



## **New Year greeting to the diplomatic corps** **Speech by M. Jacques Chirac, President of the Republic**

Paris, 6 January 2005

Prime Minister,  
Minister of Foreign Affairs,  
Ministers,  
Ambassadors,  
Ladies and gentlemen,  
Your Excellency, the Papal Nuncio,

Thank you for your words of great humanity and wisdom, which touched me. I would also like to extend my very sincere good wishes to you and ask you, Your Excellency, to convey to His Holiness Pope John Paul II my respectful and deferential greetings and the very warm wishes of the French people.

A few days ago, death and destruction descended on the shores of the Indian Ocean, striking Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, Malaysia and the Maldives particularly hard and affecting places as far away as Africa and the Arabian peninsula. I wish first of all to present my very sincere condolences and those of the French people to the ambassadors of the countries struck by this terrible cataclysm.

France and many other countries outside the area, especially in Europe, suffered painful losses in this disaster. I extend my condolences to the ambassadors of all those countries whose citizens perished or disappeared on that fateful day.

All of us are aware that the exceptional scale of this tragedy is today arousing an immense surge of solidarity across the world, despite the distances involved. Faced with this ordeal, we are aware of the extent to which we form a single mankind whose destiny is indistinguishable from that of our planet.

Within a few hours of the catastrophe, France had mobilized to provide relief to her citizens and the stricken populations. She will continue to work alongside the countries of the region. I called a meeting yesterday of the French non-governmental organizations, which have been playing such an active role on the ground, to better support their work.

At the end of the meeting with the Prime Minister and ministers which I chaired this morning, it was decided to focus our immediate efforts on providing access to drinking water for the stricken people and on preventing epidemics by setting up a field hospital in northern Sumatra and sending the Jeanne d'Arc helicopter-carrier to the area.

At the meeting of the Paris Club on 12 January, France will call for an



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immediate and interest-free moratorium on debt repayment for those countries of the region which so wish. For the worst-affected countries, France will be proposing additional debt-relief measures in the light of the assessment of reconstruction needs. I have submitted to the British G8 Presidency a proposal that the G8 adopt a generous and coordinated approach to these issues and I know this is indeed the intention of our British friends.

Beyond this first response, the united international community acting in a spirit of solidarity must continue its efforts over the long haul and help people to begin the process of reconstruction without delay.

Months will certainly, years will probably be needed to overcome this catastrophe. The fate of millions of men, women and children now hangs in the balance.

Tomorrow in Brussels, France will support a massive commitment by the European Union to help the region, calling for all available resources to be brought together in a European Reconstruction Fund.

Beyond the already scheduled short-term bilateral and multilateral assistance, France, like her European partners, is ready to mobilize the financial resources required for reconstruction, based on need assessments. These outlays will be announced at the donor conferences.

These events also highlight the need to increase official development assistance and find innovative funding mechanisms such as international taxation, which is today inevitable. France will be raising these issues throughout the year within the G8 and the United Nations.

We must also learn the long-term lessons of this tragedy. We must put in place a worldwide early-warning network based on regional systems like the one that exists in the Pacific. France will contribute to the development of this network.

To respond to such catastrophes we must also reinforce the international community's emergency response capabilities. To this end, I propose the creation of a humanitarian rapid reaction force within the framework of the United Nations. I have put this idea to the Secretary-General. The new system will have to be based on regional structures. This is why France will be proposing in Brussels tomorrow that we look at setting up a European civil protection force that can be mobilized immediately from pre-identified national resources and has a coordination capability. This force should include a medical unit and be capable of addressing medical, social and psychological needs.

Finally, this earthquake must finally make us take a more global approach to natural disaster prevention. Within the next 50 years the world population is expected to rise by 50%, with most of the increase taking place along the coasts and rivers of the countries of the South. We know that these areas exposed to extreme natural events will be particularly affected by global warming. If we are to prevent and deal with the consequences of these foreseeable disasters, it is urgent that we re-start the international debate, especially in the framework of the United Nations. France will be making proposals to this effect.

Iraq. The Middle East. Côte d'Ivoire. Darfur. Attacks in Madrid, Istanbul, Beslan the year that has just ended was again marked by violence, terrorism and war.



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Yet beyond the crises and disorder in the world, new prospects have opened up. In Iraq, with UNSCR 1546, we have laid the groundwork for a political process. In the Middle East, the maturity of the Palestinian people faced with finding a successor to Yasser Arafat, who personified their aspirations for so many years, and the courageous decision by the Israeli government to disengage from Gaza, hold out, for the first time in four years, the possibility of ending the impasse.

In Afghanistan, where the united international community continues to combat terrorism, the successful presidential elections set the stage for renewal.

