



Letter from M. Jacques CHIRAC, President of the Republic, to Mr Vladimir PUTIN, President of Russia, regarding the situation in the Palestinian Territories.

Paris, 3 May 2006

President Putin,

[Handwritten:] Dear Vladimir,

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 the 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.

President Putin, I know and appreciate Russia's contribution to peace in the Middle East.

I know that, conscious of the urgency of the situation in the Territories, you recently granted direct budgetary aid to the President of the Palestinian Authority for the education and health sectors. It seems to me that the situation demands that we go beyond humanitarian aid in the strict sense of the term and take account more generally of the very rapidly increasing precariousness of the Palestinian people's living conditions.



PRESIDENCE DE LA REPUBLIQUE

So I should like to be able to count on Russia's support so that the Quartet's next meeting, on 9 May, may be the opportunity for deciding, under the World Bank's auspices, on the creation of a trust fund for paying the Palestinian civil servants' salaries. This decision will enable us to reaffirm, in the eyes of all, the unity of the international community, its support for the Palestinian people and its commitment to the establishment of a just and lasting peace in the region.

(complimentary close, with handwritten addition).

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