

Working Paper Series

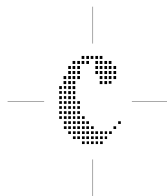
Working Paper 2

From Military Coups to Multiparty Elections:
The Ghanaian Military-Civil Transition

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Executive Summary

This paper has been written in the framework of the research project entitled ‘Coping with Internal Conflict Project’ (CICP) executed by the Conflict Research Unit (CRU) of the Netherlands Institute of International relations ‘Clingendael’ for the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The CICP consists of four different components, namely ‘Power Sharing’, ‘Political Military Relations’, ‘Political Economy of Internal Conflict’ and ‘Resources, Entitlements and Poverty -related Conflict’.

Ghana has made a remarkable transition, one that is often misrepresented as a transition from military to democratic rule. While the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) under Jerry Rawlings was an authoritarian government that came to power by military means, it was not a military government in the classical sense. Certainly, it was not a government that served the corporate and coherently defined interests of the military. Rather, the regime was one that came to power with a populist, even revolutionary agenda, but was soon forced to switch directions and adopt liberal western norms for, first, the economy and later, the polity too.

Despite these caveats, Ghana is to be commended for the progress that it has made towards democracy. How can one explain the course of Ghanaian transition?

1. This report attributes much influence to the coincidence of a number of international and regional developments, in particular indirect political pressure from the International Financial Institutions (IFIs), which predisposed the leadership of the country to consider moving towards multi-partyism.
2. The character and role of the PNDC leadership and in particular the pragmatic and self-interested nature of the head of state, JJ Rawlings, were central in dictating the pace and timing of the transition. In response to these pressures, a top-down transition was initiated.
3. The security guarantees that Rawlings employed to protect himself and his regime from prosecution for human rights abuses may have facilitated his own and the military’s acquiescence to pressure for democracy.
4. By contrast, the domestic opposition was largely ineffectual in this process although it may have reinforced the process once the transition had been inaugurated.

The Current State of the Ghanaian Military

Despite having been damaged by junior-led coups and the early revolutionary period under the PNDC, command and control functions and discipline within the military have largely been restored.

Crucial to the return to barracks has been the military’s involvement in international peacekeeping missions and the kudos, training and financial resources that flowed from this. Together with the purge of the most corrupt and politicised ranks within the military, this involvement has

served to raise the prestige and self-esteem of the military as an institution and rendered it overall less likely to intervene in the political arena.

Policing remains an area of critical weakness however and may serve to account for the extent to which the military continues to be involved domestically in Ghana. Certainly it is not clear that the military's definition of national security is one restricted to the protection of the country's borders.

Indeed, the military may see two potential sources of threat to the security of Ghana:

Should there be a breakdown in domestic law and order (for example in response to disputed election results), the military may feel justified, in light of the police force's lack of capacity, to intervene once more in the domestic arena.

The excessively unstable regional environment is in conformity with a rather more conventional definition of national security focussed on threats to the state from without.

The Current State of Ghanaian Democracy

Ghana has enjoyed three sets of multiparty elections since the transition began of varying degrees of freedom and fairness. Overall, the trend seems to be positive. While political institutions and most of the opposition parties remain relatively weak and personality-driven, the two party system appears to be strengthening. The most recent elections were tense – not surprising given that the ruling party realistically stood to lose power -- but overall there seems to be every indication that the trend is away from authoritarian and towards multiparty rule. It should be noted however that in recent years the economy has slowed and there is a need for further, difficult economic reforms.

Conclusion and Policy Lessons

Regimes are likely to be most responsive to pressure in those areas there they are the most vulnerable; in Ghana's case, it was the need to access international flows of capital as a means of restructuring and diversifying a commodity-dependent (and thus highly vulnerable) economy. International finance is crucial today to the maintenance of economic (and political) stability in Ghana and hence will, to a great extent, continue to shape the likely role of the military.

Transition away from authoritarian rule is more likely to be unopposed – and even sponsored – by the regime when it is not going to threaten the influence or security of key figures within the regime.

It is important to provide the military with access to resources and prestige outside of occupying the highest offices in the land. In Ghana's case, international peacekeeping serves at least a part of this function.

The implementation of systems of civilian control of the military remains arguably critical, however, to long-term stability. These include the need for parliamentary/legislative oversight and control particularly with respect to the acquisition and budgetary processes.

External military assistance can play a useful function in inculcating such systems, providing assistance with institution building, peacekeeping training and demobilisation, and in assisting the role that can be played by civil society.

Select Glossary of Terms

ACRI	African Crisis Response Initiative
ACSS	African Centre for Strategic Studies
AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
BMATT	British Military Advisory Training Team
CPP	Convention People's Party
ESAP	Economic Structural Adjustment Programme
IMET	International Military Education and Training
NDC	National Democratic Congress
NPP	New Patriotic Party
PNDC	Provisional National Defence Council
PFJ	Popular Front Party
PNP	People's National Party
SMC	Supreme Military Council

1 Introduction

“The preservation of order and good government seems to have become a national task to which the military have dedicated themselves. It seems to have become acceptable therefore that if the government is not doing right by, for example, if it becomes a dictatorship or fails to function effectively.... The military feel that they could intervene. In Ghana the military have intervened not because their officers are Sandhurst or West Point trained or are trained locally, but chiefly because they have identified themselves with the national interest and are today more critical and inquisitive.”

Lt.-General AK Ocran²

“Efere firi n’ase na ebum – (A sound foundation makes for a good superstructure).”

Akan proverb³

“We are trying to get the public of take up its responsibility about its own government ...the armed forces is not a time-bomb behind a civilian government ... We want to show you that you have been in bondage, we broke your chains for you, now we leave you to go where you want to. That is why I am taking a moral stand ... we still believe in the majority having a say and deciding their lives.”

Flight-Lieutenant JJ Rawlings, 1979⁴

“Once you have touched the magic wand of power, never dream that you can go back to your village, the barracks or wherever you were before.”

Colonel Ignatius Acheampong⁵

Between the time of Ghana’s independence on 6 March 1957 and following the second military coup staged by Flight-Lieutenant Jeremiah John Rawlings on New Year’s Eve in 1981, there had been no less than eight successive governments in Ghana – five military and three civilian – five of which had been overthrown by violence and not through the ballot box.

Yet following the military-civilian transition in the 1990s, Ghana is frequently cited as a model of how to transit from a military regime to democratic rule. In December 2000, Rawlings handed over power to the rival opposition party, following his party’s defeat at the polls. It was the first time in Ghana’s history that a democratically elected government has seen out its term of office and handed over power to another party in a constitutionally approved way. This is not the least of Rawlings’ achievements. Ghana is also regarded also as one of Africa’s steady performing and reforming states, a status recognised by both international financial institutions and Western governments: for example, Ghana was the first stop on President Bill Clinton’s 12-day African tour in March 1998.

² Ocran, 1977.

³ Baynham, 1988, p. 253.

⁴ West Africa, 9 July 1979, p. 1199.

⁵ West Africa, 10 December 1979.

However, to describe the Ghanaian transition as a simple case of a triumphal transition from military rule to democracy may be a misrepresentation. A caveat should be applied: neither the Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC) under Rawlings nor its successor, the National Democratic Congress (NDC), was classic military governments. Rather, the Rawlings' regime was an authoritarian populist government, albeit one that came to power by military means.

This qualification makes the Ghanaian transition no less remarkable. It is evident – and to be commended – that Ghana has, over the last 20 years, steadily moved away from a government which came to power by means of a military coup towards government which is not only elected but also increasingly subject to the constraints of greater public accountability. How then do we understand the Ghanaian transition, and what are the lessons for societies in transition elsewhere?

