Dear friends,

As October brings cooler weather and changing colors, the landscape of Franco-American relations continues to evolve and progress. On October 3, the French Minister of Defense Jean-Yves Le Drian came to Washington, D.C. to meet with his American counterpart, Secretary Chuck Hagel, and National Security Advisor Susan Rice to discuss our two countries' efforts to address the threats posed by terrorist groups in Iraq and Syria. At a press conference at the Pentagon, Mr. Hagel thanked France for its instrumental role in the international coalition to fight Daesh. In a phone call in mid-October, Presidents François Hollande and Barack Obama reiterated the positions of France and the United States in the fight against not only Daesh, but also Ebola, agreeing that there must be increased mobilization by the international community in the response to both threats. Just one week after Mr. Le Drian's visit, Minister of Finance and Public Accounts, Mr. Michel Sapin, arrived in Washington, D.C. to attend the annual meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. Mr. Sapin reaffirmed that economic growth is one of France's top priorities, and made clear that the EU must adapt its policies in order to compete in the global marketplace.

Amidst these important visits from French ministers, the issue of climate change continues to be a topic of high importance for France and for my own agenda as well. As the host of the United Nations Climate Change Conference in December of 2015 in Paris, France is working hard to raise awareness on the issue of global warming in its embassy and in consulates around the United States. The French-American Climate Talks panels have welcomed experts from each country to explore ways in which the devastating effects of climate change can be diminished. On October 16, the Brookings Institution's Center on the United States and Europe hosted Laurence Tubiana, Special Representative of France for the Paris 2015 Climate Change Conference. Ms. Tubiana offered her perspective on how to create a more dynamic climate regime that is both economically and politically feasible.

I am proud to see that Franco-American relations are growing stronger not only in the face of great challenges, but also in celebration of common accomplishments. In the last weeks—marked by the awarding of two Nobel Prizes to French citizens, in economy and literature—I have observed the presentation of French startup companies' work in the U.S. through the NETVA network, the opening of New York City's francophone library Albertine Books, and the induction of accomplished French and American entrepreneurs into the George Washington Spirit Society at the Founding Father's historic Mount Vernon home. This consistent sentiment of positivity between France and America is one aspect of my role that makes Washington a truly special place in which to serve.
Minister of Finance Michel Sapin participates in IMF and World Bank meetings

Michel Sapin, French Minister of Finance and Public Accounts, took part in the Annual Meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank in Washington, D.C. from October 9 to 11. Mr. Sapin discussed global growth and the economic future of the EU and France. He indicated that Europe’s growth in 2014 was lower than expected and needed more support from its Member States.

At the meetings Minister Sapin spoke about what economic actions should be taken in France. He acknowledged that at a time in which there are weak economic growth and inflation rates in the Eurozone, there is a need to favor growth. The Minister stated that the best way to combat the economic decline is not to stand around idly waiting to see if this risk materializes, but “… to make the right decisions to prevent this risk from materializing.”

Mr. Sapin stressed the importance of structural reforms as a means of placing France and the European Union back on track economically.

Mr. Sapin remained in the U.S. capital until October 11, meeting with IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde, as well as World Bank President Jim Yong Kim.

FACTS panels begin

The first sessions of the French American Climate Talks series, or FACTS, were held in Montreal, Ottawa, Chicago and Boston from October 6 to 9. The panels are a preparatory event for the United Nations Climate Change Conference, which will be hosted by France in December 2015.

Seeking to mobilize American, French and Canadian public opinion on the issues of climate change and its consequences, FACTS encourages dialogue between experts of each country. The panesl promotes the exchange of ideas not only in the context of global warming as a vital issue, but as an opportunity to create new methods of production and consumption and boost employment and economic growth.

FACTS in Chicago focused on “A Positive Agenda in Climate Change,” while FACTS in Boston was organized around “The Impacts of Climate Change.”

FACTS will continue through November in two more U.S. cities, New Orleans and Los Angeles. In attendance will be noted scientists, NGOs, political figures, and journalists. There will also be a conference in Vancouver, Canada on November 12.

