

The French origins of the American Democracy

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*"Of all nations, of any consideration FRANCE is the one which hitherto, has offered the fewest points of which we could have any conflict of right ad the most points of a communion of interests. From these causes, we have ever looked to her as **our natural friend**, as one with which we **never** could have an occasion of difference".*

Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish these words have been pronounced a few weeks ago at the United Nations General Assembly by your President. But I am sorry to say that they were not. President BUSH is not President JEFFERSON; President CHIRAC is not Louis XVI; 2003 is not 1780. And you might be informed -if you eat some Freedom fries, if you have heard of CREDIT LYONNAIS or if you - that situation is slightly different today than 200 years ago! Moving memories of the Independence War and smiles of August 1944 let place for angry faces, difficult dialogue, perhaps great divide.

This time may be the worst we have never known since a long time: I do not care. I should even say that it motives me, as

I am not an historian, either a French proselyte making *Frenchification* of the American History; I am not a part of the *French Conspiracy* (there is a large debate about this in this country, from JOHN ADAMS ideas of a foreign and hegemonic influence), or to remind you that British law comes from the Normands, who were French !: you know Paul Henri BENJAMIN remark regarding Americans: *"No doubt you have English blood; but the English themselves*

admit that the purest and the best of their blood is Norman, which means French". I am not representing official French position.

I am a simple citizen, pilgrim of the Franco-American friendship. I believe - and I came from FRANCE today for that reason - that FRANCE was, was, is and will be the United States "closest friend."

Actually, I really decided to come in June 2003 (2nd) when I saw in the Internet a US survey. The question was: *How important is FRANCE as a US ally?* I was shocked by the response: very/20%, somewhat/ 36%, **not at all/ 42%. That made me very sad;** this was enough to convince myself to spend nights and weekends to prepare a lecture !

There are classical means to remind French presence in American contemporary life: cuisine, fashion, ladies, perfumes and soccer (some days), Louisiana, Statue of liberty inaugurated in 1886, made by the French in PARIS (sculptor *Auguste BARTHOLDI*) and given by the city of PARIS to the city of New York (what is more a world symbol of America, Promise land and Freedom in the world than this statue?), WASHINGTON DC. designed by the French Engineer Pierre-Charles LENFANT, the Treaty of September 3d 1783 which ended War in America signed in PARIS, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences founded by QUESNAY de BEAUREPAIRE, ROCHAMBEAU's companion in arms, William STRICKLAND who learned the technique of the suspension bridges from the French; I also could remember the French influence in different fields: architecture: la "*maison carrée de Nîmes*" which inspired the State Capital at Richmond, the city of Versailles and the Mall of Washington DC., "*l'Hôtel de la Légion d'Honneur*" and MONTICELLO, la Bourse du Commerce à PARIS and the University of VIRGINIA, all French monuments which strongly influenced the Jeffersonian architecture, paintings: John TRUMBULL, Samuel MORSE, George HEALY in PARIS; the Barbizon school, the Impressionists, COROT, MONET, so many French influencing American paintings! We could spend a long time on that.

And what to say of French words, used so often in this country : "*vis-à-vis*", "*touché*", "*chic*", "*rendez-vous*", « *en route* », "*crème de la crème*", "*bizarre*", "*coup d'Etat*", "*torts*", "*porte cochère*", "*concours d'élégance*", "*laissez-faire*", "*cliché*" etc...". Anyway, I am not sure it was enough to make that lecture in French !

Anyway, I did not come to talk about French truffles or French cars, but about democracy !

Why democracy ?

You should be the devil's advocate and say: are you sure to be the most qualified to speak of democracy ? You were the *French American Empire*, at its apogee when LOUIS XIV died (1715; we held most of this country), with unhappy memories of intolerance and despotism: you may recall what an American soldier coming from the French and Indian War said two and a half century ago: "*People do not like French; when we meet men whom we dislike, we call them French !*". You could remind me our own difficulties to reach true democracy: US has the same Constitution and same institutions since 1787, in spite of one civil war, two world wars, intense political and social crises. And our country FRANCE changed its institutions **not less than 16 times** (without the modifications); since the 18th century and absolutist monarchy, we had three constitutional monarchies (1791, 1814 and 1830), two Emperors (1804 and 1852), Maréchal PETAIN and not less than five republics! You could say: your police did cooperate with the German Nazis to send thousand of Jewish people to death ! Who are you French to talk about democracy with your bloody Revolution, which sent to death at least 250.000 innocent people, the King LOUIS XVI and his wife the Queen MARIE-ANTOINETTE, with your NAPOLEON, described in terrible words by THOMAS JEFFERSON: "*Attila of the age...destroyer of ten millions of the human race... great oppressor of the rights and liberties of the world...unprincipled usurper, without a virtue, no statesman, knowing nothing of commerce, political economy or civil government*". Who are you to talk about democracy with Monsieur LE PEN, extreme right candidate, who reached about 5 millions vote at the presidential election !

Who are you European -as said recently *Jean-François REVEL* in a remarkable book dealing with French Anti-Americanism- where the two major genocides of human history came from: communism and fascism are not born in the U.S !

These could be good questions making the French humble and disenchanted..

For all these reasons, I am not here to propose any model or example but to remind you only one thing: French-American exchanges rely since the very beginning on a simple idea: **mutual influence**.

One lecture could be given **on American influence**: the passion of the French for exoticism of AMERICA is not new: La Nouvelle France, Louisiana, Canada, Jacques CARTIER, fishermen, explorers, etc... So many French came here since centuries. And you know how great was the influence of American Revolution ("*le Vent d'Amérique*" as said Claude MANCERON) on French thinkers and politicians like TALLEYRAND, SEYES, CONDORCET or MIRABEAU, as LAFAYETTE and JEFFERSON inspired the French declaration of rights in 1789.

As said ROBERT BADINTER, it was a "*fascinating intellectual feed-back*", a kind of *cross-nurturing* French thinking inspiring American Founding Fathers and American example having a strong influence on French who were dreaming of a True Constitution making protection for Freedom. Civil rights were the bridge between the two countries: American declaration of independence, including a declaration of rights, had a crucial influence on the French declaration. And the 17 articles voted by the Constituent Assembly were immediately published in the U.S, where they triggered the addition of the 10 first amendments to the Constitution of 1787. JEFFERSON was very motivated by the link between the two Revolutions: "*A failure there would be a powerful argument to prove there must be a failure here*".

Remember the enthusiasm of the French for the Insurgents was just incredible, especially among the old French Nobility: we admired their daring, courage and energy. The LAUZUN, FERSEN, NOAILLES, SEGUR, etc... had only one dream: fight for freedom in AMERICA. Between 1760 and 1790, 26 publications about America were translated into three European languages.

Remember the fascination of the French for the American independence, when they portrayed the "*wild*" American soldiers as Turkish Moors, dressed in pantaloons and turbans, when French soldiers came back to their provinces, turning into passionate propagandists of new ideals ! Just because of America, we knew that freedom and civil rights were not utopia ! As said Robert R. PALMER, we lived together "*the Atlantic Revolution*".

I will speak today mainly of the origins of the American democracy. I propose to you a short ride through Franco-American history of the early years, that we will have to confront with contemporary issues.

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THE FRENCH PARADOX HELPING AMERICA ON ITS WAY TO DEMOCRACY

The alliance was a matter of ideas, commerce, diplomacy and military issues: American democracy is born with independence and independence was brought by the French.

