

The BAD Fire and Its Aftermath: Implications for National Safety and Security

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Introduction

In the wake of the accidental explosion's at oldest Base Ammunition Depot (BAD) of the Ghana Armed Forces, I posted a piece on my Facebook page.¹ Given the avalanche of media discussions of the issue, the piece sought to calm the chorus of public voices calling for the relocation of the Base from population centres, and inform the general public about the history of ammunition depots, within the context of the Ordnance Service of the Ghana Armed Forces, as well as provide a limited, generalised examination of the merits and demerits of these calls.

In this sequel to the Facebook post, I posit that there is need to think through the wider dimensions of the strategic importance of BAD. The think piece therefore seeks to further inform the public discourse on the incident by placing the history of the military installations of the Ghana Armed Forces into perspective, underscore the need for appropriate investigations into the causes, nature and impact of the fire, and proffer suggestions towards reconciling the two seemingly extreme ends of public safety versus national military security necessity.

Background



In an article titled “Michel Camp: bombs explode at ammunition depot,” GhanaWeb reported on its General News portal on 16 Jan 2019, that “huge fireball explosions reached hundreds of metres into the skies over Michel Camp during the wee hours of Wednesday after the weapon cache caught fire”, moments after midnight. Quoting residents, the article further reported that the explosions at the Base Ammunition Depot, which caused a power outage, included multiple blasts for over an hour, causing most of the sleeping residents to run for their lives, some fleeing towards Aflao, Tema, Afienya and Apollonia. To some of the residents, the scale of the

explosions “felt like [an] earthquake at some point.” Pending proper investigations into the incident, the cause of the explosion was not yet known at the time, although the military authorities, in an official statement on the situation, called on the public to stay away from the explosive remnants.

Investigations: Preliminary and Substantive

Contrary to information in the media based on comments from the general public, including some eyewitnesses, the military authorities confirmed the following preliminary findings, that: a) there was a fire outbreak in the Ammunition Repair Workshop (ARW) at BAD, b) the fire outbreak occurred at about 00:30 hours on 16 January 2019, and that c) the fire was detected by the sentry on duty at the main gate of the BAD.

From the preliminary investigations by the military authorities, the fire was contained through the efforts of three teams, namely fire-fighting teams from the Ghana National Fire Service (GNFS), significantly including the Chief Fire Officer of the National Fire Service, and the Ghana Armed Forces Fire Service (GAFFS), assisted in

¹ Posted at 21:30 hours, 16 January 2019, at https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=2173218446340707&id=100009577182613.

fighting the fire. In addition, personnel of BAD also demonstrated gallantry by defying the thick smoke and heat generated by the huge fire to attempt to salvage some of the contents of the burning workshop. Through this combined effort, the fire outbreak was finally brought under control at about 02:30 hours, that is, about two hours after the start of the fire.

The initial military assessment of the fire indicated the extent of its impact in three aspects. The first impact was the significant destruction of the ARW structure and its contents, necessitating the possible pulling down of the structure for the safety of personnel and the depot. Obviously, the fire outbreak also caused damage to assorted natures and calibres of training ammunition [pyrotechnics as opposed to live rounds], as well as chemicals for testing and investigations, and miscellaneous equipment including Explosive Ordnance Device (EOD), among others. Finally, the authorities confirmed that the incident also impacted the adjoining settlements of Gbetsile and Kakasunanka No 2,² as well as Michel Camp, where some of the training projectiles and fragments landed. Early indications from the military authorities are that the farthest distance traversed by the projectiles was about 800 metres, and this was well within the prescribed 2-kilometre safety distance for the Base.

The preliminary information is important for dispelling conjectures by the public, especially in the age of social media and fake news. It is certain, though, that a firebreak is a matter that warrants a board of enquiry (BOI) and the military has initiated the relevant process to clarify the unknowns or even to confirm the knowns, determine the real cause(s) of the fire, including any causal omissions or actions, and ascertain the extent of its impact. For purposes of military security, it should suffice to note that the investigations would also seek to look at the natures of ammunition in storage at the BAD, including their state and continued usage in the Armed Forces, the conditions of storage of munitions and equipment, and the integrity of the structures on the compound, as well as the installation's safety regime as a whole and the localities in its proximity and, ultimately, the issue of civilian encroachment.

