

Speech by the President of the Republic on the occasion of the Atlantic Council Global Award ceremony

Thank you very much. I want to thank first Laurie for your kind words and Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends.

Tonight, we are celebrating a strong and lasting friendship. « A big, beautiful friendship », would say a friend of mine. At the very beginning, I didn't understand exactly why I was awarded tonight with my great friends Gianni and Javier. It was a little strange to me, and I started to think about that, and probably it was because three of us are soccer fans, or, Gianni, football fans. Boca Juniors, Inter Milan and l'Olympique de Marseille.

It's true that I remember a great final in 2018. It's another time, in another world, but we were in Russia, believe it or not, with Gianni Infantino, and France won the World cup. In 2022, it was in Qatar. And I don't remember the end of this game. I'm sorry, Javier. More seriously, I want to thank the Atlantic Council for this great honor tonight and this Global Citizen Award.

I have a very elaborated speech done by my team, but I think at the end of this dinner, I will kill you if I just read the speech. So let me just share a few thoughts on how to take such a prize and which type of call to action I got from it.

I would say when we speak about Global Citizenship in the current world, it could be a big problem for you, because being global is not so good for a leader today. And let me first say, but it was perfectly phrased by my predecessors here, that you can be a global leader, deeply rooted, and you can believe in patriotism and defend your country without being a nationalist. This is a big difference. The big difference is that being full of patriotism makes you loving your country, but attacking the others, which is the main difference with a nationalist guy. This is why I'm here in front of you, as a clear patriot for France, but as a strong advocate for Europe and a strong believer in global cooperation and in this global order.

I'm known in France for the « *en même temps* » which means « at the same time ». And a lot of people reproach me to have a sort of ambiguity with that. No. You can refuse to make stupid choices and you can refuse stupid alternatives. You can love your country and love to cooperate with the others. This is just a matrix of being a global citizen.

Now, after the Second World War, we built all together, and this is clearly the DNA of our United Nations. We build this order to have peace, prosperity and democracy. These three core ideas and concepts are the one at stake today, and in order not just to protect them, but to be sure that ourselves and our children will benefit from peace, prosperity and democracy.

This is the very moment where we will have to work very hard and cooperate altogether. Peace first, let's be clear. When you look at the situation today, there is a huge risk to live in a world where this is the end of the rule of law, where this is the end of our UN Charter.

You mentioned, and I want to thank you for that, the aggression war launched by Russia on Ukraine. Let me tell you, this is not just the war of Ukrainian people. They are so brave and we all admire them tonight, and please applaud them. This is obviously an existential war for the Europeans because this is our security which is at stake. But this is a war for everybody in this world. Because if you remain passive, if you don't react to this aggression war against the sovereignty, I mean the territory and integrity of Ukrainian people, it means just that you renounce to the UN Charter.

The day after, what is your guarantee not to live in the wild West ? Nothing. So our duty as free nations, as members of this United Nations, it's clearly to back the Ukrainians in this resistance, to back the Ukrainians in order not just to resist, but to recover their territory and their integrity. This is why we worked very hard with so many colleagues and allies to build this coalition of the Willings together with the UK Prime Ministers. We are 35 nations working for the day after on security guarantees for Ukraine. But this is why, above all, we have to step up to help the Ukrainians to resist in this time. This is the core of the discussion we had yesterday with President Trump. And we agreed to say : Russia is not the one you believe in. Russia is not so strong. Look at the situation. More than 1 000 days, they just took 1 % of the Ukrainian territory. If we decide that Russia has to come back at the table of negotiation and accept to respect Ukraine as a free country, we can do it. So we strongly believe in peace, but not a peace which will be in a certain way a surrender for Ukraine. A robust and solid peace, compliant with our international order and our UN Charter. This is our objective and this is what we will deliver.

This is as well what is at stake in the Middle East. Let me just say a few words on Middle East tonight here. Because if we want to be Global Citizens, if we believe that we live in a global order, we should never accept a double standard.

What is the credibility of the Europeans or others to say : it's very important to respect territorial integrity of the Ukrainians, it's very important to respect the principles of UN Charter. But not to have a single word for the Middle East, not to have a single word for what's happening in Gaza. We kill our credibility with such an approach. It's not understood in the rest of the world, because what is at stake is a human life. This is why we do condemn with strength the terrible terrorist attacks the 7 October 2023, launched by the Hamas, a terrorist group. This is why our top priority today is the release of all hostages.

