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## Decoding the Triumph of Doctrine: The Success of Ghana's International Peace Support Operations

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### Key Messages:

- Ghana has been a beacon of peacekeeping around the world since its first United Nations peacekeeping mission in 1960. Since, it has been highly respected and lauded for the professionalism of its peacekeeping contingents.
- Ghana views peace security operations (PSOs) as its doctrinal and constitutional responsibility, and is committed to contributing to international peacekeeping despite changes in regime type and government.
- Ghana's doctrinal experience and adoption of international peace operations were predicated on a sense of military reform over the years, deliberate institutional capacity development of the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF), establishment of regional training centers and cooperation, as well as its continued involvement in UN/AU peace missions.
- Ghana's doctrinal experiences can provide useful ground and practical evidence for its PSO doctrine to serve as a model across the continent and as an inspiration for the development of an AU PSO doctrine.

### Introduction

Ghana has been a beacon of peacekeeping around the world. Since its first United Nations (UN) peacekeeping mission in the Congo in 1960,<sup>1</sup> its peacekeeping contingents have been highly respected and lauded for their professionalism and dedication to world peace.<sup>1</sup> In the midst of scandals involving UN and Africa Union (AU) peacekeeping troops, the Ghana peace support missions have towered high with respect to discipline and professionalism. Peacekeeping as a doctrinal responsibility is one which Ghana takes seriously.<sup>1</sup> This paper investigates the doctrinal triumph of Ghana's Peace Support Operations (PSO), specifically delineating the historical underpinnings of its PSO, its security policy as relating to PSO, and how that has developed and changed over the years in response to key missions and new challenges on the continent and beyond.

What makes peacekeeping an important goal of Ghana and its military? How can Ghana, with its checkered history of military takeovers pursue the goal of international peacekeeping with such discipline and national pride? Even with its limited resources, Ghana has played and continues to play a role as a pioneer of international peacebuilding and peace support operations.

### I. Method

This study consists of primary research as well as a review of academic and policy literature. The primary research involves field research and interviews with staff of the Ghana Armed Forces (GAF) and representatives of the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center (KAIPKTC). The review of academic and policy literature complements the primary research by exploring the historical processes that shaped the military, its leadership, the role of civil-military relations and the general internal politics that may have influenced and explain the reason for the success of Ghana's PSO doctrine.

Considering its quite ambitious scope, this research would have been enriched through extensive interviews across the military establishment and a cross section of society. However, the study fell short in this regard because of the short period of time spent on field research and also the difficulty of accessing information from the military. The study therefore might have missed some critical insights from experienced military officials, members of government and other experts whose views on the subject matter that would have added value to the study. The call for further research is ever important.

### II. Understanding Military Doctrine

Despite the varying understandings of doctrine and its use, it is possible to note the particularities of military doctrine as generally driven by a set of normative values; grounded on historical experiences and enabled by policy—political, economic, social, technological, environmental, legal, and including international law. It is adaptable, and guides the military not only in the conduct of war but also during peacetime, both external and internal to the country.<sup>1</sup>

In all of its peacekeeping interventions, the Ghana military has executed its duties professionally. The evolution of the concept of military doctrine, and Ghana's conceptualization and implementation of military doctrine, has contributed to the military's peacekeeping successes. On an international level, "guidance" documents produced by the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations constitute an emerging doctrine employing multilateral military force in its interventions.

Doctrine is however not a silver bullet, and not all doctrine has equal weight.<sup>2</sup> In the Ghana context, it is important to note that the GAF have traditionally operated without a traditional doctrine. Rather, they have some philosophies and principles guiding their behavior, which are influenced by the politics of Ghana and its external relations. Its peace support operations doctrine specifically is influenced to a very large extent by its foreign policy objectives of promoting friendly relations and commitment to international peace and security.

### III. Ghana's Peace Support Operations Doctrine

Ghana's PSO doctrine serves as an extension of its domestic security policy. Thus the key role Ghana plays in regional security is not only for altruistic reasons of re-establishing security in conflict affected countries, but it is cognizant of the potential contagion of conflict that may affect its domestic security and socio-economic development.