This report will argue that the role of international factors predisposed the leadership to reformulate the basis of the state. In his response to these factors, the head of state, Jerry John Rawlings, was central to what was essentially an elite-driven and regime-led process of incremental transition. The domestic opposition at the time was weak and largely ineffectual but grew in strength and confidence as multiparty politics was consolidated.

Regarding the terms of reference of this report, the authors define the security sector in Ghana broadly viz. to include the military, intelligence services, the police and private security firms. However the focus of this report is on civil-military relations and hence most of the report considers the role of the military as an institution and its relationship with the political authorities. Throughout, the argument is that the then head of state, JJ Rawlings enjoyed a close and privileged relationship with the military due to the means by which he initially achieved office. This relationship was bolstered by his control of the intelligence services via his close and trusted associate, Kojo Tsikata. However, as Ghana moved towards multiparty rule and the transition to democracy, a more autonomous relationship began to emerge between the military hierarchy and the political authorities, although parliamentary oversight in particular remained constrained.

This report is concerned with civil-military relations in Ghana. When the term “transition” is used, it is thus with reference to the transition from military to civilian government that occurred in 1992, symbolised by Rawlings' resignation from the military and his ceasing to wear military uniform. The report focuses on this transition and the shorthand term should therefore not be confused with the political transition that occurred in 2000/01 when Rawlings' political party was voted out of office in favour of the liberal opposition.

Given this qualification, it is argued that the role of the media and civil society were not significant initially in monitoring the role of the military due to constraints on political freedoms. As Ghana moved towards multiparty democracy, and of course, following the defeat of the NDC at the polls, these institutions have become increasingly publicly critical.

It is impossible to quantify spending on the security sector in Ghana over the last decade. The government of Ghana lacks accurate data on even the most basic economic figures. Military spending was rendered opaque by a long-standing unwillingness by the military to undergo a thorough financial audit and no figures are kept on spending on private security firms.

With regard to the current prognosis and outlook, this report argues that there is a case in Ghana, as in many societies in Africa, for greater focus on the role and capabilities of the police force. If one is to move beyond a limited consideration of only the military, the state of policing may serve as a

crucial litmus test of first, the relationship between the armed forces and the government and, second, the health of democratic governance and institutions. It is significant then that the police are widely regarded as weak and ineffective.

This report concludes that the military are, to all intents and purposes, back in barracks and likely to remain so as long as some modicum of order prevails in Ghana. The 2000 elections were widely regarded as free and fair and resulted in a relatively smooth handover of power to the former opposition, the NPP. Subsequently, the NPP under the leadership of President Kufuor have sought to bolster civilian control and oversight over the military. There is room for optimism in this regard.

However, the military continues to interpret its role in terms of a broad, domestically defined notion of the national interest and hence may be tempted to re-intervene should there be a breakdown in the political process that is accompanied by widespread disorder. The regional and domestic economic environment poses ongoing challenges but these are unlikely to result in an increased military role. This will, however, to a great extent continue to be shaped by the external community, particularly the financial assistance given (or not) by the International Financial Institutions (IFIs).

2 Civilian and Military Rule in Ghana: A Brief Chronology

1951	Convention People's Party's (CPP) first election victory (still under colonial rule).
1957	6 March, independence. Ghana governed by the CPP under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah.
1964	Declaration of one party state.
1966	24 February 1966. "Operation Cold Chop": military coup under the leadership of Generals Ankrah and Afrifa. Rules under National Liberation Council (NLC).
1969	Elections. Civilian government led by Dr Kofi Busia and the Progress Party (PP).
1972	13 January: military coup led by Colonel Ignatius Acheampong. Governs with Supreme Military Council (SMC I).
1978	5 July: palace coup under leadership of General FWK (Fred) Akuffo. SMC II established.
1979	15 May: Failed coup attempt by Flt.-Lt. JJ Rawlings 4 June: Rawlings' breakout from prison; installed as interim head of state with Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC). Execution of senior military officers. 16 June: Presidential elections proceed as planned. Election of Dr Hilla Limann of the People's National Party (PNP) as the new President of the Third Republic and inauguration of elected civilian regime
1981	31 December: Second military coup led by Rawlings; governs with Provisional National Defence Council (PNDC); Lt.-General Arnold Quainoo sets out to reorganise the army.
1983	Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) launched.
1992	PNDC reformed as a political party, the NDC. Multiparty elections for president: fairness disputed by some observers; opposition boycott of legislature elections that follow. Rawlings wins the presidential election by 58.3% to 38.4% over his closest contender, the New Patriotic Party's (NPP) Professor Albert Adu Boahen.
1996	Second set of multiparty elections; widely regarded as free and fair and won by Rawlings' NDC from the NPP's John Kufuor by 57.5% to 39.5%.
2000	Third set of multiparty elections scheduled for early December. Rawlings was forbidden by the constitution from seeking a third consecutive term of office. NDC's election bid led by Vice-President John Evans Atta Mills; the opposition NPP led by John Kufuor. Kufuor wins first round with 4% majority, but not the requisite 50%+1. Elections go to a second round on 28 December 2000 which Kufuor wins.

3 The PNDC: Government by the Soldiers for the Soldiers?

Part of the difficulty of characterising the nature of the Ghanaian transition is agreeing on what the starting point was: that is, what was the nature of the regime inaugurated by a military coup in 1981?

It was certainly not a democratic government but neither was it a classic military *junta* in the Latin American style -- in other words, government both by the soldiers and for the soldiers that is intended to serve an agenda developed by the military as a corporate institution. Military governments in Africa have frequently differed from those elsewhere because of the generally lower levels of institutionalisation and corporate cohesion within the military.⁶ What may result then from a coup by such a military is less a rule-driven regime than a personalist one, and this would certainly appear to be the case in Rawlings' Ghana. "In Ghana... political control of the military has been comparatively weak since independence".⁷ Yet the reasons for the military's intervention in politics have not always been entirely consistent, as summarised in the matrix below.

Understanding Military Motivations in Ghana's Coups

Coup	Reasons
National Liberation Council, February 1966	Increasing centralisation of power by Nkrumah; widespread economic malaise; ethnic division in the armed forces; intra-military grievances including the establishment of a rival presidential regiment; shifting international ties; success of military coups in the region.
Acheampong, January 1972	Resort to illiberal practices by Busia; economic collapse; reduction in political support and political in-fighting; removal of military perks and ethnic military tensions.
Akuffo, July 1978	Intolerable economic situation; widespread corruption; restoration of military image in public eye.
Rawlings, June 1979	Failure of economic and military reforms; widespread corruption; restoration of military image.
Rawlings, December 1981	Unimaginative and cautious economic reforms; reports of corruption; food shortages; enforced 'retirement' of Rawlings from the military; shifting international alliances.

Ghana has had a long history of military interventions in the political arena, a number of which did in fact serve the broad corporate interests of the military as an institution. One such instance was the series of pay increases and improvements in conditions of service under military rule beginning with the National Liberation Council and subsequently continued under the National Redemption Council

⁶ Jackson RH and CG Rosberg, *Personal Rule in Black Africa*. USA: University of California Press, 1982.

⁷ Ocran, *op cit*, p. 131.