A General History of Military Real Estate: Garrisons and Training Areas

At this juncture, it is considered useful to discuss the issue of military real estate before examining the way forward on the outcomes of the investigations. There is a considerable amount of the history of military real estate in general than the public may be aware of. Lack of knowledge about such history is understandable given how little attention the Ghanaian society, pays to national history and, by extension, national military history. On the other hand, the dearth of knowledge about the history of national institutions is not only costly; it could also be dangerous, among other reasons, when policies misaligned with facts of history that may still be germane.

In normal usage, real estate is a physical property, including land and buildings, as well as air rights above the land and underground rights below the land. For obvious reasons, society may be more accustomed to real estate as it relates to residential, commercial and, industrial land in general whether vacant, undeveloped, in early development or reuse, site assembly or for agricultural purposes. The US Department of Defence (2009) doctrinal definition of real estate may be informative here. All these categorisations of real estate, however, also apply to the military that may need them as assets of a permanent (fixed) character having continuing value as capital property, for a variety of vital uses, including for military establishments of residential, command, administrative, equipment, and productive plants; training, exercises and field operations; commercial and industrial; and to meet future expansion programmes as and when the need arises. The military needs and uses real estate to maintain the mission readiness posture essential for meeting its constitutional mandate to protect and defend the territorial integrity of the country. Without appropriate and enough real estate, it is doubtful that the military can fulfil its mission and mandate.

² Kakasunanka No 1 is on the same side of Michel Camp, but outside of the Camp's outer perimeter fence.

It is in this context that the colonial powers—civilian and military—drew up an elaborate plan for military real estate. For instance, when HQ Accra Garrison³ was formed on 1 Aug 59, the constituent units and installations had been in existence progressively from the onset of the colonial project dating to the mid-15th century. After its first commander, Lt Col AG Ryshworth-Hill (1 Aug 59 - 13 Jan 60), followed by two more British Commanders till 25 Apr 60, the Garrison HQ was disbanded on 1 Nov 61 and re-formed on 15 Oct 62 under Brig CM Barwah, Commander 1 Inf Bde. The outline history of four of the 14 units—Works Services Engineers (WSE), Base Ordnance Depot (BOD), Base Workshop (B/Wksp), Base Supply Depot (BSD), Provost Unit & Special Investigation Branch (SIB), Camp HQ Burma Camp, Base Ammunition Depot Tema, Forces Pay Office (FPO), Ghana Armed Forces Fire Service (GAFFS)—under administrative control of the new Accra Garrison will help to illustrate the historicity of the real estate of the Ghana Armed Forces:

