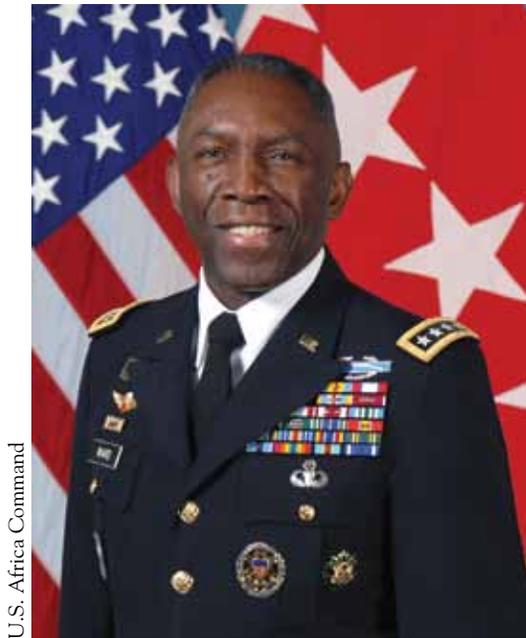


An Interview with William E. Ward



U.S. Africa Command

As the first combatant command to embed the 3D [diplomacy, defense, development] concept in your structure, what would you say are the impediments to better integration between civilian and military agencies?

General Ward: I don't know if *impediment* is the right word. As our experience continues with respect to planning and understanding the various cultures in the planning process, we are getting better; and the integration will continue to improve. Once you get things

going on the ground, the integration at the tactical level tends to be very good. The diplomatic, defense, and development professionals want to make it work. So our planning effort to get to effective integration is what we need to continually reinforce. It's a function of how the various organizations do that work; the culture of planning that the military brings is from a unique perspective, as is the planning culture of USAID [U.S. Agency for International Development]. How we bring those distinct cultures closer together at the initial stages of planning is where we need continued improvement.

Do you have adequate civilian personnel at U.S. Africa Command [AFRICOM] to achieve that improved 3D integration?

General Ward: At AFRICOM headquarters we would like as much 3D integration as possible, but because of resourcing constraints and staffing levels, we don't have the civilian complement we need to do that as effectively as I would like. For example, we have a very thin layer of USAID professionals who can be made available to us at AFRICOM. But Secretary of Defense [Robert] Gates, [Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff] Admiral [Mike] Mullen, other geographic commanders, and I are actively supporting increased civilian capacity with our interagency partners so that those additional

General William E. Ward, USA, is Commander of U.S. Africa Command.

resources for personnel, for manning, and for staffing become available in the future.

How would you characterize the differences between military planning culture and development planning culture as you've experienced it?

General Ward: I'm not very familiar with the development planning process, though working together with development professionals is helping the military to better understand those processes. The military planning cycle is very deliberate. The military decisionmaking process is a very deliberate step-by-step process that in a crisis mode has to be compressed and accelerated. When you compress and accelerate [the process], a lot of assumptions are made, and under duress many things have to be done that may not have been anticipated. Those assumptions and decisions must be socialized throughout the interagency, but often at very high speed. Increasingly important to the military is how our activities are affecting the overall environment, and how we understand that environment. We need to improve in this area. The more we work together, the more our deliberate processes will become accessible to our partners; and at the same time we will increasingly have the flexibility to bring into our military processes awareness of our partners' planning cultures because we know they have an impact on what we do. We haven't been doing this together very long, but the good news is the more we work together, the better we will get at it.

One of the things you hear quite a bit about at AFRICOM headquarters in Stuttgart is Phase Zero planning. Would you elaborate a bit on AFRICOM's experience with Phase Zero?

General Ward: Phase Zero operations are not totally new; the concept has been around for a while in a formal way. This is the business of doing things day to day that are designed to promote stability in a proactive way as opposed to having to react to a crisis. Phase Zero might seem to imply the first step toward Phase One, Two, and so on—the first step in a process that will continually move forward. In my mind, we should always be doing Phase Zero work, even in the midst of more kinetic activity as in Phase Two; we should still be doing the sorts of activities that put in place and support the elements of stability. The constant application of these soft power tools to reinforce success and to help maintain stability is crucial.

Could you describe some AFRICOM activities that you would describe as Phase Zero?

General Ward: I would include our multiple engagement activities with our partner nations to build increased capacity and professionalism in the military through officer development. I also include those things we are doing in conjunction with our other governmental partners in the developmental area—things that the local population view as clearly to their benefit. For example, I would include those activities where we play a supporting role in humanitarian projects or medical civic action projects, or veterinary civic action projects done in conjunction with local authorities. These types of activities combined with teacher education, professional medical training, and building of appropriate facilities are Phase Zero activities that help create conditions to reduce the local population's susceptibility to outside agitators. We also support agricultural development, not as the lead agency, but in a way

that is supportive of others' efforts. That's why understanding the full picture of what's being done is so important—so that we can be inside the planning process of those activities we can add value to.