In Côte d'Ivoire and Darfur, the Africans have engaged notably through the African Union, which is gaining ever greater authority, and with the support of the United Nations in the process of bringing the parties back to the path of dialogue, understanding and peace.

In Europe, a new chapter has begun with the enlargement and the signature of the Constitutional Treaty. A Europe mobilized to serve peace. The EU has taken action in theatres of operations beyond its borders, initiating in Bosnia the largest military operation it has ever conducted. The EU is making progress on building a credible Defence Europe that is contributing to strengthening the Atlantic Alliance. This will be France's message at the NATO Extraordinary Summit on 22 February in Brussels. The EU also offered to mediate the political crisis in Ukraine whose outcome marked a step forward for democracy. I commend the action taken there by Javier Solana and the Polish and Lithuanian presidents. And, lastly, the EU has played a leading role in the battle against nuclear proliferation, through the dialogue with Iran.

The year that has just ended also saw progress in the establishment of a world order based on greater fairness and solidarity.

Ratification of the Kyoto Protocol by Russia paved the way for a historic step forward in the fight against climate change and its tragic consequences.

The successful meeting organized by Brazil, Chile, Spain and France on 20 September last year in New York lent an impetus which I think and hope is irresistible to the debate on financing for development.

2005 will be a year of decisive milestones for peace and for the future of multilateralism. With only a few days between now and his second inauguration, I extend of course friendly greetings to the President of the United States whom I will soon have the opportunity of seeing again. I hope that together, with the international community, we can move into the new year united, confident and determined, and that the challenges we face will be opportunities to illustrate the vitality of the transatlantic link.

The Middle East and Iraq are the most urgent issues. In those two flashpoints, fate hangs in the balance.

In three days the Palestinians will be electing their president and then a new Parliament. At stake is the establishment of legitimate and strong institutions which must go hand in hand with the resumption of the Peace Process.

Immediately after the Palestinian presidential election, let us join together to make the withdrawal from Gaza a success. This means fully involving the Palestinian Authority in the process and helping it meet its responsibilities, as the European Union has undertaken to do. But it also means coordinating the withdrawal with the Roadmap, which must be restarted immediately.

We must begin now to encourage the parties to make a determined commitment to



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it. Learning the lessons of the past, let us not hesitate to move as quickly as possible towards a final settlement. In this way we will ultimately achieve the creation of a viable, peaceful and democratic Palestinian State living alongside Israel in peace and security.

A friend of Israel and the Arab countries, France is, together with the European Union, there to listen to them and support them as they move towards peace. This is the message which I have asked the Minister of Foreign Affairs to take to the region very soon.

The quest for peace in the Middle East requires an end to outdated arrangements. The implementation of UNSCR 1559 affirming our deep-rooted commitment to an independent, sovereign and democratic Lebanon will require our full attention, especially in the run-up to the legislative elections next spring.

In Iraq, France supports the political process set out in UNSCR 1546 as well as the reconstruction of the country. The election on 30 January, which we hope will be successful, must result in the establishment of a fully democratic and legitimate government. It is essential that the largest possible number of Iraqis take part in it, thus demonstrating their rejection of violence.

Further steps will follow which must guarantee that all parts of Iraqi society and all stakeholders in Iraqi political life take their rightful place in the country's future institutions. It will be a lengthy and demanding process. But this is the only way for Iraq to return to law and order, stability and full independence in unity and security. Throughout the process, France will stand shoulder to shoulder with the Iraqi people, as she did in finding an exceptional solution to the debt issue. This is the spirit in which I will have a meeting with the Iraqi President next week.

In Africa as well, a number of crises are jeopardizing the very stability of the continent.

This is the case in Côte d'Ivoire. The prerequisites for a return to peace have been set out and accepted by the Ivorian political leaders themselves. UNSCR 1572 called on the Ivorian parties to abide by the commitments required for a return to peace and unity in the country. Under a mandate from the African Union chaired by Nigeria, President Mbeki has drawn up the roadmap for a new attempt to bring the parties involved to reason.

France's only objective is to support the reconciliation process. By fulfilling the mission entrusted to her by the United Nations in support of ECOWAS, her goal is to enable the Ivorians to return to the path of peace and wisdom which they had long followed, through free and transparent elections.

In Sudan, the signature of a long-awaited peace agreement between the North and the South of the country has just provided a very welcome reminder that the spirit of reconciliation and responsibility can overcome the worst obstacles if it is supported by a true political determination.

It is urgent that a similar spirit of peace and determination to succeed, as called for by the UN Security Council, also prevail in Darfur, where civilians continue to endure brutal acts and to suffer the ulterior motives and equivocations of the various parties to the conflict.

Beyond regional crises, other dangers threaten world security and stability.