Minister of Defense Jean-Yves Le Drian meets with U.S. Counterpart Chuck Hagel

Jean-Yves Le Drian, France’s Minister of Defense, visited Washington, D.C. to meet with his counterpart, U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, on October 2. The meeting focused on French-American military cooperation, notably joint efforts to fight against the threat of Daesh (ISIL) in Iraq and Syria. Minister Le Drian also met with U.S. National Security Advisor Susan Rice. He then travelled to New York to meet with Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon.

Secretary Hagel made an introductory statement at a press conference at the Pentagon, saying, “We have a strong partnership, friendship, the French people, the American people, our two nations, and these historic bonds were reflected once again in our meeting today. We covered a very full range of issues, a range of security challenges confronting both our countries, and we reaffirmed our shared resolve to address these challenges together.”

Mr. Le Drian and Mr. Hagel spoke about their governments’ response to the Ebola epidemic, security challenges in North and West Africa—such as political instability and violent extremism—and the continued cooperative support of both countries in Mali. The decision reached at the NATO summit in Wales to reinforce NATO allies in Eastern Europe and its impacts on European security was also a topic of discussion.

The situation in Iraq and Syria was assessed, as France continues to work with the U.S. to combat increasing threats posed to civilians by Daesh—President François Hollande called for the mobilization of fighter planes with increased intelligence on October 1 in order to better support Iraqis and the Kurds against the terrorist group.

French citizens awarded Nobel Prize in Economics and Literature

Last month, two French citizens, Patrick Modiano and Jean Tirole, received Nobel Prizes for their work in Literature and Economics, respectively.

Mr. Modiano is the 15th French citizen to win the award for Literature, following famous French writers such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus. He is known for his dark and thought-provoking novels, many of which are set during the Nazi Occupation of France. Described as a modern-day Proust by many critics, Mr. Modiano’s work focuses mainly on themes of memory, loss and identity.

Mr. Tirole is a professor at the Toulouse School of Economics. His work focuses on imperfect markets, where competition does not typically generate low prices and high quality goods. His research has helped governments improve their work in specific areas of business such as cable television, and put restrictions on harmful monopolies. Mr. Tirole’s work has clarified “what sort of regulations we want to put in place so that large firms will act in society’s interest,” Tore Elglishens, the chairman of the selection committee, said after the announcement ceremony.

The Presidency of the Republic of France extended its warmest congratulations to the two winners: “The Republic is proud that one of our greatest writers has been internationally recognized through this Nobel Prize. Patrick Modiano is the 15th French citizen to win the important award, confirming the major influence exerted by our literature.” Of Mr. Tirole, the Presidency stated, “He is a source of pride for France.”
In an era in which both France and the United States must work together to respond to threats posed by international terrorist groups domestically and abroad, military cooperation among the two countries is vital. As Attaché for the Defense Mission at the Embassy of France in the United States, Brigadier General Vincent Cousin brings expertise from over 30 years of service in the military. He sat down with News from France to talk about his role at the Embassy and his goals for the Defense Mission.

What is your role as the Defense Attaché at the Embassy of France in the United States?

My role is to connect our two administrations on all matters of defense issues. In this role, I have to determine the best point of contact in the U.S. Department of Defense for any issues that arise. Additionally, I connect members of the Department of Defense to their counterparts in France. I also inform and offer to Paris new possibilities of cooperation on defense issues.

What are your previous experiences in the French military?

I’m a fighter pilot. I spent 15 years flying in operations, mostly in coalition with the United States. I started in 1991 for the first Gulf War, and then served in coalition with the United States for Operation "Provide Comfort," to protect the Kurds in Iraq. I spent time in Bosnia and Kosovo, and after that, I was in Africa for a French operation in Chad. In October 2001, I flew over Afghanistan just after 9/11; I flew reconnaissance missions. Two years later, I flew over Iraq for the United Nations. I stopped flying when the war in Iraq began in 2003. At this time the relationship with the United States was far more difficult. I was also at the Planning and Finance division of the French Department of Defense. I spent one year at the National Defense University in the United States, then three years as an Air Attaché here at the French Embassy in Washington. I came back to Paris and worked in the Prime Minister’s cabinet for three years, and then I returned to Washington.