(Supreme Military Council). Under the PNDC, too, while the flow of material rewards to the military were not opulent, the living standards of those in the military *were* insulated from the economic trauma experienced by the rest of the country at a time of crisis. On its own however, this is not sufficient to classify the PNDC as a classic military regime. A minimal level of economic support to the military was necessary to stave off the ever-present danger of a counter coup from within the disgruntled ranks of the military. Almost from the start however, the PNDC was serving an agenda that, while it may have overlapped at points with that of the military, was essentially the agenda of one man and his allies: Rawlings. The PNDC was undoubtedly authoritarian and it frequently governed by decree. However, while the support of large sections of the military allowed it to survive its first precarious months in office, the object of the regime was never to institutionalise the military or its interests in Ghanaian political life. Notably, on the evening of his first military coup on 4 June 1979, Rawlings broadcast a statement stressing the military's involvement first and foremost as citizens, and only secondly as soldiers.

While Rawlings shared some of the aspirations of earlier military governments in attempting to reform the image of the armed forces and arrest corruption and economic collapse, there was an important distinction: his actions were also focused on overturning the hierarchy of the armed forces through radical, populist ('leftist') action. There were,⁸

"... the necessary elements to construct a case of growing resentment amongst junior officers and other ranks against their superiors, who seemed bent on protecting themselves at the expense of the reputation of the forces ... There has been some disgruntlement in the ranks over the obvious prosperity of the senior officers in recent years, a prosperity inversely proportional to the public esteem of the forces."

This "mutinous expression of populist frustration"⁹ contained, unlike the actions of 1966, 1972 and 1978, "no cunning plot and sudden strike by a handful of officers moving their men. Instead there was immediate and instinctive response to the movement; other ranks rose up through some initial confusion to defend a movement they knew was theirs".¹⁰ Or as Tony Aidoo, then Deputy Minister of Defence has argued,¹¹

"Objective analysis sees that this act was not only to clean the military and re-establish its image, but also to assuage the anger and desperation of the civilian population. The image of the military had sunk very, very low with several malpractices of ill-discipline and corruption. What happened in the June 4 1979 uprising was thus a revolt rather than a coup or a revolution; a revolt in the sense that the junior ranks said 'we don't want this situation any more'. ... It prevented a much more disastrous explosion that could have come either in another coup or in a civil war – a kind of hot, class war. And in our part of the world, a class war can easily be integrated into a tribal situation. 1979 thus enabled Ghana to escape the experience of Rwanda, Uganda, Sierra Leone,

⁸ West Africa, 4 June 1979.

⁹ Rothchild and Gyimah-Boadi, 1980, p. 11.

¹⁰ West Africa, 23 July 1979. For a description of the events of 4 June and their aftermath, see Kofi Abaka Jackson, *When the Gun Rules: A Soldier's Testimony*. Accra: Woeli, 1999.

¹¹ Interview, Accra, 15 December 2000.

Liberia and others. Also, the military came to power with certain principles – of probity, accountability and social justice – that were previously absent.”

Samuel Huntington has argued that coups are more often an end to democracy than the beginnings of a transition to democracy. Yet in Ghana, the unlikely occurred, namely, a transition to democracy that began with military action – although at first it did not seem that Ghana was heading towards anything resembling a liberal democracy. Instead, the early months of PNDC rule were characterised by the populist and revolutionary spirit that had brought Rawlings to power. Champions of the new regime both within and outside of the military were intent on sweeping away the old corrupt order and installing a new egalitarian political and economic system. To this end, the regime adopted populist economic policies and established “revolutionary” People’s and Worker’s Defence Committees – paralleled by similar structures within the military. This attempted “makeover” of the polity included a distinctly punitive element with purges of the upper ranks of the military and public executions; indeed the country teetered for some time on the brink of anarchy.

It rapidly became evident that, whatever the intentions of the leftists within government, this was no way to run a country – certainly not a country as desperate for an inflow of foreign funding as Ghana. With the government’s coffers practically empty, it became evident that ‘something would have to be done’ and the international consensus at the time was that that ‘something’ should be neo-liberal economic reforms. The government took a sharp turn right in terms of economic policy and adopted one of Africa’s first comprehensive Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs). This resolution was mirrored in the political sphere with the reassertion of central control (ironically with the establishment of District Assemblies) and the repair of hierarchy in the Ghanaian military. In addition, having bought the liberal West’s economic prescriptions, it was going to be only a matter of time before the liberal West’s political prescriptions would also have to be considered by Rawlings, particularly in the context of global change after 1989.

4 The Transition

4.1 International and Regional Events

As is common in many political transitions, the early steps towards political liberalisation in Ghana were taken by a regime that was motivated by a high degree of self-interest. Rawlings and the PNDC regime acted to preserve their political programme in response to a changing set of international conditions.

By the early 1980s it was becoming increasingly evident that the Soviet economic model was faltering and that Ghana could not rely on revolutionary solidarity from that quarter for rescue. Only the West and its financial institutions, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), could help – and that assistance came embedded in a nest of conditionalities.

Initially of course these conditionalities focused on economic issues. Over time however, it became clear that the management of the economy in client states was part of a broader set of problems with the way these societies were governed. Accordingly, the World Bank and IMF began developing a set of political conditionalities as part of their economic package. While Ghana had up to that point been well supported by international funds from these bodies, it seemed to the regime that the country would inevitably reach a point where political reform was going to be necessary to sustain both international and domestic support. The indirect pressure to liberalise the polity emanating from the Bretton Woods institutions thus became an increasingly important influence on Rawlings and his regime. Domestic advocates of democracy who lobbied the international actors to step up pressure on the regime implicitly acknowledged this logic.

In addition, as political reform in Ghana was initiated in the 1980s and progressed into the early 1990s, these pressures were buttressed by a wave of political liberalisations elsewhere. These political opening occurred both near (perhaps most dramatically in Benin) and far (with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the dissolution of the Soviet empire).

4.2 Events in Ghana

Overall, political opposition from within Ghana seems to have been less of a factor in providing the impetus for the transition.¹² While voices for change within the PNDC itself were important, the oppositional coalition outside of the regime tended to be weak and was further undermined by the relative success of the new regime in reasserting central state authority and reviving the economy.

¹² Once again, it is important to reiterate that it is the transition from military to civilian rule that is referred to here. The internal opposition obviously played a much larger role in the subsequent political transition (2000/01) that saw the NDC being voted out of power in favour of the NPP.

Nonetheless, there was evidence of limited civic action in support of a return to multi-party rule. Frequently cited in this regard were the lectures delivered by academic (and 1992 presidential candidate for the opposition) Professor Adu Boahen which are seen as important for challenging “the culture of silence” that had developed under authoritarian PNDC rule. Some argue that these lectures marked the point from which it is possible to trace the resurgence of the domestic opposition.

Also significant was the Movement for Freedom and Justice, an alliance that included the radical left and liberals. Given its eclectic ideological base, the Movement was somewhat unfocused, essentially representing a rejection of the SAP and of the coup as a method of regime change. The key strategy employed was to engage in acts of civil disobedience such as pasting political posters around the city and addressing crowds in the market. The Movement was never a mass movement; rather it was a network of individuals in small committees. Perhaps for this reason it never presented a serious threat to the regime.

The Ghana Bar Association, National Union of Ghanaian Students and the churches also came to bolster the ranks of those who championed a return to multi-party democracy. Ultimately however, it was the regime’s own consultation process that opened the way for the holding of elections.

The regime-led transition began with a reorganisation of the District Assemblies that at first were organised on a non-party basis. A consultation process led by the National Commission on Democracy favoured the holding of local elections and local government reform followed. Further consultations overwhelmingly favoured a return to democratic rule and multiparty elections. Despite his initial scepticism, Rawlings was persuaded to go along with this. The Consultative Assembly designed the new constitution and preparations were made for the holding of multi-party elections. This Assembly included few significant figures from the opposition and those that were present did not make a decisive contribution. Throughout, it was members and supporters of the regime who were the dominant players.