Srl	Unit/Establishment	History (Brief Origins Only)
1.	Military Academy & Training Schools (MATS)	HQ Whistler Barracks was formed at Teshie on 1 November 1961, under Lt Col MB Sanni-Thomas (1 Nov 1961 - 15 Oct 1962), the first Ghanaian Commandant after 14 British Commandants of the West Africa Command Training School (WACTS)/RWAFF Training School (RWAFFTS) (1940-61).
2.	37 Military Hospital (Mil Hosp)	In 1941, the Medical Component Sections of one Field Ambulance and Field Hygiene were formed to support each of the Brigades in Burma and at home. The 37 General Hospital (9 wards, 200 beds), also the Combined Services Hospital till 1 May 1963, was commissioned on 4 July 1941, with an additional Black Section (20 wards, 800 beds), to provide treatment for troops injured in the Second World War.
3.	Cavalry Squadron / Reconnaissance Regiment (Recce) HQ	The Gold Coast Recce Regt was formed from RWAFF cadres as divisional troops—Recce Sqns—for operations in Burma in August 1941. After the Recce Sqns were disbanded in 1946, except the Indep Fd Bty which remained till independence, the remnant Regt was designated the Indep Recce Battery on 4 July 1958, and again as the Ghana Recce Sqn on 1 May 1959 with a strength of six Officers and 252 Men and moved from the Old to the New Gondar Barracks in June 1959. Regimental HQ (RHQ) for the Armoured Reconnaissance Squadrons was formed at Gondar Barracks on 31 May 1963, or perhaps on 12 June 1963.
4.	Forces Records Office (FRO)	The Records Office existed as part of the Gold Coast Regimental HQ between 1939-41. In December 1942, the Gold Coast District Records Office was formed at Butler Camp (Cantonments) from the peacetime Regiment Records Office. Maj Hodgson (Loyal Regt) was the first Commander. After its redesignation as the Ghana Military Records Office (GMRO) on 3 March 1957, and further as the Ghana Army Records Office (GARO) on 1 January 1959, it was moved from Cantonments to Giffard Camp, and again redesignated as the Ghana Armed Forces Records Office (GAFRO) in March 1960 in view of the formation of the Navy and Air Force in March - April 1959. As part of the MOD reorganisations in 1987, the Office was designated the Directorate of Military Records (GHQ(DMR)).

It is obvious that these units were all established during the by between World War II and prior to the overthrow of the first republic in 1966. Given challenges with proper record keeping and maintenance, it is arguable that the lease agreements for some of the associated military lands which were duly acquired by the state, in the first place, may be untraceable today. Against the foregoing backdrop, the table below shows some of the real estate of the Armed Forces across the length and breadth of the country.

³ HQ Takoradi Garrison was formed at Takoradi on 1 Jan 61. HQ Kumasi Garrison was formed on 1 Oct 62 under command of the Kumasi Brigade Commander, and designated Kumasi Station.

Srl	Barrack/Camp	Initial Unit Occupant	Present Unit Occupant
1.	American Lines, Cameo	US Army Air Corps Base	DMR/MOD Chapel/Cameo, etc
2.	Arakan Barracks, Accra	-	5 Inf Bn
3.	Arbo, Kumasi	Garrison Engineers (GE)	-
4.	Arden Camp, Rangoon	Mechanical Transport Training Centre	Officers/WOS Qtrs
5.	Asutsuare Training Centre (ATC)	President's Own Guard Regiment (POGR)	-
6.	Axim	-	-
7.	Bantama Camp (Elmina)	2 Infantry Battalion outpost	-
8.	Barwah Barracks (Tamale)	Airborne Force (ABF)	ABF
9.	Benin/Giffard Camp, Taungup	1 Station Workshop	Range
10.	Berekum	-	-
11.	Buna Rock, Takoradi	Royal Engineers (RE) Stores	-
12.	Bundase Training Area	-	-
13.	Burma Camp (Giffard Camp)	District HQ	MOD, Service HQs, main Base
14.	Burma Villas (Burma Camp)	Officers' Quarters	Officers Qtrs
15.	Buthidaung, Kumasi	52 West Africa Military Hospital	-
16.	Cantonments, Old Gondar	2 Light Battery	-
17.	Cantonments, El Wak	1 GCR	SNCOs Qtrs, Stadium, MP Mess, Vet
18.	Cantonments, later Butler Camp	Records Office	-
19.	Chiringa Lines (Burma Camp)	EME Quarters	EME Junior Ranks Qtrs
20.	Daboya Range	Mortar Open Range	-
21.	Dodowa Lines Flagstaff House, African Medical Staff Quarters	Flagstaff, WOs/SNCOs Quarters	2 nd Deputy (Jun 96 - Aug 97)
22.	Dohazari Lines (Burma Camp)	Mechanical Transport Company (MT Bn)	Defence MT Bn
23.	Duala Lines (Burma Camp)	-	1 MT Battalion Quarters
24.	El Wak (Accra)	1 Gold Coast Regiment (GCR)	SNCOs Quarters, Stadium, Military Police Mess, Veterinary
25.	Elmina Camp	See Bantama Camp	-
26.	Flagstaff House	Residence of GOC, Gold Coast District	-
27.	Gambaga Camp (Gambaga)	Army Training Camp	-
28.	Giffard Camp	District Pay Office	-
29.	Giffard Camp	Signal Regiment	See Burma Camp
30.	Giffard/Benin Camp, Taungup	1 Station Workshop	Range
31.	Gondar Barracks (Burma Camp)	Recce Regiment	-
32.	Iddris Camp (Kumasi)	HQ 2 Infantry Brigade	HQ Central Command
33.	Imphal, Kibi	West Africa Trade Training School	-
34.	Jelib	13 Light Aid Det (LAD)	-
35.	Juba Villas (Burma Camp)	Officers' Quarters	-
36.	Kaladan Barracks (Tamale)	2 GCR (first Unit in location)	-
37.	Kamina Barracks (Tamale)	6 Infantry Battalion	-