Those are some examples of Phase Zero activities. It's those steady state military-to-military engagement activities that we consistently engage in—helping to build stable security structures so that the partner nations can provide for their people's security. But it's also those broader developmental activities where our participation can add value and help achieve the objectives or complement what's being done by our interagency partners.

Have you encountered any resistance from civilian agencies when AFRICOM has engaged in these kinds of activities?

General Ward: Yes, but it's less and less the case. Because once we sit down and communicate clearly our understanding that we don't see the military in the primary role, but in a complementary or support one, and we find ways to work together, the resistance ends. It could be simply transportation—you need to get from point A to point B. Maybe we can provide that assistance. So as you have dialogue about your programs and you find ways where we might be able to support, that angst, that suspicion goes away. Where there is a reluctance to engage with the military, it's often because of a lack of understanding. So you establish a relationship, you establish a dialogue, you find where there are common lines of operation, if you will, supporting lines of operation, and we fill those in. This is even increasingly the case with the NGOs [nongovernmental organizations].

As to USAID, I can't say our relationship gets better every day, but it's improving

through working together, and there are fewer skeptics who want nothing to do with the military. We are day by day reducing that anxiety, reducing that misunderstanding, reducing that suspicion, reducing that reluctance to work together. We at AFRICOM certainly are respectful of our USAID and other nongovernmental partners. We understand that in certain environments if you are seen as working with the military, your security might be at risk. I think NGOs and civilian partners increasingly see themselves being threatened regardless of that and are beginning to see the advantages of working together. Yet understanding those who might have that concern, or where we can't find ways to be supportive, we'll certainly not push, not impose, not dictate, and not direct. I believe there is a growing comfort and desire to work together because there is growing understanding that there are things we can do to assist them as they carry out their jobs. And that is what we want to be able to do, to work as partners.

Do you think that the Soldiers who join up thinking “we're here to fight and win wars” accept these nontraditional roles, such as conflict prevention, as opposed to warfighting?

General Ward: Oh, absolutely. The thing about today's force—the young men and women we have the privilege of serving with today—they get it like no other. This is a flexible, versatile, agile force. They understand the difference; they also understand the positive role that they can play in both the warfighting and conflict prevention arenas.

In the 2 years since AFRICOM was formally established, would you say the

quality of military-to-military relationships has improved?

General Ward: Our partners traditionally think of themselves as the dedicated combat and command force that's there solely to engage in military activities. As a result of our increased mil-to-mil activities, we've been able to devote attention and time to them, listening to them, determining what sorts of things are important to them. They seem to want to become more capable of providing for their security, protecting their borders, working in regional cooperation with their neighbors. And as we have exhibited our interests transparently, and they have seen a benefit to them from this association, there are requests for more mil-to-mil engagement and coordination. In fact, I met with several African ambassadors just the other day, here in Washington, DC, and got absolutely no questions about why AFRICOM exists or why we're doing what we're doing. It was all about what more can we do. Now there's clearly a desire for engagement with us—with AFRICOM and with the United States more substantially. And that desire to work with us is evident around the continent, including the island nations. Our ability to engage is only impacted by our foreign policy objectives for the various countries, the regions that are there, and the availability of resources given where we are in today's global situation with the employment of forces in other parts of the world. As those things change and partner nations come to us with additional requests for interaction and engagement, given resources being available and a foreign policy that supports engagement, I think we will see continued activity in the mil-to-mil engagement area.

And you see AFRICOM's role as having been a major catalyst for this increase in interest in African countries in interacting with the United States?

General Ward: I think so, yes. I think the message has been that the United States is serious about partnering with you as a partner—as an *equal* partner—listening to your thoughts, listening to your desires, listening to your objectives, and then integrating those as best we can; and having a command that is focused only on Africa provides that type of clarity, vision, and purpose. AFRICOM is not distracted by other things that in past times were prioritized by the three commands covering Africa at the expense of Africa.

How do you mitigate the risk that the African militaries that AFRICOM supports and assists might turn on their own civilian leaderships, or worse, their own people?

