Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dear friends,

Let me first say what a pleasure it is for me to be your guest today, in your prestigious institution, to discuss with you a major stake in our foreign and defense policy: the French-American partnership.

This partnership is the result of a long and shared history, a common destiny that was borne at the same time as the American nation. This relationship, made of friendship and solidarity, has never faltered during the major ordeals we were confronted to together, from your Revolutionary War to September 11. Naturally, at times, there were doubts or misunderstandings. But, they were always overcome.

**Today, the French-American partnership is more than ever essential.**
Indeed, our two nations share the same vision of the world, the same assessment of the challenges facing us, and the tools required to succeed.
Two decades after the end of the Cold War, we realize that the famous “new world order” announced by some, has not materialized yet. On the contrary, the world we know is:

- an increasingly unpredictable world, with new conflicts, as well as renewed identity and religious claims.
- a globalized world – with the economic and financial crisis that we were unable to anticipate and the repercussions of which are still being felt by our countries, thus making us aware of our interdependence and weaknesses.
- a world where new great powers like China, India and Brazil are emerging and whose military and economic center of gravity is shifting towards the Pacific-Asia region. To that effect, I know that, for the United States, it is today natural – not to say indispensable - to turn even further towards the Pacific Rim countries.

In this context, all of us, Westerners, wonder about the nature, the meaning and the scope of our power. We wonder how to influence the evolutions of a dangerous and unstable, although promising world, on which we have, undeniably, less of a hold, whether it is France or the first world power, the United States of America.

Indeed, our two countries today know that, no nation - no matter how powerful it is - can hope to settle problems on its own. They share the conviction that the international system and its institutions must adapt to the realities of the 21st century, to the shifting of the balance of powers, to the interdependence and volatility that have increased in an unprecedented manner and are affecting all areas - the currency markets, the food and energy raw materials markets, the financial and banking crises. This conviction is guiding France which, this year, is presiding over both the G8 and the G20.
This conviction is all the stronger since, in an era of relative powers, our States are all confronted with similar threats which are now borderless: terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, cyber-attacks, even attacks against satellites, but also piracy, energy insecurity, large-scale organized crime and drug trafficking. And let’s not forget the challenge facing us in terms of access to energy, water and raw materials. Let’s not forget the consequences of our damaged environment and uncontrolled migrations.

We know that the scope of these challenges dictates a much broader concept of our security.

Above all, we know that, today, nothing could be worse than giving in to the temptation of withdrawal, nationalism, territorial expansion and arms race. Nothing could be worse, in short, than to reproduce the old forms of power. Because security, beyond powerful armed forces, also means: prosperous economies, technological progress, populations united by democratic and universal values - the ones that our two countries have been promoting since the 18th century.

Supported by these common convictions, France and the United States must strengthen their cooperation to work together towards a more regulated, more just and more future-oriented world.

Of course, our assets and capabilities differ in size; but we can benefit from our complementarities.

And this is the purpose of my visit: to make our strategic partnership more dynamic and productive in all of the defense areas.
The first one is the space area. This morning, I signed a declaration regarding *Space Situational Awareness* with Secretary Gates, which is testifying to the level of trust in our bilateral relation. Our objective is to strengthen our long-standing cooperation in the space area to tailor it to an environment that has evolved substantially, and to promote together the adoption of international standards to ensure the long-term security and safety of space activities.

In the industrial area, which offers promising prospects, we have identified numerous paths of cooperation for our security. I am referring especially to Missile defense, to the fight against biological threat or to cyber-defense. If the aircraft offered by EADS was to be retained, the renewal of the U.S. Air Force tankers fleet could, also, be the symbol of a common, fair and transparent cooperation. It would be a strong signal to all Europeans.

**To reinforce our bilateral ties is today all the more necessary since the French-American partnership is a major pillar of the transatlantic link.**

We want this relationship to be stronger and stronger, not against the rest of the world, but with it.

