogue reinforces partnerships by encouraging learning and keeping options on the table that could be useful as the strategic environment changes. This component is underappreciated because it does not necessarily produce anything tangible; therefore, we tend not to

think of it as an integral part of any program. However, communication is vital in building the relationship that sets the conditions for a program to succeed and for our partners to capitalize on that success over time.

To employ communication effectively, the unified command must be a listening and learning organization. It will be a culturally aware command that promotes dialogue over debate, possibilities over procedures, consultation over informing, and consensus over cookie-cutter solutions. It fosters innovative thinking that allows us to continuously assess our effectiveness and find ways to improve on our activities. It leverages modern information technologies that allow instant access to an unlimited wealth of knowledge, perspectives, and ideas that can contribute in new and innovative ways. A listening and learning organization proactively and rapidly analyzes the environment, consults with partners, and proposes programs that meet their unique needs. It eschews the easy solution of blindly tapping into an existing large program because it is there and available and because programs often do not exactly fit our partner's needs or deliver the desired effects.

These components together comprise the *persistent and sustained level of effort*. As procurement activities are completed, the requirements for communication rise. Second-order impacts of a program need to be assessed in the context of changes in the security environment. The incorporation of training and sustainment into the partner's institutional base normally lags behind the original fielding of equipment and acquisition of new skills. Also, most security assistance is conducted on a bilateral basis, but we also want to ensure that regional objectives are met and encourage regional communication among partners to leverage these new capabilities to meet broader U.S. and partner interests.

in our partners that as situations change and new requirements emerge, USAFRICOM will be there to help.

### Paradigm Shifts

Active Security requires a holistic look that encourages us to work in unison across agencies, and fosters greater ability for our partners to build capacity to conduct operations with well-trained, disciplined forces that respect human rights and the rule of law, with the ultimate goal of preventing conflict. As applied to USAFRICOM, it will also prepare African forces to better address shared challenges, strengthen legitimate governments, and make less likely the requirement for the United States to conduct unilateral operations.

Active Security requires us to be a trusted and reliable partner, something that is neither easy nor automatic. Building partnerships in Africa requires time, patience, consistency, and understanding. To be effective, we must develop mutual confidence in what we can do together at the theater, regional, and bilateral levels. We must maintain mutual respect, recognizing that our needs and theirs are equally important, not mutually exclusive, and are probably complementary. Most importantly, the result is the mutual confidence and competence that allow us to act as a combined team when necessary.

Active Security involves a cultural change within unified commands and the broader joint and interagency processes that employ it. In particular, there are three culture shifts already visible within USAFRICOM.

**Focused on Small Activities.** Security-based activities do not always require significant employment of forces to achieve great results. Operation *Enduring Freedom-Trans-Sahara* (OEF-TS) is a perfect example. In support of nine African nations, OEF-TS strengthens

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### *training is about assisting the partners' development of the training base to ensure these skills are retained*

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The job is hardly done once equipment is fielded. Short-term programs cannot achieve these results because the impact of a short-term program is felt only by those elements trained and lasts only as long as those elements remain together. Programs exercised under a persistent and sustained level of effort mature over time and allow adjustments, so better information can be used to gain better effects on a wider scale. They also instill confidence

counterterrorism and border security efforts, promotes democratic governance, reinforces bilateral military ties, and enhances development and institution-building. It assists governments seeking to control their territories and prevent terrorist groups from using their uncontrolled areas as safe havens. OEF-TS has produced extraordinary results, yet the majority of activities involve only a handful of Servicemembers scattered among the participating countries.

Other examples are the MEDCAP and Veterinarian Civic Action Program. These activities involve small numbers of doctors, nurses, veterinarians, and other medical specialists deploying to partner nations. In addition to curing the sick and healing the wounded, they

organizations, or partnering with other nations who have similar skills is another way of providing security assistance.

***Poised to Leverage Opportunities.***

Active Security means a unified command is postured to take full and immediate advantage

*security-based activities do not always require significant employment of forces to achieve great results*

build medical capacity in accordance with what partners request, build field hospitals or clinics, and provide emergency response training. The results are increased capacity for partners to provide for the needs of their own people, new experience and knowledge for our own medical people, and greater goodwill between those nations and the United States.

