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Boston University African Presidential Center

Boston University

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Boston University
On October 22, 2008, the *African Presidential Archives and Research Center* (APARC) at Boston University hosted a forum on the newly formed United States Africa Command (AFRICOM); with General William E. Ward, Commander, as the keynote speaker. General Ward discussed the future of U.S.-Africa relations and AFRICOM’s role on the African continent.

The United States Africa Command is a new U.S. military headquarters based in Stuttgart, Germany, and devoted solely to Africa. Unlike traditional Unified Commands, AFRICOM will focus on war prevention rather than war fighting. Africa Command intends to work with African nations and organizations to build regional security and crisis-response capacity in support of U.S. government efforts in Africa.

Following President Bush’s announcement that AFRICOM would be established as a separate Unified Command, concerns arose about AFRICOM’s role on the African continent. Specifically, there has been apprehension about diplomacy and development falling under the umbrella of the Defense Department.

General Ward’s address set to alleviate those concerns by creating an understanding, awareness, and knowledge about AFRICOM’s role on the continent. “This address helps people to understand what the command is about rather than rely on preconceived perceptions that do not reflect the reality,” General Ward said following the event. General Ward became the first commander of AFRICOM on October 1, 2007.

One of the missions of APARC is to establish a forum to engage political, business, academic, and public and private sector leaders regarding Africa’s global relationships. The forum on AFRICOM underscored this objective by bringing together scholars, diplomats, industry leaders, and international dignitaries via video conference to discuss the role AFRICOM will play in Africa’s future.

Nearly 300 individuals participated, including members of Boston University’s ROTC department and the APARC American-African Universities (AAU) Collaborative, which includes Boston University; Elizabeth City State University in North Carolina; Morehouse College in Georgia; and Morgan State University in Maryland.

“When I served as the U.S. Ambassador to Tanzania in the aftermath of the bombing of our Embassy, I came to appreciate that Africa is an important battleground in the fight against terrorist threats to the United States,” said Ambassador Charles R. Stith, Director of the *African Presidential Archives and Research Center*. “In the years since I served in Tanzania, Africa’s importance relative to our national security interests has only increased. It is projected that by 2010 we will import 25 percent of our oil from Africa. Moreover, 89 percent of African countries have substantial Muslim populations, and there continues to be flashpoints of conflict on the continent where there are clear connections with radical Islamic elements.”

The other factor in APARC’s decision to focus on the United States’ commitment to engage Africa is the potential backlash against the Bush Administration’s Africa initiatives in reaction to what are perceived as broader foreign policy failures. The results of the ongoing war in Iraq have subjected the Bush Administration to a pre-
A conspicuous drop in its approval rating with the American public. Both the Democratic and Republican presidential candidates are running against Bush’s foreign policy agenda. In such an environment, it is a real possibility that in the attempt to start a new course, the next U.S. President will be tempted to dash all of President Bush’s foreign initiatives and start anew. The result could be that Africa falls further down the list of foreign policy priorities, or that some of the Bush Administration’s more progressive and successful initiatives in Africa get ignored. From the HIV/AIDS effort, to the Millennium Challenge Account, to the Africa Education Initiative, there are the beginnings of a paradigm of possibilities for a new approach to U.S. foreign policy in a multi-polar geopolitical environment. As the leading epicenter for U.S.-Africa policy in the United States today, APARC recognizes the need to build on those initiatives and engage the public and private sector leaders that influence such programs.

The forum was moderated by Ambassador Stith and included opening remarks from Dr. David Campbell, Boston University Provost. Roxana Farahmand at Boston University, Reginald Cleaver and Bolaji James at Morehouse College, Damika Howard and Robert Carusso at Elizabeth City State University, and Deanna Tucker and Monique Fulton at Morgan State University all participated in the question and answer session, giving students an opportunity to address their specific concerns about AFRICOM and further explore its role on the African continent. Captain William Laase of Boston University’s ROTC closed out the Q&A session.
General William E. Ward
Commander, U.S. Africa Command
“United States Africa Command: Helping Africans Provide for their Own Security”

As commander of United States Africa Command, it is an honor and a privilege to address the African Presidential Archives and Research Center and all those participating via videoconference at universities across the country. This month is historic, with United States Africa Command being officially declared the sixth geographic command within the Department of Defense (DoD), responsible for DoD activities across the continent of Africa (minus Egypt) and its island nations. This has been a major undertaking. Achieving unified command status in such a short time demonstrates the will and commitment of the United States toward security and stability in Africa. It is not often you get to create something new that will make a real difference for our nation and our partners.

What difference will U.S. Africa Command make? What was the command established to do and how will it be done? I will provide an overview of our mission and strategy, and introduce some of our programs and activities. I will spend more time talking about specific programs already underway or emerging in Africa that exemplify what the strategy is about—Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors, and Marines training and exercising with their African counterparts to increase their security capacity and help prevent future conflicts.

