

### APPENDIX 3

Interview with John Kufuor, former President of Ghana (2001-2009)

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NC: Mr. President, you first ran for President in 1996, losing in the first round to President Jerry Rawlings, and then ran again in 2000, winning in the second round against Vice-President, now President, John Atta-Mills. Can you please explain what originally motivated you to decide to seek the Presidency in 1996 and 2000?

JK: I think this question shouldn't be peculiar to Africa, to me. It should go for all leaders, not only in politics. What motivates people to want to lead either in their communities, their religious groups, their nations, international institutions? Um, I, from very early times in my young age, the 1960s, I decided politics would be my line. And I wanted to go into politics because I was convinced that it was the arena where I believed I could render the most good to my people, to the nation of Ghana, to Africa, to humanity. And it was this same motivation that carried me from all those days to the times when I first got the opportunity to contest the Presidency in 1996. I was the candidate of my party, as you remember. And so, I would say the motivation has always been to render the most service to the nation of Ghana, to help uplift the quality of life for the citizens of my country, and also for humanity because I believe firmly in human rights, basic human rights of all, not just in Ghana. Anywhere there is humanity, I believe it is entitled to dignity and respect.

NC: Mr. President, you were an extremely educated and experienced President, having completed your law degree before working in various ministerial and diplomatic posts over the subsequent decades. However, in sub-Saharan Africa, as you're aware, many Heads of State actually come from a military background as opposed to a civilian, educated background. What, in your opinion, are the fundamental differences in how these two types of leaders view political power? Is there any consistent difference between a civilian, educated President and a military Head of State in how they view political power?

JK: You may get a military that is also educated, but, of course, he or she will still be military. And it depends on how they come into power. I believe in constitutions. When you look at the history of Africa, say over the past three decades or four decades, post-independence. Yes, many nations on the continent suffered—let's use the word suffered—military intrusions contrary to constitutional governance. They came in like, uh, hijackers, strongmen, who used the might of the military to oust constitutional governance. In that sense, they are serious aberrations, which we believe should belong entirely to history. Africa, from these times on, should not revert to that again. I believe the African Union has banished coup making. So that is the basic difference. I wouldn't say other civilian governments haven't tried to hijack constitutions. There are also civilian leaders who didn't take power constitutionally, which is also to be condemned.

But basically, when you talk civilian leadership, you want to assume that the civilian got into power by the operation of the constitution. Whereas, when you talk military, ordinarily the military would have come in using the barrel of the gun to take power against the wishes of the people. So this is the basic difference.

NC: Mr. President, most people will never achieve the level of esteem and authority that is afforded to a President. Since you do have that experience, can you please explain how it personally feels to achieve this highest level of esteem and authority? And, in general, do think achieving and maintaining such a high level of esteem and authority is a motivation for leaders on the African continent?

JK: Well leaders, forget about even Presidents. Leaders generally tend to stand out from the generality, say, of the populace in whatever organization they lead in. And I would say, yes, being made to feel special can be a driving force, a powerful motivation, but, I would say, I want to see this stranded out as incidental to being selected a leader. And I would expect that if you have been selected democratically by the constitution, the people who would select you would be looking at things other than just your coming to stand out. Suppose the people believe that you are the person that will give them the social services that would add value to them, give quality of life to them: education, healthcare, good infrastructure, tract investments to move the economy and that's why they vote for you. A politician, like me, would normally be driven to want to serve the people along these lines. This is why they elect you, and this is why you are also going to try to serve. If on top of that, once you've been selected, they accord you the respect that every president anywhere, United States, Europe, Asia, is accorded, then I say, "Well, it's in the office." You see? The respect comes with the office, and even so from time immemorial. Look at the good book of the Bible, talk of the kings. They are always accorded special place. I say, the trappings of office could be an allurements. But I will tell you, I did not seek the Presidency just for the allurements. I sought office to try to serve the people. But with the service has come the special treatment you get as a leader.

NC: Mr. President, as a leader, how important was (and is) your national reputation to you (i.e. whether Ghanaians view you favorably or unfavorably), and did you consider your national reputation when making important decisions?