General Ward: That's why the integration of the 3Ds is so important. Military-to-military work can't be done in a vacuum. That's why it's a part of the totality of our engagement, along with the diplomatic and development pieces. I don't control or command those military forces. That's where the diplomatic work comes in; the political leaders of our partner nations are working with our diplomatic and political leaders. State intent, state purpose . . . the sorts of things that are important from a civilian control of the military perspective help ensure that the work we do is in fact being used in ways commensurate with legitimate military activity. Therefore the integration of the defense business with development and diplomacy is critical. And when this integration is effective, you help achieve the position that you have trained

forces that support order and good governance in a society. That's why it has to be done hand in hand. That's why the integration of all 3Ds is so critical.

Have you seen signals from any African militaries of an interest in helping to develop their own countries economically?

General Ward: Sure, absolutely. In fact, all our civic action projects seek to reinforce that; for example, whenever we do Civil Affairs projects, we always encourage the partner nation's military to be side by side with our military so that the people see their militaries working on their behalf and for their benefit. Many of the nations see their military institutions as a substantial element in their development projects. Engineering comes up quite often—they help with some of the infrastructure work that needs to be done in the countries. That is an increasingly important consideration being taken by the partner nations as they look at what their militaries are and the role that their militaries play in their societies.

Are there specific country cases where this is actually taking place, where the local military is getting involved in the national development program?

General Ward: Liberia is one case. There are clearly cases where some of the East African armies—Kenya and Uganda, for example—play significant roles in disaster relief and humanitarian assistance. These are clearly roles that these countries see as appropriate for their militaries. More African leaders than not see such roles as appropriate for their militaries. There is very little hesitation for the countries to call upon and use their militaries when it comes to disaster

relief and humanitarian assistance, but also in some cases more routine developmental activities as well. Engineering units getting involved in agricultural projects is pretty widespread throughout the continent.

Again, that is one of the goals of our Civil Affairs program: to let partner militaries know that these are appropriate roles and doing so in ways that support overall country objectives. When they see our guys doing Civil Affairs work, and especially when we are partnering side by side, their populations see it as well. This reinforces the notion that their militaries are there to be their protector as opposed to being their oppressor, which has been the situation in many of the nations of Africa for many years. The military was seen as predators of the people as opposed to being there to protect them.

If not officially AFRICOM's headquarters on the continent, the Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa [CJTF–HOA] is certainly the command's biggest presence on the continent. How would you characterize its evolution since its early days as a capture and kill operation?

General Ward: Combined Joint Task Force–Horn of Africa is still focused on countering violent extremism and still focused on helping to create the conditions that reduce the potential for extremism to take hold. It's working through our various civil action programs and delivering the sort of benefits to the people—to the local populations—by the work being done with the Country Teams and USAID. Our efforts are supporting an environment that is less hospitable to outside negative influence. The people see things being done on their behalf by their legitimate government and by others who also care for them. So you have

the CJTF-HOA doing this in their operational area, predominantly the area in East Africa, that's focused on these mil-to-mil engagements that are helping to reinforce the positive contributions being made by those nations' militaries to provide for their security, to secure their borders, and to protect their populations.

What do you see as the emerging national security threats to the United States on the continent of Africa right now? What's on the horizon?

General Ward: The thing that we are most concerned about is stability across the continent and the potential threat from undergoverned or ungoverned spaces that create opportunities for those who would seek to do us harm to come in and exploit for training and recruitment. Some of our programs in East Africa and in North Africa are designed to address just that; where you have internal instability governmental transitions can cause more instability. In this age of global society high levels of instability have indirect and sometimes direct impact on us. When we see upcoming elections in unstable countries, we recognize the possibility of violence that could negatively impact us. Here again is an example of the importance of the integration of the 3Ds. We are involved in elections but we rely on our diplomats to help create the conditions for successful elections. AFRICOM certainly encourages the militaries in those countries to behave appropriately, to stay apolitical, not to get involved in political competition. Our training reinforces that as the proper role of a military in a democratic society—not being involved in political competition. We do things to address the potential threats from transitions in unstable environments and from ungoverned spaces.

I also see environmental issues as potentially threatening to stability, and thus to us. Energy and water shortages and natural disasters where huge populations are impacted all have the potential to contribute to instability. There is also the connectivity between Africa and South America with respect to drug trafficking. The drug trade often comes from South America, through Africa, up into Europe, and back to the United States. All of these are things that I see as threats. How we work with our various partners to help counter those threats is the work not just of my command but also other parts of our government, as well as the international community.

Can you foresee any realistic scenario that might result in significant U.S. combat forces on the ground in Africa?

