



Franco-german meeting: statements made by M. Jacques CHIRAC, President of the Republic, during his joint press briefing with Mrs. Angela MERKEL, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany.

(Berlin, 8 December 2005)

THE PRESIDENT Chancellor, I'd like to begin by telling you what a pleasure it is to see you again after your recent brief visit to Paris and, this time, to work with you. First of all, let me thank you for your warm and cordial hospitality.

IRAQ/KIDNAP

Before saying a few words, may I express to you France's solidarity in the ordeal today being suffered by Mrs Susanne Osthoff.

EU/BUDGET/UK PROPOSAL/WORLD PROBLEMS

As you said, we are meeting together for a working session with the two foreign ministers, who will shortly be joining us, to do a bit of preparation for the forthcoming European Council which is, obviously, an important milestone in Europe's development. This is, once again, a meeting of two countries, France and Germany, which have from the outset campaigned for a European project we're both deeply committed to.

As regards the financial perspectives, which you talked about, we're both keen for there to be an agreement at the forthcoming Council. And I'll have the opportunity of telling you but that won't surprise you that France doesn't find the British presidency's current proposals satisfactory. So we'll have the opportunity to look at the points we agree on and, I repeat, do so in a positive spirit, since we both want an agreement to be reached, provided of course it's possible.

For France, what's crucial is for every State, every member State to pay its fair share of the cost of the enlargement, which for us presupposes a restructuring of the British rebate mechanism, and putting this on a long-term basis.

We'll also have the opportunity, as you said, Chancellor, to talk about world problems, particularly the Middle East, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Iran and Kosovo.

FRANCO-GERMAN COUNCIL OF MINISTERS



PRESIDENCE DE LA REPUBLIQUE

I welcome your proposal to convene the Franco-German Council of Ministers in March to discuss, among other things, the problems of integration, and particularly that of young people, as well as research and innovation, in the framework of what we, Germans and French, have already begun to do together.

IRAN/ISRAEL

Q. I'd like your reaction to the comments of the Iranian President: after playing down the question of the Jewish genocide during the Second World War, he's just said that Europe, and more specifically Germany, should give territory to the Jewish State.

THE PRESIDENT Just a word to say that my view is exactly the same as the Chancellor's. We have already said we were appalled by the unacceptable nature of the comments made in Iran, and I note that this is a unanimous feeling in the European Union, which has already expressed its indignation in the wake of statements of the same nature.

VAT/RESTAURANT MEALS

Q. Over your meal, are you going to discuss reducing VAT on restaurant meals?

THE PRESIDENT We'll probably have the opportunity of talking about this, since the British presidency has made a proposal, and I understand that it has expressed its intention for us to decide on it at the forthcoming Council. So we'll have to talk about it.

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