JK: You cannot help, taking account of history, as a leader it's a factor. But I will tell you where I had to take a decision that to my mind and belief would be necessary to move the socioeconomy of Ghana, for the security of Ghana. I believed fervently towards the decision to take. What people think of me, that became secondary. I would take a decision if I thought it was critical for the good of the country, whether it would make me popular or render me unpopular I would take it. But, along the way, any good leader should have a sense of history. You don't do things not taking into account what the impact would be on posterity. How it would affect the citizens of the land or humanity. And for as long as you do this, you are taking into account history. But I would emphasize that you take decision as a good leader which you believe would be good for the overall governance of the people.

NC: Mr. President, what aspects of being President of the Republic did you personally enjoy, and what aspects, if any, did you not enjoy?

JK: Um, when I took the Presidency, the economy of my country was in the doldrums, as one would say. But I felt very challenged, 2001, the year 2001, inflation raged over 40%. Lending rates at the banks were over 52%, so nobody could borrow to do any worthwhile business. The economy was stagnant; there was unemployment all over the place. The currency of the country depreciated, at that time, over 100%. So you bought bread, a loaf of bread for, say, 100 cedi today, tomorrow you go to buy the same bread it's 120 cedis. Nobody could predict anything. So I felt really challenged and I agonized a lot. How do I take the first steps to change the situation, radically and dramatically? And within a month or two I realized we had to take the HIPIC initiative. You know the HIPIC initiative? The Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative. It wasn't popular, but I felt that it was a necessary decision to take to give indication to Ghana's partners around the world that my government was different. It had come in to really grab the bull by the horns to try to change the economy and society for the better. Even my cabinet wasn't quite in agreement to going that way, but I gathered the courage to decide firmly that that was the way Ghana was going to go. And we decided. And once we took the decision, it was like some heavy load taken off my shoulders. And when the responses from around the world came and they were positive for Ghana, I was so elated. I felt like I had moved a huge boulder blocking the path of development from Ghana. So that perhaps was my happiest moment.

NC: Good. I was here in 2003. I remember it used to take thousands of cedi to buy bananas.

JK: Yes, so I thought this was your first time and I am happy that you bear witness.

NC: Mr. President, you were constitutionally limited to two four-year terms, which you completed and then peacefully retired from office. Nevertheless, as you know, this is not always the case in Africa as we see many Heads of State attempt to eliminate term limits from the constitution rather than respect the term limits and step down. First, do you think it would have been physically possible for you in 2008 to eliminate the term limits if you had that desire in you? And if do think it was possible, why did you elect to peacefully step down, respect the term limits and retire form office as you did?

JK: I never contemplated staying in office even a day beyond the constitutionally fixed term. It didn't occur to me, and I've been in politics, as I've told you, from the time I was about 30, was a member of parliament then, deputy foreign minister then. It's been a long 40 years and always as part of the reason I came into politics to try to engrain a sense of constitutionality in the system. And so when I got the opportunity, through the operation of the constitution, to become President, there was no way I would think of violating the very constitution I had sworn to uphold and defend just so I could continue for a day longer. No. So it didn't occur to me. And so, it was the end of my second tenure, I was looking forward to stepping down. My concern really was to be able to step down honorably because I knew, again talking of history, that I would be the first civilian

leader to be stepping down, to be completing my term constitutionally. The three earlier ones had all been overthrown by soldiers. Even way before the end of their tenure. Kwame Nkrumah was overthrown, as you remember in '66. Busia, my mentor, was overthrown with only two years, three months in office. President Limann was overthrown, and I am the fourth one. So I was very, very determined that I would stay the course of the constitution and constitutionally step down. So achieving that to me was even historic. And so, it never occurred to me to want to cut corners or manipulate the constitution so I would continue. No. Yes, I know other people have tried, but they haven't impressed me at all.

NC: Mr. President, how did you personally feel in the days following your retirement from the Presidency? What were your thoughts and reflections at that time?