Srl	Barrack/Camp	Initial Unit Occupant	Present Unit Occupant
38.	Kibi Camp	West Africa Trade Training School	-
39.	Kintampo Camp (Kintampo)	Several Units' location	-
40.	Kpeshie Ridge (Teshie)	HQ 1 Infantry Brigade	HQ Southern Command
41.	Liberation Barracks (Sunyani)	3 Infantry Battalion	-
42.	Medo Lines (Burma Camp)	HQ Support Services Brigade	-
43.	Michel Camp (Tema)	1 Infantry Battalion	-
44.	Myohaung, Accra	HQ Gold Coast District	-
45.	Myohaung Barracks, Takoradi	2 Infantry Battalion	-
46.	Myohaung Villas (Takoradi)	2 Infantry Battalion Officers Quarters	-
47.	Narungumbe	West Africa School of Infantry & Education	-
48.	Neghelli	37 West Africa Military Hospital	37 Military Hospital
49.	Otu Barracks (Teshie) Young Pioneer Centre/WAC	Ghana Armed Forces Command & Staff College (GAFSC)	-
50.	Ranchi, Wajir Camp, Takoradi	7 Infantry Battalion	Western Naval Command Basic Schools (tbc)
51.	Rangoon Camp, initially Arden	Mechanical Transport Training Centre	Army HQ/HQ 1 Inf Bde Gp
52.	Rangoon Villas	Officers' Quarters	-
53.	Sangu (Accra)	OC Royal/Garrison Engr	Juba Villas
54.	Seth Anthony Barracks, Achiase	Jungle Warfare School	Since Jul 91
55.	Teshie Villas (MATS, Teshie)	Officers' Quarters	-
56.	Togo (Takoradi)	Ammunition Depot	-
57.	Uaddara Old (Kumasi)	2 (West Africa) Primary Training Centre (PTC)—probably at about 1940 but was so known in 1944	4 Infantry Battalion
58.	Uaddara New (Kumasi)	-	4 Infantry Battalion
59.	Volta Barracks (Ho)	Mortar Regiment	Artillery Regiment
60.	Wajir Barracks (Teshie)	37 Field Squadron	48 Engineer Regiment
61.	Whistler Barracks (Teshie)	MATS	MATS

An Outline History of the BAD

The history of the Base Ammunition Depot (BAD) forms part of the foregoing history of the military real estate as well as that of Ordnance Service of the Ghana Armed Forces. The Ordnance Service of the Ghana Armed Forces dates to World War II when a Brigade Group Company of the West African Army Service Corps (WAASC) was formed in October 1941 as a transit facility for Allied Forces. Subsequently, the Gold Coast Ordnance Depot was formed after the War but was dependent on Lagos until Ghana's independence when it was designated the Ghana Army Ordnance Service (GAOS).

The Ministry of Defence Ordnance (MOD Ord) was formed in 1961 with Colonel CK Tevie as its first Ghanaian Director (1 September 1961 – 1 August 1966). It was at this time that the BAD was established in August 1961. Subsequently, the Army Workshop Stores Section was reorganised and redesignated as the Base Workshop Stores Section (GAOS) with effect from 1 February 1963. A couple of years later, the Field Workshop Stores Section was formed at Accra on 1 January 1965.

Overview of the Status of Military Real Estate

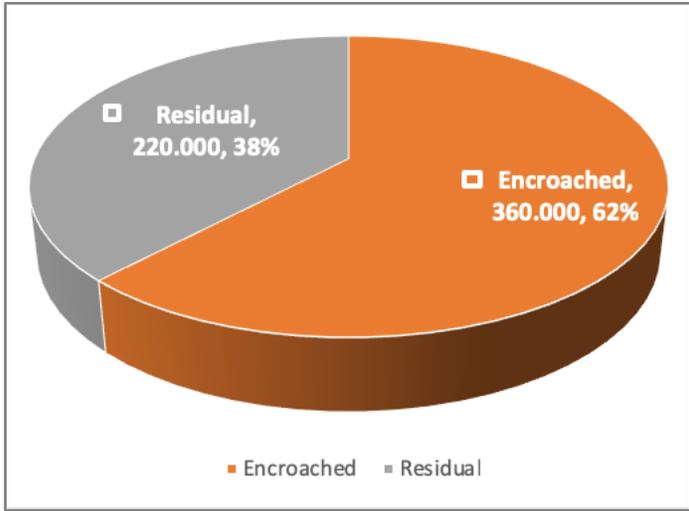
It is important to recall the fact that under the direction of Major General Paley (1959-60), Major Gen HT Alexander (1960-61) and Maj Gen SJA Otu (1961-65), who, as the Chiefs of Defence Staff were primarily responsible for the "Ghanaianisation" and expansion of the Ghana Armed Forces, all military installations were sited far away from population centres, and given clearly demarcated safety zones, on state-acquired lands. It is possible though, that some existing military installations may have come about from the principle of continued occupation. In the absence of evidence to that effect, though, it may not be proper to suggest which installations may fall under this category.

With these factors in mind, it is pertinent to draw attention to the fact that like all other military installations, including Burma Camp (originally Giffard Camp), the BAD was sited at its existing locality, then collocated with the Fourth Battalion of Infantry (4 Inf Bn) at Michel Camp. It was not until about 1968 when the First Battalion of Infantry (1 Inf Bn) replaced 4 Inf Bn, which then moved to Tamale (Kaladan).

With time, however, populations have virtually migrated towards military installations and, in some instances, encroached on them with reckless abandon. One example of such encroachment is the "B" Training Area at Whistler Barracks. The "B" Training Area was characterised by "Blackman" targets in a field of mango trees, and watermelon and tomato farms, among other vegetables, making it ideal for skill at arms training for students of the Army Combat Training School (ACTS), formerly the School of Infantry, and proximity field craft and minor tactics training for officer cadets of the Ghana Military Academy (GMA). Probably by about 2000, this vital training area was rendered unusable or lost to encroachment as suburban Teshie engulfed the area. Currently, it is estimated that about 106 acres (15 percent) of the total of 699.776 acres of land for MATS has been encroached. On a lighter note, the watermelon and tomato farms that had been the delight of cadets during field craft training also disappeared. On a more serious note, the loss of the "B" Training Area at MATS has had serious repercussions for some training that now have to be run out of sequence in other remote areas with attendant logistical challenges and military training budget cost.

Another example of encroachment on military lands is the Bundase Training Area, which has served as a vital training area for shooting practices by the Ghana Army and the Ghana Air Force, and currently serves as the locality for peace support operations pre-deployment training. Although the training is area is largely intact after the lease of some 2,172 acres (4 per cent) of the total area of about 58,314 for affordable housing, and leaving a residual of about 56,142 (96 per cent), there is empirical evidence that the Armed Forces is having to deal with a few pockets of encroachment on this piece of vital training real estate by cattle herders and settled communities.

