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A message from Ambassador Gérard Araud

Dear Friends,

The French community was extremely saddened by the acts of terrorism that took place both in the United States and in France this past month. In an Orlando nightclub, 49 people were victims of the most violent mass shooting in America’s recent history; one in which the LGBT community was particularly targeted. Unfortunately, this sort of tragedy is not unfamiliar to France, as we have witnessed numerous attacks this past year. Most recently, we lost two members of the French police force in Magnanville, near Paris.

Just as our American friends offered their solidarity after Paris was attacked in January and November 2015, the French showed their own gestures of support to the victims of the Orlando shootings and their families. Although French officials visited the American Embassy in Paris to sign a condolences book and the Eiffel Tower was lit up in the colors of the rainbow flag to remember the victims, we know that we must do more to foster a safer and more tolerant world for all of our citizens. Our administrations are working closely with one another on counter-terrorism initiatives, and we hope that our joint efforts will help us to prevent such acts of violence in the future.

Despite the difficult events that our two countries have recently faced, our citizens have displayed remarkable resilience, seeking joy rather than succumbing to fear whenever possible. We’ve seen this during the 2016 Euro Championship Cup, where thousands of soccer-lovers turned out to support their favorite teams in cities across France this past month. The French Embassy has even hosted showings of the French matches so that the American public can cheer on “Les Bleus.” On June 21, Minister of State for Veterans and Remembrance Jean-Marc Todeschini presented 11 American veterans with the Legion of Honor for the vital role they played in the liberation of France during World War II. And at the French Touch Conference in New York on June 20 and 21, hundreds of promising young entrepreneurs gathered to exchange ideas about innovation and business abroad. All of these initiatives show that both American and French citizens are resilient above all else, and will continue to work together on the issues that matter to them most.
French officials stand with America following mass shooting at a nightclub in Orlando

THE STRONG BOND OF SOLIDARITY BETWEEN FRANCE AND THE UNITED STATES was evident once again after a mass shooting at Pulse, a gay nightclub in Orlando, in the early hours of June 12. Officials expressed their condolences and support in numerous ways, responding quickly to the violent attack that left 49 people dead.

The day after the attack, President Hollande and Prime Minister Manuel Valls paid a visit to the American Embassy in Paris to sign a condolence book as U.S. Ambassador Jane Hartley looked on. Many French people remember that after the January 2015 attacks in Paris, President Obama visited the French Embassy in Washington, D.C. to sign a condolence book as well. Ambassador Hartley expressed gratitude for the support, saying, “Just as America stood with France after last year’s terrorist attacks, we greatly appreciate France’s expression of support for America in these sad hours.”

Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo called for a moment of silence at the city council, and for Paris City Hall to be decorated in rainbow and American flags. The Eiffel Tower was illuminated in rainbow colors that same night.

Hidalgo sent a letter to Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer, saying, “We stand next to you in these painful moments. We share your sorrow and your tears.”

French Ambassador to the U.S. Gérard Araud showed his support as well: “Our thoughts are with the families of the victims, to whom we address our sincerest condolences, and in particular with the LGBT community, which was the primary target of this violent act,” he wrote in a statement.

World War II Veterans awarded Legion of Honor at the French Embassy

FRIENDS, FAMILY AND VARIOUS WASHINGTON, D.C., AREA OFFICIALS gathered at the French Embassy on June 21 to support 11 distinguished World War II veterans who were awarded the French Legion of Honor by Minister of State for Veteran Affairs and Remembrance Jean-Marc Todeschini. The ceremony was attended by West Virginia Senator Shelley Moore Capito, as well as Congressmen David McKinley and Matt Cartwright.

Consul General of France in Washington Michel Charbonnier gave opening remarks, speaking of the bonds that have existed between the two countries for hundreds of years, perhaps best exemplified by French-American cooperation during World War II.

Minister Todeschini presented the medals to nine veterans and to the families of two posthumous recipients. The veterans’ numerous accomplishments throughout their lives included acts of service and selflessness.