Since taking up your position, are there specific topics that have surprised you, for instance the importance of veteran affairs?

Having been an Air Attaché before, I knew more or less what to expect from this role. We have made some progress in terms of cooperation since the time I spent here as an Air Attaché, but there is actually no aspect of the job where I have been surprised.

French Minister of Defense Jean-Yves Le Drian visited Washington, D.C. earlier this month. What were the objectives of his visit?

The main point of interest was counter-terrorism operations, whether it be in Africa, in the Sahelian strip or in Levant and in Iraq. The goal of Mr. Le Drian’s visit to Washington was to talk about joint military efforts. The Americans are fighting terrorism in the Sahelian strip, and are supporting us there. We need this support because the area is huge, and we share common goals in counter-terrorism operations. During his visit, Mr. Le Drian discussed our military operations in Africa. He reported on the situation in Mali, and then he had a meeting at the White House with National Security Advisor Susan Rice to talk about American support to our military operations.

At the operational level, how close is the relationship between French and American Chiefs of Staff?

They have established a strong relationship through many contacts over the last few months. More generally, our armed forces work together on a range of strategic issues and military operations, obviously. At a political level, for defense issues, the dialogue is fluid and permanent between our two administrations. What characterizes the cooperation between these services is that we have 50 liaison or exchange French officers in the United States. These members of the French military include navy officers on ships, pilots flying on American aircrafts, and members of the army working with allied divisions. This relationship is very strong because it is based on confidence, and we build confidence in operations with the American Armed Forces, because you learn from each other. I believe we are highly credible in terms of operations and skills, and the American Armed Forces recognize that. When you want to build cooperation with the United States, the first step is to build confidence and capitalize on that.

What are the goals you have set for the Defense Mission of the French Embassy in the U.S. for the years to come?

While my role is to serve as a liaison between our two countries’ defense administrations, my main mission is to support French-American cooperation in counter-terrorism efforts. We are very, very focused on that. Our goal is to improve the efficacy of the French Armed Forces working in cooperation with the United States Armed Forces. I ask everyone on the team to increase and enhance the cooperation between our two countries. The main focus, once again, is in terms of military operations. So, when the Navy is working together, for example, we have to make sure that we do our best to make this relationship work and to be more efficient.

With your knowledge of the French-American defense cooperation, what are the major challenges you foresee in your role?

The main challenge is related to the main goal. I want to make sure that I do my best to enhance and improve our military cooperation in order to improve our efficiency. We must maintain the trust we have with each other in order to arrive at an even better relationship—this is really my greatest challenge.
American delegation visits France to exchange ideas on nutrition in schools

Invited by the French Ministry of Agriculture, Agrofood and Forestry, an American delegation visited France to learn about programs for food education in French Schools from October 13 to 15. The French Ministry of Agriculture, Agrofood and Forestry and The New York City Department of Education's School-Food program have partnered to exchange data, ideas, and practices to educate children about food and to promote healthy and well-balanced eating in public schools.

The partnership

The new partnership between New York City's Department of Education and the French Ministry of Agriculture was founded on mutual plans and goals, as well as similar challenges. The New York City Department of Education and the French Ministry of Agriculture are working to educate children about what they are eating with the dual goal of instilling healthy habits and preventing childhood obesity. This important partnership involves regular communication between the two members, the result of which is a mutually beneficial relationship. New York City also has a domestic partnership consisting of the education departments of the nation’s largest school districts that seeks to leverage their enormous purchasing power through unified action in order to enable powerful change in the servicing and quality of school food. This Urban School Food Alliance (“USFA” or “Alliance”) is composed of Los Angeles Unified School District, Chicago Public Schools, Dallas Independent School District, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Orange County Public Schools in Orlando and New York City Department of Education, representing all together just under 3 million American K-12 students. The French Ministry of Agriculture invited the entire USFA to come to France for a special chance to personally see how the French implement the principles that form the basis of this partnership.