While the Ghanaian military is considered one of the smallest standing armies in the world, its level of professionalism in international PSO is renowned. In its peacekeeping role, Ghana views its conduct as "emphasizing the significance of the rule of law both home and abroad."<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the continued engagement of the GAF in peacekeeping over the decades has also contributed in refining the conduct of its peacekeeping contingents, which has had a positive impact on the professionalism and discipline of the GAF. Mission specific training imparts understanding of the context of specific conflicts, geopolitical situations, peoples, cultures, and mission mandates for Ghanaian soldiers. This training has helped bring the Ghanaian military personnel to standard with international best practices on peacekeeping.

### IV. Professionalizing the Ghana Armed Forces

It is pertinent to situate the analysis of the GAF and the quality of its professionalism within the socio-political environment and history that shaped it. While political instability and militarism are a part of Ghana's past, today these realities are unthinkable to most Ghanaians.<sup>4</sup> Beginning in the early 90s, Ghana's military has been reigned in and democracy has flourished, helping to move Ghana from a country on the brink of collapse to one with a professional and highly lauded military. More specifically, pre-independence and post-independence European influences have played a role throughout the military's professional evolution.

### V. European Influence—pre-independence and post-independence

It is common knowledge that most African militaries are a legacy of colonialism, and Ghana's military is no exception, tracing its military structure back to its former colonizer—Britain. After independence, Ghana maintained strong military cooperation with its former colonial power, even as Nkrumah began Africanizing the military with the goal of “Ghananisation” of the Ghana Military Forces. The experience of fighting alongside British troops in imperial wars, and the continued training relationship maintained between the two countries led to the eventual awareness by Ghanaian servicemen that Ghana was capable of managing its own affairs. It is no surprise that ex-soldiers played a critical role in the social and political process towards decolonization, and completely shattering the myth of imperial impregnability.<sup>5</sup>

Early independence under Nkrumah also saw major expansion of the military to further build its professional outlook. The size of the military was to increase by 50 percent within four years, the building of new military barracks and training centers commenced, and by far the most novel aspect of this expansion was the creation of the air force and navy divisions of the national forces. Nkrumah was not oblivious of the apparent professional gap being created by his Africanisation policy. Plans were made and by 1960 the Ghana Military Academic (GMA) was in full operation to ensure that the GAF would not lack sufficient numbers of well-trained military officers.<sup>6</sup> Baynham argues that while there was a conscious effort to inculcate the Sandhurst tradition<sup>7</sup> in the new military academy, it quickly developed its own Ghanaian idiosyncrasies.<sup>8</sup>

### VI. Military Reforms

Apart from the early efforts by Nkrumah to expand and modernize the military, subsequent governments, especially in the late 80s and early 90s introduced reforms into the military and the entire security architecture of the country. Today Ghana is considered one of the success stories of demilitarization and democratic control of the armed forces—an important reason being the introduction of general democratic principles and the reorganization of military. Security sector reforms with an emphasis of parliamentary control and civilian oversight was further given impetus in the 1992 Constitution of Ghana. Outside the constitutional provisions, civil society has also played an important role in security sector governance. Key civil society actors have collaborated with the Ghanaian parliament aiming to build its capacity and knowledge in matters related to security and military by facilitating dialogue with the security agencies, and encouraging public debate on the sector.

Military and civil reforms that led to the professionalization of the military went through incremental stages. Hutchful breaks these historical processes into four tranches.<sup>9</sup> The first was characterized by a politicized and democratic military instrumental in the creation of a new Ghanaian society based on discipline, probity, accountability, patriotism, and justice. The second marked the adoption of various concrete strategies and policies to re-professionalize and de-politicize the military. The third phase saw further reforms and the transition to democracy. The fourth and final stage, Hutchful argues, was characterized by the critical role Parliament played since 1992 in civilian control of the military.