The first set of multi-party elections was subsequently held in 1992. They were marred by a boycott by the opposition that handed victory to the NDC (the new incarnation of the PNDC). The next set of elections in 1996 suffered no such handicap but led to the same electoral outcome while the third set of elections in 2000 resulted in a change in regime.

In retrospect, how can one analyse the regime’s decision to embark on this transition?

4.3 Internal to the PNDC

As described earlier, while the PNDC did not represent the corporate interests of the military, neither, strictly speaking, was it a civilian government. Particularly in its precarious first months in office, the PNDC had to work to retain the support of key factions within the military.

This pandering to the military was not something that sat easily with all the members of the regime. The broadly Leftist (even Marxist) background¹³ of a number of key figures within the governing regime meant that, even if they were not enthusiastic supporters of Western liberal

¹³ A number of former student activists associated themselves with the Rawlings regime, particularly in its early revolutionary days.

democracy, they were a little discomfited to be associated with an authoritarian regime (particularly one that was pursuing neo-liberal economic policies).

The PNDC's shift away from its former revolutionary stance gave rise to the problem of how, in the absence of a mobilising mass-based ideology, to gain broader legitimacy. The succession of coup attempts in the early days of the regime underlined its insecurity and the need to develop a solid base of support. In the short-term, the security of the regime was protected with a purge of the military and the establishment of 64th Battalion ostensibly to protect the new regime and the President. In the longer term however, the regime would need to reconnect with a broader source of support – notably, the Ghanaian public. Rawlings is widely credited with coming to terms with this dilemma, and hence with the recognition of the need to move towards a liberalisation of the polity.

4.4 The Power of Personality: The Remarkable Rawlings

Rawlings' decision to adjust his mode of dress from military uniform to civilian clothes in 1992 was not simply cosmetic but did speak to the shifting nature of his power base. It signalled that, this time around, he was not heading up a caretaker military regime that was there only to hand over power to an elected government;¹⁴ rather he was embarked on a longer-term programme to change the way that Ghana was governed.

Yet, there is little evidence that Rawlings was (or is) committed to democracy *per se*. He has long been sceptical of multi-partyism in particular and of its ability to deliver improved living standards to Ghanaians -- not all that surprising when one considers the record of the country's elected officials. Indeed, it is often remarked that he was frustrated by the slow pace of decision-making in a democratic system.

Rather, all indications are that Rawlings is a pragmatist and that, in both the economic and political spheres, he was prepared to reform when he judged this as necessary to secure his own position. He was (and is) seen as a man "who says all the wrong things, but does all the right ones". Initially, he had to be persuaded by his advisors that the international pressure to move towards constitutionalism and democracy was real and significant. Once he accepted this in the late 1980s, the regime began to move, step by step, away from a model of politics based on military intervention. Liberalising the parliament and the media was a part of this transition, as was allowing the military to reconstruct itself as a professional, hierarchically-driven institution.

This interpretation does not require a naïve or romantic conception of Rawlings. Indeed, one might argue that Rawlings backed political liberalisation because he had already secured his position in two key respects:

First, the relative success of the Economic Recovery Programme and the way this had facilitated access to international funding from international financial institutions enhanced Rawlings' already significant popularity among the potential electorate and made it likely that he would be returned to power by a popular vote.

¹⁴ As with his first coup in 1979, which handed over to the democratically elected Limann.

Second, Rawlings had fashioned security guarantees for himself and his fellow coup plotters by legislating immunity for the PNDC from prosecution -- reinforced by the likelihood of electoral victory.

Beyond this, it was not necessary to offer the military specific incentives to withdraw from politics, because it was not the military *per se* that occupied the presidential residence at Osu Castle. As has been argued above, the military was not in government. Rather, government was occupied by key figures, Rawlings chief among them, who simply happened to have emerged from the military.

Rawlings thus acted, acted step by step first, to pre-empt and foil a succession of counter-coups against him and second, to institutionalise the transition that would broaden his support base. His decision to resign his rank of Flight-Lieut. in the military and to stop wearing the army uniform in his official duties were intended to signal that the regime was shifting from being one based on the power of the military to one that was based on popular support, demonstrated via the polls. Questions may be raised about the extent to which this reflected a real shift in the relationship between the P/NDC and the military but most would agree that henceforth, Rawlings role with respect would increasingly come to resemble that conventionally ascribed to a head of state viz. the day to day operations of the military were left to the military hierarchy while political control of the armed forces were directed from the executive. (There is more room for concern about the extent to which parliament had a real say in this relationship however – see below.)

In short the transition in Ghana, while elite-driven, did not represent an upper-level pact between the government and its domestic opponents. Rather, it resulted from the pragmatic and dynamic response of the PNDC, firmly under the leadership of Rawlings, to anticipated international pressure from IFIs to liberalise the polity.

5 The Current State of the Ghanaian Military

5.1 Command and Control

Junior-led coups are generally regarded as damaging for the military because they break down the hierarchy and discipline of military life, with adverse effects for command and control functions. Between 1982 and 1985 a number of senior Ghanaian officers left or were removed from both the military and the country during what was undoubtedly a very disruptive period. Together with the rightward turn in economic policy and the curbing of the Defence Committees however, went an attempt to restructure the army and reverse the harm done by the coup and its aftermath. Many agree that this attempt has been largely successful. One of the key mechanisms in this regard has been the extensive involvement of the Ghanaian military in international and multilateral peacekeeping operations.

5.2 Foreign Adventuring

Although doubts exist about its war-fighting capabilities (mainly due to a lack of equipment and training), the Ghanaian military has developed a sound reputation for its participation in international peacekeeping operations. Unlike some other African participants in peacekeeping, the Ghanaian troops are regarded as well-trained and disciplined, with a reputation for following orders. In 1998, for example, Ghanaian forces were present in Angola (UNOMA), Croatia (UNMOP), FYROM, Lebanon (UNIFIL), Iraq/Kuwait (UNIKOM), Sierra Leone (ECOMOG), Tajikistan (UNMOT) and the Western Sahara (MINURSO).¹⁵ Currently, around 2,000 (of 7,000) Ghanaian troops are abroad on UN peacekeeping missions, estimated to be the fourth largest contributing nation world-wide.¹⁶ Indeed, it is estimated that most Ghanaian soldiers undertake at least two peacekeeping ‘tours’ during their stint in the military.¹⁷

Participation in such programmes has garnered significant resources for the military: It has won some international and domestic prestige and troops and officers have been exposed to international levels of training. Crucially, it has also provided an injection of hard cash into both the military budget

¹⁵ See *The Military Balance, 1998/99*. London: OUP/IISS, 1998, p. 252. Major-General Seth Kofi Obeng was appointed as Commander of UNIFIL from December 1999. Another Ghanaian, Lt.-General EA Erskine served in the same capacity from 1978 to 1981.

¹⁶ For details on the role of Ghanaian forces in international peacekeeping missions, see: Festus B Aboagye, *ECOMOG: A Sub-Regional Experience in Conflict Resolution, Management and Peacekeeping in Liberia*. Accra: Sedco, 1999; and Emmanuel A Erskine, *Mission with UNIFIL: An African Soldier's Reflections*. London: Hurst, 1989.

¹⁷ Interview, Accra, 15 December 2000.

and the household budgets of individual soldiers¹⁸. Without access to these resources, the military's withdrawal from politics might have been a great deal more fraught. Inevitably there has been some corruption and politicking internal to the military in determining the allocation of assignment of battalions to UN peacekeeping operations.¹⁹ However, the military currently are not regarded as excessively corrupt (certainly not on the scale of the police force).

