



**Ambassador Lewis Lukens  
Remarks – IMET Reception  
Radisson Blu Hotel  
Friday, September 28, 2012**

Lieutenant General Fall, Chief of the General Staff of the Senegalese Armed Forces,

Lieutenant General Fall, Commander of the Gendarmes,

Vice Admiral William E. Landay, Director of the Defense Security Cooperation Agency,

General Officers here present,

Colleagues from the Defense Security Cooperation Agency and the  
Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management,

IMET Graduates,

Distinguished guests,

Good evening and welcome. We are here to celebrate the merits of a program that is well-known and greatly appreciated, the International Military Education Training program – or simply “IMET”. As I look out over all of you here tonight, what immediately strikes me is how many years of combined experience are present in this room. You have made the difficult decision and deep journey to pursue a career dedicated to the service of your country and its people. I hope and believe that your participation in IMET was a big part of your professional – and personal – development.

IMET taught you skills and knowledge inside the classroom, but it also gave you insight into American society and ideals, and an understanding of our beliefs in the proper relationship between the military, the government, and society as a whole. During your program in the United States, you also had the opportunity to share knowledge and experience in a less formal manner with your American counterparts – somewhat like we are doing here tonight.

Exchange is a crucial part of the program -- IMET helps prevent a nation's military from being overly introspective by creating a forum for true and meaningful

exchange. American and Senegalese -- and other participating nations -- we all come out the winners having learned from one another.

So tonight we celebrate the soft power of relationships, of friendships. Just as an overdue visit between two individuals can resolve tension, countries coming together realize that they have more in common than they may have imagined: For the military, IMET helped do that for you – Senegalese and American military colleagues alike. It is an honor for me to celebrate in that friendship this evening. Thank you.