United States Africa Command’s mission is: “In concert with other U.S. Government agencies and international partners, conduct sustained security engagement through military-to-military programs, military-sponsored activities and other military operations as directed to promote a stable and more secure African environment in support of U.S. foreign policy.”

Let me address some key points about the mission statement.

“In concert with other U.S. Government agencies and international partners...” Everything we do as a unified command is in support of the whole USG effort. We ensure our activities neither duplicate nor interfere with the work of others, and we only lead those efforts that are appropriate for the U.S. military to lead, such as military professionalization.

“...conduct sustained security engagement...” We have committed ourselves to the delivery of effective security assistance programs that add value to the security and stability of the continent of Africa and its island nations. This is how we will make our greater contributions to security and stability in Africa. The key for these programs is their sustainment, which is absolutely necessary if the gains made are to be long-lasting and self-sustaining. We understand the importance of being a reliable partner, one whose long-term goals and commitment to the programs is maintained to ensure lasting added value for our African partners.

The achievement of these long-lasting gains is aided by the recent DoD restructure, which makes the continent of Africa and its island nations the sole focus for the programs and activities of a single unified command, rather than continuing to be a low priority of three unified commands. The mission of U.S. Africa Command clearly focuses on military-to-military activities; when requested by civilian agencies, we play a supportive role in humanitarian relief, disaster assistance, and other activities. I made a point of stating outright that the activities conducted by this command would be in support of U.S. foreign policy, not separate from it or even in addition to it—clearly in support of the policies, which all of you create and implement.

“... and other military operations as directed...” is also important. We are a military command, and therefore can be directed to take
action under the President’s orders. I want to make it clear that U.S. Africa Command is a fully empowered Unified Command. After our mission statement was approved, we devoted a significant amount of effort toward establishing a vision for the Command and the strategy for achieving this vision. Our vision and strategy is aligned with the strategic outlook of the Chiefs of Mission and supports the objectives of the partner nations.

Our strategy centers on a persistent and sustained level of effort focused on security assistance programs that lead to better prepared and more professional militaries functioning, as a legitimate instrument of government in a democratic society and focused on conflict prevention. This emphasis helps set the conditions for efforts to further stability and growth through dialogue and development. This enables 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. Our pursuit of this strategy is through four major categories of activities:

**Building partner security capacity** is the hallmark of the strategy. It is the primary role that we fulfill on a day-to-day basis. We perform hundreds of these types of activities routinely, many on a small scale. Our goal is to add value to these activities — to make them more effective and more efficient at building the capacity that Africans themselves desire. A stronger African security sector is vital toward preventing conflict and providing a stable environment in which the inhabitants of Africa can live in peace and prosperity.

One of the most important reasons for establishing the command was so that we could better coordinate DoD efforts in Africa. An important aspect of this is captured in **promoting our strategic relationships.** In our plan to build partner security capacity; we will stand behind our partners and be steadfast proponents in matters that are in our mutual best interests. We are taking a proactive and forward-looking stance to ensure that the partnerships we build today last well into the future and that they continue to remain relevant to attaining the goals set by our government.

We continue to support our U.S. government partners, particularly in **civil-military activities.** These activities not only provide outstanding training and experience for some of our military communities such as doctors, engineers, and veterinarians, they also support African humanitarian capacity building, bringing goodwill and hope to the African people, leading to enhanced security.

**Crisis response** is an important component of our strategy. Our posture and ability to respond to crises when necessary assures our friends and dissuades our adversaries. We will conduct our crisis response activities in a coordinated fashion that supports the whole USG effort.

These activities do not necessarily result in sweeping changes, although each individual activity we conduct will produce beneficial short-term results. There are clear limits to the impact our activities will have, absent associated supporting changes, to the way our African partners govern themselves and how they manage the non-military aspects of their security sector. Each African partner — whether at the national level or at the theater and regional levels — is different. What works in one place won’t necessarily work in another. This again speaks to the importance of our command supporting the goals of our partners and understanding their perspective. From these, we can build new activities and programs that are effective and efficient, thereby adding value to existing ones.

I recently visited Liberia to participate in their commemoration of the activation of the first battalion of the new Armed Forces of Liberia. Since the cessation of hostilities in Liberia in 2003, U.S. security assistance efforts in Liberian Security Sector Reform have made a world of difference. I witnessed first-hand the pride resonating from these new soldiers, their civilian leadership and the Liberian citizens themselves. This accomplishment will ultimately enable the Armed Forces of Liberia to defend the freedoms of its people and secure a better future for all Liberians. This is the kind of result that U.S. Africa Command is meant to aid in Africa.
August 12, 2008

The Honorable Charles R. Stith
Boston, Massachusetts

Dear Charles:

Your letter and the copy of your book, *For Such a Time as This*, reached me at the White House. Thank you for thinking of me. I am grateful for your kind words of support, and I appreciate your efforts to chronicle the contributions of Africa’s leaders.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush
Ambassador Stith embarks on international Book Tour

On September 16, 2008, the African Presidential Archives and Research Center (APARC) at Boston University hosted the first U.S. book release and signing for Ambassador Charles R. Stith’s latest publication, *For Such a Time as This: African Leadership Challenges*. The book was launched this summer in Dar es Salaam, Johannesburg, Hong Kong, and the Caribbean before Ambassador Stith returned home for the Boston release, which was attended by numerous members of the Boston media, three Consulate Generals, and the Greater Boston community.