JK: I felt very fulfilled cause it was a very long haul for me. I got into politics, as I've told you, even before I was 30... 1968 I was elected to the constituent assembly to help write the second constitution of Ghana. Then in '69 I was elected to Parliament. At the age of 30, that same year, I was appointed the deputy foreign minister of Ghana, a huge thing for a 30-year-old man. And I stayed in politics until the age of 62 when I was elected to the Presidency. It's a very long haul. And then because I knew that earlier civilian Presidents had all been overthrown by soldiers before their terms ended, I was conscious and I would say prayerful that I wouldn't go the same way as my predecessor civilian Presidents. That I would serve my terms complete, which I have done. So I felt very fulfilled being the first civilian to have served the whole constitutional term and I was very grateful. And fortunately too, looking around the country, traveling around the country, interacting with the peoples of Ghana. I felt they all, or at least most of them by far, appreciated the service I rendered as their President. Then in the neighborhood of West Africa, Nigeria, Cote d'Ivoire, Togo, Sierra Leone, Liberia, I felt they all loved me. So I felt like I've earned my place in the history... So I felt very satisfied.

NC: Speaking academically, Mr. President, Political Science actually currently operates under this pessimistic Western assumption of tenure maximization, that says that the primary and universal goal of leaders in Africa (and elsewhere) is to maximize their time in office. That that is what motivates them. In respect to you, what is interesting with respect to you is that if a president is term limited then they'll transfer and say his motivation is to make sure that his handpicked successor is the next president. Of course, there are always exceptions to any general assumption. Nevertheless, do you believe that this assumption of tenure maximization is the best general academic assumption available, or do you believe that there is a better and more useful way to think about the motivations of leaders on the African continent?

JK: I would describe this assumption as rather cynical. All over the world, and it's not exclusive to Africa, and when you look back in history, do you know of any leaders that wouldn't want to at least last their agreed term of office? I do not know. Back in the United States I'm sure Presidents since Mr. Washington, is it Washington or?

NC: George Washington.

JK: George Washington, yes. They've all wanted to serve their terms. That to me is maximization! And these men, history is replete with well intentioned people, wanting to stay the course and doing a good job. I would only come in perhaps to agree with the assumption only where there has been evidence of somebody wanting to subvert the constitution, so that one is the one to be doubted. But otherwise, people want to be sure they've enjoyed their full tenure and would describe that as maximization, I would say. It's been cynical. Um, I know those people that would manipulate the constitution, especially on the eve of their departure by the constitution then they try to amend the constitution. That one is seeking to deny the people their right to make their constitutions. I believe constitutions should reflect the sovereignty of the people and why the people have fixed it and every constitution would also include, I believe, how to amend them, including timelines. And a President that would think two terms are not enough, there should be three terms, and wouldn't use the constitutionally laid timelines to seek amendment, but rather wait till the eve of his departure to do it is like, let me use the term hijacking, they're like a hijacker. Any President that would wait till the last minute to change is a hijacker. Somebody trying to rob the people of their rights. That's not acceptable to me, but that aside, again it depends on the type of constitution. If it's a monarchy, show me a king who wouldn't want to sit on the throne till death invited him. If it's a Republic where tenures are not termed, people would want to continue and continue indefinitely. Whether it's Europe, it's happened. I can sight two examples. Even the coup maker, the great dictators of history, they all wanted to stretch out, but when you come to constitutionally termed, everybody would want to serve their full term. To me, that's maximization. But tinkering with the constitution unconstitutionally is not acceptable and is only there that this assumption should be countenanced.

NC: Mr. President, leaders today in Africa are statistically more likely to step down from power than their predecessors were. Should we conclude that leaders today don't want to stay in power as much as their predecessors, or should we conclude that leaders today do want to stay in power as much as their predecessors, but that society is forcing them to step down so that staying in power is no longer a viable option?