FRANCE AT WAR

French Army was involved as early as 1777 in the West Indies, then at the siege of SAVANNAH in 1779 with Admiral d'ESTAING. Bu you know that military and naval force came later, in 1780, led by ROCHAMBEAU and his officers (LAUZUN, CHASTELLUX, VIOMENIL, CUSTINE, etc...).

The decision had been taken in VERSAILLES -the City where I live- during winter 1780. We brought troops -5034 exactly-, canons, food, clothing, 15.000 muskets. The American continental army was poor and in bad conditions. The French was not much better, with 2000 troops, over 5.000, ill and unfit for service; some had no shoes or no shirts. They did not speak English, did not understand how the Revolutionary Army could function on a battlefield. But it was the French corps, joining the glorious American rebels: without that army, no victory would have been possible. They camped not far from here in Connecticut: BOLTON, EAST HARTFORD, DANBURY. The French fleet made by six ships left on May 2nd 1780 and sailed into NEWPORT on July 10, 1780.

See this picture of Generals at the Battle of YORKTOWN (September 28 1781), final major battle of the Revolutionary War: how many Americans ? One: George WASHINGTON. How many French ? Three: ROCHAMBEAU, de GRASSE and LAFAYETTE ! The allied army was made by 9000 Americans and 7800 French (the first expedition made by ROCHAMBEAU -5500- and the second made by the Marquis de SAINT-SIMON - 3500-).

And without peace between Britain and United States, LAFAYETTE would have sent with the Spanish in 1782 an Armada of 25.000 troops ! (almost the 26.000 of French men who fought during the Civil war, on both sides, with about 60% with the South).

About 2000 French soldiers died in America.

The War of Independence in itself was a political revolution. And with a strange paradox, we gave "*des épées d'aristocrates aux idées nouvelles et à la République*" ! (swords from Nobility to fight for Republican ideas !).

You know the story: let's go quickly to the reasons of the French support.

The first response is very common: the French had to take a revenge against Britain after the Seven Years war, which was a true disaster for us and made us inferior in power to England (1756-1763); this is the "Canadian project", consisting of a recovery of Canada from the English. "*Plant the French flag in the heart of that insolent nation*" after the 1763 loss of Canada. To be clear, you did not like Red Coats; and we did not too.

No doubt that it is not easy for the French King to fight against another monarchy, to fight for freedom and independence (its opponents ideas), to back a cause which may be losing, and to spend money which would be so necessary to France itself!

But there is another reason

But the French brought more than boats, men and weapons: ideals! May we say that French brought Revolution? Not in the French approach: George WASHINGTON never used the word Revolution. The purpose of American Founders was to establish a new social order, new united nation, new institutions to be an instrument of liberty, especially in the economic and social field (abolition of taxes,). The Founders were looking for new political system, through their own thinking, through foreign experiences, through authors of

classical antiquity, through the major figures of European Enlightenment. And the French brought ideas, to men who were avid of political philosophy. (French always believe they are right; you know FRANKLIN's report of a conversation between two French ladies: "I do not know why, but when I discuss with my sister, I am always right"!).

MONEY

Pierre Augustin de Beaumarchais, a man of letters and an adventurer was born in Paris in 1732. The son of a clock-maker, Beaumarchais was introduced into society by the banker Paris-Duverney. Knighted by the King at age 29, Beaumarchais became famous for his plays *The Barber of Seville*, and later *The Marriage of Figaro*. Mozart based two operas on these comedies. For several years, Beaumarchais conducted secret missions for the Count of Vergennes, the King's Secretary of State and a great champion of American independence. In December of 1775, Beaumarchais wrote to Louis XVI to request money for the American Revolutionaries. For two years, more than three million pounds were discreetly passed on to Hortalés & Compagnie, a front company created to filter money to the Americans. The Spanish, happy to support those fighting the British, also gave a million pounds. The money, used to buy guns and ammunition, was delivered to the Continental Congress in the beginning of 1777. Because of his involvement in another arms smuggling affair, Beaumarchais was exiled at the start of the French revolution. He didn't return to France until 1796, where he died three years later.

IDEAS: THE LEGACY OF THE FRENCH ENLIGHTENMENT

These ideas mainly came from the *Philosophes*, small group of French writers, who published "*L'Encyclopédie*" between 1751 and 1776. They are not revolutionaries, just having the goal to make society more just and more rational; they are always brilliant, often impertinent. They are the **Enlightenment thinkers**, dedicated to the exercise of rational thought. Their names are DIDEROT, VOLTAIRE, ROUSSEAU (actually ROUSSEAU is a Swiss citizen), CONDORCET... They question by reason authority in politics and religion; they believe that truth can be found with an empiric search in

science, arts, literature and education. The *Encyclopedia* was translated into English and brought to America its ideological foundation.

What are these new ideas? (new but quite present in the western cultural milieu of this time). We would need more time and I have to sheep over some particular issues to go to the essential:

Slavery: it is probably the very common economic and social issue raised by the two countries in the same way: end the slave trade and emancipate slaves. The St DOMINGUE issue -French HAITI Island- between August 1791 and 1803, with the slave insurrection and the independence proclaimed in 1804 under the leadership of Pierre TOUSSAINT L'OUVERTURE, was a great issue for JEFFERSON: he sent arms and supplies to the rebels, not only because he feared a French foothold too close to the U.S, but also because of the ideal of liberty and freedom for all mankind.

Constitution: you may know the Second Empire joke: a man enters an American Bookshop and asks: do you have a French Constitution ? I am sorry Sir, but we do not sell newspapers... Okay, we are not an example of constitutional stability: I already said that we changed our Constitution not less than 16 times since the French Revolution. But we have some ideas; and the question is: did the French have any influence on American Constitution ? You will get a common response everywhere: "*The philosophical basis of the American revolution are to be found in the works of English philosopher John LOCKE (1632-1704)*". The same is generally said of the Declaration of Independence. Okay: no doubt that American laws and institutions are based on British spirit of self restraint and on common law. I even read (JAMES BECK) that Britain is the principal source of American Constitutional History...

But the French Enlightenment brought one main idea: the Constitution in itself. A said Bernard BAYLIN, "*the word constitution and the concept behind it was of central importance to the colonist's political thought; their entire understanding of the crisis in Anglo-American relations rested upon it*".

Actually, these people may forget that the American Constitution is the oldest and the best illustration of a French idea: the separation of powers made by MONTESQUIEU: one executive power (President), one legislative assembly (Congress), one judiciary power (Supreme Court). French ideas were discussed during the PHILADELPHIA convention, as modification of the

Constitution by Judiciary power. We will talk about MONTESQUIEU later; but let's mention here that the Great Assembly voted the possibility given to Judiciary Power to cancel a state or federal law which would be incompatible with the constitution. At the same time, the Parliament of PARIS was fighting to get the power to cancel illegal laws.

Another French influence may be found in the great "concision" of the Constitution: French like short and strong sentences... After 81 days and more than 300 hours of debate, the Constitution was made only with 81 sentences ! As said Lord BRICE, "*the American Constitution, including amendments, can be read within 23 minutes*" !.

Liberty: this is the main concept, in the French liberal thinking, which remains the best for ever: "*Liberty is the right to do everything the laws permit*". It means that liberty is less independence than solidarity

Equality under law: "*love of democracy is love of equality*" said MONTESQUIEU. Equality is everywhere in the Enlightenment, and it is now one of the major principles of US democracy: "*Equal under law*" is written on the building of the US SUPREME COURT. On that point of equality, FRANCE was the messenger, but also the counter-example: Nation of 20 million, with more than 15 million of poor people, paying taxes, and half-million Nobility and Clergy, with many privileges, except from taxes...;¹

Individual rights: the separation of powers was not without link with the protection of individual rights. In other terms, in the French approach, the separation of powers has to deal not only with the structure of the government but also with the civil rights, individual liberties.

