

Press Conference Statement: The Art of Selective Character Assassination - Abuse of Information by Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa

Good morning,

We are here today to address the unfounded accusations made by Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa, the North Tongu MP, against the Agriculture Minister Bryan Acheampong. These accusations are not only baseless but also demonstrate a pattern of selective character assassination that Mr. Ablakwa has engaged in over the years.

The Allegations

Mr. Ablakwa has accused Minister Bryan Acheampong of violating the constitution and abusing his power as a state official by having his business, Rock City Hotel, purchase a 60% stake in four hotels owned by SSNIT. He claims this is unethical and a breach of Articles 78(3) and 98(2) of the 1992 Constitution. However, these accusations are based on half-truths and are an attempt to manipulate public opinion against Mr. Acheampong.

Rebuttal of Accusations

First and foremost, it is important to recognize that owning a business does not automatically equate to unethical behavior. In fact, successful business people bring valuable expertise and innovation to the table. Bryan Acheampong, with his extensive background in the hospitality industry, has built Rock City Hotel, the largest hotel in Africa with 700 rooms. His business acumen is precisely what can help improve the management and profitability of the SSNIT hotels.

SSNIT has already clarified that the selection process for selling the stake was transparent and adhered strictly to the Public Procurement Act. Rock City Hotel provided the strongest technical and financial proposal among the bids received. Mr. Acheampong's involvement brings substantial value addition to these properties.

Track Record of Character Assassination

This is not the first time Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa has used his platform to attack individuals. Here are a few instances:

1. Jake Obetsebi Lamptey: Mr. Ablakwa started his campaign of character assassination against Jake Obetsebi Lamptey. Despite losing in court, Ablakwa's actions damaged Lamptey's reputation in the court of public opinion. The court ruled there was not enough evidence to prove wrongdoing, yet the damage in the public's eye was already done.

2. President Akufo-Addo:

Ablakwa attacked President Akufo-Addo over the presidential aircraft, ignoring the fact that safety and security are paramount for any head of state. The current presidential aircraft, a \$37 million French-built Dassault Falcon 900EX-Easy, has been in use since 2011 and has had safety issues. Ablakwa's claims were designed to incite public disapproval without considering the full context, particularly the trauma and risk posed to the President and his entourage.

3. National Cathedral and Prophet Kusi Boateng:

Ablakwa has consistently tried to discredit the National Cathedral project and anyone associated with it, including Prophet Kusi Boateng, to undermine President Akufo-Addo's administration. His tactics of making noise and creating controversy are intended to overshadow the positive aspects of the project.

4. Bryan Acheampong:

Now, Ablakwa targets his colleague Bryan Acheampong, without seeking clarification or context, aiming to destroy his reputation and hinder his contributions to the country's development. Instead of contacting Bryan Acheampong for more details, Ablakwa chose to publicize the issue, which raises questions about his true intentions.

5. Former President Jerry John Rawlings:

Ablakwa, influenced by the Ahwois, has also targeted former President Rawlings. His relentless attacks on Rawlings were part of a broader strategy orchestrated by the Ahwois to undermine Rawlings' influence. This reflects a longstanding pattern of using character assassination to settle political scores.

****The Motives Behind the Attacks****

It is essential to understand the motives behind Mr. Ablakwa's actions. These attacks are not about upholding ethical standards but are driven by personal and political vendettas. Mr. Ablakwa's actions are influenced by individuals such as Prof. Kwamena Ahwoi, who have a vested interest in maintaining their control over certain state assets. Prof. Ahwoi, who acquired a significant share of SSNIT property for himself, sees Rock City's acquisition as a threat and has thus mobilized Ablakwa to attack Bryan Acheampong.

****Encouraging Private Sector Involvement in Governance**

We must reject the notion that politicians, public servants, or parliamentarians cannot own businesses. This mentality is detrimental to any developing country. Successful business people can bring much-needed expertise and innovation to public service. Countries like the United States, Italy, and Chile have seen businessmen transition into successful political leaders, contributing significantly to their national development.

Here are ten businessmen who have entered politics around the world:

1. Donald Trump- Former President of the United States, originally a real estate mogul and television personality.
2. Michael Bloomberg - Former Mayor of New York City, founder of Bloomberg L.P., a global financial services and media company.
3. Silvio Berlusconi - Former Prime Minister of Italy, media tycoon and owner of Mediaset.
4. Mitt Romney - U.S. Senator from Utah and former Governor of Massachusetts, co-founder of Bain Capital, a private equity investment firm.
5. Mauricio Macri - Former President of Argentina, businessman and engineer, CEO of Grupo Macri.
6. Sebastián Piñera - Former President of Chile, billionaire businessman, and former owner of LAN Airlines.
7. Thaksin Shinawatra - Former Prime Minister of Thailand, telecommunications tycoon and founder of Shin Corporation.

8. **Manny Villar** - Filipino businessman and politician, former Senator and Speaker of the House, founder of Vista Land & Lifescapes, a real estate company.

9. **Viktor Orbán** - Prime Minister of Hungary, businessman involved in various enterprises before entering politics.

10. **Ross Perot** - American business magnate and billionaire, founder of Electronic Data Systems and Perot Systems, ran for U.S. President as an independent candidate.

A Pattern of Destructive Behavior

We need to rebut the idea that politicians, public servants, or parliamentarians cannot own businesses. This is a loser mentality for any developing country. Furthermore, we must always consider the messenger. Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa has a track record of damaging people's reputations with half-truths and manipulated narratives. By the time the full truth comes out, the damage is often already done.

****Conclusion****

Samuel Okudzeto Ablakwa's pattern of selective character assassination is not only harmful to the individuals he targets but also to the nation as a whole. It discourages capable and successful individuals from contributing to public service. We must focus on the value and expertise that individuals like Bryan Acheampong bring to the table and not be swayed by unfounded accusations and personal vendettas.

Let us not be swayed by those who have made it their mission to tear down others for personal and political gain. Let us instead support and encourage those who seek to use their skills and resources for the betterment of our country.

Thank you.