At the time of Roch Hachana, I have a special thought for all the families of these 48 hostages and all the families being victims of the 7th of October. But this is why we have to call - we can applaud them - but this is why we have to call for an immediate ceasefire in Gaza as well, for clearly humanitarian action and to stop this war without end. This is why we proposed two days ago with Saudi Arabia, not just the recognition of Palestine made by 11 countries from Canada, UK to Australia and France, but a peace and security plan for all backed by 142 countries, which is first, the release of hostages, the ceasefire. Second, the stabilization of Gaza and the dismantling of Hamas. Third, a two states solution which is the only way to have Palestinian people living in peace, in a Palestinian state, being demilitarized, recognizing Israel, Israel recognizing this state and having all the neighbors and specially those which today don't recognize Israel recognize in it. This is just the only way for all to have peace and sustainability and this is as well precisely what the United Nations voted 78 years ago. No double standard. Believe me, this is part of our credibility.

I cannot mention tonight all the wars, but this is always the same thing we have to do, working hard together, cooperating and fixing the situation to build peace and sustainable peace. If we speak about prosperity, this is the same. In order to deliver such an agenda, we need more cooperation. I don't believe we can fix the global imbalances of this world by fighting each other or fragmenting the economic global order. We do have global imbalances. Lack of domestic demand in China, lack of investment in Europe, more need of money and investment into key challenges in Africa and over indebtedness in some sectors here. But the only way to fix it is precisely to resynchronize this debate and to cooperate as we did when we launched the G7 more than 50 years ago. It will be core for our G7 agenda next year.

We have clearly to work together in order to deliver this agenda of prosperity. This is why IMF and World Bank, dear Kristalina, are so important in this agenda. Because in this very moment we are first to accelerate our growth policy in our economies. More innovation, more simplification, big acceleration in order to deliver more growth. But as well we have to deliver a more balanced world. And this is why we need stronger instruments, public and private, in order at the same time to deliver our tech, green, tech and climate agenda. Global order. If we just are focused on deregulation in our economy without any solidarity with our vis a vis the other members of the UN. If we don't deliver our climate agenda and we should remain focused on this agenda, it's very important. This is not because I would say the global discussion seems to change, that we will be citizens of another world. There is no Planet B. And this is why when we speak about prosperity, we need more growth, more innovation, more redistribution and fixing climate change by innovation and decarbonization of our economies. No other choice. And the last one is about democracy. Obviously, it seems to be so naive to speak about democracy, but look at our democracies. I'm not so sure we are in a good shape. Look at the violence in our societies. Javier mentioned that. Look at the race of the extremes and the permanent disorder of democracies where there is a sort of legitimization of excessive words, hate speech and so on. The basics of democracy is because you can vote, because you can change your leaders, because you vote for your laws. You need respect and peaceful debates. And we are losing these basics. And let me just share one conviction. When we speak about democracies in this country, but in mine as well.

We will have to work very hard on social media. Our democracies were not conceived with for the social media and this is a huge issue and we were definitely too naive. Our young people and teenagers are hurt by this social media. It's now well documented. But if we speak about mental health of our teenagers and young people, just look at the social media and what happens. From bullying to obsession of some references. But this is making their life impossible. We have to protect them. For our democracies, we already have a sacrifice generation, the one who started with social media in 2015. We are not allowed to remain passive. But more than that, look at all of us. We were educated to learn about the world, to try to be educated and to digest some information sometimes in the day and to try to think about what's happening to live in a global shared world. Now from the morning till the end, we eat this permanent food delivered by the social media and the merit order is the argument is the lower emotion is much stronger and negative emotion is much, much higher. Because everything is driven by an algorithm. I don't know, you don't know, but made on purpose to create excitement, engagement and guess what, money. I don't want my democracy to be driven by an algorithm whose unique purpose is to create this excitement and to spread crazy contents because it's just killing the possibility of a common discussion. It's just pushing people to the extremes. It's just killing our common approach of a common world and a shared world. And it's just framing our democracies in favor of the extremes.

Our democracies are at risk because we are too naive with something which is quite well organized. So let me tell you that if we want to be efficient and remain democracies, speaking about democratic values in a few years' time in this room, we should act and we should regulate. And the regulation of social network is not a bad word. This is just a necessity to work together on peace, prosperity and democracy. We need this strong alliance, especially between the United States and France, the United States and Europe. This is our history. This is history from Lafayette to the First World War and the Second World War. And we are here together. And I want to conclude by telling you how much this partnership is important and how much you need here in the US a stronger European. Sometimes, people thought that having a stronger Europe was something detrimental to the transatlantic relation. This is the opposite. Having a strong Europe, Europe has a power, a financial, an economic, a military power. It's just having a Europe which shares the same values as the US, but is able to take its fair part, its fair share in this global order. But we have to work together very hard, and each time we diverge, this is a time where we are less efficient to fix a war, less efficient to build a sustainable prosperity, less efficient to work and improve our democracies. I was already too long and I do apologize for that. But as you understand, I strongly believe that this cooperation between our countries is the only way, the only way to remain global citizens in this current environment. As for the rest and beyond cooperation, partnership and friendship, leave it to the football field.

Dear Jenny, thank you for your attention.