



Letter from M. Jacques CHIRAC, President of the Republic, to Mr Ehud OLMERT, Prime minister of Israel, regarding the situation in the Palestinian Territories.

Paris, 3 May 2006

Prime Minister,

On 28 April I had a visit from Mr Mahmoud Abbas, President of the Palestinian Authority. He emphasized to me the imminence 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.

Given the risk and the consequences which could ensue, it is necessary and urgent to act vis-à-vis the Palestinian population.

So I have given President Abbas my agreement in principle to support the creation of a trust fund managed by the World Bank, which has the necessary resources, know-how and logistics. The Bank would take responsibility, while respecting international law and the Quartet's principles, for establishing a mechanism for paying immediately the salaries of the Palestinian Authority's civil servants.

Prime Minister, Israel's support is necessary for carrying out such a project.

With the formation of the government following the 28 March election, Israel is today at the start of a new phase. I noted with satisfaction, when you spoke on the evening of the poll, that your first option remained negotiation. The payment of the civil servants' salaries seems to me the first measure to take to avoid a serious destabilization of the Territories, which would jeopardize any mutually-agreed political solution.

I know that as a man of peace and vision you are keen to establish an environment conducive to the definitive resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Some rendezvous with history must not be missed. This is why I hope that the Israeli government will have a pragmatic, constructive approach to the creation of this fund, which will prevent the rapid deterioration in the living conditions of all the Palestinian people, whilst maintaining a united, firm political position vis-à-vis their government's respect for the Quartet's principles. It must be possible to combine these two objectives. It seems to me that the conditions for maintaining a hope of peace are found precisely in this balance which we must maintain.



PRESIDENCE DE LA REPUBLIQUE

Prime Minister, I know of your planned visit to Europe in June and very much welcome it. I am convinced this visit will be the opportunity for us to consolidate further the improvement in our bilateral relations to which I am personally very committed, and which has taken a major step forward thanks to your predecessor to whom my thoughts go today.

(complimentary close, with handwritten addition)./.

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