This implies first that we succeed together in modernizing NATO, which is currently the only credible military Alliance in the world. To that effect, the last summit in Lisbon constitutes a real common success. Indeed, it resulted in three major steps forward:

1) the first one is that we now have a new strategic concept adapted to the reality of today’s world, which enables us to respond to future threats. The fundamental pact which has been binding us since the Treaty of Washington is
unchanged: the Alliance is a military alliance, the core of which remains collective security and Article 5.

To that effect, I wish to emphasize an important point. The new strategic concept clearly mentions the irreplaceable role of nuclear deterrence for the collective defense of our Allies. It is a fundamental point underpinning the credibility of Article 5, and on which the state of the world surrounding us prevents us from compromising.

- Nuclear disarmament is indeed a desirable objective. Signing and ratifying the New Start Treaty between the United States and Russia is therefore good news, which we have welcomed as such.

- But it is not an end in itself, disconnected from the real world of proliferation. Indeed, nuclear and ballistic proliferation is a real threat. It is the reason why the Alliance has committed itself to acquiring new means of protection by deciding on the deployment of an anti-missile defense system to protect territories and populations. France supports it, of course, in so far as this system is designed to be an additional tool to ensure our security. But it would be a mistake to think that the anti-missile system could be something other than a complement to nuclear deterrence. As long as nuclear weapons exist, the Alliance will remain nuclear.

2) the second step accomplished at the Lisbon Summit, is that we have given a new impulse to our partnership with Russia, in order to work together on the threats confronting us all, such as terrorism and proliferation. Among other things, we have made a major political decision to cooperate on Missile defense, and more broadly, on a renewed strategic partnership with that country, for the benefit of the vast European security area decided on at the OSCE Astana Summit on European security. It is a fundamental political choice, even though
its implementation will not be easy. We must find the right balance between the needs of the Alliance and Russia’s marked will to participate in common security, by giving up completely the old ways of thinking. We are determined, on our part, just like the American Administration to engage in that discussion with an open mind.

3) the third step forward resulting from the Lisbon Summit was the vote on a decision to carry out structural reforms within the Alliance, which must be more efficient, more reactive and more functional. These ongoing reforms to streamline NATO staffs and agencies, and to modernize its financial governance, should now be completed. It is our priority over the next few months.

A reinforced transatlantic relation means a renovated Alliance, but also a stronger Europe.

I wish to strongly emphasize it here: Europe and the Alliance are not rivals, but complement each other – France’s return to NATO has shown that this debate belonged to the past. Indeed, if a European defense is in the interest of the Europeans, it is also in the interest of the United States, which must be able to rely on strong Allies. President OBAMA said so himself repeatedly. The fact that the French-American partnership is not an exclusive one should not be a reason for France to be concerned. Quite the contrary!

It is true that Europe has had its failures. I am thinking of the conflicts in the Western Balkans, at the core of our continent, which revealed the inability of Europeans to take charge of their defense, without relying on the unfailing engagement of our American ally. We have learnt lessons from that.
But over the last decade, the European defense has had its successes. In 1998, while the French and the British agreed on the need for an independent European defense, few among us would have thought that this European defense would be able to launch some twenty operations and missions throughout the world.

And indeed, there was the engagement of the European Union in Georgia which stopped the crisis. There is EU's engagement against piracy in the Horn of Africa where the first major naval operation in its history was deployed. All this is testimony of a silent revolution. A silent revolution indeed, still poorly understood, and nonetheless very real, if one wants to look at the path trodden over the last 20 years by European defense, which has currently a unique global capability to respond to crises.

Today, we must forge further ahead, beyond the problem of relatively weak military capabilities we are confronted to.

The challenge is ambitious: as you know, the economic crisis, our national debts, which should be referred to as a strategic threat, have made the situation worse.

It is therefore up to the Europeans to take charge of themselves to avoid their strategic and technological downfall, what Robert Gates justifiably calls Europe’s “demilitarization”.

France does not resign to that prospect. We are convinced that, on the contrary, the European Union must remain ambitious about being a responsible political power capable of making our voice heard. But a political power does not truly exist unless it is supported by a security and defense capability. And we are
convinced that the 27 member states of the European Union have the capabilities to sustain that ambition.