One challenge of smaller programs, however, is that they usually require U.S. Servicemembers who have high-demand

of opportunities as they arise. The Africa Partnership Station (APS) is a perfect example of leveraging an opportunity. The concept behind the deployment of APS to the Gulf of Guinea was a result of the Gulf of Guinea Ministerials in Cotonou, Benin, in November 2006. The sentiments of those in attendance were that maritime security was crucial to ensuring the region's economic development and stability and that regional solutions were necessary. The ministers, as a collective, enumerated their

regional presence while employing a minimal footprint ashore. With west coast African nations from Senegal to Angola participating, APS conducted training on Maritime Security Awareness, operational medicine, damage control and firefighting, at-sea interrogation techniques, procedures for boarding rogue ships and securing their personnel, and hand-to-hand combat training.

APS accomplished far more than training. It welcomed partners on board such as the nongovernmental organization Project Hope, which provides medical assistance and training for doctors and emergency services. While in Ghana, a team of Navy Seabees helped construct a medical clinic for use by both military and civilian personnel. And it got the call to assist in crisis response. The APS moved early to Cameroon to aid with the Chad relief effort, delivering 27 pallets of food and medicine to ease the refugee crisis in northern Cameroon.

The development of APS was possible because we were poised and postured with the capability to respond quickly. As a result, we greatly contributed to maritime stability and security in the Gulf in both the short and long terms.

However, in general such quick responses will be challenging for several reasons. First, USAFRICOM will not have forces permanently stationed in theater. Therefore, it must compete with the global force pool to source all its programs, and priority understandably goes to unit rotations in combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Second, although programs such as APS and other security assistance ventures provide immediate gains for the receiving nation, the longer term impact is much greater but difficult to quantify. In our measurement of success, we tend to look for "guaranteed" return on investment, which steers us toward more short-term projects. Third, the demands on the force have caused us to seek greater predictability in the apportionment and allocation of units to the unified commands, thus increasing lead times. This is especially true for the high-demand, low-density capabilities that play vital roles in security assistance. Hence, we will be challenged to maintain flexibility, which is essential to Active Security and allows us to leverage the opportunities that could arise.

The solution is to reexamine our operations and make sure there are adequate numbers to support current operations, planned operations, and security assistance requirements, and then to have a special pool set aside that allows us flexibility and versatility.



**Aid workers retrieve flood relief supplies dropped by U.S. Air Force in rural Kenya**

CJTF-Horn of Africa (Robert Palomares)

skills or subject matter expertise. Certainly that is true with the special forces involved in OEF-TS and medical personnel participating in MEDCAPs. Currently, the pools of such talent are very limited, and such assets are also in great demand elsewhere. Enlarging the pools of resources, whether through expansion of military assets (that is, more special forces), building cooperatives with nongovernmental

needs and priorities. We listened and were postured to respond with tailored training and assistance that also supported U.S. foreign policy goals.

The APS deployed to the Gulf of Guinea region from October 2007 through April 2008 to improve maritime security and safety. It has established an at-sea training platform onboard a single ship, providing a sustained

The situation in Africa is dynamic and complex, and the pressure on the national governments for securing their territory and caring for their people is great. Many have limited resources and significant needs. USAFRICOM must be poised to respond with programs and resources when those nations reach out to us.

**Postured to Help the Africans Leverage Success.** Everywhere we have traveled in Africa, we are given the message by the leadership that Africans want to provide for their own stability and security and not depend on foreign assistance. It is also in our interest to avoid creating dependency. USAFRICOM's approach is two-fold: partnering with African initiatives whose goals are compatible with our

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own and leveraging successful U.S. military programs as a means by which the Africans can build their own indigenous capabilities. Two examples of the former were the subject of our visit to Mali earlier this year.