State secularism and religious freedom: quite a paradox for a country which under Louis XIV revoked the "Edit de NANTES", that had established religious tolerance, making 200.000 protestants leave the country... But some French were in favour of religious freedom: VOLTAIRE, LAFAYETTE.

Universal suffrage:

Education: it is a main idea: knowledge is a prerequisite to wisdom and proper exercise of human rights. Self government, safety and happiness need first education.

It can be said that American democracy is the beautiful fruit of French intellectual life, of the Enlightenment, *les Lumières*, *l'Illuminismo*, the *Aufklärung*. More than this, AMERICA was the very unique occasion to enforce these new ideas in a young country- we French still see United States as the paradise of youth, self-reliance, optimism and efficiency- in a country with more future than past. All French observers agree to say that your country brought the proof that republican government was possible, even with a large country and big population. Utopia became reality. You became our "legacy", by a "*philosophical experiment on a grand scale, in order to ascertain the possibility of mankind governing themselves*" (Horst RÖSSLER).

How did these ideas come to Americans ?

But note that the main instrument at this time is already **communication, like the stone age of globalization**: books, letters, cafés (Café PROCOPE in PARIS, the world's first coffee house established in 1686, VOLTAIRE, FRANKLIN, ROUSSEAU, BEAUMARCHAIS, etc... frequented the café to talk, debate, think, discuss...), almanacs, papers (they grew up at the end of the XVIIIth century and there were 38 in the mainland colonies by 1775), masonic societies, clubs, "salons littéraires" (Madame de LAMBERT, Madame du DEFFAND, Madame GEOFFRIN, Madame de TENCIN, etc...) and above all pamphlets in America. Communication of ideas is the main issue. And in a certain way XVIIIth Century was much more cosmopolite than the XIXth Century.

But communication and mutual influence is not like a miracle: it is the men's doing, intellectual people, military officers and decision-makers. This is the reason why it is necessary to meet these men on both sides of the water.

- **VOLTAIRE**

Seventy years ago, in a small book named "*qu'est-ce que l'Amérique ? -what is America ?-* Professor ANDRE SIEGFRIED, who is one of the most prominent French Thinkers in political science, said that the very essence of European Spirit is the "esprit critique", search, understand, measure and revolt is necessary. He gave PROMETHEUS as the symbol of independence and individualism of European Spirit. PROMETHEUS is facing the risk at the

ROCKEFELLER CENTER in NYC -my favourite place- and nobody better than the French Philosopher VOLTAIRE can embody the cult of reason and critic.

I'd like to remind you that after the treaty of PARIS signed in 1763 , which opened the doors to French influence, VOLTAIRE was read and received considerable comment, praise or anathema... Many copies of the "*Dictionnaire philosophique*" were sold. "*There has never been a perfect government, because men have passions; and if they did not have passions, there would be no need for government*". "*It is dangerous to be right when the government is wrong.*"

Who more than the American Founders did enforce the famous words of VOLTAIRE: "*Injustice in the end produces independence* (TANCREDE, III, 2).

VOLTAIRE was read by the first Americans; he was optimistic about them, writing in the *Lettres Philosophiques* that Pennsylvania and the Quakers "*had brought into existence that golden age of which men talk so much and which has probably never existed anywhere*".

VOLTAIRE would have loved the special place of Reason within American culture.

- **ROUSSEAU (1712-1778)**

Few people have equaled ROUSSEAU's influence in political thought. But some historians said that Founding Fathers knew very few about him.

Actually, there is something which comes from ROUSSEAU (cf. le CONTRAT SOCIAL) is precisely the necessity of Founding persons to settle a new political regime. Many of the founding principles of American democracy come from ROUSSEAU's thought: freedom as self-imposed law of reason, social contract to achieve liberty and well-being, sovereignty, rightness of general will, equality, and optimism !. Confidence in liberty and optimism are very present in ROUSSEAU's thinking, as they are in founding of America.

As Harvard professor Irving Babbitt noted in 1924, "*The commanding position of Rousseau in the democratic movement is at all events beyond question.*"... No doubt that ROUSSEAU had been read by the first American politicians.

Anyway, the Founders were more concerned about abuses of popular government, while ROUSSEAU had sometime passion for unlimited government power...

MONTESQUIEU

Noble background like most French Philosophes, lawyer, President of the Parliament of BORDEAUX (it was an "hereditary office" at this time), wine merchant - difficult to avoid in BORDEAUX...- active in writing and politics: MONTESQUIEU worked all his life long against the French absolutism and for a new form of government for his country. He was well educated, very clever person - "*everything interests me, everything surprises me*"- and careful to others: Do you know who was MONTESQUIEU's Godfather ? A beggar, chosen by his father just to remind him that poor people are his brothers !

By MONTESQUIEU, you may know the "Persian Letters", satirical portrait of French (American love the story of these two Persian gentlemen), particularly PARIS civilisation. You know the exquisite words of MONTESQUIEU: "*Do you know why French almost never speak of their wives ? because they are afraid that other men know them better than they do themselves...*". STENDHAL said that MONTESQUIEU is "la fête de l'esprit", the celebration of spirit... But you should another book, the essential for democracy: *The Spirit of the Laws*. Laurent VERSINI said this book is one of the most important and intelligent in universal literature. It was actually an **extraordinary modern book**, which had a considerable influence on human nations. MONTESQUIEU is generally regarded as the Founder of Modern Political Science. He said about that book: "*I can say that I have worked on it my whole life*". And he added something moving and very encouraging for students: "*I was given some law books when I left my College; I sought their spirit, I worked, but I did nothing worthwhile... Anyone else working as hard as I did would have done better*". Like LA BRUYERE or MONTAIGNE (French moralists), he put all he knew into one book. It is a "*complex mosaic*" said Pr COHLER, a "*rococo painting*"...

As many French -this is a part of the French paradox- , MONTESQUIEU had a stronger influence abroad than in his own country (see the American constitution and the French evolutions through ROBESPIERRE or NAPOLEON...).

The Spirit of the Laws was published in FRANCE in 1748 and only two years later in English in 1750. You may know that a special Commentary and Review of the book was composed in 1811 by DESTUTT de TRACY (1754-1836). Do you know who did the translation again, with observations of CONDORCET: a retired President of the United States, Thomas JEFFERSON himself!.

Beyond the typology of the governments made in the book -beginning of sociology-, Americans were very interested in the two main ideas which were presented in this analysis concerning the nature and workings of government.

The first MONTESQUIEU assertion is that forms of government will invariably differ according to the political and social climate and circumstances which they have to deal with. He concluded from analysis that despotic rule is best in large empires as to maintain control and order, especially those in the "hot climates." As for democracy, he concluded that small city-states would be the best situation for it, because it would be simpler to maintain and govern, with general agreement of the populace being easier to achieve. I am not sure that Mr BLOOMBERG would agree with that !

MONTESQUIEU second assertion, the most important of the treatise and the most serious is the fact **that a balance and separation of powers is needed for an efficient and successful government.** The main idea is: it is an eternal human experience that every man who has power is inevitably conducted to abuse of it. How to limit the power ? With other powers which can make a balance; limit **the power by power; only power can stop power.**

It is simple; it is a piece of genius, it is eternal ! Then come the questions of tensions between the powers, of delimitation of the territory of each, of borders and checks. But precisely, the tensions make the balance. The practice has to enforce the theory. And even today (ABA Meeting in San Francisco 2003), when American lawyers are wondering if some provisions of the Patriot Act are compatible with the separation of powers, they deal with MONTESQUIEU's ideas!. Power against power. The issue is the same today with public institutions or private entities (see/ BARNES-OXLEY and watchdogs to limit power...).

