

**Remarks  
Ambassador Lewis A. Lukens**

**Counterproliferation Awareness Training Session**

**Radisson Blu, Dakar, Senegal  
December 2, 2013**

*(As prepared)*

Participants and distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good Morning.

Thank you for inviting me here today to welcome you to the second Weapons of Mass Destruction training that the U.S. Government has organized in Dakar. I am proud to say that the United States Government is a strong partner of Senegal in many security-related areas. In the past, "WMD" has not been considered a priority threat in Senegal. However, international security is constantly in flux, and this past year, several countries in the neighborhood have experienced unrest that took many of us by surprise. Just last month, Al-Qaeda claimed responsibility for the deaths of two French journalists in Mali. We are living in a region that unfortunately seems to be becoming more and more dangerous – and we need to be prepared for anything. This preparation includes training for the detection of WMD.

As the American Ambassador to this country, I am very proud of our strong bilateral relationship with Senegal. This relationship has only grown stronger in the past year with President Macky Sall's visits to Washington and New York, and President Barack Obama's visit to Dakar. President Obama's visit here was in large part to recognize Senegal's role as a leader in the region, including its leadership in security. So we believe it is vital that Senegalese security professionals, like you, understand the threat posed by WMD and counter-proliferation techniques.

This training program has been brought to you under the aegis of the International Counter-Proliferation Program. This United States Government training program is designed to build partnerships and assist international law enforcement, and customs and border security officials in countering the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and related materials. The program's mandate is to provide assistance to 87 countries in Africa, Europe, Central Asia, South Asia and Southeast Asia. Again, we are so happy that Senegal -- and Gabon and Guinea -- are part of this group of countries.

The training curriculum that you will follow will cover awareness of the WMD threat and WMD interdiction, investigations and response skills. It will also cover how to build government interagency capacity to counter national threats and incidents.

We believe that like the United States, Senegal, Guinea, and Gabon, want to prevent the transit of WMD materials – as well as counter the smuggling of related illegal items. Please take what you can from this important course -- whether the new knowledge is something you may have to use sometime in the future, or whether this information is something that you needed and can apply it to your job immediately! What you do on a daily basis to contribute to preventing transit of WMD and other contraband is important for you, the leaders of your countries, and your fellow citizens -- including your children and grandchildren.

The instructors who will work with you over the next few days represent the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency. They have come to share their hard-won professional knowledge, gained through years of experience. I hope that you will take advantage of their eagerness to work with you.

I hope that you will also take the time to get to know each other. Friendships among yourselves -- law enforcement officials living in neighboring countries -- can contribute enormously towards fostering the true spirit of international security cooperation.

In conclusion, I extend my thanks to all of you for taking the time out of your schedules to learn about detection of WMD. But more importantly, the people of your countries thank you. Your efforts here this week are helping to bring us all closer to the goal of a world that is safer and more secure.

Thank you.