

U.S. President; I do believe that is the only American President to have had that experience. And he was U.S. Ambassador to France at the time of the French Revolution, and he departed from France in August of 1789, which means, after the 14th of July, the taking of the Bastille, he thought he had seen enough and that he could go back home. And then of course, he was involved in the governance of the United States before becoming President. And then Jefferson purchased Louisiana from Napoleon.

President Obama. Very good deal.

President Hollande. And today we are not demanding anything. [Laughter]

President Obama. It was a good bargain though. [Laughter]

President Hollande. I also wish to confirm that this bond that unites us through Jefferson and that these bonds are sustained over time, because he represents values and principles. Freedom, human dignity, rights—these are the values for which we are continuing to fight around the world, the United States and France. We were allies in the time of Jefferson and Lafayette. We are still allies today. We were friends in the time of Jefferson and Lafayette, and we will remain friends forever.

Thank you.

President Obama. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:32 p.m. in the Entrance Hall. President Hollande spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks at a Welcoming Ceremony for President François Hollande of France

February 11, 2014

President Obama. Good morning, everybody. *Bonjour!* That's the extent of my French. [Laughter]

Few places in the world warm the heart like Paris in the spring. This morning, we're going to do our best with Washington in the winter. [Laughter]

France is America's oldest ally, and in recent years, we've deepened our alliance. And today, on behalf of the American people and Michelle and myself, it is a great honor to welcome my friend President Hollande and his delegation for their first state visit to the United States, in fact, the first state visit by a French President in nearly 20 years.

Yesterday, at Monticello, we reflected on the values that we share, the ideals at the heart of our alliance. Here, under the red, white, and blue and the blue, white, and red, we declare our devotion once more to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," to "*liberté, égalité, and fraternité.*" [Laughter]

For more than two centuries, we have not only proclaimed our ideals, our citizens have bled to preserve them, from a field in Yorktown to the beaches of Normandy, to the

mountains of Afghanistan. And today we are honored to be joined by two extraordinary men who were there those historic days 70 years ago. I ask them to stand, proud veterans of D-day who are here in attendance today.

So it's no exaggeration that we stand here because of each other. We owe our freedom to each other. Of course, we Americans also thank our French friends for so much else: this Capital City, designed by L'Enfant; our Statue of Liberty, a gift from France; and something many Americans are especially grateful for, New Orleans and the French Quarter. [Laughter]

Mr. President, like generations before us, we now have the task not simply to preserve our enduring alliance, but to make it new for our time. No one nation can meet today's challenges alone or seize its opportunities. More nations must step up and meet the responsibilities of leadership, and that is what the United States and France are doing together.

To our French friends, I say let's do even more together, for the security of—that our citizens deserve, for the prosperity that they seek, and for the dignity of people around the

world who seek what we declared two centuries ago: those unalienable rights, those sacred rights of man.

President Hollande, members of the French delegation, we are honored to have you here as one of our strongest allies and closest friends. Welcome to the United States. *Bienvenue, mes amis.*

President Hollande. Mr. President, dear Barack, dear Michelle, ladies and gentlemen: It's cold in Washington. [*Laughter*] You're right. But it's a beautiful day—

President Obama. It's beautiful.

President Hollande. —a great day for America and France. And I will speak in French because I am obliged to do that for my country.

[*At this point, President Hollande spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter as follows.*]

We are received here, my delegation and myself, as friends. And I am particularly touched by this reception by the President of the United States. We are always united by a common history, from Yorktown to the beaches of Normandy. As you said so rightly, each of our countries knows what it owes to the other: its freedom.

Yesterday we were in Monticello, Thomas Jefferson's residence, a great American statesman, once Ambassador to France, who remains one of the most beautiful symbols of the ties that unite us. This afternoon, at the Arlington Cemetery, I shall award the Legion d'Honneur, the highest French distinction, to the American Unknown Soldier. And I shall present American veterans who fought in the Second World War with an award, and I'd like to pay tribute to these men.

Thus doing, I wish to demonstrate the fact that France will never forget the spirit of sacrifice shown by these American soldiers, nameless heroes who left their homes to liberate my country and Europe. We shall pay tribute to

them during the celebrations that will take place in France to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Normandy landing. And I hope, Barack, that you will join me on the 6th of June, 2014, 70 years after D-day landing.

Our two countries hold universal values, values that inspired Eleanor Roosevelt and René Cassin to write together the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We stand together to fight terrorism. Today, still, France and the United States stand side by side to make these values prevail. We stand together with the United States to address the threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and chemical weapons; together to solve the crises faced by the Middle East; together to support Africa's development; and together to fight global warming and climate change.

Today, we stand united, and we have built a model of friendship, a friendship that is the best recipe for a better world, a world such as the one that was dreamt by Thomas Jefferson and Lafayette. It is not just about friendship, it is about an alliance that will enable us to make this world a better place, a safer place, a more humane place.

Mr. President, I am proud to stand here. You are this great man of the United States of America, and you represent the United States of America, a country where everything is possible for who wants it, a country devoted to freedom and equality. Long live the United States. Long live France. Long live the Franco-American friendship. Thank you!

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:25 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, where President Hollande was accorded a formal welcome with full military honors. In his remarks, President Obama referred to Lansdale, PA, resident George A. Shenkle; and Keswick, VA, resident Arthur W. Ordell, Jr. President Hollande referred to Madison Heights, VA, resident Robert L. Sales; Vienna, VA, resident John C. Cheban; and Frederick, MD, residents Henry E. Ponton, Jr., and Charles S. Toms.