JK: What I would say is that in Africa now more and more nations are moving towards constitutional governance and constitutions generally are prescribing termed tenures and more and more peoples are awakening to democratization and to the fact that no one person or group of people would hold the truth exclusively to others. Democracy and multiparty systems tend to provide for alternating governance on the choice of the people. And so the people are awakening to their rights. And so working by their constitutions we find that... and also the leaders of the times also being constitutional themselves. When you look at the African Union constitutive act, for instance. It is proscribing good governance, respect for human rights, respect for rule of law, governing by constitutions, and really proscribing coup d'etat. So that's the African Union basic law. And it was the leaders of Africa, including myself, that made that law. So we've got leaders who reflect the wishes of their people. So it's not like the people pushing these leaders. The way the question has been framed, it seems like the leaders are imposters who want to just hang on and that the people are pushing them out. It's not like that. The leaders... After all,

it's been said that the people get the government they deserve. So if the people have made their constitutions and they've sort of selected their leaders then I would say the leaders reflect the wishes of their people. This is what is happening in Africa like it's happening in some parts of Europe or in the United States. The leaders reflect their peoples and it's not like before when the imposters, the strongmen, the coup makers, were the characters on the scene.

NC: Mr. President, how much is Western international pressure, as opposed to domestic national pressure, responsible for the increase in leaders voluntarily stepping down from power following the end of the Cold War in 1990, if at all?

JK: Well I would agree that with the globalization process nobody is an island, that we are all affected by viewpoints and pressures from outside their jurisdictions and sovereignty or territorial areas. So on that basis I would say that international opinion counts. But I would think that we are also influenced by domestic opinions. I've told you, "People get the government they deserve." The people themselves locally are also getting more and more democratic. They are aware of their rights and they are trying to exercise them.

NC: Mr. President, is there any fundamental cultural difference between how African populations view their leaders and how Western populations view their leaders? Do the two different populations respect and admire different things in a leader, or is there no difference?

JK: If you would, if there is anything like global history and we sort of try to review X, whether it's in China or Britain or the United States, wherever. You'd see that evolution from the ancient times has always enjoined human societies to pick leaders. And leaders are expected to guide the communities that they lead by values and also beliefs; basically it's the same everywhere, like in Africa too. So in that sense it's the same. But with evolution, if you are scanning the globe currently, I say with the socioeconomic developments at the age of science and technology and all that. You'd think perhaps the way that Western society, say France, or Germany, or Britain, would expect certain values of leaders that wouldn't be the same as the less developed places, like say you find in many parts of Africa would expect of their leaders. I don't think that's the case. I believe it's the same everywhere. When most of Europe, the European nations were monarchies, what did they expect of their kings and princes? It's the same you'll find in Africa here. Now most of Europe has gone republican and with the deeply instituted media, for instance, sometimes they can even get irreverent of leadership. You come to Africa, we are all in the same trajectory, moving transitionally. Perhaps we haven't gone as far as Europe with media development so forth and so on, freedom of expression, so you may not get the same nature of criticism of leadership as you may find in Europe, but I say we are on the same line. So, to me, leadership is universal and the people expect leaders to give wise leadership and to be foresighted about security, to be strong, to ensure territorial integrity and that sort of thing. It's common to all people. So I wouldn't attach to much importance to how Western nations see their leaders and how that is different from how Africans would see their leaders. It's the same and it's

happening these days in Africa. Leaders are criticized as much as those where, people expect leaders to be transparent and accountable in governance. Assure people that economies would grow. Give employment security to people, food security, be providential against difficult times, that sort of thing. And I believe it is the same in Europe.

NC: You spoke of Europe coming from kingship. Also Africa even more recently has come from kingship, in fact you have Swaziland and Morocco, you also have kings here, the Ashanti king...

JK: Well, the interesting thing is that we have the paradox of republics containing monarchies. Like in Ghana, talk of Ashanti king. Ghana is a republic, but somehow the constitution makes room for the retention of monarchies in certain parts of the country. Swaziland is a monarchy outright, that's their national constitution, but all these I believe are evolutionary.

NC: And the people in Africa are very familiar with this system whether or not it's currently applied, that the king, as you mentioned, serves a lifetime tenure. Does that political mentality still affect the African population today, if at all?

JK: Well, it depends on the national constitution as well as the recognized pockets of tribal or ethnic constitutions. You go to Britain, isn't the monarchy there for life? The queen is there for life. So how is it different from here if say within Ghana the Ashanti region has a king for life and the constitution of Ghana acknowledges that.

NC: Mr. President, how would you like to be remembered by domestic and international historians in the future, and did you actively take the historical implications of important decisions into account when making them, or were you more concerned with their immediate effects of your decisions?