A focus on taste and pleasure

While in France, the American delegation participated in a variety of discussions and educational programming to learn about how food and nutrition programs are implemented in French schools. On October 13, the delegation was welcomed by the General Director for Food at the French Ministry of Agriculture, who presented France’s National Program for Food and introduced the “Fruit for Recess” (“Un fruit pour la récré”) program. In the days that followed, they learned about the “Taste Education” program (“Classes du goût”) and “Have Fun at the Cafeteria” (“Plaisir à la cantine”). These programs are a major part of France’s efforts to educate children about food, aiming first and foremost to promote well balanced and healthy eating in a fun and sustainable manner.

The first program, “Fruit at Recess,” was proposed by France to the European Union in 2008 in order to encourage students to eat more fruits and vegetables.
during their day. Through this program, fruit is distributed once a day to all students. The goal of the program is to educate students about different types of produce, the seasons in which they are grown, and the means by which they are distributed throughout the country. Each trimester, schools participating in the program introduce nine different types of produce to students at about 0.30€, accompanied by a mandatory lesson plan. Since the implementation of this program in 2014, the EU has contributed to the distribution of 76 percent of the program’s fruits and vegetables.

“Taste Education” gave the visiting delegation the chance to learn about another French education food program and to witness how it is being practiced in the schools. The program has the overarching goal of teaching young students to better articulate the sensations they experience when tasting a certain food. Teachers receive special training to give these taste classes. Following a presentation of “Taste Education,” the delegation joined a class of third and fifth graders at Pierre and Marie Curie Elementary School in Roissy-en-Brie, an eastern suburb of Paris.

The third program, “Have Fun in the Cafeteria,” has existed in French schools since 2010. The aim of this program is to rejuvenate the cafeteria by making food more appealing while keeping in mind the laws for nutritional quality. Students are able to explore all the steps that go into the preparation of the meals they eat in the cafeteria, focusing on everything from the source of the food to its pricing. Thanks to the Regional Directorate of Agriculture, Agrofood and Forestry of Picardy (Northern France), the delegation was invited to spend their third and final day in the region’s capital, Amiens, where they were welcomed by an impressive number of people invested in School-Food, ranging from the regional prefect, Mrs. Nicole Klein, to local school chefs who came to share their positive experiences with the program. After a thorough presentation of the elaborate “Have Fun in the Cafeteria” program, the visitors once again traveled to the nearby town of Marseille-en-Beauvaisis, where all convened at the local middle school to openly discuss the practical aspects of the program with students, parents, chefs, administrators and civil servants.

France is not the only party contributing ideas to this partnership. The Alliance answered many enthusiastic questions throughout the trip about their free breakfast programs, a service that does not yet exist in French public schools.

Additionally, Urban School Food has also shared their “Garden to Café” program, which serves to deepen the urban student’s understanding and respect for agriculture through growing on school gardens, all while placing an emphasis on the importance of local food production.

A positive experience for all

Catherine Rogy, the Deputy Counselor for Agriculture at the Embassy of France in the United States, said that the visit surpassed their expectations, and that the American delegation was extremely satisfied with their experience: “In France, school nutrition programs are very focused on introducing children to the pleasure of eating well early on. French schools place great importance on taste and conviviality in the cafeteria, rather than telling them not to eat too much of this or too much of that. The American delegation really took this idea back with them, and will now try to incorporate these positive ideas in their nutrition programs.”

Clockwise from top: At the cafeteria of college Lou Redounet, a middle school in Uzès, France, locally-sourced organic baguettes are served to over 500 students each day; Michel Testard, Head Chef at college Lou Redounet, slices bread; a typical lunch from the cafeteria at college François Villon in Saint-Fargeau-Pont-Thierry, France.
Laurence Tubiana speaks about climate change at the Brookings Institution

On October 16, the Center on the United States and Europe at the Brookings Institution hosted Laurence Tubiana, Special Representative of France for the Paris 2015 Climate Conference. Ms. Tubiana gave the 11th annual Raymond Aron Lecture. Named after the renowned scholar, the Raymond Aron Lecture has become a well-established and prominent forum for leading French scholars and statesmen.

