

**REMARKS MADE**

**BY**

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**Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of**

**THE FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA**

**AT**

**THE AFRICA AIR CHIEFS CONFERENCE HELD**

**IN**

**ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA**

**26 April 2011**

**Addis Ababa**

**Gen. Norton Schwartz, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen**

At the outset, allow me to express my pleasure to be here in the middle of such distinguished personalities who are reputed for their stellar leadership in their respective countries and to make this remark at the opening phase of this very important conference.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt pleasure to welcome you all to Addis Ababa.

**Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am aware that this is not the first time when the United States Air Force Africa is organizing such a high profile conference in Addis Ababa. This is, I believe, the third one. I therefore, would like to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciations to the leadership of the United States Air Force Africa for choosing Addis Ababa as a venue for this very important conference, which my government is delighted to co-host.

My appreciation also goes to all members of the organizing team of the conference, particularly to the Africa Center for Strategic Studies for helping organize such a high profile conference. The success of the organizing team is evident in bringing together so many participants as well as panelists, moderators and guest speakers from the United States of America, Germany, and all corners of Africa.

In this connection, I would like to recognize the presence of a number of panelists and express my admiration for their kindness to be here with us. Their contribution in the course of the various stages of the conference and their willingness to share their expertise in the field is so invaluable.

I am aware that they have been selected and invited due to their rich experiences and knowledge about the subjects of the discussion of the conference, which include strategic dialogue in the area of air domain safety and security, sharing information with regard to development of the capacity of African Standby Force, and sharing best practices in asserting positive command and control of the air domain across Africa.

**Excellencies,**

**Distinguished Guests,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The fact that Africa particularly, eastern part of the Continent borders with the major sea lanes where important maritime commercial traffic takes place, is attracting the attention of international terrorists and pirates. While some of the illicit activities include hostage taking of oil tankers and cargo ships, others include shipment of weapons using aircraft destined to Somalia, which has actually been under UN arms embargo.

Thus, in the face of the existence of states which violate the UN imposed arms embargo on Somalia, considering more practical regional instruments, within the framework of international law, under which such violators would be held accountable, is becoming absolutely essential. It is my conviction thus, that this conference would highlight

the magnitude of the challenges and provide some recommendations as to how to go about state-led illicit airborne activities.

**Excellencies,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The need for Africa and the United States to work together in the areas of counter terrorism and airborne related illicit activities is increasingly becoming evident. The fact that so many participants have accepted the invitation to take part at this conference implies that there is an emerging consensus to address the challenge at a regional level in cooperation with the United States.

I also strongly believe that the United States Department of the Air Forces is committed to responding to such needs. I therefore, believe that your deliberations during the next few days will come up with much needed recommendations that would help to make the needs operational.

**Distinguished Guests,**

Having looked at the program of the conference, I have the impression that you are going to have very useful, productive and rewarding stay in Addis Ababa. In my view, your stay could be more rewarding if you also do some out- of- conference hall activities, despite your tight schedules. I would encourage you to take advantage of your presence here in Addis Ababa, to meet with Ethiopians, look around the city and get a little bit impressions of the efforts that we are doing to transform the city, the country and the lives of ordinary people of Ethiopia.

Allow me once again, Excellencies and colleagues, to wish you successful outcomes of your conference and pleasant stay in Addis Ababa.

I thank you.