



G8 SUMMIT PRESS CONFERENCE GIVEN BY M. JACQUES CHIRAC, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, FOLLOWING THE SUMMIT (EXCERPTS)

(Sea Island, 10 June 2004)

THE PRESIDENT (...) Through my speeches and contributions I wanted at this meeting to convey five messages which seemed to me to be in the spirit of the G8 whose remit isn't to manage the world, but, to a certain extent (...) because of the importance of its constituent nations (...), take initiatives (...).

I. The first of these messages was the importance of dialogue. Everyone can clearly see that we're in a world where, if anything, there's too little not too much of it. I believe it was a good initiative, as far as dialogue is concerned, to have a meeting with seven heads of State from the Middle East and North Africa (...).

Similarly, there was the working lunch on the theme of NEPAD, with six African heads of State. And, here again, there was an exchange of views which I personally found very positive. The way the Africans had prepared their speeches was very coherent and very intelligent. They each spoke in turn on a theme, a subject, in what I thought was a particularly responsible manner which impressed everyone, especially those who were perhaps not so close as others to the issues of concern to Africa. We did much the same at Evian. I personally was a bit sorry that we didn't broaden this dialogue to include a number of emerging countries, as we did in Evian, because obviously, talking today about the world's major affairs, particularly on the economic front, without hearing the views of countries like China, India, Brazil and others, or involving them in our discussions, isn't that great an idea. Maybe this will happen next time.

(...)

II. The second message concerned the need for confidence. I was really quite impressed by the confidence in the recovery of the world economy, i.e. the growth, and everyone's clearly-stated determination to make the most effective contribution possible to it. Not to do anything to handicap it and to do the utmost to extend it, particularly in the social and job-creation spheres. We're seeing this growth in the United States, where it's creating a large number of jobs, in Asia, and also in Africa and Europe, i.e. particularly in the euro area (...). So there's a feeling here of emerging from a crisis, a feeling which has been growing stronger in the past few months (...).

III. The third message was about the need to mobilize for development. (...) We clearly have to face the fact that, globalization being what it is, we have today a system where, at present, the poor countries are, at best, stagnating, with worrying prospects, given their population growth, and the rich countries



are getting richer. So there's a real problem here.

We made pledges at the Millennium Summit four years ago, in 2000. We're going to be a third of the way through the commitment period and, as things are at the moment, we're obviously not, unless something drastic is done to put things right, going to achieve the Millennium Goals which, I reiterate, were, basically, to halve world poverty. Why? Quite simply because we haven't got the resources and our official development assistance (ODA) is clearly inadequate.

The World Bank recently produced an important report indicating that we'd need, roughly, to double or even triple it let me remind you that today it totals around \$50 billion a year if we wanted to achieve the Millennium Goals. I think it would be a very grave failure and extremely sad for the countries concerned if we didn't succeed in achieving the goals we had set ourselves. To do this there's no doubt that we need to improve ODA and development aid in general.

This is what explains, firstly, the British initiative known as the International Finance Facility, which France very strongly supports and we adopted in principle at yesterday's meeting.

Secondly and I gave an initial report on these the efforts to find an acceptable, efficient and productive international tax system. This explains France's initiative of convening, under M. Landau's chairmanship, a working group [for this purpose]. I should like, moreover, to thank Governor Michel Camdessus for generously providing this group with all his expertise. We haven't yet reached the conclusions stage, but I think that we'll do so before the end of the year and be able perhaps liaising with President Lula since, as you know, we are working together on this to make proposals for an international tax system. To be honest, I have to say that this problem which I simply mentioned, in principle, has been approved by some countries but disputed in the strongest terms by others. So, on this issue we've still got a long way to go.

Likewise, the decisions we took to encourage private initiative in the poor countries and particularly everything to do with the introduction of micro credit, microfinance was, to my mind, positive, as was what we did vis-à-vis the battles against famine and AIDS, on which we, at any rate we French, laid great stress, since clearly, to date, the funding of the Global Fund which isn't the only means of action but is an essential one hasn't been secured for next year. And in two years' time we must have the money the international community had pledged to raise.

IV. Fourth message, the need for responsible action. Yesterday, we spent a long time working on the security problems and took a number of decisions in three spheres, which you've probably already seen and I'm going to summarize briefly. Firstly, the prevention and dissemination of nuclear materials, important aspects of our non-proliferation policies. Secondly, stronger cooperation on air transport to facilitate the lives of travellers and identify more clearly



what are discreetly called "passengers at risk". And, thirdly, an action plan on peacekeeping, particularly in Africa, in complete agreement with the African Union, which gives a new boost to our efforts to increase regional capabilities. France is particularly involved in this, with the RECAMP system [renforcement des capacitØs africaines de maintien de paix strengthening of African peacekeeping capacities]. But admittedly, it's better coordinated now, the goal being that, in a few years' time, the African Union can have the intervention elements necessary to guarantee and maintain peace.

On these three issues, I stressed the responsibilities, potential for G8 action and the conditions it must satisfy if it is to be effective. In particular, I insisted on respect for multilateralism, a prerequisite for effective and legitimate action.

I also stressed the need to respect public freedoms, especially in the fight against terrorism. Fighting terrorism is a necessity. It mustn't make us forget the principles on which our civilization is founded, especially respect for human rights. I am also pleased that we managed to get a positive reference signalling a bit of progress on tax havens.

On the other hand, there's one area where I regret that we have made no headway at all: the fight against climate change. It's absolutely obvious that global warming has started. A decade ago it was possible for experts, scientists to make different assessments of it. Today, they are totally unanimous in asserting that global warming has started, with all the consequences it entails. So we are really threatened. And so we have to act responsibly and if we do nothing, we would bear a heavy responsibility. I had the chance to talk to the United States President about this. To tell you that I convinced him would be a total exaggeration, as you can imagine, but, even so, I wanted to draw his attention to the serious consequences of our inaction. I welcome the fact that next year's British presidency has decided to make this issue one on which proposals are to be made and action taken.

V. Finally, fifth and last message: our offer of partnership to the countries of the Middle East and North Africa. At our lunch with a number of Middle East leaders, we managed, I think, without difficulty, to agree on the G8's response to the Tunis Summit appeal vis-à-vis the reforms. As you know France thought it very important for this summit to be organized in such a way which was finally the case that the Arab and Muslim heads of State and government and also general publics could tell us about their feelings and expectations so that we could take account of them and make proposals. It was with this in mind that we responded to the proposals put forward at the Tunis summit. We are ready to strengthen our partnership with those countries in that region which wish us to do so in order to support the reforms they have decided to launch in accordance with their cultures, histories and economic, social and political situations.

I reiterated the conditions for the success of this undertaking, the imperative conditions: first condition: relaunch of the peace efforts, particularly



between Israel and the Palestinians. We need to make far more active efforts, the United States and us, especially the Quartet, to try and implement the Roadmap which seems to us, today, the only way to get everyone back round the table and halt the tragic situation we have today. (...) The second condition is scrupulous respect for the independence and diversity of the region's countries. We must respond to their requests, and in no case impose solutions on them. A spirit of partnership must prevail in this matter. And the third condition is the harnessing of the cooperation instruments by capitalizing on what Europe has already done in the Barcelona Process which, despite often being ill-recognized, is effective and appreciated and clearly signals the route which has to be followed.

(...)

Q. Since Mr Blair and Mr Bush's two press conferences, we have a slightly clearer idea of what they expect from NATO: both told us that having NATO troops in Iraq wasn't realistic, wasn't practical. But they both talked about a possible training role for NATO. Do you see that sort of role for NATO? Could France participate in it?

THE PRESIDENT (...) We have always been more than reluctant [about NATO playing a role in Iraq]. When the Poles agreed to go into Iraq, we agreed to them having technical help from NATO because they hadn't the requisite capabilities to take on the command responsibilities. But it was technical help, it wasn't [a deployment under] the NATO flag. It wasn't NATO's responsibility. Any NATO interference in that region seems to us to entail great risks including risks, in a way, of a clash between the Christian West and Muslim East. That's of course an oversimplification, but, at the end of the day, it's something we need to keep in mind. So we clearly pointed out that we couldn't accept a mission of that type for NATO. Now I know that today, at the level of the experts, some people are thinking about and this is what, I imagine, both Mr Blair and Mr Bush were alluding to the training of Iraqi army officers. On this point, I have to say that I have no comment to make on the potential role, should the need arise, of NATO specialists in this sphere. We shall have to look at the details of this, see what's proposed to us. For the moment, there's no concrete proposal and so I've no comment to make.

Q. If you had to compare the present Bush administration with the Reagan administration, what would you say? (...)

THE PRESIDENT (...) I have no intention at all of making comparisons, especially at a time like today when [former] President Reagan has just passed away and there are ceremonies for his funeral. France will, moreover, be represented at them by former President Giscard d'Estaing, accompanied by the French Foreign Minister, M. Michel Barnier. It's not at such a moment that historical comparisons should be made.