Involvement in UN missions is cited as a reflection of the strong internationalist tradition in Ghanaian society, of which UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan is also seen as part. There is, too, an awareness that this role (and the benefits that accrue from it) would all but disappear should the military re-involve themselves in politics as before, and this factor remains in itself a significant deterrent.

5.3 The Role of External Agencies

The Ghanaian military's involvement in peacekeeping and its importance within a regional context has, as noted, resulted in international technical, financial and training support from principally two sources, the United States (through, *inter alia*, the African Crisis Response Initiative – ACRI – and the African Centre for Strategic Studies – ACSS) and the UK through the British Military Advisory Training Team (BMATT).

From July 1997 the US government has provided training assistance through the ACRI.²⁰ By the end of (financial year) 1999, some 137 Ghanaian soldiers had received training under this scheme. In addition, 29 Ghanaians have attended military education programmes funded through the US International Military Education and Training (IMET), and four personnel through the ACSS. The latter is intended to enhance civil-military relations. According to the ACSS director,²¹

“It is not just a case of keeping the soldiers in the barracks. It’s also about educating the civilian leadership about their responsibilities to the men and women who wear their country’s uniform. The civilian leadership knows that it must give a mission to their military a soldier can be proud of; that the military needs to be paid; that soldiers and officers must be trained for their missions, given uniforms and adequate housing so that they can fulfil their professional roles.”

ACRI has received mixed reviews, however. While it has supplied much-needed equipment such as radios, tents and clothing, the training is seen “as a necessary evil so as to get the kit” and a “way of

¹⁸ Each soldier receives US\$32,00 daily allowance on UN peacekeeping missions of which they are allowed to keep half themselves. This compares well to the monthly salary of a corporal estimated at less than US\$100 per month. Ghanaians are deployed on six-monthly rotations.

¹⁹ Little work has systematically examined the basis on which decisions are made as to which battalions should be sent on UN missions. Military spokespersons would argue that there is an effort to more or less evenly distribute the allocation of missions. Anecdotal evidence suggests however that significant levels of corruption impinge on this process because of the lucrative nature of such deployment.

²⁰ Beneficiaries of the ACRI scheme are Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Malawi, Mali, Senegal and Uganda. Training for Côte d’Ivoire and Uganda was suspended due to the December 1999 coup and involvement in the DRC war respectively.

²¹ See *The Washington File*, 22 June 2000 on <http://usinfo.state.gov>.

ensuring that not a single American is placed in danger in Africa”.²² Or as one officer reflected, on the basis of their experience with ACRI “we could teach the Americans about peacekeeping”.²³

A similar kind of military involvement by the British began in 1976, originally as the Commonwealth Advisory and Training Team and subsequently, following the departure of the Canadian contingent in 1984, as BMATT. Comprising four transferred staff (one full colonel as Commander: BMATT, one substantive Lt.-Colonel, one local rank Lt.-Colonel, and warrant officer), BMATT’s role is essentially twofold. First, to assist in the running of the command and staff college at Teshi; and second, to create a “centre of excellence” for peacekeeping studies. Attendance at the 46-week senior staff college course has a regional component, with 10 non-Ghanaian Africans attending the 2000 course from a total of 38 students. Between courses, BMATT runs a three-week peacekeeping seminar involving imported (British and foreign) as well as Ghanaian instructors.

There has apparently been some Italian assistance with airforce (pilot) training for the five Aermacchi jet aircraft. In addition, the Canadian government has assisted through a Military Training Assistance Programme by sending approximately “one dozen” students to the Lester Pearson peacekeeping centre in Canada. The Canadian government has also provided course materials for the embryonic Kofi Annan peacekeeping centre being established at Teshi.

The impact of these initiatives on wider, civil-military issues is more difficult to discern and assess, however. In spite of these programmes and greater awareness about issues concerning civilian control over the military, for example, under the NDC the parliamentary committee on defence and the interior was not seen as particularly active; it functioned as a rubber stamp rather than check on the military. Little support is forthcoming for this committee, as there is generally with non-government (civil society) institutions involved in security issues. There are but a handful of academics and institutions involved in the subject (African Security Dialogue and Research; Centre for Conflict Resolution; Foundation for Security and Development in Africa; and the Institute for Economic Affairs) while the media are reportedly often prevented from delving too deeply into such matters. Although attitudes are slowly changing, security was long regarded as a “state-centric, no go area” for non-government agencies and individuals (see below). It remains to be seen what the impact of an NPP-led parliament will be but early indications are the Kufuor’s government will seek to increase civilian oversight over the military. Certainly the media and NGOs are already markedly more assertive.

5.4 Policing and Governance²⁴

The Ghanaian police forces are arguably a useful indicator of the closeness of the relationship between the military and the state. The police forces remain under the tight control of the central government, are under-resourced and are seen as corrupt and inefficient – “underfunded, ill-educated, ill-trained, bush guys in blue uniforms”. The relationship between the Inspector-General of Police (IGOP) and the president is apparently one of close scrutiny and control.

²² Interview, Accra, December 2000.

²³ Interview, Accra, 15 December 2000.

²⁴ We are grateful for the input made in this section by our colleague Dr Mark Shaw.

Under the P/NDC, policing was, as in colonial times, a matter largely of state control and suppression rather than of securing the safety of the community. The use of the military to deal with public order issues and maintain internal security was both a measure of the desire to retain political control and the low level of political maturity, but illustrates too the extent to which the police are mistrusted and sidelined.

The military and police along with officials from the prisons, customs and excise, immigration, finance, foreign affairs and justice sectors sit, however, on the National Security Council (NSC) headed by the president. This constitutionally created body meets at least once per month, and more frequently at regional and district levels to prepare a security agenda and to communicate these issues between the government and its arms. It is serviced by a 1,000-strong Secretariat headed by a National Security Co-ordinator. Relations between the military and police remain far from optimal however, perhaps related to the blurred distinction between their respective jurisdictions.²⁵

Officials contend that the police require an additional 16,000 members to “make them more effective”. Currently it does not have the numbers “sufficient to police Accra alone”. Such expansion is not possible, however, in an environment where there is “strong pressure on recurrent expenditure” and the government has thus taken the step of collapsing “the strict categorisation between the police, defence force, immigration, prisons and customs into one security force as required”.

Despite a rhetorical commitment to improving the services offered by the police and some limited indications of movement in this direction (there has, for example, been some forensic assistance given by the US government), there is no evidence that under the NDC there was any structural, institutional reform of the police. Indeed, the recent rise in crime has led to an increase in the number of private security forces, a reflection of the overall lack of confidence in the police.

It is still too early to judge the intentions or capacity of the NPP government to transform the role of the police. Very shortly after the handover of power, the new government made a large number of new vehicles available to the police and a dramatic increase in visible policing followed in the capital. Allegations about the political deployment of the police continue however, as the police undertook a number of high profile raids on the homes of high profile NDC leaders, allegedly in search of illegal weapons.

5.5 The Regional Security Environment

Ghana’s Deputy Minister of Defence under the NDC, Tony Aidoo, has argued that Ghanaian defence policy is based on an ideology of “positive neutrality” of which the “most important output is to create conditions of economic growth to deliver to the people and dissuade attempts at the destabilisation of constitutional government as we have seen before”. It has to be a force, he noted, capable of “detering potential aggressors both from neighbouring countries and from within”.²⁶

²⁵ This was demonstrated most dramatically in April 2001 when individual soldiers launched an attack on a police station, allegedly in response to the arrest and beating of one of the colleagues by police.