The Bamako Peacekeeping School is an initiative of the Malian government to train its personnel to conduct peacekeeping missions. Its curriculum is based on the requirements of the Economic Commission of West African States, and it accepts students from 10 African nations. Argentina, Canada, France, and the Netherlands have provided instructors, and the United States is an associate member on the council and has provided automation equipment. In its first year of operation, the school trained 600 students and is working to increase that capacity. Also, its initial charter was individual training of officers, but it seeks to expand to collective training. USAFRICOM is becoming an active partner in this endeavor.

The Military Intelligence Basic Officer Course–Africa (MIBOC–A) is an initiative to provide basic training for military intelligence officers in Africa. When we visited, 26 officers from seven West African nations were in attendance. While we played an integral role in the development of this school, it is run by Africans.

Both of these activities enjoy the advantage of Africans providing for their own needs so they become self-sustaining endeavors. Our

assistance is welcomed as a partnership rather than as interference from a foreigner.

APS is a successful U.S. program that could spawn an African initiative providing similar training and exercise opportunities on a continuous basis. For the moment, let us call it a Gulf of Guinea Maritime Safety and Security Academy. In addition to APS rotations of finite duration, such an academy would be available to all sailors in the region, with readily tailored curricula that address current maritime issues, challenges, and threats. Sailors trained by APS personnel could become instructors in this academy, forging useful relationships not only with the U.S. Navy, but also with other navies that have

U.S. Government. The notion of a “persistent, sustained level of effort” is not peculiar to the military. It can be exercised by all the elements of national power, especially informational. But for it to succeed, all these elements must work in harmony. It requires balancing the perspectives of each agency, mapping the authorities and responsibilities in such a way that collective solutions can be found, so Washington is perceived as responsive and reliable. It also requires openness and transparency to give partners a greater understanding of our perspectives. This way, as political decisions are made about the expenditure of resources for USAFRICOM activities, partners follow the rationale sufficiently that the team

U.S. Navy (Elizabeth Merriam)



West African naval officers participate in exercise led by U.S. Coast Guard International Training Division

similar goals. The APS would have been successful at adding value to stability and security in the long run.

### Interagency Inroads

Openness and transparency on our part are essential. It is well known that there have been lost opportunities to establish programs or partnerships because of misunderstandings or conflicts within the U.S. Government or where lines of authority established for particular situations created bottlenecks or inhibited rapid response under new circumstances.

Active Security, while currently being applied only in the context of USAFRICOM, can overcome deficiencies across the entire

effort is sustained and healthy even as direct government support experiences temporary reductions in response to changes in the global security environment. (Both the Department of State and U.S. Agency for International Development have been providing persistent, sustained assistance for decades.)

Active Security is a philosophy grounded in strategy. It requires clearly defined strategic ends and the identification of ways and means to support them. However, it challenges some of the current processes found in joint doctrine as well as DOD business practices used by unified commands to develop their theater strategies.

For example, the current strategy development process is designed to function over a multiyear basis. That is, developing the ends and

ways today generates the means in future years. It is grounded in a largely sequential process of assessing the security environment, identifying threats, developing courses of action to respond, and therefore identifying resources necessary to execute those courses of action. While this process serves well the existing force allocation processes that apportion forces over the course of Program Objective Memorandum cycles, it makes it difficult to exploit opportunities as they arise, particularly for unified commands that lack permanently assigned forces. It also causes mismatches with the shorter resourcing cycles of our interagency partners. The dynamics of the African environment and impacts of continuous sustained security engagement with our partners require a flexible and responsive model of translating requirements into programs and resources in a shorter time frame. It also requires business rules that work in harmony with other government agencies.

It also puts forth a sizeable challenge to the force allocation models used to prioritize missions. Notwithstanding the fact that ongoing and demanding operations such as *Iraqi Freedom* and *Enduring Freedom* are rightly our top priorities, in general those activities that serve to prevent conflict, such as the security assistance programs described above, have almost always tended to fall in the lowest priority. Therefore, programs that have reduced the need to commit U.S. forces in the long term often are at risk.