Robert Gautreau, for example, enlisted in the army in June 1943 and served as a gunner. His military career came to an end, however, when he and his fellow soldiers were running through a forest in the Rhine Valley, and he stepped on a hidden mine. He lost the use of his left leg, arm and hand, but not his sense of courage. He has received the Good Conduct medal, the Purple Heart, and the World War II Victory medal in addition to the Legion of Honor. His fellow servicemen boast similar accomplishments.

After the presentation of medals, high school students from the Lycée Rochambeau sang the American and French national anthems. A brief reception followed, after which Minister Todeschini traveled to Arlington National Cemetery to lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington, Virginia.
When curators at the Musée du Louvre in Paris decided to collaborate with the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., on an exhibition featuring the work of French artist Hubert Robert, they knew it would be a special project. Although the 18th-century painter is best known for his capriccio—picturesque portrayals of ruins—he was also a talented draftsman, printmaker and all-around well-respected man of Paris society whose paintings depicted some of the formative events of modern French history.

Guillaume Faroult, a senior curator at the Louvre, and Catherine Voiriot, a researcher at the same museum, were heavily involved in this special project. They spoke to News From France about the Louvre’s relationship with American museums, and their hopes for the exhibition.

What drew you to this particular partnership with the National Gallery of Art?
GF: We wanted to do this project with the National Gallery in Washington because it’s one of the biggest galleries in the world and has a magnificent collection of paintings, notably French paintings—they have a beautiful collection of French art from the 18th century.

The relationship between the Louvre and the National Gallery is a long one. About 10 years ago, the Louvre began a project centered on Hubert Robert’s paintings and very quickly realized that a collaboration with the National Gallery would allow us to work with some professionals who have true expertise.

Do you do a lot of work with American museums?
GF: The Louvre works very regularly with American museums. Exhibitions and publications that we collaborate on work very well because American museums have a vast collection of French works. Furthermore, over the last decade, the Louvre has developed ties with the American Friends of the Louvre. This organization helps put together special events, exhibitions and restorations of works like those of Hubert Robert.

What did you find interesting about studying Hubert Robert as a person, outside of his work?
CV: For this project, I worked on archival documents and sources concerning the painter and his biography. Guillaume called me the “second Mrs. Robert” because I studied his life so closely, and I will tell you that I was charmed by his personality. Robert was cultivated, intelligent, friendly and very skilled at communication, but at the same time he was very humble. He is appreciated by all the researchers who have studied him.

What are your hopes for the Hubert Robert exhibition?
GF: My hope is to shed light upon a wonderful artist who is as appreciated in France as he is in the United States by art-lovers, specialists and collectors, but is perhaps less known among the general public, even though he is truly a major figure of the Enlightenment. Robert’s work is interesting because it deals as much with images and shapes as it does with history. And we see many examples of this in the exhibition. The destruction of the Bastille, for example, was a key moment of the French Revolution, and was painted by Robert. Another good example is the Louvre, which was born out of the French Revolution and served as the subject of some of his paintings—Robert was also one of its first curators.

France’s YEARLY CONTRIBUTION to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Bill Gates met with President François Hollande June 27 in Paris to discuss France’s partnership with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and international efforts to stop the spread of these diseases.

495K% Increase in searches for the French phrase “FAUTE DE MEILLEUR” on June 26, after Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg used it in her concurring opinion for a case that was brought to the U.S. Supreme Court. The phrase means “for lack of something better.”

The year JULY 14 was declared a national holiday by the French government. Bastille Day is celebrated by French people all around the world in remembrance of the monumental storming of the Bastille, which triggered the French Revolution in 1789.
with much anticipation and excitement from football (or “soccer”) fans around the world, the 2016 European Championship—commonly referred to as the Euro—kicked off in France on June 10. Since the tournament first began 56 years ago, the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) has hosted the Euro every four years, bringing together the best European football teams to compete in one of the world’s most prestigious competitions. The tournament returned to French soil this year for the third time, and several cities including Paris, Bordeaux, Lille, Lyon and Marseille are hosting games.