²⁶ Interview, Accra, 15 December 2000.

Robert Kaplan's article, 'The Coming Anarchy'²⁷, described the challenge facing the West African region as follows:

"West Africa is becoming the symbol of worldwide demographic, environmental, and societal stress, in which criminal anarchy emerges as the real "strategic" danger. Disease, overpopulation, unprovoked crime, scarcity of resources, refugee migrations, the increasing erosion of nation-states and international borders, and the empowerment of private armies, security firms, and international drug cartels are now most tellingly demonstrated through a West African prism. West Africa provides an appropriate introduction to the issues, often extremely unpleasant to discuss, that will soon confront our civilisation. ... There is no other place on the planet where political maps are so deceptive -- where, in fact, they tell such lies -- as in West Africa."

Kaplan's analysis has arguably attracted more controversy than credibility. Nonetheless it is evident that West Africa in general and Ghana's neighbours in particular face significant challenges, that Ghana's political and economic situation is somewhat different from those of its neighbours and that sustained application will be required for regional solutions to these problems. Ghana's neighbour to the west, Côte d'Ivoire, has been beset by ongoing civil-military tensions following the coup in December 1999 and the subsequent controversy over the refusal of President Laurent Gbagbo to allow the main opposition leader, Alassane Ouattara, to participate in the December 2000 election. To the north and east, Burkina Faso and Togo are seen as conduits for the illegal shipment of diamonds from Sierra Leone and even Angola. Indeed some commentators see Ghana as the "odd one out" in an alliance "of outcasts" that has developed between Charles Taylor in Liberia, Gnassingbe Eyadéma in Togo, Mathieu Kérékou in Benin and, to the south, Jonas Savimbi's UNITA movement in Angola. At the centre of this relationship is reputedly Muammar Gaddafi of Libya intent on building a strong African constituency, while analysts share concerns about the influence of Islam and its external supporters within the region. While Ghana itself may be moving away from Kaplan's apocalyptic vision, there is no doubt that it finds itself in a rough neighbourhood.

²⁷ See Robert Kaplan, 'The Coming Anarchy', *The Atlantic Monthly*, February 1994 on <http://www.theatlantic.com/politics/foreign/anarcf.htm>.



Source: CIA World Factbook²⁸

This regional dimension lends particular significance to the maintenance of democracy and conditions of good governance in Ghana: “if it [Ghana] plays by the rules and remains clean, this will send positive signals world-wide including down south in Africa”.²⁹

Indeed, according to the US Department of Defence, “Ghana exerts a positive influence in the region through its progress in building democratic institutions and economic development”.³⁰ There are doubts particularly about the ability of Nigeria’s armed forces to intervene regionally in the future in the face of its own domestic challenges – and thus the concomitant need to bolster Ghana’s economy and democratic institutions in this environment. As noted above, the military’s relationship and interoperability with the region has improved through BMATT and ACRI programmes.

While Rawlings, partly for military-security reasoning, remained rhetorically committed to ECOWAS and the concept of regional co-operation and integration, some believe that it will be difficult to maintain this adherence in the face of regional challenges. There were also doubts about the NPP’s regional philosophy, though these have been quashed by Kufuor who foresees an increased role for Ghana in the region under his leadership.³¹

5.6 The Intelligence Sector

Ghana’s intelligence services were originally trained by the Cubans and Chinese and have remained distinctly “old school” in their approach to intelligence gathering and relations with “civilians”. The development of intelligence networks around Kojo Tshikata early on in the PNDC’s rule were an integral part of attempts by the new regime to safeguard its position in an insecure environment.³²

²⁸ [Http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/gh.html](http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/gh.html).

²⁹ Telephonic interview, Johannesburg, 9 December 2000.

³⁰ *Foreign Military Training and DoD Engagement Activities of Interest, Volume 1*. Joint Report to [US] Congress, 1 March 2000.

³¹ Interview, Accra, 14 December 2000.

³² For background on the intelligence sector, see Kofi B. Quanston, *Ghana: Peace and Stability – Chapters from the Intelligence Sector*. Accra: The Advent Press, 2000.

In the days of Tshikata, the operation of intelligence services in Ghana was “influential, Machiavellian and arbitrary”.³³ Subsequently, Tshikata and Rawlings had a falling out and Tshikata was, in December 2000, reportedly in exile in Libya. Since then, he has been replaced by a more civilianised structure albeit one that remains highly resistant to attempts to render its workings more transparent or publicly accountable. Currently the intelligence services are divided between the internal (Bureau of National Investigations) and external (Research Department) civilian wings, Military Intelligence and the police CID. In terms simply of the size of the intelligence services and the resources they have available to them, they are commonly regarded as less of a threat than they used to be. However, it is not clear how much of Tshikata’s original intelligence network remains intact and to whom it owes its loyalty.

5.7 Residual Spheres of Influence for the Military?

As noted above, despite the military’s overall acquiescence with the transition, there are select areas where the military has been less than happy to subject itself to public scrutiny and debate. This has occurred with the debate on the military budget, the proposed audit of the military’s arms and ammunition stocks, and the proscriptions on the taking of photographs on military installations. In addition, the military still have much work to do on improving their public relations. Of course, the inability of the legislature and the relevant parliamentary sub-committee to oversee the military budget may say more about the weakness of those bodies than about the strength of the military.

In terms of the military’s impact on broader policy-making, for now at least money speaks more loudly than guns. Overall the Minister of Finance is probably a more powerful figure in present day Ghana than the Minister of Defence. Very quickly after achieving power, the PNDC understood that they would be required to make policy and budgetary adaptations in order to access international funds³⁴. The military, too, have come to understand this and, more specifically, recognise the importance of compliance with international norms regarding the ‘proper role’ for the military in a modern polity.

On the public relations front, communication between the military and civil society has improved. Indeed a number of seminars designed to promote this dialogue have been held and higher-ranking officials within the military have come to see the value of such meetings. At a broad political level, it seems that civilian oversight of the military has been successfully reasserted (that oversight emanating from the central executive and not from the legislature). At an operational level (*viz.* in the day-to-day conduct of military affairs), the politicians are inclined not to interfere with the running of the military as seems reasonable.

³³ Interview, Accra, October 2000.

³⁴ The same would appear largely to be true of the NPP although of course this party is ideologically more committed to a proscribed role for the military in any event.

5.8 Defining National Security

Aidoo's comments above notwithstanding, Ghana has, for many years, not had an explicit statement of defence policy or a precise statement of what constitutes national security -- supposedly the chief concern of any military. Neither are clear directives in this regard emerging from the legislature. What then is the military's implicit understanding of its role in modern day Ghana?

This is obviously very difficult to discern from without. Anecdotal evidence would seem to indicate that the top level of military leadership is unlikely to want to undertake another coup, even though there are "a few dinosaurs at the level of full Colonel or above who have experienced the revolutionary period and believe that the military have a role other than that of supporting the government".³⁵ Generally the middle ranking levels (Major, Lt.-Col.) of the military are viewed as seeing the need for "a democratically-accountable, impartial, professional military". This does not mean, of course, that there is not potential support for a greater political role from among all ranks.

For this reason, it is important to distinguish between the officers and the enlisted men.³⁶ While many senior officers have benefited personally from the Rawlings coup, other officers were "horrified" by junior-led coups and remember all-too-clearly the excesses of the revolutionary period. Of course, many enthusiastically supported the subsequent restoration of internal disciplinary processes. More broadly, most observers would agree that there has been an important mind-shift among the top ranking officers: They have come to believe in the subordination of the military to civilian rule. They are not necessarily unambiguous believers in democracy however. Rather, they apparently value political stability and, to the extent that it facilitates this, some kind of an "open" political system.³⁷ Whatever their qualms about democracy and politicians, pragmatists within the military have come to understand that, given the difficulties of governing Ghana, intervention could be more of a burden than a benefit to the military and its interests.