In the fight against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the case of Iran has shown the way forward. Countries abiding by their international





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non-proliferation obligations and providing proof of the peaceful nature of their activities must be able to have the benefit of technologies to which international rules give them legitimate access. But we must be unwavering towards those who fail to live up to their commitments. These principles will continue to underpin the approach taken by the three European countries in the negotiation of a long-term agreement with Iran, in coordination with our other partners in the European Union, Russia, the United States and China. They will guide our approach in this area at the next NPT Review Conference in May, which will also provide an opportunity to continue work on disarmament.

Faced with expanding terrorism which nothing, no cause, can justify, we must define an increasingly effective response. Let's take account of the new forms of threat notably bioterrorism and cyberterrorism. Combat the advantages derived by terrorist organizations, notably in tax havens. France calls on the European Union to be even more at the forefront of this struggle, which must be waged, of course, with due regard for our values. It must address the roots of terrorism, which are first and foremost to be found in unresolved conflicts with their attendant injustice, misery and despair.

2005 must be the year of United Nations reform. I want to, today, pay tribute to the determined and unrelenting action of the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr Kofi Annan, a man of peace, conviction, courage and integrity. In welcoming him a few days ago on the occasion of the December European Council meeting, Europe renewed its respect, support and friendship for him.

In a world seeking new equilibria and solutions to global challenges, the United Nations, the only universal forum for regulating international relations, must continue to change while remaining faithful to the principles and goals of the Charter.

Let us take the opportunity of next September's summit in New York to achieve the required reforms, as the Panel of Eminent Persons calls on us to do in its conclusions. You are familiar with France's positions in support of: expansion of Security Council membership in both the permanent and non-permanent categories; creation of an economic and social governance policy forum and a United Nations Environment Organization; reinforcement of post-conflict management capabilities; and further progress in the protection of human rights.

Let us also shoulder our responsibilities with respect to development financing. France believes that the September summit must, in the spirit of the Millennium Development Goals and Monterrey Commitments, arrive at a decision in principle to double concessional financing. To achieve this we will be tirelessly pursuing with Brazil, Chile and Spain, and others who decide to join us, the work on all the innovative mechanisms, and particularly on international taxes.

Let us get to work on the most urgent problems right away.

Vaccination for all, by setting up an experimental finance facility, as proposed by the United Kingdom.

The fight against AIDS, by allocating the revenues from a first international tax among those considered in the Landau Report.

Beyond that, to fight this pandemic, France is emphasizing the urgent need to raise an annual amount of \$3 billion at the Global Fund Replenishment



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Conference in March, with the European Union, United States and other donors each contributing a third of that amount.

Let us also take advantage of the International Year of Microcredit to increase tenfold, from 60 to around 600 million, the number of microfinance beneficiaries. The international conference which France will be hosting in June should contribute to it. Everyone is aware of the importance of such an instrument for helping affected populations restore their economic activities very rapidly, as part of the process for the reconstruction of the tsunami-ravaged countries.

France will stand shoulder to shoulder with the British Prime Minister, who has chosen to devote the next G8 Summit to Africa and to the battle against climate change.

The international community must reiterate its support for the efforts being made by Africa, with the African Union and NEPAD, to consolidate peace, build effective States and remove barriers to development such as insufficient infrastructure and deficient education and healthcare systems. The forthcoming G8 will have to concentrate on these objectives.

It is also in this spirit that following a visit to Senegal I will be going to Brazzaville in February for the Congo Basin conference, to Madagascar in March for the Indian Ocean Commission and to Bamako at the end of the year for the Africa-France Summit.

With the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol on 16 February, we will start discussing the future of the international system to combat climate change beyond 2012. I hope that the G8 Summit in Gleneagles, under British presidency, will provide an opportunity to re-engage the United States on this issue, vital for the future of our planet. I also hope that we will be able to use our imagination to convince the emerging countries especially through technology transfers to make the sustainable energy choices that will enable them to fight global warming without impeding their economic growth.

With the July agreement at the WTO, Europe demonstrated its determination to move forward. But we have a long way to go to conclude the Doha Round. Let us strive between now and the December conference in Hong Kong, in line with the objectives of this round, to meet the real needs of the poorest developing countries and achieve a balanced result in all chapters of the negotiations.

Ladies and gentlemen,

2005 will be a decisive year for the future of Europe.

When they vote on the European Constitution in the referendum, before the summer, French citizens will look back and contemplate how far we have come in half a century. This Europe that we are building, this project for shared peace and prosperity, is rooted in a painful history. Because we must never forget the unspeakable suffering that marked the history of Europe in the last century, I will be going to Poland on 27 January on the occasion of the sixtieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. Then I will go to Moscow for the commemoration, on 9 May, of the end of the Second World War.

I also call on the French to take pride in Europe, the great undertaking which France and her partners supported from its inception, and in which France wants always to be at the forefront.