History
The UEFA Euro Championship was first envisioned by Henri Delaunay in 1927, when he was serving as secretary-general for the French Football Federation. Delaunay played a pivotal role in both the creation of the UEFA in 1954, as well as the organization of the first Euro tournament. In 1955, five years before his vision of a European soccer competition would be realized, Delaunay suffered an untimely death. The Euro trophy, which is passed on to each successive winning team, was named after Henri Delaunay for his invaluable contribution to the creation of the Euro tournament.

Delaunay’s son, Pierre Delaunay, took on the task of completing his father’s project. In 1960, the inaugural tournament took place in France. Seventeen European countries participated, four of which competed in the final tournament. Since 1960, the number of teams within the UEFA has gone from 17 to 54, with 24 teams qualifying for the Euro this year. Due to a significant increase in participating teams, the tournament is now larger and more competitive than ever before. Germany and Spain have historically seen the most success, with three titles each. France is a close runner-up with two titles.

This year’s tournament
All teams seeking to enter the 2016 Euro competition played in qualifying matches held during the year leading up to the tournament. With the expanded 24-team format, qualifiers for this year’s tournament were especially challenging. Due to the additional tournament spots, a new class of nations was eligible to qualify for the final tournament this summer, with Albania, Wales, Iceland, and Northern Ireland all participating for the first time.

But these teams did not just qualify because of the tournament’s expanded format. The tiny island nation of Iceland has a population of only 330,000, but had one of the most successful qualifying campaigns in Europe, including two convincing wins over 2014 World Cup semi-finalists the Netherlands. Wales, a country of barely three million people, managed to finish second in their own qualifying group.

At this year’s Euro Cup, these teams have continued to defy the odds. Iceland scored its first-ever major tournament goal in a 1-1 draw against Cristiano Ronaldo’s Portugal and progressed to the knockout round against England.

In addition to these underdog teams, five previous World Cup winners—Germany, Spain, Italy, France and England—are playing in the tournament, as well as a number of talented teams that have demonstrated they are not to be taken lightly. Dark-horse favorite Croatia shocked the soccer world by topping Group D over a very strong Spanish side, only to be defeated by Group F third-place finisher Portugal. Poland also looks to be a surprise contender after defeating Switzerland on penalty kicks in the quarterfinals.

France seeks a third title
After disappointing eliminations in the 2008 Euro, the 2010 World Cup, and the 2012 Euro, France performed admirably in the 2014 World Cup, exiting in the quarter-finals after a 1-0 defeat to Germany, the eventual World Champions.

The team’s rebirth is largely attributable to the 2012 managerial appointment of Didier Deschamps. A legendary soccer player, Deschamps captained France to victory both at the 1998 World Cup and 2000 Euro, and his experience and leadership have proved invaluable in developing France’s identity. The new manager has recruited younger players to join an established veteran core, and while many doubted Deschamps at first, France’s steady improvement under his guidance seems to have silenced his critics. With France undefeated in the Euro so far, fans hope that the team can build on its past performances and finally deliver a championship on home soil.

As for France’s players, midfielder Dimitri Payet has been a much-followed star thus far. On the periphery of the French team for the better
part of the past two years, many analysts predicted that his international career was over. But Payet would not be denied. Since his return to France's starting lineup, Payet has fulfilled Deschamps's expectations and been a strong force on the team. With two goals and an assist in three matches, including a game-winning strike from a distance in the dying moments of France's opener against Romania, his performance during the Euro has been unforgettable. After his goal against Romania, Payet shed tears of joy at his accomplishments: “A few months ago, I was far from certain that I would play in the tournament. I've worked very hard and had a really good season with my club, despite having had to sit out two months through injury. I think it was because of all the hard work that the emotions came through when I scored.”

“This team brings emotion to the crowd and makes people fall in love with them.”
—Didier Deschamps

Forward Antoine Griezmann has also proved an indispensible member of this year’s French team. On June 26 he led a decisive two-goal performance in a Round of 16 match against the Republic of Ireland and secured a 2-1 comeback victory for France, in which they qualified for the quarter-finals. After this exciting win, Griezmann acknowledged that the team had to “come from behind” after Ireland scored a goal in the first minutes of the game. “We saw another team in the second half,” said Griezmann, “the one that wants to go to the final. We have to maintain this mentality. And personally, I'm happy with my two goals and I hope I’ll continue to help the team.”