General Ward: Not that I can envision today. We have some partnerships such that some great humanitarian disaster could result in requests for U.S. military help and assistance. That is certainly a possibility. The President is the one who makes that decision based on the circumstances. If huge innocent populations were threatened with violence, international powers could decide that we won't allow that harm to occur—then some kind of intervention could take place. I don't see anything on the horizon, but should something like that occur and the President or other decisionmakers decide to intervene, we would clearly be in a position to do our part and react accordingly.

How do you assess the risk to U.S. interests posed by China's growing involvement in Africa?

General Ward: China is clearly in Africa pursuing its national interests in ways that are

typical of how China does business. We're there as well in a way that makes sense to us—hopefully in ways that will promote long-term stability in Africa from a security point of view, as well as from a developmental point of view and diplomatic point of view. Where we have common purposes with China, such as stability, good governance, professional security forces, and effective police, borders, customs, and judicial systems, working with anyone who shares those purposes makes sense. I've heard many policymakers say that. We're not in Africa competing with China or any other nation; we're in Africa to do what we can in pursuit of our national interest in a more stable continent. We pursue our national interest in an African stability that enhances our stability at home and helps to protect our people both at home and abroad from threats that might emanate from the continent of Africa. And so to the degree we can work with China or any other country in pursuit of those common goals or objectives, we would seek to do that.

But do you think we might be losing influence in Africa, relative to China, in terms of major power politics, grand strategy?

General Ward: I don't see it that way. I think that the nations of Africa pursue their own interests. They will partner with whoever is partnering in ways that are conducive to their interests. We need to continue our activities and partner with them because we are still welcome across the continent by and large in most places. Our economic and development support activities such as the Millennium Challenge Account, the African Growth and Opportunity Act, and various other projects and programs are still welcome and deeply appreciated. Our security assistance, engagement, and

involvement are still welcome, and we just need to do our best to participate when we're asked, where we're asked. Given the resources to do that, we will continue to be a country that African countries will seek to partner with. I believe that's the case today, and will be the case in the future as well.

How can the forces assigned to AFRICOM, both civilian and military, prepare better for the assignments that they're going to take on, both at headquarters and in the field?

General Ward: Actually, AFRICOM doesn't have any assigned forces. We have components—an Army component, naval component, air component, and a Marine component. Special Operations is a subunified command. We talked about the Combined Joint Task Force—Horn of Africa. Our men and women, both military and civilian, come to work either at headquarters in Stuttgart, Germany, in one of the components or the subunified command, or go to work on the continent as a part of some exercise, some program, or multilateral engagement. We want them to enter those contexts with a better understanding of culture, the environment, the history, so that our activities are informed of and by the local environment and cognizant of the traditions in the local area. Language skills and appropriate cultural orientation are important so that our men and women who work with our African partners approach them from a perspective that reflects more than just our own perspective. One of our objectives is to ensure that anyone who goes to the continent and works with our African partners has some background, some understanding in who they are working with. We will continue to focus on that, and we will continue to put programs in place that build that capacity.

WARD

At AFRICOM headquarters, for instance, we have routine programs bringing in speakers, authors, and scholars to help give us the understanding that we need. We use cultural anthropologists to help us better understand the environment and the culture, so that when we go to a particular place on the continent we know specifically about that place. It's a big continent with 53 nations, and vast subcontinental regions. Each is different, and so in each case, having specific orientation and cultural insight helps us better understand the context and do things that are in keeping with the traditions, the norms of that location, as opposed to our own purely, uniquely American point of view.

What advice will you give your successor? What is the biggest challenge he is going to face, what to look out for or what to prioritize?

General Ward: I don't think I will tell my successor anything different than any commander would say to those who follow. Obviously it's a dynamic environment. Have your senses about you, build relationships so that you understand better where you are operating. Be sensitive to those things we talked about earlier—the potential sources of instability and how you work to mitigate or contain them. How to bring resources to bear to help achieve our objectives are things we will have to always pay attention to. I think building on where we are is important because as I mentioned, the command has done some pretty substantial work helping to create an environment where our African partners know that we can be trusted and that they can rely on us. That's because we've listened to them. Maintaining that as we go down the road is important. Let's not start over from scratch, but build upon what we've accomplished in this regard.

Obviously the specific programs and activities will reflect the crisis of the day. Yet while there will always be a crisis of the day, we have to keep our eye on the long term. We have to keep our eye on the 20-, 40-, 50-year timeframes, and provide the sustained engagement needed to create the environment our African partners have told us they want to create—a more stable environment where peace and development can occur. In the end, it is that development that produces enduring stability in these societies: determining how we the military can continue to be a contributing factor, working with the other parts of our government and the international community and our host nations to move toward this objective. These are the sorts of things my successor will be faced with, and bringing all of that together is the job that the Nation asks of the commander. **PRISM**