

Govt considers purchase of new aircraft for GAF to combat insurgencies

BY AGNES OPOKU
SARPONG

THE government is considering the purchase of new aircraft for the Ghana Armed Forces to boost their capabilities to handle insurgencies.

The A-29 Super Tucano Aircraft, tailored to counter-insurgency, was therefore put on display at the Air Force Base in Accra to enable security experts acquaint themselves with its operations.

The aircraft is the gold standard for light attack, combat, reconnaissance aircraft and built in the U.S by Sierra Nevada Corporation, and Embraer Defense and Security.

With its close air support and aerial reconnaissance missions in low threat environments, the Aircraft presents new opportunities to augment the country's capabilities in counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism efforts.

The Minister of Defence, Dominic Nitiwul, said there was the need to prioritise airpower in counter-terrorism and asymmetric warfare efforts.

"The prevailing security

landscape in our sub-region underscores the imperative for nations, including Ghana, to prioritise efforts in counter-terrorism and various forms of asymmetric warfare," he said.

Mr Nitiwul expressed optimism about the potential of the A-29 Super Tucano to augment Ghana's capabilities in combating insurgency and terrorism.

Acknowledging the critical role of ground infrastructure in maintaining aircraft operational readiness, he stressed the need for an organised ground organisation and logistical support.

"Reliable ground support is indispensable for keeping aircraft airborne and effective in executing their missions," he said.

The Vice President, Sierra Nevada Corporation (SNC) Business Africa, Mr Eric Hauff, announced his outfit's commitment to deepen its partnership with Ghana.

He said the 829 Super Tucano aircraft is a key component in

countering violent extremist organisations and promoting stability in the region.

"The 829 Super Tucano represents the best-in-class aircraft equipped with advanced technology and precision weapons," he said.

Highlighting the border and maritime security challenges, he

stressed the aircraft's capability in addressing internal security issues and enhancing overall stability.

The Chief of the Air Staff, Air vice Marshal Fredrick Asare Kwasi Bekoe, thanked the teams from Sierra Nevada Corporation (SNC), the Embraer Defence and Security as well as personnel from the Ghana Air Force in ensuring flawless execution of the event.

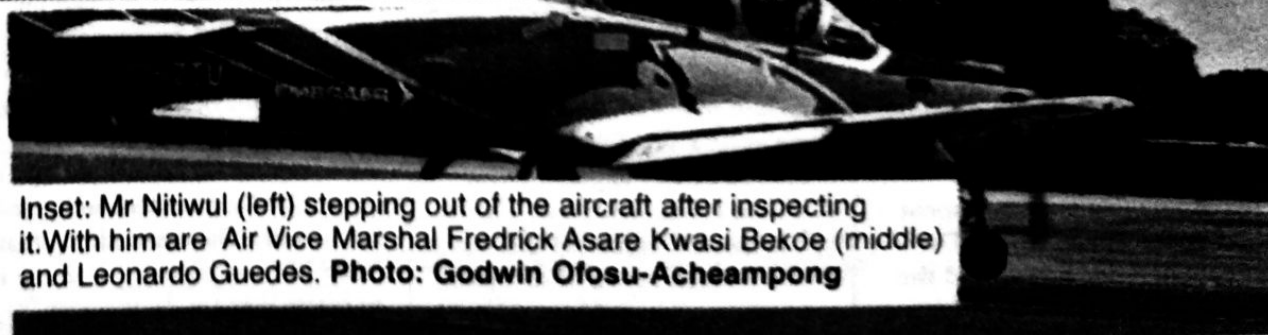
"This partnership with SNC and Embraer Defence and Security will facilitate our processes and our aligns, our requirement

for future consideration and acquisition," he said.

He said this comes very timely, by saying "The Ghana Air Force is opportune to critically consider the Super Tucano aircraft as an appropriate offensive platform to enhance its deterrent and offensive posture within the sub-region."

The Super Tucano has the potential of enhancing Ghana Air Force's counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism drive to safeguard borders and also, deal with piracy issues in our maritime domain.

It is versatile with powerful turboprop: engines operating at a low cost. It is also known for its rugged-and durable design allowing it to operate from unimproved runways and forward operating bases with target sensors and precision guided munitions.



Inset: Mr Nitiwul (left) stepping out of the aircraft after inspecting it. With him are Air Vice Marshal Fredrick Asare Kwasi Bekoe (middle) and Leonardo Guedes. Photo: Godwin Ofofu-Acheampong