

Remarks by Ambassador Zumwalt
CET 7 – Thiès
Opening Ceremony for FLINTLOCK 16
Monday, February 8, 2016

(As prepared)

Senegalese Army Chief of Staff General Kane
Governor of Thiès Amadou Sy
Ambassadors and representatives of participating nations
Senior military leaders
Officers
Soldiers and distinguished guests

Good morning. Let me begin by thanking the Governments of Senegal and Mauritania for hosting Flintlock 2016. This is Senegal's third time in the role of host, and we are grateful both for the hospitality of our Senegalese partners and for your professional commitment to the global effort to combat terrorism. This demonstrated commitment highlights Senegalese regional leadership and serves as a warning to violent extremists that there is no place for an ideology of hatred here in Senegal.

Thank you also to the more than 30 African, European and North American partner nations participating in FLINTLOCK this year. I would also like to say a special thank you to our Lead Partners at distant locations where FLINTLOCK will take place. Austria, Estonia, Italy, The Netherlands, Poland and the United Kingdom deserve our thanks for assuming leadership roles.

The goal of FLINTLOCK is to exercise together, as a multinational team to enhance cooperation and to counter terrorism and violent extremist ideologies. Recent events in the region have highlighted the threat, but make no mistake – those events were only the public face of terrorism. Every day around the world, arms are shipped illegally across borders, terrorist groups are financed from wealthy benefactors, and public insecurity, underdevelopment and poverty are exploited to recruit future terrorists.

To counter this multifaceted threat, our response must also be comprehensive. For this reason, this Flintlock exercise involves not just the militaries of our partner nations, but many civilian and law enforcement agencies as well. This “whole of government” approach serves to combine Diplomacy, Development, and Defense in support of collective objectives. Veterans of previous FLINTLOCK exercises will see significant progress in increasing the civilian and law enforcement participation in this year's exercise. Our nations share many goals. We seek economic prosperity, democracy, and the protection of human rights. To achieve these goals, we have come together in agreement on another shared goal: *security*. A stable and secure region is fundamental to achieving all of our goals.

I have no doubt that the professionals here will make great strides toward achieving our common goals, but I ask one additional thing of you. When you are in Podor or Bakel, Saint Louis, Kedougou, Dakar or Thiès, and you speak with people who may not regularly interact with men and women in the military or in law enforcement, tell them why you are here. Tell them about the good things a secure region will mean for their lives. Show them, through our collective actions, that the military forces of Africa, Europe, Canada, and the United States are professional and worthy of the support of the people, because you are the alternative to terrorism, and to extremism. The people already know and value the protection their own Senegalese forces offer, but you can demonstrate that the militaries of over 30 nations stand with the Senegalese as the face of security and stability in the region.

I wish you all a safe and productive exercise and look forward to celebrating your success at the conclusion of FLINTLOCK.

Thank you.