In France's quarterfinal match against Iceland on July 3, it was forward Olivier Giroud and midfielder Paul Pogba who stole the spotlight, scoring the first two goals in what would end as a 5-2 victory for France, propelling them to the semi-finals against Germany. Griezmann and Payet also scored goals during this match. After a few games where the team had gotten a slow start, Giroud was happy that they had played strong from start to finish. With their victory, he said, the team had sent a strong message: “We are ready.”

**Fans throughout the world**

To satisfy the millions of eager fans who are not able to get tickets to attend the matches, the 2016 tournament has been extensively broadcast on television and radio throughout the world. For this year’s competition, the French government set up secure fan zones throughout the country. This regulation is part of France’s increased security measures following the November attacks. These new restrictions have not deterred a large number of French fans from watching the matches, however, as they have turned out in droves to their cities’ fan zones.

The French Embassy in Washington, D.C. has also organized viewing parties so that fans can gather to watch France's knockout round matches in a public space. On June 26, the Embassy’s Maison Francaise entertained a packed house for France’s tense and dramatic victory against the Republic of Ireland. Fans returned to the embassy over the next week to watch France take on Iceland, followed by Germany.

"This team brings emotion to the crowd and makes people fall in love with them," manager Deschamps has said of his players. This has been clear during screenings at the French Embassy, where one can hear resounding cheers from both French and American fans alike all the way from Georgetown's Reservoir Road; a reminder that fans of France’s beloved “Les Bleus” can be found all over the world.
New York hosts 2016 French Touch Conference

On June 21 and 22, hundreds of French and American entrepreneurs, researchers, and investors gathered for the third annual French Touch Conference at the AXA Center in New York City to discuss new partnerships and promote innovation and entrepreneurship on both sides of the Atlantic. Gael Duval, a French entrepreneur and founder of the conference, described it as a means of “building bridges and bringing talent” to both France and the United States.

Over two days, experts shared their personal thoughts on emerging trends, as well as experiences with starting an innovative business. Attendees participated in a variety of programs including workshops, cultural events, round-tables and discussions.

Keynote addresses were given by representatives from highly regarded companies, including Trello, IBM, Microsoft, Synthesio, Happn and Vimeo. Attendees gained insight on developing their products and successfully entering foreign markets. They also made invaluable connections with both mentors and investors, many of whom raised capital for their business ventures.

A highlight of the conference was the “On Stage” startup contest, during which 12 American and French startup owners pitched their business ideas to a panel of investors, venture capitalists and business investors (commonly known as “business angels” in the startup community). Two winners were selected this year—Dowza, a company that seeks to simplify Visa processes in the U.S., and Teqoya, a company that creates air purifiers with negative ionization technology. Both winners will receive prize money, business and legal mentorship, and future opportunities to meet with investors in New York.

Attention carb lovers!

Vote for the Best Capital Baguette!

For years, the French baguette has won the hearts and taste buds of American customers. As a growing number of French boulangeries open in the United States each day, the Embassy of France has put together an event that will promote this indispensable element of the country’s gastronomic heritage, as well as the best bakers in the Washington, D.C. region.

How do I vote?

Voting is now open for the best baguette in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area (this includes the city itself and surrounding areas in Maryland and Virginia). You may tell us where you go for your favorite baguette in these areas by visiting the following link:

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/capitalbaguette

You may also visit our website to access this link.

And then what happens?

Voters will be automatically entered to win free tickets to the final round of the Best Capital Baguette contest as well as a basket of gourmet goodies. The bakeries that receive the most votes will be invited to participate in the final round of the competition, which will take place at the French Embassy on Thursday, September 29.

The winner of the Best Capital Baguette contest will be offered the opportunity to serve as the in-house baker for the residence of the Ambassador of France in Washington, D.C.
Charlie Hebdo journalists honored at Newseum

On June 6, Ambassador of France to the U.S. Gérard Araud delivered a keynote speech at a ceremony held at the Newseum in Washington, D.C. to honor the lives of journalists who died in 2015.