### VII. Deliberate Institutional Building

Successive governments since Ghana's independence have sought to create new training institutions, improve and build the capacities of old institutions, or evolve new institutions with a focus that reflects a professional dispensation in the security forces. The establishment of the Military Academy and Training Schools, the Ghana Armed Forces Command and Staff College, and the Kofi Annan International Peacekeeping Training Center all demonstrate how deliberate institution building played a role in the professionalization of the GAF.

### VIII. Participation in Peacekeeping/Peace Support Operations

Although peacekeeping/peace support operations have remained a consistent foreign policy since independence<sup>10</sup> and largely seen as its membership commitment to the international comity of nations represented by the UN and AU, Ghana is also seen to have benefited indirectly from its contribution to peace operations, especially that of the UN. Apart from the economic benefits—in terms of supplementing the meager salaries of soldiers through the extra income they gain from peacekeeping,<sup>11</sup> one of such indirect benefits is the increasing professionalism of the GAF gained through peace operations in the form of valuable pre-deployment training.

Moreover, through its long term serving experience in peacekeeping, as far as African countries are concerned there is no country that has peacekeeping experience as Ghana which has contributed military observers and troops since the Suez Crisis in 1956 and the Congo in 1960, respectively. It is believed among Ghanaian military officers that the horrors of intrastate conflicts they have experienced in conflict zones during their deployment is ingrained in their psyche and constantly reminds them that the peace of Ghana cannot be sacrificed for the selfish ambitions of some military officers, and therefore has made the distancing of the institution from politics a priority.<sup>12</sup> The above description demonstrates that training for the Ghanaian soldier is a continuous process; it does not simply end with commissioning or enlistment training. These represent some of the ways that Ghana has benefitted indirectly from its contributions to peace operations over the years.

### IX. Developing Peace Operations Doctrine/Ghana's

As alluded to earlier, the GAF like many other African militaries do not operate on a clear doctrine. Though doctrine has supposedly been central to the GAF training and operations, it is largely borrowed from mostly western countries. The GAF also has often inserted in its establishment western military advisors—mostly from the United States. Ghana can therefore be said to have an eclectic set of doctrinal principles rather than a distinct military doctrine.

In the GAF what is often taken as doctrine proper is its PSO doctrine. Although largely borrowed from the UN and adapted to suit the intent and purposes of the country,<sup>13</sup> Ghana's PSO doctrine does have some historical roots back to the political praxis and worldview of Kwame Nkrumah during the early years after independence. It is important to state from the onset that doctrine is fluid and dynamic because of the changing nature of events, Ghana Peace Operations Doctrine has changed accordingly. Despite the few aberrations in the history of Ghana under military rule and dictatorship, most governments after Nkrumah have been committed to peace operations.<sup>14</sup>

#### ***Political Praxis, Symbolic Nationalism and Pan-Africanism of Nkrumah***

The role of Nkrumah in the development of Ghana's doctrine of peacekeeping and interventionism in African conflicts cannot be overemphasized. "He made his ideologies a blueprint in schools, colleges, market places, workplaces and everywhere two or three Ghanaians met."<sup>15</sup> It is worth noting that Nkrumah's political thought informed the institutions he established between 1958 until his overthrow in 1966. These institutions had a bearing on the development of philosophies that reined in the military from partisan or civilian spheres of life.

As stated earlier, the understanding of military as an entity, and for that matter the development of doctrine is not in isolation, but in the context of the historical, political, and the social processes of its milieu. Nkrumah's triple personality—nationalist, pan-Africanist, and an international statesman—therefore mirrored the way the GAF became one of the first African armies to engage in international interventionism under the conviction of "African solutions to African problems." This became the genesis of Ghana's PSO doctrine.

#### ***The Political and Social Thought of Kwame Nkrumah***

Peace and peacekeeping was also an essential part of Nkrumah's personal, social and political thought and worldview. He incorporated non-violent strategies and principles into his political struggles against Apartheid in South Africa, in support of the Algerian fight for liberation, and to denounce French nuclear imperialism in Africa.<sup>16</sup> It is however imperative to state here that non-violence had been the philosophy of Nkrumah until the latter part his life—especially after his overthrow—when he advocated for armed struggle, and that "we have passed from



constitutional non-violent Positive Action to Positive Action by force and armed struggle.”<sup>17</sup> Though there had been prior evidence of his support of armed struggle on basis of decolonization as in the case of his support for the liberation war in Algeria, one likely explanation to this shift in philosophy, especially after his political demise, is that he was frustrated about his overthrow, and while in Guinea he expected a triumphant return as president of Ghana through an armed struggle to depose the military junta.

