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RÉPUBLIQUE FRANÇAISE

Consulat général de France à New York

Speech by the Consul general of France in New York
Mr. Philippe Lalliot

Conference@934: New Opportunities For The French-American Relations

Wednesday, November 30, 2011

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear Friends,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you tonight at the Consulate for the 23rd meeting of our Conferences@934. As you know, this series of conferences is dedicated to International Relations and to those between France and the United States.

This year's first two conferences were about the Iranian nuclear threat and the epidemiologic threats. For tonight we chose as relevant a theme, though it may be less of a burning issue: the transatlantic relations and their new opportunities.

We are going through a very difficult period since 2008, in which one crisis follows another. Financial crisis, economic crisis, budget crisis: none spared either Europe or the United States. International security challenges are also at the center of our common preoccupations: Arab Springs, Iranian nuclear threats, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, sanctions on Syria, etc.

In the context of these difficult circumstances, the transatlantic relations make even more sense and the French-American relations are tightened. It is impressive to see how far we have come since the high tensions of 2003 in regards to the war in Iraq. As President Sarkozy mentioned in Cannes during the joint press conference with President Obama: the friendship among our two nations goes way back. It is "unfailing and indestructible". Our two speakers this evening will give us their interpretation of the situation we currently find ourselves in, its opportunities, its risks, and how to overcome them.

Dear Friends,

Today we are welcoming François Delattre, the French Ambassador to the United States. François feels at home here and I believe it is not so much necessary to introduce him. Only a few words however, for those of you who may not know him. Other than being an old friend, and other than me having the redoubtable privilege to being his successor here in New York, François is one of our most brilliant diplomats.

Deputy Chief of Staff of the French Foreign Minister Alain Juppé and a diplomatic counselor to President Chirac, François was also appointed to posts in Bonn, Washington and New York, and became Ambassador in Ottawa before he returned to Washington.

For conducting our discussion with him, we are fortunate to have with us Michael Oreskes, the Associated Press's Senior Managing Editor since 2009. Before working for the AP, Michael was Editor at the International Herald Tribune and the New York Times. During this time he received three Emmy Awards and a DuPont Award. Michael is also the co-author of *The Genius of America, How the Constitution Saved Our Country and Why It Can Again*, published in French under the title: *Le Génie de l'Amérique*.

After a discussion of half an hour between our two guests, we will have a half-hour session of Q&A. I would like to mention we are off the record tonight. We shall finish around 7:45 p.m., and continue the conversation over a cocktail. With no further delays, I hand over the microphone to our guests. Bonne soirée à toutes et à tous./.