This is the reason why my country has undertaken an unprecedented streamlining of its defense assets, the dividends of which are then reused to improve the equipment of our combat forces, as well as our intelligence assets.

It is also the reason for the French-British Lancaster House Treaty signed on November 2, 2010, which established the foundations of a historical cooperation between our two countries, in order to bring our defense assets closer together over the long-term. By seeking to share and pool our resources, our skills and our capabilities, we will increase our productivity and economies of scale. Thus, together, we will be able to safeguard the assets of our armed forces and increase our action capability.

Finally, it is the ambition of the recent proposals of the Weimar Triangle which include France, Germany and Poland, to aim at reinforcing the capability, institutional and operational aspects of European Defense.

These are the first signs of a European burst that we wish to generalize. Indeed, our conviction is that, for a common security and defense policy to be meaningful, it high time for our countries to unite their efforts to confront budget constraints, at a time when we know that our defense budgets will not increase in a foreseeable future, and that we need to do better with less and increase the efficiency of our defense expenditures. CSDP must be an instrument of response to the budget crisis, while allowing "pooling and sharing" our capabilities at a European scale. And this will benefit to the European Union as well as to NATO.
This reinforced transatlantic partnership is essential to enable us to take up the challenges awaiting us over the upcoming years

The first of them is to maintain the credibility of the Western world, which is being challenged in Afghanistan. I want to salute the memory of all those military personnel who fell in Afghanistan while defending our values and our security.

France has been engaged in that theater since the start of the operation. And as reminded by the French President, France is engaged over the long-term, as long as necessary, alongside with the Americans and with her Allies.

You know our strategy. It was agreed upon in Lisbon.

- It consists in transferring the responsibility of their security to the Afghans by 2014, as soon as it is possible in the districts. All our efforts focus on that transitional objective, in terms of securization, but also in terms of training Afghan security forces.

- This military objective goes hand in hand with a development aid strategy, which requests our full attention. For France, this global approach is not a meaningless word and our country is setting an example. The military and economic successes which are taking shape in the districts under our command show the full relevance of our approach.

I wish to emphasize an important point. President OBAMA announced that the downsizing of U.S. forces deployed as part of the surge (30,000 troops) could start as early as this summer, should the situation allow it and under the conditions that will be laid out by General PETRAEUS. Just like the start of transferring the districts to the Afghans, this phase is not the signal for our forces to pull out. It is only the beginning of a transitional process. It is
perfectly clear for France, and we expect from our allies that they show the same strategic patience.

Beyond 2014, we have committed ourselves to supporting the Afghan government in the long-term, especially through the training of Afghan forces. It is the meaning of the long-term partnership signed with President KARZAI at the Lisbon Summit.

Indeed, if notable military progress has been achieved over the last few months, we are convinced that the solution is first political: we will succeed in Afghanistan only by working closely with the Afghan government which must commit itself even further to developing more suitable national governance. On this point, the objective is far from being reached.

Therefore, we must support the dialogue and the reconciliation with those who are ready to renounce violence, to break away from the terrorists who are taking the Afghan people hostage. But it is the responsibility of the Afghan officials to conduct this dialogue, with the help of the international community. To that effect, we have expressed our expectations to President KARZAI.

We have also sent strong messages repeatedly to Pakistan, which is a victim of terrorism on its own soil, and must behave as a responsible and engaged ally. There will be no peace in Afghanistan without stability in Pakistan, without the conviction of a long-term Western engagement in support of the region. The Pakistani government knows that this stability depends on the eradication of terrorism on each side of the border.
Our second challenge is to resolve the proliferation crises.

I am thinking of the Iranian crisis first. The Europeans have been working on it since 2003, along with the Americans since 2005, and with China and Russia since 2006.

Today, the international community cannot accept Iran’s refusal to comply with IAEA’s demands and even less so with the U.N. Security Council’s requirements. Faced with the division attempts orchestrated by the Iranian regime which is seeking desperately to get away from the disastrous consequences of its own policy, a strategy of toughness is the only one that can be productive.

