



ORDER OF FRIENDSHIP AWARDED BY VLADIMIR PUTIN, PRESIDENT OF RUSSIA

THANKS FROM GILLES REMY

**THE KREMLIN, NOVEMBER 4, 2017
(Translation from Russian)**

Mister President of the Russian Federation,
Dear Vladimir Vladimirovich,

When my parents hung a poster of Gagarin in my bedroom when I was a child, little did they know that one day their son would be decorated at the Kremlin by the President of Russia. Today, my thoughts go to them.

It is probably thanks to them that very early, I became interested in Russia and later fascinated by the Russian world.

It is probably also thanks to them that Russia has held an important place in my professional and private life for more than 30 years.

During this period dedicated to international business and industrial cooperation, I had to adapt to major upheavals with planetary repercussions.

I watched the world's second greatest power collapse. I saw Russia itself on the verge of vanishing as a State in the chaos of the 1990's.

I saw the rebirth and reconstruction of the Russian State, and watched Russia gain renewed respect. For this, Vladimir Vladimirovich, History will definitely be grateful to you.

In each of these vastly different periods, I had the privilege of working on prestigious and strategic projects. With major successes, such as the oil and nuclear industries, beginning in the 1980's. With major disappointments, such as the wonderful cooperation to build the Mistrals, terminated by decision of the former French President.

My professional career has allowed me discover virtually every region of the former USSR. My company, CIFAL, developed business relations with all the new countries of Central Asia and the Caspian region, at a time when Russia was losing interest in its near abroad.

Today more than ever, I appreciate the human and cultural richness of these peoples sharing a glorious common past. I appreciate Russia's contribution to European civilization. I appreciate the immense courage of the Russian people. I appreciate their freedom of speech, which is not stifled by political correctness.

Dear friends, the commercial and industrial projects I have realized have been a modest contribution to the rapprochement between France and Russia. As a businessman I am happy for this, and as a French citizen I am proud, because, as General de Gaulle said, *"For France and for Russia, to be united is to be strong. To be divided is to be endangered."*

Today, the world is a dangerous place. We must therefore work harder than ever to come together.

Thank you, dear Vladimir Vladimirovich, for the honor you bestow upon me by granting me this prestigious decoration.

Long live friendship and cooperation between France and Russia.