Fig 1: Chart of Encroachment of BAD



Of the three military lands discussed in the piece, the situation of encroachment of BAD is considered quite severe. Here, it is estimated that out of its original size of about 580 acres, a significant amount of 360 acres (62 percent) has been encroached, leaving a residual amount of 220 acres (38 percent). This data and the corresponding chart (Fig 1) place the acute problem of the encroachment of the BAD into sharp relief. Indeed, they paint a scary and sordid picture of public safety vis-à-vis national military security.

This encroachment phenomenon speaks, to some degree, to an underlying issue of the political economy of military lands and installations and how local economies of proximity communities, such as Kakasunanka, feed into them. It may be instructive to place the meaning and usage of the word “Kakasunanka” in the context of the phenomenon. One understanding is that the word originated from the Hausa word “*yayasunanka*,” meaning “who are you”? The usage may thus be further explained by the influence of Hausas, starting with Glover’s Lagos Hausas, on the Gold Coast Regiment and the early Ghana Army. Since all military camps are ordinarily beyond limits to unauthorised persons, these Hausa soldiers might have routinely challenged persons they perceived as squatters near military camps in attempts to drive them away. Over time, perhaps, the word was corrupted to Kakasunanka and came to be associated with the small Zongo-type⁴ squatter market communities that grew up in the vicinity of military camps not only in Ghana but also as far away as in Nigeria. Indeed, in Aboagye (2011: 391–392), I have argued that the phenomenon goes further back to the time of the wars of colonisation in which both British and other European and indigenous military forces relied on “war markets” that rolled on with armies and sprang up in proximity to the fighting lines. Obviously, between then and now, there appears to be some laxity in securing military lands from severe encroachment by such market camps and communities. Furthermore, it is wholly possible that some retired soldiers might have also chosen to settle close to 1 Infantry Battalion at either Kakasunanka No 1 or Kakasunanka No 2 or both.

In general, though, about four or five inter-related reasons may account for this phenomenon of encroachment. They include poor urban planning and lack of enforcement, increasing assertion on the part of traditional leaders to “reclaim” stool lands requisitioned for the state in bygone years, and a culture of lack of respect for law and order on the part of the citizenry, coupled with a lack of strict enforcement and protection by military authorities. Truth be told, sometimes it also arises from political pressure on the military to relinquish military lands in accordance with state policy. The above factors have also informed the syndrome of encroachments within the wider society, such as of ceremonial areas, and roads and railway lines, including under bridges, and under high tension cables.

Towards Enhanced Safety and Security of Ammunition Depots and Other Vital Military Installations

Thus, suggestions that the BAD should be moved from its present locality in populated areas to a locality like Bundase are not logical considering the syndrome of encroachment on military real estate. The empirical evidence would tend to suggest strongly that civilians and civilian communities will continue to “pursue” military and other vital security installations no matter how far away they are sited at any time in history. In broad terms, the debate on remedial measures will relate to safety and security questions. The safety debate, vis-à-vis civilian encroachment, is not a scientific one. The fact remains though that the adjoining civilian communities might not have been impacted by the projectiles if there had not been any encroachment.

One may, however, get a sense of the safety culture of the Ghana Armed Forces by gauging the number of lethal accidents of the nature of the explosions at the BAD since the inception of the Ordnance Service as explained above. In the absence of firm data and, subject to correction, it is guesstimated that such ammunition explosions during the period of about 78 years (1941-2019), if at all, would be the exception rather than the norm. Indeed, they would be few and far between. Thus, while we wait for the report of the investigations on the specific

⁴ The word Zongo historically may refer to settlements created by Diula merchants who normally established themselves at the *Ntafo* towns or *Nsoko* (Zongo) for their trading interests in gold, salt and slaves. See Aboagye (2011: 93), *vide* Smith, RS (1989). *Warfare and Diplomacy in Pre-Colonial West Africa*. London: James Currey: 8–9.

cause(s) of the explosion, it would be unethical and far-fetched to blame the accident on the Ghana Armed Forces, which has a demonstrable reputation for safety.