5.9 Ethnicity and Divisive Forces

It is unclear to what extent Rawlings was able to inculcate a sense of national rather than ethnic identity within the armed forces. Government officials contend that ethnicity is not a factor, while observers reflect the complaints of both Akan and Ewe alike that the other party received preferred treatment in government services, the former particularly in the military. There are stated concerns about the senior role that was played in the military by the Ewe – and whether this group might view an (Ashanti-based) NPP victory as a direct threat. The NPP's call in parliament for a balanced regional (ethnic) distribution in the armed forces was dismissed by the NDC as unnecessary given that the armed forces are all-volunteer, and that this approach "creates a consciousness of a situation that does not exist".³⁸

³⁵ Interview, Accra, December 2000. In terms of prestige within the army, coup-makers are generally stigmatised as failed military men.

³⁶ Interview, Accra, October 2000.

³⁷ Indeed, within the military, the manner in which Rawlings has enabled debate within the military through regular open consultations ('durbars') should be noted.

³⁸ Interview, Accra, 15 December 2000.

The role of the rapid deployment force, 64th Battalion, is also cited as a divisive element. It was seen to be directly under the control of the presidency in Rawlings' day – hence its public status as a presidential guard. Made up of a heterogeneous mix of Bulgarian, Cuban, German and Russian trained troops which, in the words of government, “might make some uncomfortable”, 64th is also apparently better equipped than other elements, with in the eyes of foreign observers “better vehicles and armoured cars”. The NPP government has not as yet taken any decisive steps to restructure the Battalion.

6 The Current State of Ghanaian Democracy

6.1 Introduction

Ghana has a chequered political history, of elected governments that are interrupted by military coups that then revert to elected governments that are interrupted by military coups and so on. This has given rise to speculation concerning the dominant impulse in Ghanaian political life: is it democratic or authoritarian? There is concern that Ghanaians have come to accept elements of authoritarianism as crucial to political stability--and even that they link the recovery of the Ghanaian economy with the somewhat authoritarian style of governance adopted by Rawlings. Other observers argue not only that Ghanaians do value democracy, but also that it is regarded as valuable in and of itself, rather than viewed instrumentally.³⁹

Until the end of 2000, Ghanaian democracy could have been described as “pre-consolidation”: until the December 2000 election, there had been no change of regime by democratic means. The NPP’s election victory bodes well for the state of Ghanaian democracy. Relatively free political expression and a lively and vigorous press and media debate characterised the run-up to -- and aftermath of -- the 2000 elections. Increasingly the public has access to information and debate regarding the nature and programmes of its government. Although the effective functioning of the judiciary continues to be compromised by corruption it is nonetheless plausible for one commentator to argue “[w]hat can be done by political engineering has been done. Now we face the slow, painful process of consolidation”.⁴⁰

6.2 The Political Institutions

Civil society has grown increasingly assertive during the transition process and may be regarded as relatively healthy, albeit still undeveloped. In terms of formal political opposition at the time, the two chief parties in opposition to the NDC were the New Patriotic Party (NPP), the reconstituted liberal party and the National Reform Party led by disgruntled former members of (P)NDC, although only the former made a significant showing in the recent elections.

Questions at the time were raised concerning the extent to which the NDC has matured into anything more than a fan club for Jerry Rawlings. The answer? Not really -- but then personality-driven politics is not only shared by the other political parties in Ghana but is also found in democracies across the globe. Indeed, consensus around “centrist” economics and structural

³⁹ Bratton M and R Mattes, *Support for Democracy in Africa: Intrinsic or Instrumental?*. East Lansing: Michigan State University, 1999.

⁴⁰ Interview, Accra, October 2000.

adjustment left little space for substantive policy debate and reinforced the tendency towards personality-driven politics.

Because it has been the longest period of sustained constitutional government in Ghana, the 4th Republic has been a real test of Ghana's democracy and this fact alone made the December 2000 election vitally important. Political institutions and structures compatible with democracy have been developed. This election and the manner in which it was conducted may positively shape the extent to which these are allowed to consolidate in the future.

6.3 2000 Elections and the New NPP Government

The parliamentary victory by the NPP and the victory of their presidential candidate John Kufuor could thus be taken to represent a fundamental consolidation of Ghana's democracy. It is significant that very shortly after his accession to power, President Kufuor named his brother, Addo Kufuor, as the new Minister of Defence; it is evident that the new president wishes to keep as close an eye as possible on the military and that he may not feel entirely confident of the loyalty of the upper echelons of the military. Some additional, albeit tentative pointers can be drawn from these events:

First, to some extent it represents the de-personalisation of Ghanaian politics with the removal of Rawlings and his party from the political centre-stage. If anything, Atta Mills' prospects were seen to have suffered as a result of his close ties to Rawlings.

Second, the election of the centre-right NPP is seen by many as confirmation of the need for ongoing economic reforms and a further move away from the abuse of civil liberties which characterised the military regimes. On his accession to office in January, Kufuor faced immediate and difficult political choices in making these economic reforms, particularly in the removal of petrol subsidies.

Third, there was never a question of military interference (it was considered unlikely that the military would have considered intervention unless the results had been annulled or contested and there had been widespread political and social unrest). However, questions remain about Rawlings' future role, especially with the poor showing by Atta Mills in the recent elections. Rawlings remains a relatively young man (54) and is unlikely to step completely out of the public limelight after 20 years in politics especially as he is the self-appointed life chairman of the NDC. The reaction of the NPP to Rawlings' conspicuous public displays of consumption and the possibility of legal challenges to human rights abuses allegedly committed during his rule may be important determinants of Rawlings' future career -- and also of the reaction of the military.

Fourth, some commentators have highlighted the class-based nature of the NPP/NDC divide, and whether the election result might thus result in a populist backlash, as well as a revival of Ashanti/Ewe NPP/NDC tensions.

Fifth, the role of parliamentary (and civil society) institutions might receive a boost from the outcome, particularly given the role of the Inter-Party Action Committee (IPAC) in institutionalising the common interests of all political parties in the electoral process and as a conflict resolution mechanism should be stressed. This process involved all of the parties in rule-making, strengthening the role of civil society initiatives that characterised at least the latter stages of the Rawlings' era.

There have been growing calls for a re-examination of the role that the military has played in Ghanaian political life. This has included for example, demands for the restoration of the bodies of those military officers “purged” during the revolutionary period to their families. It has also included demands for a South African style “Truth and Reconciliation Commission” to examine “excesses” and human rights abuses by the military and other branches of the state under the P/NDC. Kufuor appears aware of the need to move very cautiously in regard to any issue that may inflame the military and there has thus far been little official response to such demands.

6.4 The Economic Realm

*Ghana: Socio-Economic Indicators*⁴¹

Rate of Annual Real Economic Growth, %, 1975-97	-0.2
Rate of Real Economic Growth, %, 1999	4.2
Real Per Capita GDP, 1997 US\$	437
GDP (US\$ billion), 1997	6.9
Average Annual Rate of Inflation, %, 1985-96	31.3
Inflation, %, 2000	23
External Debt as % of GDP (total in parenthesis in US\$ billion), 1985 & 1997	51 (2,3) 88.6 (6.0)
Population, 1975 & 1997	9.8 & 18.7
Average Annual Population Growth, %, 1975-97	3.0
Estimated Adult HIV prevalence, %, 1999	3.6
Adult Literacy, %, 1997	66.4
UN Human Development Index ranking of 174 states	133 (1999)
Military Spending, % of GDP, 1996 (1988 in parenthesis)	0.6 (0.4)
Military Forces	7,000 (Army 5,000; Navy 1,000; Air Force 1,000)
Police Forces	Est. 5,000

Finally, as has been intimated above, Ghana faces an environment characterised not only by political change but also increasingly by economic uncertainty and difficulty. This may impact on the ability of state agencies to deliver, on political stability and on the future role of the military.