This Constitution, which France called for and substantially inspired, will further consolidate the foundations of peace and democracy on our continent. A



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peace and democracy we must bequeath to our children. It is a document supporting economic and social progress. It guarantees freedoms and protects citizens. It will strengthen Europe's role as a global player.

With the Charter of Fundamental Rights, with the affirmation of a mutually-supportive society and recognition of the role of the public services and social partners, this Constitution will lend new force to the European economic and social model faced with strong winds of globalization.

It will give Europe a solid framework for developing ambitious policies.

Already a united Europe, building on its many talents, is destined to be a leading player in international competition. The example of Airbus shows us the way. I will be going to Toulouse on 18 January with the Federal German Chancellor and the British and Spanish Prime Ministers to attend the official launch of the A380.

The decision to locate ITER in Cadarache in as open as possible an international partnership will give Europe the opportunity to be a front-runner when it comes to the energies of the future.

To be better placed to tackle international competition, France wants Europe to adopt a more dynamic and ambitious strategy to promote growth, competitiveness and jobs, at the European Council in March. A Europe which will have to reform the Stability Pact so that future-orientated spending such as that on research and major infrastructure, and military spending receive special treatment. A Europe which will have to forge a new pact with its young people, as I have proposed together with the Federal German Chancellor and the Spanish and Swedish Prime Ministers.

Our Europe is far more than a mere economic and financial area. With its rich history and culture, it embodies the humanistic values that we all share. It is a model of the cultural diversity which we seek to promote on the international scene through the adoption in 2005 of the convention currently under negotiation in UNESCO. For this purpose I have asked the government to organize a meeting of European leading figures in the world of culture in Paris this spring.

An area of peace, Europe wants to be open to the European States that respect its political and democratic values and make a commitment to work together to promote them.

France welcomes the prospect of Bulgaria and Romania joining the EU in 2007 and of negotiations with Croatia starting soon.

With regard to Turkey, it is in the EU's interest ultimately to integrate that country in order to give Europe more weight and influence in the world and consolidate peace and democracy. But the process initiated at the last European Council will be a long and difficult one and no one today can tell what the result will be. Our objective is indeed to prepare for Turkish accession. But we cannot rule out the possibility of a different outcome if that great country were not able, or no longer willing, to see the process through to its conclusion. Should that happen, the European Union and Turkey should maintain and deepen strong and mutually-supportive relations.

The European Union must also continue to build closer ties with its immediate neighbours in the Maghreb. On the strength of her close and dynamic partnerships with Morocco and Tunisia, France wants to be a pioneer in this area. She is particularly pleased to be signing in 2005 a friendship treaty



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with her great neighbour Algeria. She will also continue the process of developing her relations with Libya.

Beyond that, France will work with Spain to prepare for the Barcelona Conference which, next November, will provide an opportunity to lend new momentum to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership on its tenth anniversary.

In the Western Balkans, the forthcoming start of negotiations on the institutional future of Kosovo is now our main challenge. France and the international community will help the parties prepare for them with realism and, I hope, a sense of responsibility.

And lastly, at a time when the multipolar reality of our world is daily becoming more obvious, Europe and France will continue to work for the necessary dialogue and the development of harmonious relations between the world's major poles.

Our relations with Asia are rapidly expanding. After my visit to Vietnam, to whom we are bound by so many ties, and to China, a very great world power and a major partner in coming decades, I will be going to Japan with the goal, in particular, of reinforcing cooperation between our two countries in the field of high technology.

In Guadalajara, last May, Latin America and the European Union affirmed, once again, their shared view of the world and shared objective of an effective multilateral system. The action we initiated together in the struggle against hunger and our close cooperation in dealing with the crisis in Haiti has shown us the way forward. The agreement between the European Union and Mercosur, which I hope will soon be concluded, will further strengthen the partnership between our two continents.

Following the forthcoming launch of the Soyuz installation programme in Kourou, France, together with Germany, will do her utmost to ensure that the European Union finalizes the four Common Spaces, with Russia as soon as possible in 2005. This is, for us, an essential goal. More than ever, Europe and Russia need each other.

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Your Excellency, the Papal Nuncio,  
Ambassadors,

Let us together make 2005 the year when the international community comes together again to take up the challenges of peace and solidarity. I assure you that France stands ready to do so, true to the principles of our Republic, to her commitment to Europe and to the universal values enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

This is the message I ask you to convey, with my warmest personal wishes, to all your heads of State and government and all the peoples you represent here. And to each of you personally, to your families, loved-ones and colleagues, I extend my most sincere good wishes for your happiness and for the year ahead. Thank you./.

„ An economic space , a common space of freedom, security and justice, a space of cooperation in the field of external security and a space of research and education including cultural aspects.

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