- It is in this sense that the vote of the Security Council’s Resolution 1929 and the unilateral sanctions imposed by the international community have changed the equation.
- It is also the reason for the meetings in Geneva (December 2010) and in Istanbul (21-22 January) which have shown the determination of P5 + 1 to act together.

From now on, we must carry on treading this path and increase the economic and political pressure on Iran (in particular in the energy and access to financing domains). This pressure, for which France and the United States are cooperating in an exemplary manner, will reach its full peak in 2011, with the effect of sanctions. We remain convinced that these sanctions can get Teheran to come to terms with the ending of its uranium enrichment program, since time is running out for the Iranian regime, contrary to its own belief.

Today, the question of a new phase in the sanctions process is rising. But, should Iran seriously consider the general proposals it received in terms of a
civilian nuclear program, France, as it has always said, would be ready to return to the negotiating table.

The other major concern, which requires that France and the United States must establish a close cooperation, is the ballistic and nuclear dissemination started by Pyongyang.

North Korea has now a uranium enrichment program. The revelation of the centrifuging program, which has only confirmed our doubts, sheds light on the threat that the Pyongyang regime is hanging over international stability and security. Faced to the North Korean provocations, the Republic of Korea paid a heavy tribute in 2010; I would like to grab this opportunity to voice our support to the government of President Lee MYUNG BAK.

In the short-term, the confirmation of existing uranium enriching capabilities makes us fear new disseminations, especially for the benefit of Pyongyang’s traditional allies. In this current environment, priority must be given to restarting the Six-Party talks.

Finally, our third challenge is to guarantee peace and stability in Africa.

I am thinking first of the Sahel region, where increased terrorism directed more particularly at French citizens, is becoming a threat to all countries. If France has made counter-terrorism a priority, it is obvious that our country will not be able to carry this burden on its own. We are cooperating very closely with the United States who are heavily engaged in that region (Trans-Saharan Terrorism Initiative). But we can bring that cooperation even further. We are also
encouraging the European Union to be more active, by adopting a global strategy for the Sahel region, linking security and development.

Beside the Sahel region, stabilizing the Horn of Africa, in a strategic position on the axis of crisis linking Kandahar and Dakar, is also the purpose of a close cooperation.

- Of course, there is also counter-piracy at sea, with operation Atlanta, the NATO operation and the American operation, coordinated as part of SHADE, based in Bahrain.

- But we must now focus our efforts on land. To that effect, the security forces training mission of the Somali Transitional Federal Government is a model of cooperation between the European Union, the United States and Uganda. For other support conditions to the TFG and the stabilization of Somalia, we must carry on with our exchanges with our British and American friends. It is all the more necessary since a difficult period is expected with the radicalization of Puntland and the end of the transition scheduled for August 2011.

Finally, it is difficult not to mention the upheaval sweeping through North Africa and its aspiration for freedom and democracy echoing throughout the Arab world? Indeed, as it often happens on the occasion of great historical turning points, we were taken by surprise. Indeed, the uncertainties brought about by these movements can be a source of concern: concern about the risks of chaos resulting from void or destabilization of power, concern over the risk of increasing radical Islamism, concern over the risk of shifting geo-strategic and security balances, which are so precarious in that part of the world. But let these fears not interfere with our dates with history. Let’s take the only risk compatible with our principles and our values: the one that makes us trust
democratic movements, accompany them and bet on their success while remaining vigilant about their evolution. This must be a winning bet.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A final word in conclusion before engaging in a dialogue with you.
In an increasingly interdependent world, where political, economic, cultural, environmental challenges are more and more common, in the great ongoing shift of the global balances, the partnership between the Europeans and the Americans seems to me both unique and irreplaceable.

The period ushered in by the election of President OBAMA, who places his foreign policy under the sign of “linked destinies” and “mutual interests” offers us a tremendous opportunity.

Let’s grab it to make that partnership ever more profound, trusting and productive. France will spare no effort in that regard.

Thank you.