Technology Gap topics:
A1-1: "Work Flow Technology to Support Tactical Networking"
A1-2: "Composers and Operational Thread capabilities"
A2-2: "Small form factor C2 applications for disadvantaged platforms"
N2-3: "IA/Security architecture for direct information exchange with coalition partners"

DEPLOYING THE STANDBY FORCE: A FIRST IMPERATIVE IN AFRICA

A central piece of African vision lies in the ability for each Regional Economic Community (REC) to deploy a brigade-size force. Whether reactive or preventative, whether its mission is peace or war, this ability to project power *and services* is fundamental to African hopes for continental stability. However, none of the regions has the ability to do this. Perhaps the Economic Council Of Western African States (ECOWAS) is the furthest along but last summer during a U.S. European Command (EUCOM)-sponsored Limited Objective Experiment, Brigadier General Lai (the ECOWAS Operations Officer) stated that his primary challenge was the inability to identify and characterize the status and locations of pledged forces and to plan and execute missions with those forces.

This requirement can be reduced to the following three components:

1. Gathering, analyzing, displaying/sharing information among partner countries and with outside contributors.
2. Developing plans of action with the information and situational awareness it provides.
3. Executing those plans to include deploying/employing an expeditionary force.

These requirements suggest a system with characteristics that include:

1. Non-classified domain (not an appendage of a U.S. system)
2. Runs over the Internet and is web-based
3. Uses both open source/freeware to contain costs and payware to capture best of available technology
4. Contains search to GEO-VIZ technology and taxonomy-based structured search
5. Incorporates cellular- and satellite-compatible hand-held devices to support horizontal and vertical communications flow at the tactical edge
6. Is compatible with U.S. systems and current and future U.S. efforts on the continent.

Although its primary purpose might be to support a standby brigade, the fact that it can be accessible to a wide audience (non-classified) means it could support virtually any purpose. That said, the system must be viable and thus must have the procedural and encryption protections that are appropriate.

Architects for such a system must realize that a REC is made of individual and sovereign nations and that information sharing is an intimate proposition. African decision makers may prefer hierarchical management styles with close control of information over Western ideas of flat management and simultaneous information flow. The system must be co-developed with African contributors and pre-determined technology stacks should be rejected. The technology package must be designed to support the processes that users feel comfortable with. It must have built into it the perspective of the local user as opposed to the outsider no matter how well meant and compassionate that outsider might be.