

**Remarks**  
**Defense Attaché Lt. Col. Daniel Jones**

**Closing Ceremony**  
**Africa Center for Strategic Studies**  
**“Countering Transnational Threats in the Sahel” Workshop**

**King Fahd Hotel, Dakar**  
**Friday, May 23, 2014**

*(As prepared)*

Dear Honored Guests,  
Dear Seminar Participants,

First I would like to express my thanks and the thanks of the Department of Defense to the Government of Senegal for allowing us to hold this seminar here in Senegal. We recognized that events such as this have a cost for the hosting nation and we appreciate Senegal’s continued willingness to host these discussions. I would also like to thank the King Fahd Hotel for their support to this conference, and the ACSS staff for their efforts in putting this conference together.

While transnational issues impact all nations, I believe that Africa perhaps has the greatest challenge of any region in the world. Because of the arbitrary nature of so many of Africa’s national boundaries, there are numerous religious, ethnic, economic, and other divisions and identities that cross those boundaries. As a result, almost all issues in Africa tend to be trans-national issues to some degree, and as such require an international response.

Over the last week you have had the opportunity to more closely examine several transnational threats of global concern, and others more specific to the Sahel region. You have also had the opportunity to exchange ideas, opinions and plans on how these threats might be countered in this region. Some of your thoughts have included:

- the importance of maintaining equipped, paid, and trained security forces to make them more resistant to corruption;
- involving civil society in countering threats and in providing unofficial oversight of the security forces;
- raising awareness of Transnational Threats and their consequences with border populations; and
- the importance of regional and interagency cooperation.

However, I somehow suspect that you have not completely developed the definitive solution to all transnational threats. You have done something almost as important. You have opened a low level dialogue between nations, and you have established personal contacts that transcend national boundaries. As the great Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu stated, “a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.”

However, as the almost completely unknown and mediocre American philosopher Dan Jones stated, “between the end of a thousand mile journey and the first step are lots and lots of steps.” As you return to your homes, your challenge is to continue the journey. Take the time to report to your superiors those ideas and discussions that seem the most promising and important. Take the time to maintain contact with the people you met and worked with during this seminar. Keep taking steps toward then end of the journey.

Finally I would like to thank each of you for your attendance at this seminar. I know that all of you have important duties at home that will be waiting for you when you return and that the time spent here is a sacrifice. Thank you again for your participation and I wish you a safe passage home and a productive journey to your final destination.