Ms. Tubiana offered perspective on how to create a more dynamic climate regime that is both economically and politically feasible. Speaking of the upcoming Paris Climate Change Conference in 2015, Tubiana said that the event “can help to harness a positive trend and translate it into something more institutionalized.”

Ms. Tubiana is the founder of the Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations in Paris. She is a professor at Sciences Po Paris and Columbia University, serves as co-chair of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network’s Leadership Council and is the board president of the French Development Agency.

Big Data for Society looks forward to Horizon 2020

On October 9, a half-day workshop on Big Data for Society was held at the Embassy of France in Washington, D.C. The event focused on solving challenges on collaborations between the United States and the European Union. Held in partnership with the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique Office for North America and the Centre National d’Études Spatiales delegation in the USA, the workshop was hosted by the Mission for Science and Technology of the Embassy of France.

The featured event of the workshop was a roundtable discussing support for a U.S. partner in the Horizon 2020 project of the European Union. H2020 is the financial arm of the Innovation Union, a program aimed at securing Europe’s global competitiveness by 2020. As part of the Europe 2020 growth strategy, H2020’s target is to make the EU a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy. Other roundtable topics included Perspectives on Big Data for Society and remarks on Analysis in Astronomy.

From September to November, 15 French startup companies will spend a week in the United States, hosted by the program New Technology Venture Accelerator (NETVA). Through this program, selected participants have the opportunity to be mentored by some of the best American companies in Boston, San Francisco and Washington, D.C.

The NETVA program aims to support and inform innovative French startups on American regulations and the technology market by providing immersion and partnership opportunities in the United States. As a program that targets small, innovative science and technological start-ups with high-growth potential, the previous 30 winning companies that have participated in the program over the past four years have benefited from what this initiative has offered.

This year the winning companies boast a wide range of innovative accomplishments—some notable selections include a technology to desalinate water designed by startup Adionics, and an intra-operative surgical assistance technique that will help oncology surgeons to visualize infra-clinical size tumors otherwise invisible to the naked eye during surgery, developed by SurgiMab.

Each of these unique cities has been selected to participate in the NETVA program because they offer a booming market for innovative technologies. As prime locations for technological research and innovation, Boston, Washington, D.C., and San Francisco will give the NETVA winners the tools and opportunities they need to continue to grow and thrive in the global market.

Focus on digital technology at “France-Atlanta 2014”

Since 2010, the Consulate General of France in Atlanta and the Georgia Institute of Technology have worked to create a series of events in the fall covering a multitude of Franco-American collaborative opportunities. This year, there was a particular focus on digital technology at “France-Atlanta: Together towards Innovation”.

Deputy Chief of Mission of France to the U.S. Frédéric Doré opened the conference, which was attended by Consul General of France to Atlanta Denis Barbet. Other notable guests included G.P. Peterson, President of the Georgia Institute of Technology, and Kasim Reed, the Mayor of Atlanta.

Highlights of the program included a networking opportunity sponsored by UbiFrance for French companies specializing in digital learning and technology, as well as a discussion about French-European space endeavors by Mr. Philippe Hazane, Space Attaché at the Centre National d’Études Spatiales (CNES).

The annual celebration was a huge success that will continue to encourage further cooperation between France and the Southeast U.S. region for many years to come.
**Edgar Degas’ Little Dancer steals the spotlight once again**

Edgar Degas’ Little Dancer Aged Fourteen (1878–1881) mesmerizes visitors of all ages, including this young girl.

The National Gallery of Art (NGA) and The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts have collaborated to celebrate French Impressionist artist Edgar Degas and his acclaimed piece, Little Dancer Aged Fourteen (1878–1881). The Gallery has worked to curate a special exhibition, Degas’ Little Dancer, which opened October 5, and will continue through January 11, 2015. Concurrently, the Kennedy Center is showcasing a new musical inspired by Degas’ art, entitled Little Dancer, from October 25 through November 30.