Where is MONTESQUIEU in the thoughts of Founding Fathers?

But the French gentleman also influenced the Federalists, who were supposed to be closer to the British tradition: First, MONTESQUIEU's influence can be found in JEFFERSON and Anti-Federalists thinking: they took very seriously MONTESQUIEU's account of the social conditions that make democracy possible. The idea was that US Constitution would encourage civic virtue.

He can be found mainly in the *Federalist Papers*, published during winter 1787 and spring 1788 by Alexander HAMILTON, James MADISON and John JAY. MONTESQUIEU appears as the author of a machinery to make a reality **for the government of laws and not of men.**

Federalist n° 9: HAMILTON finds in MONTESQUIEU a strong support to confederate republic. He quotes *The Spirits of the Laws* and says: "I have

thought it proper to quote at length these interesting passages, because they contain a **luminous** abridgement of the principal arguments in favor of the Union".

Federalist n° 47: MADISON quotes MONTESQUIEU again, before examining the Constitutions of the American States: "From these facts by which Montesquieu was guided it may clearly be inferred, that in saying "there can be no liberty where the legislative and executive powers are united in the same person, or body of magistrates," or "if the power of judging be not separated from the legislative and executive powers," he did not mean that these departments ought to have no partial agency in, **or no control over the acts of each other**".

Federalist n° 51: MADISON explains that the way to Democracy is to connect power with the people's vote and he adds the necessity of checks and balances;

Federalist n° 78: regarding judiciary department, HAMILTON uses MONTESQUIEU again: "From the three powers above mentioned, the Judiciary is next to nothing".

MADISON understood from MONTESQUIEU that balance of powers is very necessary, and that it is a result of both of the division of power and of its sharing.

Again, the theories of MONTESQUIEU regarding limitation of power were appropriate to the American experience for a very simple reason: fear of power and its limitation was the main concern of the Founders, who believed that essential characteristics of power are aggressiveness and propulsion to expand beyond legitimate boundaries. MONTESQUIEU was sometimes criticised, for example by STEVENS, young NEW JERSEY lawyer, who wrote: "he would have been an American and now living, I would stake my life on it, he would have formed different principles" or MURRAY who said that MONTESQUIEU "never studied a free democracy".

THE ACTORS OF THE FRANCO-AMERICAN ALLIANCE: A FRENCH VIEW

II.1 THE FRANCOPHILE AMERICANS

They are many, still today. I would like to mention today the very first President, George WASHINGTON, and two Founding Fathers who lived in PARIS at a very crucial time for the American democracy: Thomas JEFFERSON, Benjamin FRANKLIN and Benjamin FRANKLIN.

- GEORGE WASHINGTON

As French, we try to forget -and I think we did- that our Minister, le Chevalier de COULON DE JUMONVILLE, had been killed on May 28, 1754, as he was bringing message at the frontier of the ALLEGHANYS, with ten of his fellows, by a British group of Soldiers, whose Commander was a man named George WASHINGTON...

It remains very important to the French that WASHINGTON was not a King as some delegates of the Great Assembly proposed, but a true President, the very first President of the first modern republic in the world, the largest democracy never achieved. We love WASHINGTON perhaps just because you American were able to do what we could not achieve so fast: a modern and peaceful democracy. In a way, he is too great to belong to one nation only; he served his country, but he also served humanity. When GEORGE WASHINGTON took his oath of office as the first President (April 30 1789), FRANCE was preparing to plunge into bloody revolution, chaos and terror...

You know that WASHINGTON never travelled to FRANCE; he did not speak French. But he read French authors and loved some French. The most popular is LAFAYETTE. Washington named him "my adopted son". "I love him as my own son" says Washington I a letter to the French Ambassador on Christmas Eve 1779. He was fond of the young French officer, so generous, so dynamic, so rebellious !. You know WASHINGTON had great correspondence with the French Officer and long conversations. You probably already read one of these letters: they are moving pieces of friendship, admiration, respect mutual gratitude and love. WASHINGTON was confident in the French ("*The British will never beat the French Army*"; he knew their own interests but truly cherished the French help.

You may know the beautiful words of CHATEAUBRIAND about Washington "*Search in the plains where flashed the sword of Washington. What find you there? Tombs? No; you find a World. Washington has left behind him the United States as a trophy of his battle-fields.*"

Washington had a key with him. Do you know where it came from ? From the BASTILLE fortress, symbol of royal absolutism; the key had been given to him by LAFAYETTE (who ordered the demolition of that fortress in the days following the 14th of July 1789.

- **BENJAMIN FRANKLIN**

Many French students of your age know the "College FRANKLIN" in PARIS, which is a Jesuit High School in PARIS (quite amazing to give the name of a Mason to a catholic school), but they might know less about FRANKLIN himself. Anyway, FRANKLIN remains one of the most popular "American in PARIS". We love FRANKLIN; at some time of our History, it was even possible to talk about "Franklinomania":

Let's remember: in 1776, Congress appoints three commissioners Silas DAEN, Arthur LEE and Dr FRANKLIN "to transact the business of the United States at the Court of FRANCE". FRANKLIN leaves PHILADELPHIA the 26th of October and 30 days later arrives in Brittany, in QUIBERON (the place where I go for summer holidays since 30 years...). He is about 70. He arrives in PARIS the 21st of December, moved to PASSY, a charming village at this time, which is now a part of the city and remained at this place during the whole of his residence in FRANCE until July 1785. About 9 years in PARIS !

From FRANKLIN, you know what he did for America when he was in PARIS first as Commissioner and then as Ambassador: negotiations with the Court of FRANCE to raise money (two millions of livres loan from the royal treasury to be repaid after the war) and munitions of war, to get recognition of independence and sovereignty of United States, to sign the two 1778 treaties, to sign the Treaty of PARIS (September 3d 1783, actually signed in VERSAILLES; by this treaty, Great Britain formally acknowledged the independence of the United States)etc... Ellen Cohn, editor of the Papers of Benjamin FRANKLIN, said "French support was due entirely to FRANKLIN". FRANKLIN made the entire country in favour of America: LA LUZERNE, ROCHAMBEAU, LA FAYETTE were like idols for the brilliant French Youth !

FRANKLIN was highly regarded by the French, who loved his great learning and simplicity of life. We loved his country squire appearance, clever and adroit American Farmer. The 20th of March 1778, he was introduced to the King in VERSAILLES (we still remember that day in VERSAILLES (this is a part of the American story of the Royal city): "He was accompanied and

followed by a great number of Americans and individuals from various countries, whom curiosity had drawn together. His age, his venerable aspect, the simplicity of his dress, everything fortunate and remarkable in the life of this American, contributed to excite public attention. The clapping of hands and other expressions of joy indicated that warmth of enthusiasm which the French are more susceptible of than any other people, and the charm of which is enhanced to the object of it by their politeness and agreeable manners. After this audience he crossed the court on his way to the office of the minister of foreign affairs. The multitude waited for him in the passage, and greeted him with their acclamations. He met with a similar reception wherever he appeared in Paris." From that time both Franklin and the other American commissioners attended the court at Versailles on the same footing as the ambassadors of the European powers. Madame Campan says that on these occasions Franklin appeared in the dress of an American farmer. "His straight, unpowdered hair, his round hat, his brown cloth coat, formed a singular contrast with the laced and embroidered coats, and powdered and perfumed heads, of the courtiers of Versailles."

