THE DAMPARE MUST GO LEAKED TAPE RECORDING IS DIVERSIONARY FOR THE LONG GAME: MARTIN A. B. K. AMIDU

"Duncan. There is no art

To find the mind's construction in the face. He was a gentleman on whom I built An absolute trust." William Shakespeare in MacBeth

The recording and leaking of the tape concerning discussions to persuade the President to terminate the appointment of the Inspector General of Police on grounds of disloyalty to the incumbent Government and the NPP was a deliberate ploy to divert the attention of the opposition political parties, particularly the National Democratic Congress (NDC), to render it embarrassing for them to complain should the Ghana Police Service fail to supervise the security aspect of the 2024 elections fairly and impartially.

I know as a fact that Dr. George Akuffo Dampare was handpicked for the position of IGP on grounds of proven loyalty to this Government. The discussion for the replacement of his predecessor started long before his predecessor left office. The three kingpins in this discussion who held positions on the Police Council were my friends. When Dr. Dampare's predecessor was to leave office the discussions and maneuvers intensified and the President's support and concurrence sought and obtained. I know as a matter of fact that Dr. Mahamudu Bawumia who chairs the Police Council and chaired the Council meeting which formally recommended Dr. Dampare's appointment to the President was a staunch supporter of Dr. Dampare, long before the office of IGP became vacant.

Impending vacancies in the office of the IGP always generates lobbying and scheming within the high echelons of the Police Administration. Indeed, it has been so for promotions to positions when the vacancy is limited by numbers. I was a member of the Ghana Police Council from 1989 to 2001 and know how intense these scheming can be, and what stories eligible senior police officers can coin against perceived rivals for the positions. I also became the Minister for the Interior with additional responsibility as the Minister for Security and Intelligence. Senior officers of the Ghana Police Service lobbied me as well for appointment to enhanced positions and only God was witness to what they said about their competing colleagues.

Similar scheming and maneuvers took place before Dr. Dampare was preferred over his other contestants some of whom were more senior to him in the Ghana Police Service. Unfortunately, Dr. Dampare is fairly young in age and is likely to incumber the position for several more years unless senior police officers scheme for his early removal from office. And what was heard on the leaked tape answers to the usual scheming within the Ghana Police Service.

The Commissioner of Police, Mr. Mensah with four months terminal leave to be discharged from the Ghana Police Service, whom we hear on the leaked tape, and the other senior officers on video or other platforms scheming against the IGP are only vocalizing a tradition that undermines colleagues in an attempt to be preferred for higher appointment. Quite apart from my experience in public service, I was born in the Police Service and grew up to experience the scheming within the service since the colonial era from Half Assini to Takoradi to Lawra and to Bawku where my father off-loaded me and continued his police service career elsewhere.

What is worrying listening to the leaked tape is the fact that Mr. Mensah, a senior police officer, would lose his guard and speak in the office of a former NPP chairman unmindful of basic security and intelligence precautions on such sensitive matters. Mr. Mensah threw caution to the wind to visit his host in his office and assumed that his host was not capable of recording their conversation. A senior police officer who has served that long and is on terminal leave at the pinnacle of his career should have realized that he was being recorded when his host was being non-committal and using leading interjections to goad him to say more things against his superior, the IGP.

The 50 minutes plus leaked tape recording I listened to several times is authentic and not fake. One of the interlocutors was my client in 1980 to 1982 when I practiced law in the Northern Region whose voice I cannot miss when I hear it. I have been to his Accra office on the Castle road and know that while speaking to him his mobile phone is always on and he continues receiving phone calls which interrupt whatever serious discussion one is having with him. By those incoming phone calls the inexperienced are put at ease of the likelihood of being recorded.

I am convinced that the recording of the conversation was planned and executed by the host of the office where it took place. The decision to leak that taped recording might have been made by his political collaborators who saw it as a perfect tool for the diversion of the opposition political parties from the likelihood of a relaxation of security supervision of the 2024 elections by the Ghana Police Service. The recorded tape was leaked knowing very well that the President, Nana Akufo-Addo has confidence in the IGP and would not remove him from office a few months to the 2024 elections.

The leakage of the tape recording has achieved its objective because the NDC in particular, other opposition political parties, and security and intelligence operatives have diverted their attention to defending and extolling the virtues and perceived neutrality of the IGP. IGPs do not win elections and can scarcely influence the polls. What an IGP can and might do is to position Regional, Divisional, District, and Station Commanders who will control his men at the polls and relax their security alertness and surveillance on election day. Even such a move in a national election is not without hazards for the IGP as some Commanders may give him out to the other side. The Assin North constituency by-election cannot be used as a yardstick for measuring the neutrality of the Ghana Police Service in the coming national elections in 2024.

The danger the NDC and other opposition political parties are putting themselves in now by concentrating over the smokescreen that Nana Akufo-Addo may remove and replace the IGP before the 2024 elections is that they may take positions generated by this planted tape recording and find themselves unable to walk back their talk when circumstances about the perceived neutrality of the IGP changes, come the period leading to elections 2024. The NDC and other opposition political parties ought to make haste slowly in what they say in praise or condemnation of the IGP. Heed the warning: "There is no art to find the mind's construction in the face"!

The leaked recorded tape is not the first time a chairman or former chairman of the NPP has been involved in the leakage of what would have passed for confidential information. The alleged bribery of a chairman of the NPP for the Northern Region with a vehicle and money made the rounds before the 2016 elections. For those who have forgotten, the link can be

found at: Mahama bribed Bugri Naabu with Ghc3.3m, cars to smear Nana Addo - NPP - Citi 97.3 FM - Relevant Radio. Always (citifmonline.com). There is also the case of the leaked and denied secret tape recording published in the Daily Graphic on 26 January 2015 which the NDC did not pursue to investigate: Bugri Naabu denies 'voice' on secret tape (audio) - Graphic Online.

Free and fair elections are the life blood of any democracy. I believe that the leaked recorded tape has achieved the opposite of what it intended by alerting patriotic citizens to the fact that no matter who is IGP everybody needs to be vigilant to ensure that the 2024 election is not captured by any President's long game. By all means, those who wish to investigate the authenticity of the tape may do so, but at the end of the day like previous investigations nothing will come out of it. The vigilance of a patriotic citizenry is the truest bulwark against long games and election rigging come 2024. Let us defend the 1992 Constitution. Assalamu Alaikum!

Martin A. B. K. Amidu 13 July 2023