

Remarks at a State Dinner Honoring President Emmanuel Macron of France
December 1, 2022

President Biden. Please, have a seat. Good evening, everyone.

Jill and I are honored. We're truly honored to welcome you all to the first State Dinner that the President and the First Lady of United States have been able to have because of COVID. And we couldn't have had a better guest than the President of France and the First Lady of France.

Tonight, we—[applause]—tonight we celebrate the enduring alliance between France and United States, a partnership that's marked by so many firsts. France was our first ally, first country to fly the American flag after our revolution. And Franc [France; White House correction] hosted the first diplomatic posts. Before—more than anything else, France has been our first friend.

Ladies and gentlemen, I actually grew up in a place called New Castle, Delaware—County, and—near Brandywine Battlefield, where a young man named Marquis de Lafayette fought for the American cause and became close friends with a fellow named George Washington. Later, Lafayette wrote of their friendship, he'd quote—and I quote, "It was a such simplicity that two friends were united by the greatest of causes."

Today, we're still united by the greatest of causes: democracy, liberty, equality, opportunity, and freedom. We stand together against oppression and injustice. We stick up for one another in our democratic values, to which Washington and Lafayette dedicated their lives. And we still strive to build a world that's worthy of our highest hopes and of our future, knowing that we can always, always count on one another as allies and friends.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me—please join me in raising our glasses, which neither one of us have—[laughter]—there you go—

[At this point, an aide handed glasses of champagne to President Biden and President Macron.]

—in raising our glasses, to President Macron and his wife Brigitte, to France, ladies and gentlemen, to the history that binds us and the values that still unite us and to the future we're going to forge together.

Vive la France. And God bless America.

[President Biden offered a toast.]

President Macron. To our friendship.

President Biden. It's all yours, boss.

President Macron. *Ma vous!* Let's applaud.

Mr. President, dear Joe; Madam First Lady, dear Jill; ladies and gentlemen; distinguished members: I do hope you had a great dinner. *[Laughter]*

But let me tell you that it's a great honor that Brigitte and myself and our delegation were invited for this first state visit and to be with you tonight at the White House in this splendid setting. And it means a lot for us. A lot.

President Biden. It means a lot to us.

President Macron. You perfectly described the challenges we have in front of us. And I will not repeat what—several times in this morning, in the wonderful celebration you organized—what we told, both of us. We come from the same values. I stole, during his long role—

[*President Macron held up a pocket copy of the U.S. Constitution.*]

—to Judge Breyer, this Constitution of the United States. "We the People." We the people.

And when Lafayette came here, indeed, to fight, he fought for these principles and to have people here living in democracy and freedom. And this is the same—it's the same thing in my country.

And when these principles were at risk in my country, you came and did the same. And in a lot of places today, these principles are at risk or challenged. Even in our societies, in our democracies, a lot of people just want to jeopardize or revert on this principle, challenge and contest elections and so on.

We stand together, shoulder to shoulder, precisely to be entitled to say, at the same time, "We the people" and "*Liberté, égalité, fraternité.*"

This is why this evening we are not just honored and moved, but we feel the importance of this moment. It means a lot for all of us, because this is our history, this is our shared life, because a lot of you have beloved on the other side of the oceans or shared your lives between our countries.

But this is how to build our future and how to work together for climate, to fight against inequality, for inclusive societies, to unify our nations. Shoulder to shoulder, we will do so and we will prevail.

So I want to thank you. And let me have a toast as well with you.

Dear Joe, my dear friend—my dear friend, I'm immensely grateful for the honor once again of this unique opportunity.

Et laisse-moi dire, vive les États-Unis d'Amérique, vive la France, et vive l'amitié entre nos deux pays.

[*President Macron offered a toast.*]

Cheers. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:45 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, President Macron referred to former U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice Stephen G. Breyer. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 2.

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