



|

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

(Unofficial translation)

Elysée Palace, Wednesday, July 27, 2005

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I was very happy to accept the invitation of the President of the French Republic, Mr. Jacques Chirac, to pay a visit to France.

I left Israel at a difficult time. A time of continued Palestinian terrorism and of fierce internal disagreements in Israel on the question of disengagement.

And yet despite all these difficulties, I decided to come here to France in order to strengthen French-Israeli relations, to which we attach great importance.

I came here to express my great esteem and friendship to President Jacques Chirac, whom we consider one of the world's great leaders.

I would like to thank the French President for his staunch fight against anti-Semitism and his full and entire faith in the strengthening of the deep friendship between Israel and France.

I am absolutely convinced that this visit will lead to even stronger ties between France and Israel.

Once again, I would like to thank President Jacques Chirac for this invitation and for this visit. I am sure that this visit will help to further strengthen relations between our countries. It will also provide, I am certain, precious aid in the peace process that we in the Mideast so badly need.

|