

will follow up in Cannes at the G-20, where we've got to get the world economy moving.

So these are very important times. I think the relationship is as strong as it's ever been, and it's been a pleasure working with you these last 16 months.

President Obama. Excellent. Thank you very much, everybody.

Iranian Government's Release of Detained U.S. Citizens Shane Bauer and Joshua Fattal

Q. Can you give us your reaction to the hikers being released?

President Obama. We are thrilled that the hikers were released, and we are thrilled for the families. It was the right thing to do. They shouldn't have been held in the first place, but we're glad they're now home.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:55 p.m. at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the audio was incomplete.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Nicolas Sarkozy of France in New York City September 21, 2011

President Obama. Well, I want to welcome President Sarkozy to New York City and to the United States. On the anniversary of September 11, President Sarkozy gave a speech at our Embassy in Paris, and he reminded the people of France, but also the world, of the extraordinary friendship that had developed, in part, because of the great sacrifices that our men and women in uniform have made over the decades to preserve freedom and democracy. And so not only am I grateful for the expression of deep friendship that President Sarkozy expressed, but I want to affirm the mutuality of feeling that we have towards the French people.

Do we have an interpreter?

[At this point, an interpreter translated President Obama's previous remarks into French and began a running translation.]

That partnership's been evidenced by the extraordinary work that we've done together in Libya. And I want to thank President Sarkozy for his leadership, as a coalition helped the Libyan people achieve the kind of freedom and opportunity that they're looking for. That partnership is evidenced in the work we did together in Cote d'Ivoire to ensure that the rightfully elected leader of that country was put in place. And our partnership and our mutual leadership will be required to deal with a range of internation-

al issues that have been discussed here at the United Nations and are going to be critical in the months and years to come, including trying to find a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but also trying to find a coordinated world strategy, global strategy, to deal with a economy that is still far too fragile.

And of course, we still have the joint project to bring stability and transition to Afghan governance. And we are extraordinarily grateful for the sacrifices that the men and women in uniform from France have made in that effort.

On a personal note, I consider Nicolas a friend as well as a colleague. Thank you for your leadership. Welcome. And I look forward to a very productive discussion.

[President Sarkozy spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.]

President Sarkozy. I should like to say just how delighted we are to be here in the United States, in New York, alongside Barack Obama.

Now, for we, the people of France, I must say, it's actually easy to work with Barack Obama. Whatever the crises we've had to face together, whatever the initiatives we have taken jointly, on every single occasion we have found a listening, openminded attitude on the part of our friend, Barack Obama. In particular, when tackling the crisis, which is still upon

us today, the leadership that President Obama has shown, and showed at the time, have been of a special value to us all.

There is still much to do, in particular in paving the way to the G-20 summit in Cannes. This is our priority; our number-one priority—let me make this very clear—is to find the path to growth worldwide.

Lastly, I wish to say to what extent I am sensitive to the boldness, the courage, the intelligence, and the sensitivity of President Obama, my friend. I liked him before his election, I liked him once he was elected, and I especially appreciate him now, when the tough times are upon us.

And there's one thing I want to say, perhaps on a more personal note, and that I really mean from the bottom of my heart. When things are as tough as they are right now, when the going

gets as tough as it is right now, it is especially precious and important to be able to speak to what is the world's number-one power, but to someone who listens, someone who is sensitive to others, someone who is respectful and aware of other people's red lines and prepared to take them into account, especially at a time when, as I said, we are facing fresh difficulties, and we really need, together, to go forward.

[Following the translation of his remarks, President Sarkozy spoke in English.]

President Sarkozy. She speaks like me.
[Laughter]

President Obama. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:53 p.m. at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel.

Statement on Armenian National Day *September 21, 2011*

On behalf of the American people, I want to extend my best wishes to all those who are celebrating Armenian National Day in Armenia, in the United States, and around the world. This 20th anniversary of independence and Armenia's achievements during this time show the

progress that is possible when people are free to determine their own destiny. Here in the United States, we are grateful for the Armenian Americans who enrich our national life every day and who help sustain the strong and growing relationship between our two countries.

Statement on the Iranian Government's Release of Shane Bauer and Joshua Fattal *September 21, 2011*

I welcome the release of Shane Bauer and Josh Fattal from detention in Iran and am very pleased that they are being reunited with their loved ones. The tireless advocacy of their families over these 2 years has won my admiration and is now coming to an end with Josh and Shane back in their arms. All Americans join their families and friends

in celebrating their long-awaited return home.

We are deeply grateful to His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said of Oman, Iraqi President Jalal Talabani, the Swiss Government, and to all our partners and allies around the world who have worked steadfastly over the past 2 years to secure the release of Shane and Josh.