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D-Day Remarks for French Television, 05/22/1984

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(ROBINSON)

MAY 22, 1984

TAPING: NORMANDY STATEMENT FOR FRENCH TELEVISION

THIS YEAR, THOUSANDS OF AMERICANS ARE RETURNING TO THE NORMANDY SHORES TO REVISIT THE SCENE OF THAT MOMENTOUS LANDING 40 YEARS AGO. THIS WEEK, HUNDREDS ARE, LIKE MYSELF, GUESTS IN YOUR COUNTRY AS WE JOIN IN REMEMBERING THAT DAY. ON BEHALF OF ALL AMERICANS, I THANK YOU FOR YOUR GRACIOUS HOSPITALITY.

FRANCO-AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP HAS A LONG AND PROUD PAST. INDEED, ONE OF THE GREAT HEROES OF AMERICAN HISTORY IS A FRENCHMAN. MANY TOWNS, STREETS, AND SQUARES -- EVEN A COLLEGE -- IN

AMERICA BEAR HIS NAME.
A BEAUTIFUL PARK THAT I
LOOK OUT UPON EACH DAY --
DIRECTLY ACROSS THE
STREET FROM THE WHITE
HOUSE IN WASHINGTON --
IS NAMED IN HONOR OF HIM.
HE WAS THE
MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE,
AND HE SERVED WITH
GEORGE WASHINGTON AS A
GENERAL IN THE AMERICAN
REVOLUTIONARY ARMY. YET
DESPITE THE IMPORTANCE OF
LAFAYETTE'S MILITARY
SKILL, HE TOOK A STEP AS
A LEGISLATOR THAT HAD
PERHAPS EVEN GREATER
SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE
TWO CENTURIES OF
FRIENDSHIP AND ALLIANCE
BETWEEN YOUR COUNTRY AND
MINE.

ON JULY 11TH, 1789,
AS A DEPUTY IN THE FRENCH
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY,
LAFAYETTE INTRODUCED A

BILL CALLING FOR THE
PASSAGE OF A DECLARATION
OF THE RIGHTS OF MAN,
FORMALLY ADOPTED BY THE
ASSEMBLY 6 WEEKS LATER,
THE DECLARATION APPEARED
AS THE PREAMBLE TO THE
FRENCH CONSTITUTION OF
1791. THIS DECLARATION
OF THE RIGHTS OF MAN
EMBODIED THE SAME
FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS ABOUT
HUMAN LIBERTY AS THOSE
EXPRESSED IN THE AMERICAN
DECLARATION OF
INDEPENDENCE AND BILL OF
RIGHTS. TOGETHER, THOSE
FRENCH AND AMERICAN
DOCUMENTS PROCLAIM THAT
ALL MEN ARE ENDOWED WITH
EQUAL AND SACRED RIGHTS,
THAT AMONG THESE, IN THE
WORDS OF THE AMERICAN
DECLARATION ARE, "LIFE,
LIBERTY, AND
THE PURSUIT OF
HAPPINESS." IT IS

THIS SHARED COMMITMENT TO
HUMAN FREEDOM THAT HAS
FORMED THE BEDROCK ON
WHICH OUR FAST FRIENDSHIP
HAS BEEN BUILT. AND IT
WAS IN THE NAME OF THIS
HUMAN FREEDOM THAT SO
MANY BRAVE MEN RISKED
THEIR LIVES ON THE
BEACHES OF NORMANDY
40 YEARS AGO.

THOSE COURAGEOUS
MEN, LIVING AND DEAD,
GAVE US A PRICELESS
LEGACY OF PEACE AND
PROSPERITY IN EUROPE --
A LEGACY THAT HAS ENDURED
NOW FOR TWO GENERATIONS.
TO PRESERVE THAT LEGACY
OF PEACE, THOSE OF US WHO
CHERISH LIBERTY MUST
CONTINUE TO LABOR
TOGETHER.

YOUR COUNTRY AND
MINE BELONG TO AN
ALLIANCE COMMITTED TO
DEMOCRACY, INDIVIDUAL

LIBERTY, AND THE RULE OF
LAW. OF COURSE,
MEMBERSHIP IN THE
ALLIANCE IMPOSES ITS
BURDENS. TO DEMONSTRATE
THE AMERICAN COMMITMENT
TO THIS CONTINENT,
THOUSANDS OF AMERICAN
TROOPS ARE STATIONED HERE
IN EUROPE, FAR FROM THEIR
HOMES AND FAMILIES.
FRANCE, THE UNITED
STATES, AND ALL THE
ALLIANCE NATIONS, MUST
SPEND MORE ON DEFENSE
THAN ANY OF US LIKE TO DO
IN PEACETIME. BUT THE
BURDENS WE BEAR IN
DEFENDING OUR FREEDOM ARE
FAR LESS THAN THE HORRORS
WE WOULD HAVE TO ENDURE
IF WE LOST THAT FREEDOM.

I BELIEVE THAT THE
BEST WAY WE CAN HONOR
THOSE WHO GAVE SO MUCH
40 YEARS AGO, IS BY
REDEDICATING OURSELVES

TODAY TO THE CAUSE FOR
WHICH THEY FOUGHT:
FREEDOM -- FREEDOM FOR
OURSELVES, FREEDOM FOR
OUR CHILDREN, AND FREEDOM
FOR GENERATIONS YET
UNBORN.

THANK YOU AND GOD
BLESS YOU.

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