As a matter of procedure, the outcomes of the investigations—observations and findings—will inform sets of recommendations on measures to remedy the causes of the fire outbreak and prevent future occurrence, including more effective safety measures and rapid responses in the event of fires and explosions. It is important to stress here that no single recommendation may provide all the desirable ends of safety and security. Perhaps, a combination of the sets of recommendations may be more satisfactory.

From professional military experience, it is to be expected that the military authorities will be seized with such immediate, mundane measures as solid inner perimeter walls, outer perimeter fencing, parapet, observation towers, fire belts, automated fire hydrants and fire-fighting tenders/engines, and appropriate landscaping around and within the Depot. Other considerations of long-term measures may focus on upgrading the structures and equipping them with state-of-the-art capabilities for the repair and storage of all natures of munitions and equipment, including the use of CCTV and other hi-tech gadgets for improved 24/7 security, monitoring and surveillance of the facility.

Ad interim, though, at the extreme end of the measures, there has even been the talk of more modern blast-proof underground facilities that will provide greater security and safety in the long term. While one should consider this important, one should also be mindful of two critical implications. One is the financial cost of such a facility like Roswell Area 51—the ultra-classified remote US Air Force Base detachment in the Nevada Test and training range—albeit on a much smaller scale. If funding would be forthcoming, this should be given a serious consideration. The other implication is security. It arises from the informed principle that any vital military installation which holds the strategic reserves—a fourth line of supply—of munitions for the Ghana Armed Forces must be integrated with a military security complex. This means that it must be effectively protected against attacks by an integral military combat unit, and capable of rapid reinforcement by multiple means by land and air and, where necessary, by sea. This is even more pertinent in the age of terrorism. It will, therefore, be inadvisable to locate any new ammunition depot in an isolated locality without commensurate military protection, because that will make the base vulnerable to interdiction and attacks by any entity that wants to harm the country's military security.

Another consideration could be scaling down the natures and calibres of ammunition in storage at the BAD whose safety distances exceed two kilometres established commensurate with the natures and calibres of ammunition in use at the time. Given the reality that the Ghana Armed Forces continually upgrades its equipment and weapons capabilities, it is plausible to assume that some of the recent munitions on the inventory of the BAD may be in excess of the old safety distance. This reality will underscore the need for upscaling the BAD as already explained, and or considering the construction of an additional facility at a different location for the more lethal munitions. One advantage of this would be to disperse the storage of strategic reserves of munitions, subject to the provision of requisite security for such a facility.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that the fire and explosions at the BAD on 16 January 2019 have, for obvious reasons, raised questions about public safety vis-à-vis the siting of the of the Depot. There is need, however, for a more holistic debate on the not-so-obvious side of the equation, notably questions on the necessity of national military security, military mission readiness and their intrinsic linkages with military real estate.

Pending the outcome of military investigation into the incident, it is my belief that this think piece would assist in clarifying some of the fundamental issues at the bottom of the BAD fire and explosions, and help the reader to draw his/her conclusions on the matter. I am, nonetheless, aware that the policy options that the authorities, political and military, may choose to adopt, without a doubt, would require a considerable amount of political will, although any policy decision and action should also be based on sound logic.

While refraining from making specific recommendations that, in my view, could only be made after appropriate investigations, I remain convinced that the arguments put forward in the piece are also suggestive of the next steps. First, it is suggested that the Ghanaian society should recognise the vital importance of the BAD infrastructure. It should recognise its obligation to assist in ensuring the integrity of all military real estate, to enable the Armed Forces to maintain and improve on its mission readiness profile and posture.

Second, the syndrome of encroachment on military lands works against the national interest and should stop with immediate effect. In consideration of the cardinal importance of public safety, it is reasonable to suggest that all unauthorised structures in the areas of encroachment of BAD should be removed, to maintain the status quo ante, and prevent any possible future safety scares. As part of these measures, and as a matter of policy, the political authorities should lend support to the military authorities to strictly enforce existing safety regulations relating to the integrity of BAD and all vital military installations.

Finally, the safety and security arrangements of BAD and other vital military installations, should be reviewed with the view to ensure the long-term storage of the strategic reserves of military munitions and explosives.

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