Following the event in Boston, Ambassador Stith traveled to Atlanta for three book signings, hosted at the Grounds Coffee House, Morehouse College, and the Interdenominational Theological Center. Bishop Charles E. Blake and The West Angeles Church of God in Christ hosted Ambassador Stith’s book signing in Los Angeles. Eugene Ludwig, former Comptroller of the Currency during the Clinton administration, and his wife Carol, hosted a book release and reception in Washington D.C., which was attended by eleven former and current U.S. Ambassadors, officials from USAID, the IMF, the State Department, the Treasury Department and the Millennium Challenge Corporation, and a former US Trade Representative.

Far too often, our media outlets cover the tragedies of Africa while the positive news goes ignored. *For Such a Time as This: African Leadership Challenges* is one such example of the positive outcomes of good leadership on the continent. It was funded in part by a grant from USAID and is now available for purchase through Amazon.com. Published by APARC Press, this unprecedented book reflects the contributions of thirteen (13) former and current African heads of state. The book is a chronicle of their tenures in office, the challenges they faced, and the prospects for the future in their respective countries. *For Such a Time as This: African Leadership Challenges* is such a unique publication because it is the first time that so many leaders—from anywhere in the world—have come together to share their stories in a single publication.

Recognition and support of *For Such a Time as This: African Leadership Challenges* has extended all the way to the White House, where President George W. Bush received a signed copy of the publication. In addition, Ambassador Stith has received letters of support from Auerbach Grayson, the Carnegie Corporation, De Beers, and several fellow Ambassadors, among others.

Former Tanzanian Presidents and contributors to the book, Ali Hassan Mwinyi and Benjamin Mkapa, joined the attendees at the launch in Tanzania, which received front-page news coverage. In South Africa, Ambassador Stith did interviews on CNBC Africa’s *Regional Roundup, African Views*, 180 Degrees Live, and *Point Blanc* news programs on South Africa’s major broadcasting network (SABC). Ambassador Stith most recently appeared on Boston Neighborhood Network’s (BNN) *Wake Up Live* and was interviewed by GlobalAtlanta. He has upcoming appearances on NBC’s (WHDH-TV) *Urban Update*, ABC’s (WCVB-TV) *CityLine*, and CBS’s (WBZ-TV) *Sunday with Liz*.

Ambassador Stith also wrote a piece for *Ebony* magazine (October 2008) titled *The Best of Africa*, which details world-class tourist attractions on the African continent. The article appeared in *Ebony*’s spotlight on Africa series, launched last December to acknowledge the growing importance of covering African affairs. Ambassador Stith’s article informed 12 million readers of a side of Africa rarely covered in the mainstream media as part of *Ebony*’s commitment to more sustained, wide-ranging, and in-depth coverage of the African continent.

Ambassador Charles R. Stith, former U.S. Ambassador to Tanzania during the Clinton administration, is the director of Boston University’s African Presidential Archives and Research Center and serves on the faculty of Boston University’s International Relations Department. He is the author of *Political Religion* and has published articles in such newspapers as the *Boston Globe, New York Times, Atlanta Journal Constitution, the Denver Post,* and *USA Today.* Stith is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations.
For Such a Time as This:
African Leadership Challenges
A new publication by Ambassador Charles R. Stith

"An insightful look into the minds of African leaders — some controversial, others commendable, all of them caustic in their analysis of Africa's challenges." — Walter Kansteiner III, Former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs

"The future of Africa will be determined by the quality of its leadership. This book addresses the most critical issue in Africa today and in its future." — Stephen Hayes, President, The Corporate Council on Africa

"Whatever we think we know about the continent of Africa, its people and its governments, there is much more to learn. This book offers new and in depth information and insights from former African heads of state." — Phylicia Rashad, Actress

"The African statesman whose views are reflected in this book are the architects of post-colonial Africa. What they've provided is an understanding of the foundation on which future generations must build." — Bishop Charles E. Blake, Presiding Bishop, Church of God in Christ & CEO, Save Africa's Children

"Ambassador Stith has produced a timely and provocative collection of the history of modern Africa mediated through the profound insights of some of its most importance leaders. Sometimes anecdotal and autobiographical, but always analytical and probing. In For Such a Time as This, these lions of winter are in full roar." — Dr. Walter E. Fluker, Executive Director, The Leadership Center at Morehouse College

Now available for purchase at Amazon.com

If you are interested in supporting the African Presidential Archives and Research Center in its American-African Universities Collaborative and more, please contact Ebony Griffin, Program Development Manager, for donation levels and other information.
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