

For delivery at 2 July 2015 July 4th reception, CMR

Welcome

Bienvenue.

Along with Daniel and Crystal, I'm happy and honored that you have come to join us in celebrating America's Independence Day.

I am delighted to welcome you to my small, intimate home !

In America the Fourth of July is an especially happy holiday shared with family and friends.

I'm happy to see so many friends here fellow ambassadors, ministers, and particularly my friend Segolene Royal!

I'm especially pleased and proud that we can recreate that spirit and that sentiment here on my first 4th of July as Ambassador to France.

We have some superb food & drink and amazing entertainment.

A particular thank you to our sponsors who make this night possible.

And our gratitude to our special guest Rufus Wainwright.

I encourage you all to stay until the end as you know, we are going to close the festivities with a wonderful Disney sound and light show.

Two hundred and thirty-nine years ago in July of 1776 George Washington and Thomas Jefferson were among the leaders of America's young struggle for independence.

These two extraordinary men Washington the soldier and Jefferson the philosopher personified the two great goals of liberty and equality that have inspired and challenged America and France ever since our two historic revolutions.

To me the most important and timeless words in Jefferson's Declaration of Independence are: "all men are created equal."

The goals that the American Revolution and the French Revolution fought for two centuries ago life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness and *liberte, egalite, fraternite* are still the goals our nations share and the challenges we face in the 2000s no less than in the 1700s.

Today especially our devotion to liberty abroad must be matched by a commitment to equality at home.

In the last week, in America we have seen the tragic and noble aspects of our on-going struggle for equality.

From the awful ashes of the Church killings in Charleston President Obama, in his poignant and sublime eulogy mirrored the eloquence of Jefferson when he told the mourners that "history can't be a sword to justify injustice or a shield against progress but must be a manual for how to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past how to break the cycle a roadway toward a better world."

And in Washington Justice Kennedy speaking for the Supreme Court wrote that "The nature of injustice is that we may not always see it in our own times."

And the Court held that our Constitution grants all Americans "equal dignity in the eyes of the law."

Yet we know we can do more and we should never stop working to make sure everyone has a fair chance.

America and France have been friends and allies from the very beginning.

For more than two centuries our people have been bound by history and affinity.

And our nations as friends and allies have stood side by side.

We will never forget that at Yorktown the final and victorious battle of our War of Independence there were more French soldiers led by the great Rochambeau than there were Americans commanded by Washington.

The balance was redressed not only with the efforts of American Forces in World War One at Belleau Wood but also when our 18, 19, and 20 year old boys fought for France on the beaches of Normandy.

I was in Normandy with D-Day veterans several weeks ago many of those boys are now 90-plus year old men who recall fighting alongside the allies as if they were defending their own families their own country their own freedom and liberty their own way of life and indeed, they were!

Today, France and the United States and our liberty-loving friends and allies once again find freedom threatened on many fronts including in the Middle East, in Africa, and in Ukraine.

In ISIL, France and America and civilized people everywhere confront a barbarous and callous and dastardly foe.

And today, as before our two nations stand together as friends and allies.

We will face today's challenges just as Washington and Jefferson and Lafayette did together.

And even as we celebrate here tonight let us remember the men and women of our armed forces who are engaged in the Middle East and Africa as well as our diplomats all around the world who are working diligently for peace and freedom.

We wish them all Godspeed and good luck.

On this special day for my country I want to say to all my French friends:

You stood by us when our nation was being born and we were too weak to survive alone.

We stood by you during two world wars when you were beleaguered and hard-pressed.

To any who would be so foolish to think that we would fail freedom now I say plainly and proudly:

We will not fail

We will be together

And we will prevail.

Thank you. Merci

Now let the celebrations begin.

Vive la France and vive les Etats-Unis.

Bonne Fete Nationale!

Happy 4th of July everyone.

On a personal note I want to wish my darling daughter a Happy Birthday!