## X. Key Lessons Learnt from Ghana's PSO Doctrine and Peacekeeping

Through extensive involvement in peace operations, Ghana has garnered a wealth of experience that other countries can learn from, and can play a valuable role in contributing to a unified AU PSO Doctrine.

1. Intra-state conflict represents operational challenges for multinational forces. Often in these conflicts there is no peace to keep, but a need to establish and enforce peace, and many peacekeeping forces must work towards peace with a lack of clarity or an inappropriate mandate, vacillating between peace keeping and peace enforcement.<sup>18</sup>
2. Having strong civil-military relations is a key success factor in the effectiveness of a contingent in peace support operations. The GAF's engagement in a range of "Quick Impact Projects" aimed to bridge immediate post-conflict situations and long-term reconstruction and development have fostered a cordial relationship between the Ghanaian contingents and their communities. This has proven to be a factor of success in different missions and has also increased the safety of the Ghanaian peacekeepers.<sup>19</sup>
3. Prior contextual knowledge of conflict zones is an important determinant of the success of the mission. Inadequacy of contextual knowledge affects planning and may have some repercussion on the entire mission. For this reason, the background history of conflict and the culture, religion, and characteristics of the local people forms part of the core of pre-deployment studies for Ghana contingents.
4. Lack of military equipment and logistics support present glaring challenges for Africa peace

missions. Logistical issues and equipment failures are also aggravated by differences in training, which affect the levels of interoperability necessary for any successful multi-dimensional mission. Disparate doctrines and trainings and their impact on capability demonstrate the need for a unified PSO doctrine.

5. Commitment to peacekeeper welfare is essential. There is transparency and equitability in the disbursement of peacekeeping benefits to the Ghanaian peacekeepers, and this has prevented confrontations between soldiers and their commanders or governments, helping to maintain the high peacekeeper morale vital for successful missions.

Indeed, Ghana's lessons learnt in African peace missions, especially those pertaining to doctrine, reflected governmental policy in the training of Ghanaian forces, and the important role of regional centers of peacekeeping in promoting interoperable capacity of contingents including that of the GAF. To enhance regional collective security, Ghana has established military cooperation and has engaged in joint military exercises with numerous countries. Ghana's military institutions have also been open to other African forces with the aim that this collaboration would simulate a cross fertilization and harmonization of ideas on peacekeeping.<sup>20</sup>

As demonstrated by this study, Ghana takes seriously the professional training of its military to enable it to contribute effectively to peace operations. Ghana proudly shares its experiences with others and helping to train thousands of military, police, and civilians across Africa on UN, AU, and ECOWAS peace operations. It also has contributed to scholarship on the topic of peacekeeping and conflict and security, and has incorporated peacekeeping training into the curricula of the various military and police training institutions of the country.

Doctrine is only meaningful not only when professed, but also practiced. Ghana's experience has shown that participation in peacekeeping does not only promote world peace, but has also contributed the professionalism of the GAF and the development of the PSO doctrine. Harmonized regional doctrines and collaborative training would be essential in providing the institutional basis to prepare African multilateral forces for specific missions

and helping to develop a common approach to tackle the continent's conflicts.

## XI. Conclusion

Since the 1960s, Ghana's commitment to international peace operations and world peace remains resolute. It views PSOs as its doctrinal and constitutional responsibility, and its commitment to contributing to international peacekeeping irrespective of the changes in regime type and governments suggest it will continue to uphold this ideal. Its peacekeepers continue to be involved in a wide range of complex and multidimensional peacekeeping roles, and have executed their duties and responsibilities with distinction, discipline, and professionalism.

