So Why Are We Here?

- Importance of understanding the AFRICOM problem set
  Where culture is the “condition” – not the “task” or “standard”

AFRICOM/CC Gen Ward in Botswana
Outline

Framing
- "Security" and "culture"
- Applying "culture"
- Realities of external engagements in Africa

Cultural Variables that Matter

Strong and Weak Ties

Implications for partnering with Africans

Air Force contribution to the fight
Some Definitions

“Cultural Ramifications of African Security”
Some Definitions

“Cultural Ramifications of African Security”
Defining “Security”

What is the “referent object”?  
Whose security?  
Ours or theirs??  
What is “security”?  

US Air Force
Evolving Notions Of “Security”

Cold War era “security” paradigm:

✓ State-centric
✓ Emphasis on military power
✓ Protection of sovereignty, boundaries and elites

Post Cold War “human security” paradigm:

✓ “People-centric”
✓ Safety from chronic threats
✓ Protection from hurtful disruptions in patterns of daily life
Africans

Early advocates...

...Of broad new security definitions
The post-Apartheid South African model

“Security is an all-encompassing condition in which individual citizens live in freedom, peace and safety; participate fully in the process of governance; enjoy the protection of fundamental rights; have access to resources and the basic necessities of life; and inhabit an environment which is not detrimental to their health and well-being.”  

*White Paper on Defence, 1996*
Implication

If we are going to partner effectively with Africans on issues of security...

...we have to work within African notions of security.

Staff at Tanzanian Military Academy, Monduli

Senegalese civil society

Congolese Politicians
Some Definitions

“Cultural Ramifications of African Security”
Defining “Culture”

Everyone has a favorite definition – that’s not really our issue here. . .

What are the variables that matter. . . and how do I actually use this stuff??
“Culture” as the Condition

Culture and military planning (in partnerships)

. . .to achieve the collaboration we want?

How do I work through the local cultural filters. . .

I have a mission
How do I send clear messages... that achieve the effects we want... while avoiding undesirable 2d order effects?
“Culture” as the Condition

Culture and military planning (humanitarian operations)

I have a mission

What must I do... 
...to protect people...
...satisfy basic needs...
...and facilitate return...
...to status quo ante?
Cultural Factors

Routine peacetime engagements have their own dynamics!
Working “Culture”
In routine peacetime engagements

- Communicating across cultural barriers
- Building productive relationships
- Managing cross-cultural conflict
  - Negotiating

Language skills are very useful but interpersonal skills are critical
Working “Culture”

In Africa, this is not just about relations with Africans!

Allies and coalition partners...

French troop in Cote d’Ivoire

Indian peacekeepers in Congo

International organizations...

Medecins sans frontiers in Darfur

Humanitarian workers

In Africa, this is not just about relations with Africans!
Working “Culture”

The common objective in all applications:

Influence

Along a scale...

“Do no harm”

Full mutual agreement, concord, and synergistic cooperation
So You Want to Influence Africans?

Who, specifically, do you want to influence?

Military counterparts?

National leaders?

Urban intellectuals?

Traumatized refugees?

Business leaders?

Rural populations?

Traditional elites?
If We Want Influence In Africa. . .

We must know the local implications of:

- Environment, resources, livelihoods, and settlement patterns
- Social organization and identity
- Distribution of power, modes of resolving disputes and conflict
- Distinctions between authority, legitimacy and prestige
- World view, systems of logic, norms of justice, locus of value
- Modes of communication
- Recent history
- Sources of instability and conflict
- African diversity in all of the above
Incredible Diversity

-- Genetic
-- Cultural
-- Linguistic
-- Ideological
-- Urban versus rural

-- Historical
-- Environmental
-- Economic
-- Political
Let’s Talk “Environment”
And livelihood

We cannot understand “culture” in Africa
without understanding “environment”