By the way, do you know how our Queen MARIE-ANTOINETTE named FRANKLIN: "l'Ambassadeur électrique" (the electric Ambassador) !.When FRANKLIN left PARIS, JEFFERSON said: "the village of PASSY lost its patriach".

He was also realistic: in a letter dated September 14, 1767, he says: "There is, in short, both at Versailles and Paris, a prodigious mixture of magnificence and negligence, with every kind of elegance except that of cleanliness, and what we call tidiness".

What did Benjamin FRANKLIN get from the French and from FRANCE, regarding Democracy?: he learned French, read and spoke a little (perhaps mainly from French ladies; he was quite a ladies's man... He was interested in papermaking, balloons,

By the way, do you know why Americans have no British accent: because Benjamin FRANKLIN went to PARIS !

The lodge of the Nine Sisters -there is a great debate about the influence of Masonic organizations in the two revolutions- was the most pro.

- Thomas JEFFERSON

I do have a chimney in my office; over the chimney is a portrait of THOMAS JEFFERSON. Most of the French visitors who come to me ask the same question: who is this gentleman with that aristocratic bearing ? Some say: is he your predecessor ? My response is always the same: *"he was a great American, probably the greatest democrat in America, almost French, at least the most Francophile among the American Presidents, brilliant, curious like a French Encyclopedist, , ..."*.

JEFFERSON and the French Revolution: he supported the French Revolution, but not the bloody one. He allowed his residence to be used as a meeting place for the rebels led by LAFAYETTE. But he did not like the madmen, the ROBESPIERRE, DANTON, MARAT, etc... JEFFERSON was too civilized: *"and was ever such a prize won with so little innocent blood? My own affections have been deeply wounded by some of the martyrs to this cause, but rather than it should have failed, I would have seen half the earth desolated. Were there but an Adam and Eve left in every country, left free, it would be better than as it now is"*.

On the American side, 55 delegates attended the Constitutional Convention in PHILADELPHIA in 1787, well-educated men, strong political experience, 35 lawyers among them, natives of the 13 colonies, without any French educational background... What did the French influence on them? The response is that these men heard of the XVIIIth century's enlightenments, especially of the brilliant French intellectual life! They knew the necessity to built modern democracy from European new ideas.

No doubt that JEFFERSON **influenced** the French: the author of the Declaration of Independence often consulted with LAFAYETTE during the drafting of his declaration of rights in July 1789, before it was presented to the National Assembly; he was present at the meeting of the Estates General in VERSAILLES; he had great correspondence with LAFAYETTE, the French Writer Madame de STAEL (1766-1817), the Marquis de CHASTELLUX, . No doubt that JEFFERSON succeeded **by using the French** in his doctrine of agrarianism: the LOUISIANA Purchase in 1803, which doubled the U.S territory, is one if the most brilliant enforcement of this doctrine: landownership is the best means to protect freedom and independence. No doubt that JEFFERSON, who opposed a strong central government for the United States, did not agree with the French "Colbertism" (strong centralized government).

He was the most Francophile of your presidents, for some reasons.

First, the young Virginian grew up with French: he learned and read French at the College of William and Mary from Mr DOUGLAS by the way, the first American chair of French was founded in this college...and was decried as a hot bed of infidelity!); he studied law saying that "*an acquaintance with the Latin and French languages is absolutely necessary*", as a foundation; he was interested in French History, writing about the murder of HENRY the IV by RAVAILLAC

Then he writes French in his English letters or speeches, using French words like *adieu, ennui, belles lettres, dénouement, belle assemblée, coup de grâce*, quoting RACINE, MONTAIGNE, DESCARTES and VOLTAIRE,

He has regular correspondence with French like CHASTELLUX, LAFAYETTE,

He educated MARTHA in saying: "*From 3 to 4, read French*". Actually, MARTHA spoke French as well as English.

He was a Parisian for about four years, as Benjamin FRANKLIN's successor (not replacing) as American Minister to FRANCE: arriving at PARIS on the 6th of August 1784, leaving on the 26th of September 1789, dealing with America's commerce -you had corn, the French were hungry- (*disette de l'hiver 1788*), but living **with the French**. The Hôtel de LANGEAC on the CHAMPS ELYSEES was like a Franco-American Salon, mixing Americans and French as BUFFON, MALESHERBES, VOLNEY, LA ROCHEFOUCAULD, CONDORCET, BEAUMARCHAIS, etc...

He loved the French people with all his heart and he enjoyed the intellectual and artistic circles into which he had been introduced by FRANKLIN and LAFAYETTE, loved shining PARIS with its theatres, concerts, bookstalls, architecture, Garden of Plants, Bois de Boulogne, sculpture, paintings and ladies... I am sorry Maria COSWAY was not French... He loved VERSAILLES. Do you know which was his first visit in FRANCE, before discovering PARIS: the "Machine de MARLY", extraordinary machine near LOUVECIENNES, built under LOUIS XIV, to bring water from the SEINE to the gardens of VERSAILLES ! He loved French daring and happiness...Maybe sometimes he was not critical enough, saying of the French: "*I have never yet seen a man drunk in FRANCE, even among the lowest of the people*". JEFFERSON was lucky or blind... But he respected more the French than the

British: "It must be the quantity of animal food which renders their character insusceptible of civilization".

Why was he inspired by the French, why was he closer to the French ?

- he was not a federalist like Alexander HAMILTON: more freedom;
- he was an agrarian;
- he was representing the aristocratic elite of the South; and he probably had a philosophical and cultural approach of life close to the French: happiness of life and elegance.
- he reads and shares MONTESQUIEU's constitutional ideas (he annotated *The Spirit of the Laws*);
- the emotional side of his character (see the extraordinary *dialogue between head and heart*) was quite appropriate to French sensibility; he probably had the desire to recreate in America the French "douceur de vivre",
- last but not least: he loved French countryside and wines, especially the BORDEAUX. The CHATEAU HAUT BRION still today mentions the visit of THOMAS JEFFERSON..

I think JEFFERSON was also a critical observer: he said our country would be most enviable **with a better religion and a better government**; he was quite critic with LOUIS XVI- *not very clever* - and Marie-Antoinette *-pride angel-* what he saw of the *vaunted scene of Europe* only deepened and intensified his democratic Americanism, as the concentration of French properties in a few hands stimulated his love of equality. In a way, the French bloody experience of Revolution was like a counter-example... JEFFERSON thought that bloody disorders might be avoided if LAFAYETTE and other moderate leaders would have been followed.

II-2 THE AMERICANOPHILE FRENCH

I will not talk today about the men who frightened WASHINGTON, JEFFERSON, FRANKLIN and Governor MORRIS, theorists and politicians, all madmen who unfortunately did a part of the French revolution, bringing murders,

terror, savagery... We had at this time - and they did not completely disappear from political French universe- quite extraordinary imbeciles and fanatic politicians: the DANTON, ROBESPIERRE, MARAT, FOUQUIER-TINVILLE and Ambassador GENET used to belong to the Jacobin tyranny and paranoia. Unfortunately, as LAZARE CARNOT said, NAPOLEON also refused to become a French WASHINGTON, to transform his victory into a constitutional order dedicated to Liberty. These French have nothing to do with democracy, nothing to do with our common heritage, nothing to do with America.

- **LOUIS XVI**

It was not an easy job for a King to support a revolution, even beyond the ocean. But he did. Louis XVI Please remember that this unfortunate King who died under the French cruelty and frenzy is the one who made possible the military help to the American insurgents.