Programs do not always produce immediately measurable results. While one can measure the numbers of African soldiers and sailors trained during APS missions or MIBOC–A classes or the number of clinics built, the real measures of success relate to the true goals of preventing conflict and establishing self-sustained security and stability. These are elusive. The opportunity to gauge how well a nation can respond to crisis sometimes only comes when a crisis occurs. The real results of security assistance efforts manifest themselves after years or decades. We acknowledge that occasional setbacks due to unfavorable political or economic conditions are a possibility. The wrong answer is to become too fickle when this occurs, as it may cause us to forfeit our standing as a nation rebounds. Again, a persistent and sustained level of effort is critical.

Meantime, while security is a necessary precondition to development, progress in development is a factor in maintaining lasting security and stability. In other words, a comprehensive government approach is

required. However, aligning priorities across the interagency community has been next to impossible, not so much because the priorities naturally differ but because of the lack of transparency in the decisionmaking processes. Consequently, decisions made by one agency to reduce or alter support to a given nation cannot be addressed by other agencies in a manner that permits either alternate support mechanisms to be developed or helpful communication with that partner. Greater transparency is needed if we are to exercise the flexibility, versatility, and consistency that Active Security demands.

### Beyond Phase Zero

Because theater security cooperation plays such an important role in Active Security, some may believe that it is just another name for Phase Zero, which attempted to capture and codify the types of theater security cooperation activities that geographic combatant commands performed outside of named operations. However, as both a moniker and a philosophy, Phase Zero falls short.

First, joint doctrine describes Phase Zero as “Shape,” which is the opposite of an Active Security approach.<sup>3</sup> *Shaping* asserts our influence over the environment in such a way that conditions are favorable for future operations. Active Security recognizes that the environment belongs to our partners, and it is our relationships with those partners that determine the nature of that environment. This is why Active Security requires us to be a listening and learning organization. Our full appreciation of our partners’ perspectives and support of their needs are what ultimately set conditions that are favorable for preventing conflict and avoiding the need for conducting operations.

Next, by referring to it as a “phase,” many (including our partners) misunderstand it as a natural precursor to traditional military operations. When certain conditions arise in Phase Zero, go to Phase One. But this is more than a perception issue. The definition itself poses problems: “In joint operation planning, a [phase] is a definitive stage of an operation or campaign during which a large portion of the forces and capabilities are involved in similar or mutually supporting activities for a common purpose.” Yet in reality, activities associated with Phase Zero are by nature indefinite and enduring. Active Security takes that notion one step further—that these activities must be exercised at a persistent and sustained level of effort through all other phases. Phase Zero had no such qualifier.

Furthermore, Phase Zero and Phase One have proven to be apples and oranges. Unlike Phases One through Four in a traditional campaign, the alleged transition from Phase Zero to Phase One is unclear and unpredictable, and in fact may not actually occur. In the case of Mozambique, should the Zambezi have flooded in 2004 with the programs having yet to be completed, the Phase Zero activities would likely have continued during any U.S. joint operation that might have occurred. Phase Zero and Phase One would not only occur simultaneously; they would probably be fully independent of one another.

Active Security represents a fundamental shift in the way we address and prioritize security assistance. It is clearly within our national strategic interests to prevent conflict and foster conditions that permit development in Africa. Doing so requires a full understanding of the perspectives and needs of our African partners, so we can provide them with programs that meet their needs and support U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives. It requires new business rules that permit unified commands the flexibility and versatility to exercise those programs quickly and effectively and that exercise the necessary persistence to ensure the programs produce the desired long-term effects.

We have had tremendous success with a number of programs in Africa precisely because Active Security principles have been in force. However, we have treated such principles as the exception. In USAFRICOM, they will be the rule. It is what our partners want from us, and it is in our national interest. **JFQ**

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### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Department of Defense Publication 5105.38–M, *Security Assistance Management Manual* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, October 2003), 33.

<sup>2</sup> These come under various names, including Offices of Defense Cooperation and Offices of Military Cooperation.

<sup>3</sup> Joint Publication 3–0, *Joint Operations* (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Forces Command, February 2006), IV–27; Joint Publication 5–0, *Joint Operation Planning* (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Forces Command, December 2006), IV–35.