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**Introductions**

* I work only on Ghana. We have other countries of the region in the delegation.

**Overview of the situation**

* It is a growing area of concern for us.
* Four top priorities for this year. FIMI is one of the new topics. But the term does not resonate here.
* For EEAS, Ghana is one of the priority countries among 5-6 others. It means additional monitoring and a lot more [activities].
* Two streams of analysis: (1) on effectiveness; (2) more regional – compare narratives between Ghana and other countries in the region.
* First evaluation of media monitoring: from August will now. We discussed with the member states – 10 of them are in Ghana, and 3-4 are active in the regional space, often in Ghana.
* FIMI activities are minimal.
* There is an unsophisticated application of techniques from Sahel on France about former colonies in Ghana. But it doesn’t work – the Ghanaian government doesn’t care about France as former colonies do. We have seen quite a bit of that.
* Most of the information is domestic – manipulation of domestic narratives on Ghanaian authorities and personal smear campaigns – put as a priority during elections. We don’t work with… EU… keeps from being politically engaged. The expectation of FIMI before the election did not materialize.
* During elections – minimal. Glaringly NDC party – Pan-Africanism, traditions. We don’t look West or East, we look forward. West is not the best partner to go pan-African – it is Russia and China. Exploitation of trade, neocolonialism.
* The more visible we become and the more projects we have, the more FIMI we see. When we become stronger, get more attention – we become targets of FIMI.
* European Peace Facility – the same avenue we use for Ukraine military equipment deliveries.
* We had a public campaign called “Above the Noise.” It is just finished – migration, multilateralism, diaspora. It got a lot of attention from FIMI.

**Which foreign actors?**

* It is hard to pinpoint. Mostly Russia. AES countries, some Ghanian influencers – not the biggest, mid-category.
* There is a newspaper – BFT [The Business & Financial Times] – people buy space there to write something positive about Russia. It is not Ghana-specific. It is just positive about Russia.
* On coordination – there is none. There is hardly any information sharing. It is not unique to this topic. The coordination on other topics is also minimal. Recently, political [departments?] met, so it might improve.
* Coordination among EU countries – missions meeting. Also, with second tier: Norwegian, Swiss.
* European Center of Excellence – started studies on the topic. Finns are funders or at least the initiative-takers. Now Norwegians became [coordinators?], as Finns are not represented here.
* Stratcom – our funding. I was in Brussels. There was an ambassadors meeting, then deputies. There is consensus in Stratcom – more resources, more focus – it is widely accepted. Member states will become active in the field.
* Among the 10 countries present, Germany is the largest, then France. On the topic, they are targeted a bit in the region.
* Make a good argument – FIMI minimal – but it can change quickly. Media literacy environment – it can become more sophisticated. They can keep hammering the same nail – overflow.
* We are near Burkina. One narrative in Ghana that is different from the neighboring countries – on reparations. Ghana is one of the leaders in the reparations movement for the Transatlantic slave trade. They pushed to make it the 2025 theme of the African Union – it was pushed by the old president, and now the new one has picked it up. It has potential – it was picked up by Russia and the influencers. They are mostly targeting Europeans. The U.S. never comes up. I have a suspicion that it has something to do with the funders for reparation activities – Americans like Open Society. They are very Europe-focused. You are primarily responsible [for the slave trade]. An EU-AU summit is coming up. We have to prepare for this narrative.

**Information threats from China?**

* Very little. It is a lot more subtle. Benign information about China and how the West is not an ideal partner.
* Occasional media fillers like the one I described above – but the content is coming straight from Beijing. It is obvious. They have Mongol content, with maybe a paragraph on Ghana in the end. Very little in the online space.

**Recruitment moves across the border, but so does misinformation and disinformation.**

* We haven’t done a lot in local languages. We had just a first year. I have a meeting with the Media Foundation next week. We haven’t worked with them yet. We will focus a bit more on local languages. We are not funding them, but maybe in the next batch.