JK: Well, all decisions would tend to have their immediate as well as medium to long-term impacts. And I believe the decision maker would, I believe, be well served if he takes a decision taking into account of these faces; immediate to medium to long term as is necessary. As how I would be remembered? Firstly, I want to hope that the people of Ghana who made me their President as they reminisce or at least they write their history would say under Kufuor the country was well served. He was a good leader who took account of the welfare and progress of the people, all the people of Ghana into account under his leadership. Internationally, say West Africa, my government launched a good neighborly foreign policy and we pursued it faithfully. So in our tenure relations between Ghana and the neighbors spanning all the way to Nigeria and Senegal, Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, the relations were so good. I was twice the chair of ECOWAS and I even had the privilege of chairing the African Union itself. So I hope there to, across our continent, they will say, "Kufuor served Africa well." As I say, I believe in the universality of man, and historians like you coming from far away, the United States, when you read up and say this guy truly believed in the dignity of man and used his tenure to try to promote that.

NC: Mr. President, you have experienced the dynamics of current-former Presidential relations from both possible perspectives. As you know, on the African continent sometimes these relationships can be very friendly and sometimes they can be extremely adversarial. Can you please talk about the importance of relationships between current and former Heads of State on the continent? What principles do you feel should guide this relationship, and how important are these principles in affecting the likelihood of leaders to step down from power in the first place?

JK: OK. Um, if it's constitutional governance that holds sway, it's not only in Africa, everywhere, then I believe basic principles should be continuity of governance. Like say in the monarchies, in Britain for instance, the King or Queen is supposed never to die, so whoever comes will take off from where the other one left it and it makes for stability and gives a continuum of governance for the good of the people. I believe that is where everybody should operate and I wish seriously that the animosities that tend to show up with changes of government, constitutionally, would abate so that a man who served the term and ended legally or legitimately would not be humiliated or disgraced unlawfully, it is unlawful to do it. If say the man didn't serve well, use the constitutional means to impeach him and put him where he should belong. But if he went through the process and ended as the constitution provided for then whoever comes should take off from there and try to move the system forward, even if he's bettering it, that's how it should be without dragging this poor person back to public view to disgrace him. So I don't think it makes for harmony and continuity, and the government of the peoples shouldn't help. So, this is my view on that.

NC: Mr. President, I'm sure that you are familiar with the Mo Ibrahim Foundation and the fact that it semi-annually gives out a prestigious prize to a former African Head of State for reasons of good governance while in office, peacefully stepping down from, and a productive post-tenure. Beyond the accolades and the awards, however, do you feel that this prize and similar measures can actually affect the behavior of leaders on the continent as well as their likelihood of peacefully stepping down from power in the first place?

JK: I believe so. In a way it can be said governments, the institutions of governments in independent Africa is young, more or less developing. And anything that would help establish the institution, make it stronger, I believe should be welcome. Over the past four decades since independence on the continent, Africa has suffered too many shocks and indignities through coup d'états and hijacking nations by strongmen and that sort of thing. Bit by bit, Africa is coming away from this face of instability and conflict and since the year 2000 when, 2001 or '02, when the African Union was formed, as I said collectively the states or the nations of government are aspiring or they've declared the necessity for various countries to be governed constitutionally and implying that leaders who are elected should abide by the constitution and, when their term is up, step down. Well, that's the provision of the constitutions, but we find that even up to this period we see some erratic developments here and there. People wanting to change constitutions last minute. And a lot of times perhaps they are driven by fear of what might happen to

them after whether it's going to be stacked poverty or suspicions and accusations and a whole lot of untoward treatment they would get so then they refuse to go. That could explain some of the violations of constitution by these fears. So if you have something like the Mo Ibrahim Foundation coming along to assure that even after your term you might still have a chance to live in dignity, then I say why not? As Africa gets stronger, as the institution of government strengthens, I'm sure the Mo Ibrahim Foundation might begin to peter off, things would be as normal as what happens in Europe or America. But for the time being we have to be candid and acknowledge that we have difficulties in evolving and we would need catalysts like the Mo Ibrahim support to assure that leaders would retire confidently that if they've done the right things they wouldn't be reduced into penury or disgrace. So I think that's good.