

## Remarks

Ambassador Lewis Lukens

Opening Ceremony of the Counter Violent Extremism  
Workshop

Dakar

Monday, May 6, 2013

List of Dignitaries to be recognized to be confirmed:

Good morning. On behalf of the United States Government and the United States Embassy in Dakar, I would like to welcome you to the opening of the third Countering Violent Extremism in the Sahel workshop. This program, organized by the Africa Center for Strategic Studies in partnership with USAID and USAFRICOM, has brought together more than 60 participants from African partner nations, international non-governmental organizations, and representatives of numerous U.S. Government agencies.

This is a critical period for West Africa. A little over one year ago, we would not have expected conflict to erupt in Mali, previously one of the most enduring democracies in

the region. Other neighbors, such as Guinea and Guinea-Bissau, have experienced their own share of civil unrest in recent times. We all want to see sustainable democratic and economic growth, but conflict and civil unrest remain facts of life. The U.S. Government has a multi-dimensional view of the evolution and methods of countering violent extremism, and of transnational activities and threats such as drugs and arms trafficking.

You -- participants from Ministries of Defense, Foreign Affairs, Interior, and Justice; and international and non-governmental organizations representing Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Tunisia, as well as the United States -- represent a cross section of society that will be better able to examine this issue across multiple dimensions. I encourage you to continue collaborating once you return to your home countries to find strategies to counter violent extremism. The work you will do here will bring real and tangible benefits to all of your countries, and indeed -- to global security, as well.

Senegal plays a key role in the fight against violent extremism. The Government of Senegal has taken a multi-layered approach that ranges from the deployment of highly trained Senegalese forces on peace keeping and peace enforcement missions, to working with regional governments on projects like Regional Harmonization of

Counter-Narcotic Trafficking Legislation. Senegal also frequently hosts regional seminars and workshops, such as this one. The U.S. / Senegal partnership is strong and becoming stronger. Through training and engagement efforts via USAFRICOM, to academic programs organized by the Africa Center for Strategic Studies, to the wide array of development work spearheaded by USAID, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, and Peace Corps, our relationship continues to grow. I want to personally thank the Government of Senegal for its strong partnership and for its outstanding and professional support of our programs.

Over the next week, you are going to have the opportunity to listen to speakers from numerous countries and organizations, some of the brightest minds in their fields today. The ACSS model for workshops such as this gives participants maximum opportunity to interact, not only with speakers and panel members, but also among yourselves in group discussions. I encourage you to make the most of this opportunity. I look forward to seeing and studying the recommendations that you will put forth at the end of the workshop. Your ideas could very well be the building blocks that are necessary to strengthen our international efforts in Countering Violent Extremism via development-oriented efforts.

What you do on a daily basis to contribute to these efforts is important for you, the leaders of your countries, and your fellow citizens -- including your children and grandchildren. Therefore, I hope that you will take the time to forge friendships with your counterparts from around the region and from the United States. These friendships will foster a true spirit of international security cooperation. I know that the people of your countries will be grateful for your dedication to peace and security at home.

Thank you, once again, to the Government of Senegal for your continued partnership with the United States. And thanks to the participants for doing your best every day, on the job and here at this training, to improve regional security here in West Africa, and around the world.

Closing recognitions.