

Speech by H.E. Sylvie Bermann
French Ambassador to the United Kingdom
at the ceremony to award the insignia of *Chevalier*
in the *Ordre national de la Légion d'Honneur*
to Mr Michael Borrell
French Residence
Tuesday 28 June 2016

Ladies and gentlemen,

Cher Michael Borrell,

I'm very happy to welcome you this afternoon, surrounded by your loved ones, friends and colleagues, to the French Residence, to present you, *cher* Michael, with the insignia of *Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur*. Today I'm delighted to be decorating a man who, over a career lasting more than 30 years, has contributed to France's economic influence in the world by upholding the interests of the Total group. I also especially welcome the presence alongside you of Patrick Pouyanné and all the other members of Total who are here, and who testify to the company's esteem and gratitude towards you.

Before coming back to your career and achievements, I'd like to stress how much this award in London highlights your major contribution to the North Sea oil and gas sector.

You began your career with Total in that same North Sea... really far north, four hundred and forty kilometres north-east of Aberdeen, where you took part in developing Total's first British offshore field, Alwyn North. You also helped forge Total's North Sea strategy from nineteen-ninety-seven to two-thousand, preparing Total's purchase of Belgium's Petrofina in nineteen-ninety-nine and then Elf Aquitaine in two-thousand. Today you're returning to your first love, because last year you added the United Kingdom to your portfolio. So today you're

both Senior Vice-President Continental Europe and Central Asia and, since the first of January twenty-fifteen, Director of Total Holdings UK. You thus demonstrate not only that the gas market is no longer regional but global, but also that you hold an absolutely crucial strategic role in the Total group.

Under your leadership, the Total group is on the way to becoming the UK's top hydrocarbons producer, no less, largely thanks to strategic investments and the development of new technologies for deep offshore production – I'm thinking in particular of the Laggan-Tormore field, situated north-west of the Shetland Islands, and its natural gas processing plant, which I had the pleasure of inaugurating with you on the sixteenth of May. The Total group managed to invest at the right moment in the price cycle, enabling Total today to consolidate its presence in the UK despite a difficult context of low prices per barrel. The situation was also commended by the Energy Secretary, Amber Rudd, who attended the inauguration.

Your international career with Total is brilliantly impressive and varied, *cher* Michael, and you've played a significant role in extending France's influence well beyond the North Sea. From two-thousand to two-thousand-and-three you were in Argentina during the economic crisis that gripped the country; then you returned to Indonesia, where you focused particularly on liquefied natural gas (LNG), in connection with one of the world's largest liquefaction plants, the Bontang plant. In two-thousand-and-six you returned to the American continent, this time the North, to develop the tar sands exploitation that would ultimately be abandoned in view of its production costs and, above all, Total's decision to adopt a proactive climate change policy, as also shown by your group's aim of devoting twenty percent of its assets to low-carbon energy within twenty years. Total thus becomes the first "major" in the hydrocarbon sector to clarify its climate vision and ambition – a strong symbol in the context of the ratification of the Paris climate agreement, adopted in December and especially championed by France.

The role you occupy in the North Sea, *cher* Michael, is also highly strategic, given the challenge of securing Europe and France's hydrocarbons supply.

On this strategic supply challenge, in your post as Senior Vice-President Continental Europe and Central Asia for the past six years, you've been especially committed to obtaining the strategic agreement in Russia with Novatek to build the Yamal gas liquefaction plant, one of Total's most promising projects but also one of its most complex.

Cher Michael, I'm aware of your fondness for France, the ties you've forged with it, and I understand that in a moment you'll be describing the important stages in your life which have unfolded on French soil. But in any case I'd like to highlight a flagship project in Total's story, a symbol of French oil production history to which you've been contributing since twenty-thirteen: the redevelopment of the legendary Lacq gas production site in Aquitaine. Under your leadership, the end of production at this field in twenty-thirteen was accompanied by an exemplary development of the site, which kept alive a significant business network and seven thousand five hundred jobs on site.

In view of your brilliant career, this year you were appointed a French Foreign Trade Adviser in the UK, and I'm sure you will be putting your skills and experience at the service of the Franco-British business community.

Cher Michael, because of your outstanding career, your personal commitment to Total's and France's international influence, France wanted to pay tribute to you this evening and award you our highest distinction.

Michael Borrell, au nom du Président de la République et en vertu des pouvoirs qui nous sont conférés, nous vous faisons Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur.