



Statement by M. Jacques CHIRAC, President of the French Republic, on the occasion of his meeting with Mr. Ariel Sharon, Prime Minister of the State of Israel.

Unofficial Translation

Elysée Palace, Wednesday, July 27, 2005

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome the Prime Minister of Israel. This occasion is an opportunity to tell him once again that France is and has long been a friend of Israel and hopes to continue expanding our political, economic, cultural and human relations.

I also want to convey to him my total determination to fighting the scourges of our time: terrorism, racism and anti-Semitism.

And I will have the opportunity to tell him, on the eve of the disengagement from Gaza, that France stands alongside the Israeli people and the Palestinian people to ensure that, on the occasion of this historic decision, we see a revival, a renewal of the peace process within the framework of the Road Map a process that should allow Israel to live in peace and security and the Palestinian people to build a State both viable and independent.

Finally, we will have the opportunity to discuss problems linked to regional stability, the situation in Lebanon, discussions with Iran and more generally, international problems.

I would therefore like to extend to the Prime Minister the most cordial of welcomes.