

《双语新闻：奥朗德新欢旧爱》

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French President Francois Hollande faced the press for nearly three hours on Tuesday but refused to answer questions about reports of an affair with an actress.

Hollande said only that he and his partner, France's official First Lady Valerie Trierweiler, were going through a "difficult and painful period." He insisted, "I have one principle, and that is private matters should be dealt with privately."

Trierweiler was admitted to hospital, reportedly suffering from shock and depression, after a celebrity magazine reported Friday on Hollande's alleged trysts with actress Julie Gayet. The magazine Closer published several photographs of a man on the back of a scooter, said to be the president on his way to visit the actress at a borrowed apartment, where he reportedly spent the night.

Asked how Trierweiler was doing, Hollande's reply was frosty. "She's resting. That's all I will say," he said.

In his opening remarks, which lasted 40 minutes and covered a wide range of subjects, Hollande unveiled plans to guarantee "France's place in the world."

He pledged to boost employment and economic growth, as well as to make nearly \$89 billion in cuts to public spending by 2017. He said he would reduce taxes and red tape for French companies in return for promises that they would create more jobs, especially for the young. And he said he would introduce measures to save money by cutting the "excess and abuse" in the country's health system.

He also spoke of forging closer ties with Germany, including a possible military alliance between the countries.

A handful of journalists tried to ask questions about what the French and international media are calling the "Hollande affair," but the president cut them short.

An Associated Press reporter remarked that Hollande would be making a number of foreign trips, including one to the United States in February to meet President Obama, and asked if the recent scandal would tarnish his image.

"In France, we have a certain number of principles," Holland replied. "They are respect for private lives and our liberty and conception of the press. That is what we have ... a certain number of values and principles."

However, Hollande did say earlier that he would "clarify" the official position of Trierweiler, who was expected to accompany him on the trip to Washington, before leaving France.