Ghana's doctrinal experience and the adoption of international peace operations were predicated on a series of military reforms over the years; the deliberate

institutional capacity development of the GAF; the establishment of a regional peacekeeping training center of excellence to share and build further the competences of its military, police and civilians in peacekeeping/PSO; as well as its continuous involvement in UN/AU peace missions. And despite the aberrations in Ghana's history when it was almost at the brink of collapse as a result of military rule, it was able to democratize and continue to take seriously its doctrinal responsibility of PSO.

Given the persistent and necessary call for a relevant, unified Africa Union doctrine on peace support operations, this study concludes with making a case for the tapping into the doctrinal experiences of lauded TCCs like Ghana—one of the pioneers in peacekeeping. Its doctrinal experiences can provide useful ground and practical evidence for its PSO doctrine to serve as a model across the continent, as well as, an inspiration to draw from in the development of a workable AU PSO doctrine.

<sup>1</sup> Velthuisen, Andreas. "Towards a military doctrine for humanistic intervention in African conflicts." *International Journal of African Renaissance Studies- Multi-, Inter- and Transdisciplinarity*. 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Holt, Victoria K. and Tobias C. Berkman. "The Impossible Mandate? Military Preparedness, the Responsibility to Protect and Modern Peace Operations." Stimson Center. 2006

<sup>3</sup> Aning, Kwesi and Festus K. Aubyn. "Ghana." In Alex J. Bellamy and Paul D. Williams (Eds.). "Providing for Peacekeepers: The Politics, Challenges, and Future of United Nations Peacekeeping Contributions." Oxford University Press. 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Ansah-Koi, Kumi. "The Security Agencies and National Security in a Decade of Liberalism." In Kwame Boafo-Arthur (Ed.). "Ghana: One Decade of the Liberal State." CODESRIA Books. Dakar, 2007.

<sup>5</sup> The boycott of European goods, the killing of sergeant Adjetej and his two other colleagues precipitated the 1948 riots that led to political overtures by Britain and eventual self-government and independence in less than a decade after disturbances.

<sup>6</sup> Baynham, Simon. "The Military and Politics in Nkrumah's Ghana." Westview Press. Boulder Colorado. 1988.

<sup>7</sup> Note that the initial teaching instructors at the Ghana Military Academy were on loan from Britain.

<sup>8</sup> Baynham, Simon. "The Military and Politics in Nkrumah's Ghana."

<sup>9</sup> Hutchful, Eboe. "Military Reform and Policy in Ghana." *The Journal of Modern African Studies*. Cambridge University Press. June, 1997.

<sup>10</sup> Interview, GAF/KAIPTC, Accra. 18 Jan. 2016

<sup>11</sup> Hutchful, Eboe. "Military Reform and Policy in Ghana."

<sup>15</sup> Atta-Boakye, Ken. "Of Nkrumah's Political Ideologies: Communism, Socialism, Nkrumaism. Ghanaweb." 20 September 2006. Accessed 10 April 2016 <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/features/Of-Nkrumah-s-Political-Ideologies-Communism-Socialism-Nkrumaism-110817>.

<sup>16</sup> Biney, Ama. "Ghana's contribution to the anti-apartheid Struggle: 1958-1994." *The Road to Democracy in South Africa*. Vol. 5, pt 1.

<sup>17</sup> Nkrumah, Kwame. "The Struggle Continues." Panaf Books Limited. London., 1973.

<sup>18</sup> Aboagye, Festus B. "ECOMOG: A Sub-Regional Experience in Conflict Resolution management and Peacekeeping in Liberia." Sedco. Accra, 1999.

<sup>19</sup> Aning, Kwesi and Festus K. Aubyn. "Ghana."

<sup>20</sup> Mark Malan, Mark. "Training for Peace Operations as Conducted in Ghana." In *African Capabilities for Training for Peace Operations*. Institute for Security Studies.

<sup>12</sup> Interview, GAF/KAIPTC, Accra. 18 Jan. 2016

<sup>13</sup> Interview, GAF, Accra, 8 Jan. 2016.

<sup>14</sup> Interview, GAF/KAIPTC, Accra. 18 Jan. 2016

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