Louis XVI was not an imbecile; he was simple, good, honest, sometimes weak and had true sympathy for the American Revolution: remember that the KING, against the opinion of his cabinet, accepted that FRANKLIN published in FRANCE a collection of the American States Constitutions. FRANKLIN even gave one as a gift to the KING in VERSAILLES and he accepted ! A King was helping insurgents against another king! He knew the danger for a King and his Court to support the struggle of a people against another King, even British !

Remember that this King accepted to spend a lot of money for America: two billions of livres, about four times the annual budget of the French State !. At this time, FRANCE had a national budget far higher than any other country (about 25 times the United States budget... which is different today).

But a few years later, the country went bankrupt, which precipitated the French revolution. That bankruptcy happened, in part, because of the earlier support to America (see the first nation's budget declaration by NECKER in 1781, labelled as "blue tale" just because the Minister forgot to mention the war's expenses...).

Anyway, the French help and victory made the King popular. In a way, Louis XVI is the one who made the American independence and democracy possible. He died because of the

- **CONDORCET**

He was also a "Marquis", member of the French Nobility, born in 1743 the same year than Thomas JEFFERSON) and died at the age of 51 (committed suicide in prison, to escape the crazy and radical French "Jacobins" or he might have been murdered...).

He both was mathematician (his first public distinctions were gained in mathematics at the age of 19), economist, politician and philosopher. He

was a friend of TURGOT, the "Contrôleur general des Finances" of FRANCE, of VOLTAIRE and d'ALEMBERT. CONDORCET was a member of the French Academy. He wrote a very interesting book dealing with the *intransitivity of majority decisions*: still today, you will hear of *CONDORCET paradox*: it is possible for a majority to prefer A over B, another majority to prefer B over C and another majority to prefer C over A, all from the same electorate and same set of ballots. He also designed a method to simulate pairwise elections between all candidates in an election, all things which are used in the American democracy !

CONDORCET was a moderate and *Girondist*: his philosophy was one of progress; he championed human rights, equality between men and women, abolition of slavery, and young AMERICA. He was a friend of THOMAS PAINE, who lived in FRANCE for 10 years and was one the unique American citizen elected member of the French "Convention". Together, they attempt to write a French Constitution. He was a man of unfluence as said ELISABETH BADINTER.

What did CONDORCET do for American democracy ? Actually, CONDORCET did not only study the influence of America on the French Revolution (*De l'influence de la Revolution d'Amérique sur l'Europe, 1786*); he made the American Constitutions popular. He wrote the most impressive text never done about BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (before the French Academy of Sciences on November 13, 1790:

- LAFAYETTE (1757-1834)

Gilbert du MORTIER, Marquis de LAFAYETTE, "our Marquis" as you say: inspite he is one of my fellow compatriot, I should talk today about "Your Marquis".

We could spend days and days talking about the extraordinary life of LAFAYETTE. Lets' talk HARLO GILES UNGER, who recently wrote a wonderful book named "LAFAYETTE". The words he uses are great: "*hero among heroes, champion of individual liberty, abolition, religious tolerance, gender equality, universal suffrage, free trade. He had no personal interest, just serve America and liberty! His friends were named George WASHINGTON, Benjamin FRANKLIN, Thomas JEFFERSON, MADISON, Alexander HAMILTON, Quincy*

ADAMS, etc... He was a true giant among Founding Fathers"; he was French, and you know he is now American, since the Congress .

You know the life of the brave French young knight forsaking fortune -he was one of the richest aristocrats in FRANCE (with an annual income of about 1,5 Million USD 2003), friends and family to fight for Liberty.

His life

Gilbert du MORTIER was born on September 6, 1757 in Auvergne, France. His full given name was Marie Joseph Paul Yves Roch Gilbert du Montier. His father died when he was 2 years old, and when his mother and grandfather died 11 year later, he inherited a large fortune. Lafayette, who came from a long line of soldiers, studied at the Military Academy in Versailles and became a captain in the French cavalry at age 16. In 1777, Lafayette purchased a ship, and with a crew of adventurers set sail for America to fight in the revolution against the British. Lafayette joined the ranks of American insurgents as a major general and was assigned to the staff of someone you may know: **George Washington**. He served with distinction, leading America forces to several victories. Lafayette arrived in Philadelphia in 1777. He was appointed a major general by the Continental Congress, was wounded at Brandywine, shared the winter hardships at Valley Forge and was a key strategist in the Yorktown campaign that led to the British surrender.

He also was instrumental in securing French aid for the struggling American forces. On a return visit to France in 1779 Lafayette persuaded the French government to send aid to the Americans. After the British surrender at Yorktown, Lafayette returned home to Paris. He had become a hero to the new nation. At home he cooperated closely with Ambassadors **Benjamin Franklin**, and then **Thomas Jefferson** in behalf of American interests. After 1782 Lafayette became absorbed with questions of reform in France. He was one of the first to advocate a National Assembly, and worked toward the establishment of a constitutional monarchy during the years leading up to the French Revolution of 1791. These efforts cost him much of his support from the French nobility. As commander of the French National Guard, Lafayette was forced to use force to put down crowd violence. By the 1791 he had lost most of his popularity with the people. In 1792 he tried unsuccessfully to curb radicalism against the monarchy. The King and Queen would not accept his assistance, and the troops he tried to turn on the Paris mob would not follow his orders. He was denounced as a traitor and fled the country. Lafayette returned to France in 1800 and found his personal fortune had been confiscated. In 1815 he was elected to the Chamber of Deputies. As one of its vice presidents, he worked for **Napoleon's** abdication after the Battle of Waterloo. Lafayette became a focal point of resistance to the Bourbon kings. In 1830 he became the leader of a Revolution that dethroned the Bourbons. He refused the popular demand that he become president of the new republic, and instead helped make Louis Philippe the constitutional monarch of France. Just before his death in 1834 he began to regret his support of Philippe and support the move to a pure republic in France. He was the first foreign dignitary to address Congress in 1824. Upon his death on May 20 1834, both the House and Senate draped their chambers in black. On August 6, 2002, he became the sixth honorary US citizen by bill of Senator John WARNER of VIRGINIA.

As former French Ambassador François BUJON de L'ESTANG said a few years ago, LAFAYETTE was a **man of vision**, the spokesman of political moderation.

Some remarks

- A rebellious: it is probably the first characteristic of the man. Born in a noble family, military officer, married to Adrienne de NOAILLES (March 14 1774: he was 16 and she was 13), he was entering one of the most prestigious French family, he starts his life by violating the King's order not to leave for America; the second LAFAYETTE departure was with the King's blessing. But not the first one. LAFAYETTE has been the most hated person in Europe, as said the Archbishop of TOULOUSE, "*the most dangerous man of there all*"; he dangerously opposed NAPOLEON too; in a way, he enforced the principle of DANTON: "*Daring, daring, daring, always daring!*". During LAFAYETTE's last trip to America and long stay in MONTICELLO (1825), JEFFERSON said: "*God forbids us to be more than twenty years without a good rebellion*".

- the man of two worlds: he was both French and American, devoting his life to cement American relations with FRANCE, French Noble and American Founder !. Nobody will never know whether he was feeling more French or more American. But his double belonging is amazing: he is the only commander of the Continental Army who speaks both English and French; he walks in the streets of VERSAILLES wearing the uniform of an American major General ! (can you imagine the stir); he is making influence on the French (VERGENNES and the King) in 1780 to send a naval and massive military force to America, later to get financial help to the very young nation; he introduced many American in PARIS (introducing "*mon ami américain*" was quite chic... But he also influenced Americans: by conspiring with FRANKLIN against Britain, by asking Washington to promote a new constitution to strengthen the federal union (interesting to understand that Washington's ideas to have a true Constitution may come from the French), by discussing with his close friends JAMES MONROE and JAMES MADISON... CHASTELLUX will write about LAFAYETTE letters: "*The private letters from him have frequently produced more effects upon some states than the strongest exhortations of Congress*". His third child, who is French, is named George-Washington (It is quite surprising that the French Etat-Civil accepted such a first name !). He tries to champion trade between the two countries: he knows that free trade and free commerce are part of democracy.