The Newseum, which opened in 2008, is committed to educating visitors about the freedoms guaranteed by the First Amendment. Each year, the Newseum rededicates its Journalists Memorial, which bears the names of reporters, photographers, and other journalists who lost their lives while reporting.

This year, the Newseum selected twenty journalists to add to its memorial, representing the 110 who died in 2015. Among the journalists chosen were those from the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo, who were killed in the January 2015 terrorist attack on the magazine’s headquarters in Paris.

In his speech, Ambassador Araud spoke of France’s commitment to defending press freedom and the freedom of expression even in times of danger: “France does not just pay lip service to the freedom of the press—it works to make it a reality.”

In light of the terrorist attacks that had a profound impact on both France and the United States this past year, Ambassador Araud also reaffirmed France’s commitment to fighting terrorism in partnership with the United States. “French-American cooperation on counter-terrorism has never been so close,” he said. “In the face of a very high threat level, our two countries are firmly committed to combating violent extremism.”

The Newseum is a particularly special place for the French community. It served as a spontaneous gathering place for people mourning the victims of last year’s Paris attacks, as well as the starting point of a solidarity and friendship march organized in Washington, D.C. by the French Embassy following the January 2015 attacks.

On the day of the ceremony, the Newseum did not publish its daily display of front page stories in front of its building, choosing instead to leave these spaces black with the hashtag #WithoutNews in order to raise awareness of the dangers of reporting worldwide.

Washington, D.C. is the next American city to be featured in a Michelin Guide

On May 31, the North American branch of French company Michelin announced that it will publish its first-ever edition of the Michelin Guide for restaurants in Washington, D.C. The nation’s capital will be the latest American city featured in the internationally renowned gastronomic guide, joining New York, Chicago and San Francisco as one of four cities in the United States visited by Michelin’s food inspectors, who evaluate restaurants anonymously.

Originally published in 1900, the first Michelin Guide was part of a creative strategy aimed at boosting sales of Michelin’s original pneumatic tire, which first went on sale in the late 1880s. The guides sought to inspire tourists to travel longer distances in search of leisure and luxury, with the help of Michelin’s tires. By the 1920s, Michelin began rating restaurants in its guide, and by the 1930s its iconic three-star rating system was established.

The Guide has since evolved into a cultural phenomenon, and its annual release is eagerly anticipated by chefs and foodies in the 27 countries where it exists. It is widely regarded as the international benchmark for fine dining, and its arrival in Washington, D.C. marks the city’s growing status as one of America’s most prominent gastronomic destinations.

“I am excited to announce that the Michelin Guide will be a part of the extraordinary and eclectic food scene in America’s great capital,” said Michael Ellis, the international director of the Michelin guides, at a press conference held in Washington, D.C., also attended by the city's mayor, Muriel Bowser. The mayor added, “Washington is one of the great cosmopolitan cities in the world, with a unique and storied past that includes, among so many other things, a rich culinary tradition that continues to evolve in exciting new directions.”

The first Washington, D.C. Michelin Guide will go on sale on October 13, 2016.
NOT FAR FROM THE ATLANTIC COAST IN SOUTHWESTERN FRANCE lies Bordeaux, a modern city with medieval roots. Formally the seat of the French government, the city is best known for its world-class gastronomy and culture. The Garonne River runs through Bordeaux and fertilizes the land, providing the ideal conditions for wine production.

Visitors can now experience wine in a completely unprecedented way at La Cité du Vin, a ten-story cultural center featuring immersive tours, tastings and exhibits all centered around Bordeaux’s most famous export. The international reputation of Bordeaux’s vineyards extends a long way—“A Taste of Bordeaux” is even the theme of the Comité Tricolore’s annual Bastille Day celebration this year in Washington, D.C.

Bordeaux is more than just its grapes, however; this city is also a UNESCO World Heritage site with breathtaking architecture and monuments.

One of the most popular sites is the Mirroir d’Eau at the Place de la Bourse, a reflecting pool made of granite filled with two centimeters of water. The city and sky are reflected in the water by day and by night, creating a scene so beautiful it has earned the location the title of “the most photographed site in Bordeaux.”