The Kennedy Center’s world premiere of the new musical Little Dancer tells a partially fictional tale about the little girl from the Paris Opera Ballet who became inadvertently famous as the subject of Degas’ artwork. Caught between poverty and debt, childhood and womanhood, and life and art, the story of this muse truly captures the spirit that Degas was channeling when painting Little Dancer—a young girl whose social class does not hinder her dignity. The show also highlights the friendship between Degas and famed American painter Mary Cassatt.

The NGA’s special exhibition, Degas’ Little Dancer, places 13 of his ballet-inspired works in the spotlight. The collection highlights the experimental, daring, and risky approach Degas took to sculpture—Degas’ Little Dancer originally prompted disgust and resistance due to its unorthodox appearance, but it later become one of the most celebrated and visited artworks in the NGA. The showcase follows the special exhibit Degas/Cassatt, shown exclusively at the NGA, which ended October 5.

This show was made possible by the generous donations of Paul Mellon, a Gallery benefactor. According to Earl A. Powell III, the director of the NGA, “the Gallery’s wax version of Degas’ famous sculpture is the only one that was formed by the artist’s own hands and the only one he ever showed publicly.” The inaugural appearance of a musical inspired by this rare piece of art is a special Franco-American collaboration not to be missed.

**Albertine Books opens its doors to NYC francophiles**

Albertine Books, a bookstore featuring titles in French and English, was inaugurated by Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Development Laurent Fabius in New York City on September 26. A project of the Cultural Services of the French Embassy, Albertine Books contains the largest selection of French-language books and English translations in New York. Featuring over 14,000 titles from 30 French-speaking countries in genres including fiction, non-fiction and art, the bookstore was named after the mysterious female character in Marcel Proust’s In Search of Lost Time.

Located inside a stunning mansion designed by 20th-century architect Stanford White, French architect Jacques Garcia modeled the space after a private French library.

In commemoration of the opening of the store, a week-long festival took place at the bookstore’s Fifth Avenue location. Festival Albertine aimed to contribute to the project’s mission to become a hub for French-American intellectual exchange. Curated by author, journalist, and cultural critic Greil Marcus, the event ran from October 14 to 19.

Free and open to the public, the festival provided a preview of upcoming special events and cultural programs that will take place at the bookstore. Many prominent French and American intellectuals and artists were featured, including filmmaker Olivier Assayas, creator of Mad Men Matthew Weiner, and Nobel-Prize winning mathematician John Nash.

Antonin Baudry, Cultural Counselor of the French Embassy, spoke of his plans and hopes for the project: “For this festival, we looked beyond the usual suspects for original thinkers that we are curious to hear from and we paired them in non-conventional ways in order to spur challenging conversations. This is just the beginning of what will become an ongoing and permanent debate between the most inspiring thinkers in France, the United States, and beyond.”
Ambassador Gérard Araud speaks at “Spirit of Mount Vernon”

On October 14, French Ambassador to the U.S. Gérard Araud spoke on the occasion of the induction of CEO of Moët-Hennessy Christophe Navarre to the George Washington Spirits Society at Mount Vernon, the historic home of America’s first president. The event, “Spirit of Mount Vernon,” was hosted by the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States, a national trade association representing leading producers and marketers of distilled spirits in America. The event featured a dinner and rare spirits auction to raise money for both the institution of Mount Vernon and the Wounded Warriors Family Support Program.

The George Washington Spirits Society was formed in order to “celebrate, manifest, and uphold the noble traits exhibited by our Founding Father,” stated Distilled Spirits Council President Peter H. Cressy. This year, three business leaders were honored for their commitment to support their communities, the spirits industry, and the United States.

At the event, Ambassador Araud spoke highly of the contributions that inductee Christophe Navarre has made to French-American business relations. As the Chairman and CEO of Moët-Hennessy, Mr. Navarre has supported a number of cultural projects in both the United States and France, most notably the reconstruction of Marquis de Lafayette’s ship, l’Hermione. When addressing dinner attendees, Mr. Araud spoke of the bond between the Marquis de Lafayette and George Washington, and encouraged the audience to come to Mount Vernon for the arrival of l’Hermione next year, saying, “I hope you will be there on the 9th of June to greet l’Hermione in front of this beautiful house.”