(...)



Q. After your vote at the United Nations this week, after this summit, what's your general view of the situation in Iraq? (...) Are you opposed to, have you got reservations regarding NATO because you still oppose the US position in Iraq?

THE PRESIDENT I'm in no way opposed to the US position in Iraq. We, France and the United States, had totally different views on the war in Iraq. That's a fact. And I regretted that war. To my mind it was neither necessary, nor in fact useful, it was inevitably costly in every sense of the term and we should have found other solutions for steering Iraq towards a more democratic and more balanced system. I haven't changed my mind. But that's in the past. I'm not going to keep on indefinitely coming back to it.

Today, my conviction, as I said very clearly, and particularly to President Bush, is that the situation has nevertheless very much worsened, it is very disturbing, worrying. And our only possible chance of moving towards a certain stability, development, security in Iraq, the only chance is for the Iraqis really to feel, be convinced that they are being given back their whole sovereignty, total independence and control of their destiny. That's the path, and in my opinion it's a narrow one, which will perhaps allow us to put an end to the tragedies we're experiencing at the moment.

So this means that we must genuinely transfer this sovereignty, and not cheat if I can put it like that. This is what we paid great attention to ensuring. It's why we were so demanding with respect to the wording of the UN resolution. I have to add that we weren't alone in this, since we had twenty-four-hour a day cooperation this is no exaggeration from our German, Russian, Spanish and Algerian friends as well as some other friends.

In the end it's this that was adopted as the principle. And if the Iraqis really feel that they are again masters of their destiny, there is perhaps a chance. If people don't play the game, that chance will disappear.

Q. Proliferation has been one of the principal subjects of this conference. Yesterday, you talked about three cases: Libya, North Korea and Iran. Do you think it's still possible to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons? If so, how? Do you think the Libyan model is one to follow or is it important to find a third way between the Iraqi and Libyan models?

THE PRESIDENT You could also have mentioned the North Korean model. Firstly, I believe it's essential to prevent new States acquiring nuclear capabilities, beyond the control of the [International Atomic Energy] Agency. As you know, we, the British, Germans, French, carried out a strong diplomatic offensive vis-à-vis the Iranian authorities to try and convince them that the cost-efficiency ratio of the goal they seemed to want to pursue of acquiring weapons of mass destruction was totally negative. There's a simple reason for this which involves asking the Iranians: "But if you have a nuclear bomb, what are you going to do with it, who are you going to drop it on, when it's cost you extraordinarily dear." There's no satisfactory or reasonable answer to that



question.

So we think it's absolutely necessary to convince the Iranians. Now, are they convinced? I can't answer that question. All I can tell you is that our three countries are resolutely pursuing, moreover in close cooperation with the Americans, a determined course of action with the aim of persuading the Iranians to agree, submitting themselves to IAEA supervision and inspections, to provide the evidence that they have halted their programme, at any rate in the nuclear sphere.

(...)

Q. On the Iraqi debt. We know that the Americans would like it cut by 95%, that the IMF has said it should be cut by 80%. When France was talking about a substantial reduction, the figure of 50% was mentioned. Does France still think 50% is the right figure?

THE PRESIDENT It is absolutely the right one and I'm going to tell you why. Iraq is potentially a rich country, even though she has a substantial debt. How will you explain to the very indebted poor countries or some other countries which are also heavily indebted I'm thinking, for example, because she was here today, of Nigeria how will you explain to those people that we're going to do for Iraq in three months more than we've done in ten years for the world's thirty-seven poorest and most indebted countries? That (...) isn't right.

This is why, it's true, France and we aren't alone has adopted a clear position, a cancellation, yes, a substantial one, yes. What does "substantial" mean? For us it is indeed around 50%.

(...)

Q. Earlier, during his press conference, George Bush described relations with France as cordial. How would you describe France's relations with the United States, at a time when there seem to remain differences on a lot of issues?

THE PRESIDENT Well, I'd describe them with one word: cordial, as is right. I repeat, one can be friends without this meaning that you are subordinate. We have very strong points of agreement, especially on what's essential: a certain vision of the world, of democracy, of human rights, an exceptional historical experience. It's possible for us not to agree on everything, which is the case. And we can disagree without being aggressive. So there you are, "cordial" is the word. (...). |