



Letter from M. Jacques CHIRAC, President of the Republic, to Mr George W. BUSH, President of the United States of America, regarding the situation in the Palestinian Territories.

Paris, 3 May 2006

Mr President,

[Handwritten:] Dear George,

On 28 April I had a visit from Mr Mahmoud Abbas, President of the Palestinian Authority. He emphasized to me that we were on the brink of an unprecedented humanitarian, economic and social crisis in the Palestinian Territories, largely due to the fact that, as from two months ago, the Palestinian Authority has been unable to pay the salaries of its civil servants.

Action is thus necessary, and even urgent. The international community has a political responsibility which it must not shirk.

Given the risk and the consequences which could ensue, we must establish a mechanism making it possible, while respecting international legality and the principles agreed to by the Quartet, to address the nature and urgency of this looming crisis.

The Palestinian President supported the idea of a trust fund directly managed by the World Bank which could pay the salaries of the civil servants on whom depend the living conditions of nearly a third of the Palestinian population. The Bank has the means, agencies and staff required to rapidly set up such a mechanism.

I assured the Palestinian President of France's support for the implementation of this fund.

Mr President, the United States' policy in the Middle East to promote peace and democracy has particular weight.

The United States, the main provider of humanitarian aid to the Palestinian Territories, will not, I am sure, be insensitive to the impending humanitarian catastrophe, and I have no doubt that it will take every possible measure to avoid it.



PRESIDENCE DE LA REPUBLIQUE

The gravity of the situation requires that we do not limit ourselves to humanitarian aid alone but take into account more generally the increasingly precarious living conditions of the Palestinian people. It seems to me that the mechanism proposed is the appropriate one for genuinely addressing the nature and urgency of the crisis.

The next Quartet meeting, on 9 May, should be the opportunity for taking and announcing such a decision together. This would enable us to reaffirm, in the eyes of all, the unity of the international community, its support for the Palestinian people and commitment to the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region, based on two States living side-by-side in peace and security principles to which you are, as I am, fully committed.

(complimentary close, with handwritten addition)/.

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