



Embassy of the United States of America

Dakar, Senegal

Ambassade des Etats-Unis

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**Remarks by U.S. Ambassador Janice L. Jacobs
Reception and Opening of Bissau Liaison Office
Bissau, Guinea-Bissau
July 6, 2007**

Excellencies, Ambassadors and members of the diplomatic corps,
Distinguished guests, dear friends and fellow Americans,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am delighted to formally announce the opening of the U.S. Embassy Liaison Office in Bissau, which I inaugurated earlier today. This new facility includes offices and meeting rooms that will be used by official U.S. Government travelers to Bissau and our Bissau-based staff.

The opening of this liaison office today is significant not only because it demonstrates the deepening relationship between our two countries, but also because it marks the beginning of the process that will eventually lead to the re-opening of the United States Embassy in Guinea-Bissau.

The inauguration of the Liaison Office coincides with America's celebration this week of the 231st anniversary of the signing of the U.S. Declaration of Independence, a document which boldly asserts that governments must derive their power from the consent of the governed.

In a 21st century world defined by democratization and globalization, it is easy to forget what a revolutionary document it was. The then-daring premise that "all men are created equal" and have "inalienable rights" to include "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" not only led to a bloody war but also changed the course of world history. It was the launch of an historic and ongoing experiment, based on an unshakable faith in the sanctity of the individual and the strength of forging unity out of diversity.

I see examples of the same spirit of democracy happening here in Guinea-Bissau. Free and fair elections in 2005 ushered in a peaceful transition of power. In April of this year, a new government was formed peacefully and in accordance with the Constitution. Since that time, measures have been put in place to make public finances more transparent, and the National Popular Assembly is enacting relevant legislation against corruption, transnational crime and terrorism.

The United States will continue to seek ways to assist Guinea-Bissau in its transition to a stable, prosperous and democratic nation. This year we supported humanitarian demining and removal of unexploded ordnance; programs to fight HIV/AIDS; training and professionalization for select members of the military; promotion of cashew production and exports; crop development and food security; and community development projects.

Earlier this year in Washington, D.C., Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice signed a tri-partite agreement with the Governments of Guinea-Bissau and Brazil for capacity building and strengthening democracy in the National Popular Assembly.

In addition, we continue to look for ways to fight drug trafficking in Guinea-Bissau. We believe that no other single factor can corrupt and destroy nascent democratic institutions like the debilitating power of narco-money. It is imperative that the Government organize itself for the fight with a strong counter-drug task force and arm itself with tough laws against drug trafficking and money laundering. It is equally imperative that we in the diplomatic community redouble our efforts to form a united front against transnational drug networks that threaten to destabilize many of the countries in this region.

Thanks to President Grant, we have been involved in Guinea-Bissau for over 130 years—over half of our history as an independent country. Our relationship with Guinea-Bissau is based on partnership, not paternalism. In the words of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, "We seek to use America's diplomatic power to help foreign citizens better their own lives and to build their own nations and to transform their own futures."

Before concluding I would like to inform you that, later this month, I will depart my position as U.S. Ambassador to Guinea-Bissau and Senegal to take up the post of Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs in Washington, D.C.

I must say that a certain sadness comes with my impending departure, but I leave with a great sense of pride in the fruitful and durable relations between our countries. I also harbor hope for the people of Guinea-Bissau, for it is a nation of citizens who are working for peace and for whom I believe there awaits a brighter future.

July 4 offers Americans time to reflect on the sacrifices made by so many to secure the liberties we prize so dearly. Following the United States' celebration of the blessings of democracy, I salute not only American patriots past and present, but also the people and Government of Guinea-Bissau for their staunch friendship and determination to work for peace, justice and the rule of law.

Muita obrigada.

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