- A suffering man: "LAFAYETTE was obsessed with recreating the America he loved in the France he loved" says UNGER. Triumph and tragedy said Charles Eugene CLAGHORN... But he could not succeed: social reforms, republican self-government, true democracy came long after LAFAYETTE. Worst, he had to ask protection to the U.S from his own country. He was crushed by the wheel he

put in motion. You may remember the letter from ADRIENNE LAFAYETTE to WASHINGTON: "*I expect everything from the people in whose land he helped to form a model of that liberty of which he is now a victim*". LAFAYETTE had no chance to introduce American-style democracy in FRANCE neither individual liberty.

- A Republican: you may know the response of the King Charles III when he heard of LAFAYETTE plans to seize JAMAICA from SPAIN: "*No, no, I do not want him here; he will turn it into a Republic*". LAFAYETTE was a true democrat, pleading to free slaves; he was the very first to propose a French Bill of Rights on July 12 1789, giving the American Constitution as an example. "*The constancy of his love for liberty has been almost unique in the history of mankind*" (Ralph Waldo EMERSON).

- A generous man: MAUREPAS, French Minister, said that if LAFAYETTE had his way, he would have sold all the furniture of VERSAILLES to underwrite the American cause ! He was a man in quest of honor, glory and freedom, not sel-interest or money.

- A Democrat: as Secretary of State in 1778 (who could remember in 2003 that one of the predecessors of COLIN POWELL was French !), as Major general, as friend of WASHINGTON, FRANKLIN and JEFFERSON, LAFAYETTE worked for a united nation: he pleaded for federal union (PHILADELPHIA 1784) and friendship between states, at a time these states were acting like independent nations...

A few weeks ago, as I was preparing my lecture, I went to the "*Cimetière de PICPUS*", which is a cemetery in PARIS. Here is the grave which houses the remains of "Your MARQUIS", his wife Adrienne and their son, Georges-Washington. There is a flag on the grave: it is not the French one; it is American, replaced with a new one every year by the U.S Ambassador to FRANCE. It is a very moving place. The soil is French and American. It was shipped back by LAFAYETTE himself in 1825; it comes from the Brandywine Valley in Virginia, where he first fought in America as he was about your age ! This was LAFAYETTE's will: enter into eternity with the two countries he loved so much, FRANCE and America.

- **CHATEAUBRIAND**

He was a founder of romanticism in French literature: love stories, melancholy, exotic descriptions, imagination and moving... You may know *The Genius of Christianity* or *Memoirs from behind the tomb*. Minister of

Foreign affairs in 1823, Ambassador to LONDON in 1822, he visited United States in 1791. He was fascinated by the unique American experience: "*La liberté américaine est la fille des lumières et de la raison*".

- **TOCQUEVILLE**

Innovative and pragmatic, the political institutions of the young American nation attracted the brightest minds of Europe. Among them was a French legal expert whose penetrating analyses remain relevant today. Charles Alexis Clérel, the Count of Tocqueville, was born in 1805. His career as a Justice Magistrate began in 1827 at Versailles. In 1831, he was sent to the United States to investigate its penal system. There he studied the institutions and ways of life in the new nation. Tocqueville published his observations as *Democracy in America*, between 1835 and 1840. It enjoyed immediate success in France as well as in England (Tocqueville married and practiced law in England). The acuity of its analyses and its almost clairvoyant commentary, made *Democracy in America* an immediate classic.

To this day, it remains an extremely accurate study of the American political system. Tocqueville was one of the first political thinkers to point out the potential danger of the 'dictatorship of the majority' inherent in a democracy. He also insisted on the importance of an independent press and judiciary. Elected to the prestigious Académie Française, he was a liberal member of the opposition to the government, and deputy from the Manche region of northern France. As such, he defended the freedom of education and free trade. After the 1848 Revolution, he was elected to the Assembly and charged with drawing up the constitution of France's Second Republic. Many aspects of this constitution bear his trademark and were clearly inspired by the American example. In particular, it calls for presidential elections by universal suffrage every four years and the separation of the powers of government. As deputy at the Legislative Assembly of 1849, and Minister of Foreign Affairs, of Tocqueville opposed Napoléon III's coup. He went into exile first to Italy and then to Germany. In 1859, he died in Cannes in the south of France.

The American success

Revolution led in the New World spanned American democracy;

The French paradox

As a witness of the French revolution - he was Minister to FRANCE from ...Thomas JEFFERSON already doubted the French people could duplicate the American example of republican government... Actually, it was easier to establish new social order in the former British colonies than it was in FRANCE.

One of the great questions we have to deal with is the following: **America and France started from the same *philosophes*, same ideas, same purposes... But results were so different! One Constitution on one side, 16 on the other side; peace and democracy on one side; war, blood, violence and passions on the other side; *stability and disorder, felicity and perpetual vibration would have said Alexander HAMILTON ! From crisis to crisis,***

The response has to be found in the different spirits of our nations -we can see that still today- but also in the circumstances.

You had to make unity from of confederation of states; you had federalists and anti-federalists but you did agree on the same values: sovereignty, republic, separation of powers, civil rights, with a strong reluctance to the State. You were fortunate: you had great Founding Fathers, intelligent people, reasonable, peaceful (*peace is my passion* said JEFFERSON).

We had a different situation: very old monarchy, state religion and rich catholic official church, privileges, centuries-old inegalitarian legal system, suffocating traditions, discriminations between people, strong and united state... and no GEORGE WASHINGTON but madmen like ROBESPIERRE, MARAT, SAINT-JUST or DANTON, bureaucracy, huge army (more than 100.000 troops). And we had for centuries a tradition of despotism, power coming from God and not from the people. Work was different, much more difficult, even if ideas were the same at the very beginning. The American experimentation of democracy was not possible in France... We did our Revolution, but contrasts between Old World and new ideas were too strong and French behaviour too violent: about 500.000 people died of it; among them were at least 100.000 children! And 1 million went to jail...We regret every day our treasures,

destroyed by the Revolution. Still today, it is possible to cross in this country people who would like to plant heads on pikes...

Revolution led in the Old World genocidal political ideologies, communism, fascism, nazism... Revolution in FRANCE was not only ideas, but blood: you should remind thousands of victims who died under "LA TERREUR". A few weeks ago, I did a very moving visit: the cemetery of PICPUS in PARIS, where between June 14 and July 27 1794, 1300 people were buried after guillotined, just because they did not share the same ideas than the government...

Some tried to introduce American model of Democracy in France; but they did not succeed. LAFAYETTE again, was declared an enemy of the State just because he requested for constitutional monarchy.

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

- The war to IRAQ: FRANCE was in favour of diplomacy and diplomacy only: UN resolution 1441 (disarmament **without a war**, nobody will be able to say whether the resolution would have been successful or not); we knew the growing place of US in Middle East since 50 years; and I think many French were doubting about the real purposes of America. Perhaps we were not efficient enough before the UN or too arrogant...). Anyway, The French Diplomacy thinks that the Palestinian issue is the main origin of terrorism. Regarding the issue we have to deal with today, one thing is clear: if democracy can be brought to Iraq by the war (President BUSH quite often mentioned such a goal), nobody can criticize such a result ! **Anyway, a true friend can be demanding, perhaps has to be !** We may also be keen on defending our own interests, as every other nation would be, as America would be.
- International or foreign standards: this is a great debate ? Does America have to take into consideration universal values, especially as they are protected by the international law (great issue of Les rencontres de PETRARQUE in MONTPELLIER in July 2002) ? Does America have to use foreign legal concepts ?