**How is Ghanaian government cooperating?**

* Mixed signals.
* The capacity of Ghanaians is very primitive. Their National Intelligence Bureau is a bit more advanced; it looks in the right direction.
* Appreciation of threats is not there. We had a big tour of the top three counselors recently – [this issue] did not even come up. It's different to talk with Ghanaians about security – for us, it is macro; for them, micro-level matters more – security in their neighborhoods, criminal violence. With the civil society, the first topic that comes up is political instability, tensions between parties, and the risk of regional spillover.
* On capacity – we have a new security and defense initiative. Cooperation:
  + 1) regular cooperation – standing security and defense programs – about 30 on border security, maritime security, mediation.
  + 2) Weapons deliveries I mentioned
  + 3) EU version of peacekeeping – 8 advisors fielded across. Bring along trainers, more often deliver equipment. Also, other training on misinformation/disinformation for the security sector.
* National Intelligence Bureau – is developing some kind of early warning system, not sure what the context. As a gap, we would like to support.
* It is one of the options on the list.
* Little coordination. We’ve been engaging to leverage Ghanaian coordination. This is the only way to make it work – related to national governments. The EU shouldn’t be the coordinator. Donors on security and defense should coordinate. But it is in the interest of Ghana, they would like to continue bilaterals. That way, they can make requests to different donors for the same things like they do now.
* We are transparent. We don’t have some secret stash of activities. We try to make the measurements public.
* We were here during a big disinformation conference – September- December.
* It was weird. It was government-sponsored. But the actual sponsor was a real estate company organizing it – a private business organizing a government conference.
* What I liked about the conference. I was afraid it would be political – but we had people across the aisle. There was some bashing as it was during the election [but not a lot]. Security apparatus was there. AGI [?] was there and spoke.
* I didn’t get the political objectives of the conference. A lot of money was invested. Did they want to attract investment? Did they want to prepare grounds for accusation for disinformation in case they lost the election? Was it to position the private companies toward the government?

**What are you planning to do in the future?**

* 1) Better coordination is the right track.
* 2) Apply more sophisticated tools – own media monitoring – particularly in local languages.
* 3) getting smarter on what we could be an active response – rather than focusing on debunking and media literacy. We should push our own message and actively push noise in the margins.
* 4) Better opinion surveys – get polling on positions of Ghanaian society disaggregated by media and language. A lot of information [can be collected] – what do they want, how easily religion can be used [for FIMI]?
* 5) Vulnerable communities – it is a sensitive spot – LGBT. FIMI can use it in the communication – can easily lead to active attacks on them. We need to study it further. We are on this course. Brussels recently published a good [report?] on EU-African relations. We need to make sure it comes here, and we can share it with the Ghanaian population.
* One difference between the U.S. and the EU – the U.S. has an easier job of gaining support – U.S. government, culture, diaspora – there are historical connections.
* Ghanaians see the U.S. and the UK as the main points of reference for institutions. Ghina is an alternative. Continental Europe for them is something they don’t understand. It is hard for Europeans to gain traction. This does not correspond with the size of support. We’ll see how it will resonate – affect the ability of the U.S. to do strategic messaging.
* They talk about vulnerable communities as a national security threat – one of the ministers.
* Illegal mining – one of the biggest – interwoven with every issue. It goes beyond the environment to corruption, the spread of small arms, and human trafficking. Recently, there was a report about young girls being trafficked to serve the miners – it is a severe problem that has many nasty layers.
* Qatar – European CoE – whole different angle. They are able to [create a] different type of tension – not on any radar.
* Streams – open to Russia – we see it goes beyond Russia. Narrative on BRICS that Ghana would be a good candidate to join BRICS.
* Appeal for a strong leader – not necessarily authoritarian. It’s more about the style – like Traore received the largest applause – broad appeal.
* It is indicative of what people expect. Something that Putin and Erdogan have – no confusions. Europeans have to talk and negotiate among themselves – a sign of weakness. Political culture. This is a soft spot for FIMI actors.
* Quick money – illegal money. A lot of money got out of this country. It is poisoning the country – mercury, cyanide – and their cocoa producing – pride and joy. Also fishing, and agriculture. Their prosperity is undermined by it. Local mayors, kings own the land. Big foreign companies benefit – if big mining is not possible, they lease it to small miners. US mining company – also Chinese.