The results from 15 years of SAPs have been, at best, mixed. Gold and cocoa continue to contribute nearly 70% of export income and the agricultural sector 37% of economic activity overall, while the high cost of oil imports has created a US\$1 billion trade deficit. The cedi devalued by 70% during 2000. In summary, the new government’s challenges are essentially six-fold:⁴²

⁴¹ See UNDP, *Human Development Report*, 1999. London: OUP/UN, 1999; World Bank, *World Development Indicators*, 1999, CD-Rom version; *Military Balance, 1999/2000*. London: OUP/IISS, 1998. For details on the prevalence of HIV-Aids and the related social impact, see http://www.unaids.org/wac/20020/wad00/files/AIDS_in_Africa.htm.

⁴² For a summary of these challenges, see Antony Goldman, ‘Star pupil, mixed report’, *Business Day*, 8 December 2000; ‘Ghana’, *Financial Times Survey*, 29 November 2000; and ‘Sustaining the vision’, *Business in Africa*, October 2000, especially pp.20-31 and the interview with John Atta Mills on pp. 28-31.

First, the quicker elimination of state subsidies (particularly on oil which is priced at around half the current cost) that will need to be balanced against the need to secure political support. (There is currently an estimated 8.5% fiscal deficit.)

Second, the need for continued (and tighter) control over monetary supply without freezing the economy.

Third, a more aggressive privatisation strategy, where just 25% (by value) of state enterprises had, by December 2000, been sold off.

Fourth, the need for consensus with Bretton Woods institutions in the management of these challenges. There is an immediate short-term imperative to achieve such consensus to raise “incremental assistance to cushion the burden”.⁴³ Ghana’s decision to sign up to the Highly Indebted Poor Countries initiative in early 2001 will provide some immediate debt relief but will not solve the problem of long term funding for the economy.

Fifth, the imperative to maintain investor and donor confidence, particularly in the light of the scandal around investment impropriety in the mining sector.⁴⁴

Sixth, the need to reduce dependency on inelastic commodity earnings that requires the diversification and promotion of non-traditional exports.

Commentators argue that the current spate of economic difficulties is not the fault of the NDC government: the combination of low oil and gold prices and high oil costs were beyond the ability of the government to remedy, and will likewise assail an NPP government. While frustrations about government’s abilities to deliver will, in the opinion of most, result in difficulties at the polls in 2004 they are unlikely to evoke a military response.

⁴³ Interview, World Bank, Accra, December 2000.

⁴⁴ This relates to the preferential access apparently granted by the government to union interests in the transfer of mining rights in Prestia Mine, an act that, in the words of one mining executive, has “significantly changed the investment climate to the negative”.

7 Civil-Military Relations in Ghana: The Prognosis

This report has argued that the regimes led by Rawlings and the (P)NDC were authoritarian but were not necessarily military governments. The purge of the military in the early days of the PNDC was welcomed by a large number of those within the military. Certainly those who were purged were those generally regarded as the most corrupt (they were frequently those who had led previous coups against elected governments). While corruption has certainly not ceased altogether within the military, the purge did succeed in eliminating the influence of the most corrupt -- and politicised -- sector within the military. This paved the way for the development of a new role and image for the military and for it to benefit from significant side-payments for projects like international peacekeeping while restoring some level of international and domestic legitimacy. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that there are many in society who saw the NDC as a military government. Without Rawlings, they lost their fear of the NDC, hence the protest-type vote against the NDC in the 7 December 2000 election.

Although the current crop of the Ghanaian officer corps “owes its being to Jerry [Rawlings]”, the indications are that the military has indeed retreated to the barracks; further, that it will accept a change in regime and is, overall, inclined to be loyal to the Ghanaian state rather than to a particular party or individual. Indeed, the presidential candidate, John Kufuor, has gone out of his way to reassure the military in stating his commitment for the need for extra funding, equipment and training for Ghana’s “highly professional military”.⁴⁵

Ethnic tensions between the largely Ashanti NPP and the Ewe NDC might remain, but it is unlikely that the army would intervene on these grounds alone. What is less certain is what the military’s role might be should there be a total breakdown of law and order such as might follow a future contested election or, especially, economic collapse, particularly in the absence of an effective police force. Although he has said that “Ghana is fed up with coups and this is a remote possibility”, the NDC’s Deputy Defence Minister, Tony Aidoo, cautioned a potential NPP government against pursuing an investigation against President Rawlings and his family that “would ruffle people’s feathers – not only in the military, but in a sizeable portion of the civilian population”. He said that “creating a South African-type [Truth and Reconciliation] solution here is not going to work for Ghana, but rather it will open a Pandora’s box which will be very difficult for us to close”.⁴⁶ Finally, the regional environment also poses worrying and seemingly unstoppable trends towards disorder and even anarchy in some areas, with officers and civilians alike concerned over the role being played by Liberia that is seen to be a “time-bomb”.

⁴⁵ Interview, Accra, 14 December 2000.

⁴⁶ Interview, Accra, 15 December 2000.

8 Conclusions and Policy Implications

At first glance, Ghana has come full circle. At independence in March 1957, it was regarded as the jewel in Britain's African colonial crown. Its political status was enhanced by the activist continental role played by Kwame Nkrumah, though this was dramatically offset by his (failed) economic policies and subsequent political and economic events.⁴⁷ Rawlings' coups d'état appeared initially to be yet another phase in Ghana's continued decline. However, his pragmatic economic policies coupled with external and domestic political developments (including, importantly, the 1992 multiparty constitution and the 1996 democratic presidential election), instead led Ghana back towards economic recovery and political stability. It also kept the military in the barracks. The December 2000 election and the subsequent regime change is a critical forward step in this process. Ghana is once again pointing the way forward for Africa.

Ghana has been lauded frequently for the apparent smoothness with which it has moved from a dictatorship in which the military was above scrutiny, to a system where the military is increasingly being held accountable. What made this possible and what might be some of the generalisable lessons offered by Ghana's transition?

Regimes are likely to be most responsive to pressure in those areas where they are the most vulnerable; in Ghana's case, it was the need to access international flows of capital as a means of restructuring and diversifying a commodity-dependent (and thus highly vulnerable) economy. International finance is crucial today to the maintenance of economic (and political) stability in Ghana and hence will, to a great extent, continue to shape the likely role of the military.

Transition away from authoritarian rule is more likely to be unopposed – and even sponsored – by the regime when it is not going to threaten the influence or security of key figures within the regime.

It is important to provide the military with access to resources and prestige outside of occupying the highest offices in the land. In Ghana's case, international peacekeeping serves at least a part of this function.

The implementation of systems of civilian control of the military remains arguably critical, however, to long-term stability. These include the need for parliamentary/legislative oversight and control particularly with respect to the acquisition and budgetary processes.

External military assistance can play a useful function in inculcating such systems, providing assistance with institution building, peacekeeping training and demobilisation, and in assisting the role that can be played by civil society.

⁴⁶ In 1957, Ghana had a higher GNP per capita than South Korea: today the average income of Koreans is 30 times that of Ghanaians.

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