- The "Convention for European Union": it is quite amazing to see that the convention which is meeting in 2003 under the presidency of former French President GISCARD d'ESTAING to work on a Constitution for Europe is not very far from the convention which met in PHILADELPHIA from May 25, 1787... Same issues are discussed: federalism, subsidiarity, checks and balances, etc... Even before the convention, we knew that the principle of "subsidiarity" made by the Treaty of MAASTRICHT (1992) was not far from the American idea: everything that does not belongs to the Federation belongs to the States. The problem is that European integration always goes further, especially with the case law of the European Court of Justice: primacy of E.U law is the main purpose, almost everywhere... To give you an example, about 60% of laws adopted last year by the French legislator were E.U laws !
- How is FRANCE ? Nice country to live, excellent food, beautiful architecture, exquisite countryside... But member of Europe which could be on decline very low demography (1.4), low immigration, low competitiveness (30th world rank), still heavy taxes, low investments, etc.. Result for Europe: 12% of the world gross product in 50 years ! (recent study of Institut Français de Relations Internationales).
- What makes us closer ?
 - FRANCE is more and more getting to a Judiciary power, even if our Constitution still mentions "Judiciary authority" and not power (since the Monarchy, the French fear power of Judges -see law 16-24 August 1790); our contemporary analysis of separation of powers becomes closer to the American one;
 - Judicial Review becomes a reality in our country with the case-law of the *Conseil Constitutionnel*;
 - we have no *Common Law* but case-law is having a
 - US SUPREME COURT

Conclusion

The American Nation was grateful to the French: more than 600 villages, towns, cities, mountains, counties, lakes... were named LAFAYETTE in America (not a single community in France, except one street in Paris and one in Versailles).

TREASURE FRANCO-AMERICAN RELATIONSHIP

Richard PERLE, the chairman of the PENTAGON's Policy Advisory Board until quite recently, (I met him; he loves FRANCE and has a house in PROVENCE...) was wrong when he said - February 2003) that FRANCE is no longer an ally of the US. He was wrong: **we are the oldest and the closest friend of your country**. US has never been at war with FRANCE (not far in 1798 and 1799, when the American Ship *Constellation* had to fight with the French Ship

l'*Insurgente*); it was with BRITAIN, GERMANY, ITALY, SPAIN... but never with us. It might be possible, as said Colin POWELL, that we need "*conjugal therapy*"...

But don't you think that the best couples are the ones who know the difference between the people. We are grateful to America for freedom and decisive role in final victory in 1918 (136.516 Americans died for freedom in Europe) and 1944 (405.399 died). We do not forget. We will never forget.

And today, we are with you in the war against terrorism. Remember the words of President CHIRAC on September 11: "*France will be in the front line in the combat against international terrorist networks, shoulder to shoulder with America and its ally for ever.*" On the Iraq issue, we did disagree. But as French Ambassador Jean-David LEVITTE said to your country in Florida: "*You wanted FRANCE and the French people to be a free people and indeed we express our views on world affairs as a free people !*".

Believe that we are friends, or at least, as said ROBERT DARNTON from PRINCETON UNIVERSITY, believe that our misunderstandings are creative... But continue to cherish and **built** our friendship, which was not born from nothing or given by Heaven, but built by founders, politicians, soldiers, sometimes who gave their life to common ideal...

Continue the great work and please avoid the *clichés* (freedom fries, etc...).

KEEP AND DEFEND DEMOCRATIC VALUES

One of the big issues I like to deal with is: since two centuries, **were FRANCE and AMERICA moved by ideals and true friendship or by common interests, or perhaps by both** ? The utilitarian approach can be found on both sides of the Ocean, since years and is quite common: ANDRE TARDIEU, French High Commissioner in WASHINGTON in 1917-1918, presumed to be an Americanophile, said that relations between US and FRANCE are ruled by one single law: the law of interest. And JOHN ADAMS said.... But there is another way to approach our relationships, which is based on mutual confidence and affection. Remember the words of LA FAYETTE aboard LA VICTOIRE, his own ship, in 1777: "*I bring with me nothing, but my heart and good will. The happiness of AMERICA is intimately connected with the happiness of all mankind*".

We had a common enemy: BRITAIN; we loved freedom in the Enlightenment. Still today, business, technology (Europe is far from US in research expenses) can make people close. Democracy also makes the two people close: nobody more than French thinkers since TOCQUEVILLE are more interested in American politics (perhaps because of our difficulties to make stable politics and social happiness in our country !).

But this is not essential: essential is that we share the same ideal. It is not accident that American woman and Frenchman, Eleanor ROOSEVELT and René CASSIN together wrote *the Universal Declaration of Human rights*. As said former Ambassador BUJON de LESTANG, *"the religion of liberty is the clue to the very profound and indestructible bond which, throughout two centuries of history, has united France and the United States, and gives the relationship between our two countries its unique character"*. It is true that we did not have the same approach of political philosophy: to be simple, you thought that society was good and power dangerous; we thought that society was corrupted and power regenerating ! But I hope you are now convinced that we share the essential: supremacy of the Constitution, same universalism,

Is it necessary to say "We are European" as some American said in 1940 or "We are American" as proclaimed the Chairman of LE MONDE (Jean-Marie COLOMBANI) on September 11 2001 ? We say in FRANCE: "Le mieux est l'ennemi du bien" (*Best is the enemy of good*). I would prefer to say: **"What we share is stronger than what can separate us"**: we have common democratic values, common search of liberty.

But make no mistake: not all values are good for democracy. Make a difference between tolerance and relativism. It is necessary to respect different ideas; but it is more essential to reject any other concept which has nothing to do with our philosophical foundations, the principles I talked about before.

A few months ago, I met the Honorable United States Justice Anthony KENNEDY. He said to our Assembly after I spoke to him that *"the work of Freedom is never done"*. He was right. This work has to be renewed at each generation. We talked about the past; but democracy is your future too. It is our future, our common heritage. It is precious and may be compromised at anytime. Do you think that fundamentalists who attacked your country on September 11 respect democracy ?. Do you believe that the extreme right

candidate at the second round of the French presidential election of 2001 had the purpose to bring democracy ?.

Please, I would like to ask you a favour: do not remember anything from my lecture, but only one question, one response and one advice.

The question is: what do American and French share and cherish the most ?.

The response is: the spirit of liberty and the pursuit of happiness !

Try to be free and happy; and remember MONTESQUIEU's advice: "*To do great things, it is not necessary to be a genius and to be over the men. Just be with them*".

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But the eternal problem between us is not the Atlantic Ocean... It is another Ocean named "*ignorance*", the abyss that has to be effaced... As said Paul Henri BENJAMIN, "*You believe we are very old. We believe you are very young. We are both wrong*"

Because you are young: you may know the age of LAFAYETTE when he decided to fight and bleed for liberty; he was 19!

Because future generations must continue the unending struggle to translate democratic faith into democratic practice.

I have no doubt these are very serious issues. Even today, French elegance is everywhere: "*The contrast between French elegance and American pragmatism should make a fascinating show !*" (San Francisco Chronicle, August 2003, about the Annual Pebble Beach Concours d'Elégance in California).