Participant name: Maj David Butler, ADATT

Participant organization: US Embassy Accra

DOD footprint in Ghana – DATT office – 10 personnel – mix of every service represented, don’t have an Army attache at the moment – field analyst and a bunch of NCOs. OSC on other side of the embassy – 3 active duty – and one national guard officers. And 3 LE staff. DATT doesn’t have any local LE staff. Have CA team – 4 officers, 3 enlisted- SFABs – 3 – one doing TCCC (combat medicine), civil engineering, and one more actual shoot and scoot training. Very small force protection division. That is going to shift to DOD, is going to be Army CI – actual counter intel folks. Two SOFLEs. One warrant officer and one enlisted.

Programming – OSC has some significant security cooperation initiatives, just delivered some APCs, working on giving some armament, equipment transfers, protective body armor specifically for women being delivered – being held up in port but coming. A lot of training going on – mostly focus on training provision – air war college and command and staff college graduates and people attending actively. Maintenance and logistics training. Often times we engage the partner and they won’t give us specific lists – hard to get those etc, M17 parts etc. Sometimes hard to get to the finish line. Navy – buildup of special boat squadrons – Navy Seal light thing – riverine based – RIBS – build up that capacity. Delivered former coast guard cutters – 102 feet each boats. They have a lot of ships, bigger than what they usually have. Ghana one of our best partners, but CDI and Benin also up and coming. Ghana can be a bit more selective, Benin and CDI are like we will take everything. Ghana has been a little more cautious.

The misinfo about US military and basing – some levels of Russian disinfo happening here, CNN had done a special on Russia having a troll farm in Accra during 2016 election. Kofi Anan international peacekeeping center – we had former DATT and ADATT – had a professor stand up and lambast US and talk about how great of partner Russia has been. And every once in awhile will see an article pop up that reads that way. 90% of the stuff that is coming out on the US opening a base in Ghana, most of it is speculation – perhaps we aren’t messaging well enough – only 5-10% is foreign. China engages a lot of infrastructure development – they are building up infrastructure with Navy – we used to have 40 CBDBs, and then the Chinese showed up as well and started building stuff. They are engaged and messaging that. You see it even in the Ghanaian military messaging as well. They don’t have allegiance to one specific partner.

Public perception of China – people prefer to go to go with the US if they can, but they are happy to go with China if they can. To steer it back to the armed forces, they’d rather get it from the US if they can. China tries to backstab and go back on deals and their stuff isn’t good. They will deal with whoever.

Accra – C12 program – cover from Cabo Verde to CAR down to Gabone. To support other DAOs. Togo and Benin cover those as well. Benin up and coming. Increasing in importance. They have their own OSC now. Just oversight on those programs and briefing that up to component commands and AFRICOM. Observe and report.

PDS – controls messaging, POL/ECON, etc. So it is all going through the country team. And usually the Ambassador is all over it. Good luck with the messaging. Ship delivery, we build something, get it the press, it is positive. Daily news summary. Ghanian military – they have public affairs officers – at the opening ceremony – they have them at each service branch level. They sometimes publicize what we are doing here, but sometimes they just don’t put something out but they certainly. They aren’t hesitant.

Helping with Ghanaian military on countering mis-disinfo and PD or specifically training engagement. Paul Corbett can speak more on the training on.

Could train their PD and on mis/disinfo. And thinks they would be open to that.

Regional training center – could be impactful. Ghana armed forces, they already kind of do that – start initiatives here – bring these programs here. Ghana likes to take a lead. They would great support it, especially if it could bring more attention to what is happening Ghana.

Just the messaging that we are putting out from the Embassy, emphasizing now - uncertaintly about America – emphasize that we are still here and we have a lot of impact we can make. Getting that messaging out there in any and every way we can. Help to counter mis-disinfo here. The downside is Amb is leaving. So Rolf will be picking up CDA for awhile. Making sure we stay on point. On the defense realm. Funding might be decreasing.

DOD – coordination – more deliberate in evaluating how messages are received among community. Could miss the mark there. How we put our foot in our mouth – more training on our end about how to properly message things through the African lens. And local context lens.

Muslim Christian divide isn’t as pronounced here, but still can be construed in a different way. Counter terrorism and counter VEO how is that being perceived in the population – including in different population.

Government/local military – doesn’t seem to be that worried about or doing much on mis/disinfo – their PD doesn’t seem to be very sophisticated. They had a ministry of national security before but now under the interior ministry. They are focused on cyber, dis/misinfo. And it would either filter up and across – national security would drive an effort that would go across to defense. But still waiting to see what happens here.

Chinese and Russian defense attaches were there yesterday at ALFS. They are getting a lot more involved. Seeing an opening, a perceived decrease in US presence and trying to move in. Change of command for Ghanaian military – service chief level – were there. So they are upping their presence. They never used to go to those. Used to only be the US. UK and others showed up as well now, Turks and Canadians.

Chinese and Russians stick together – so they are cordial.

French DATT, used to be Togo French DATT was accredited here. UK and Canda has defense attaches and have NCOs. Turks are here. Nigeria and CDI and others are here. Zambia. Chinese and Russians, two Russians – Chinese DA, deputy, and exec officer. Fairly large presence compared to other partners besides US. Australia is accredited to here but in Addis. Germans and EU have attaches here. Danish (might have meant Dutch?) have attaché. Was running K9 training for Ghana army, and were also involved in SVS special boat squadron stuff. And Austrians were helping with that (they have a DATT too). Germans do a lot of infrastructure buildup – GAFTAG – like Navy CBs – they do civil engineering construction.

Ghana AF has four bases – trying to build up fourth one infrastructure and Germans are helping them. Richard Walters is the UK DA. Like the Canadians have done a lot of training initiatives and WPS – with the mis/disinfo space not so much, not in how to use this equipment, but how to operate as a military – LOAC stuff. More training not hard items. Canadians have decreased their footprint a little bit. They had additional military personnel out here doing stuff – but realigning priorities. Not a lot that he’s heard on stratcomms or mis/disinfo. The SCAG – Security Cooperation Advisors Group – meeting of western minds – Canadians, Swiss, Austrians, etc. To be able to share and deconflict. Ghana military will ask for something from everyone – so coordinate who is doing what. This is just for Ghana – coordination mechanism. Though they sometimes mention what is happening elsewhere. Canadians laid out what they could do in the future. And they laid out cybersecurity as one of these things. Ghanaian military seems onboard with us. Mostly training, less than tech transfer right now. Have requested a lot of ISR support right now. Have sent people from USAFE Africa – do training in these skillsets. They may request everything under the sun but have to baseline.

Definitely talk to OSC – really need to talk to Paul Corbett – figure out the big programs – training related to the GAF. Engaging with PD section Travis. Shawn Collins. She is Navy O4 and was acting for awhile.

Interagency coordination. At the country team level – working well in country. A lot of it coming from the DOS side but working well. Being hadnled as well as it can handled.