



G8 Summit : Press conference given by M. Jacques CHIRAC, President of the Republic, following the summit (excerpts)

St Petersburg, 17 July 2006

LEBANON

THE PRESIDENT Ladies and gentlemen, before talking about today's meeting, I'd like to tell you that I've decided to send Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin to Beirut and have asked him to convey our solidarity and support to the Lebanese Prime Minister, Mr Fouad Siniora, both on my personal behalf and on behalf of France.

France stands side by side with the Lebanese government to support its authority, and notably to support Lebanon's independence, stability and sovereignty. While the violence, alas, is continuing, I call once again for a halt to the bombing, a halt to the rocket attacks against Israel, and a halt to attacks both against civilians, who are today being killed or injured a tragic situation, and against the infrastructure representing a considerable effort which Lebanon and her people had willingly agreed to and undertaken in order to rebuild the country, and much of which has been destroyed all in one go, with everything this means in terms of roads, bridges, power plants in other words, with all the consequences this entails for the stricken civilians who have to suffer the consequences of behaviour that is both violent and aberrant.

I call (•••) for the release of the Israeli soldiers who were abducted either by Hamas or by Hezbollah. Yesterday, I pointed out to all our partners how essential it is to fully implement UNSCR 1559, which was, as you know, largely of French origin and which France championed at the time. UNSCR 1559 (•••) resulted in the departure highly significant for Lebanon of the 15,000 Syrian soldiers who had been occupying the country for nearly 30 years. Now we must carry this process to its conclusion and recognize Lebanon's authority, integrity and sovereignty, her right to govern her people and her country. This requires the full implementation of UNSCR 1559, which provides notably and this is essential for the disarmament of militias. For a country can't be independent when a part of its territory is under the authority of uncontrolled militias, imposing directives which aren't those of the Lebanese people.

Yesterday, I also mentioned and we have agreed on this the usefulness of having of a UN initiative, still to be developed, an international intervention force in southern Lebanon to guarantee security, as well as a border monitoring mechanism. I won't go into detail it's up to the UN to discuss this and up to the Security Council to define its modus operandi. But I wanted the principle



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to be affirmed. You will have noted that the UN Secretary-General took all of these on board. He said so very clearly at this morning's meetings of the enlarged G8. It's now up to the UN to assume all its responsibilities. I have no doubt it will, and do so discerningly.

As you know, we unreservedly support the UN's mission to Lebanon. All the parties must clearly understand that there is no alternative to a dialogue between Israel and President Mahmoud Abbas when it comes to relations between Israel and Palestine and that, likewise, there's no solution to this crisis other than a dialogue between Israel and the legitimately and democratically elected government of Lebanon.

Finally, I call on all those tempted to support the forces of destabilization and intervention in Lebanon to understand the risk they are taking and the dangers such an attitude can entail for the people of Gaza and Lebanon. We said this both yesterday and today, and these principles have been taken on board by the UN Secretary-General and have today been approved by the enlarged G8, which includes the principal emerging countries.

That's what I wanted to say regarding Lebanon. Rest assured that the French Prime Minister, who is, I believe, arriving in Lebanon, is bringing France's wholehearted encouragement to Prime Minister Siniora, his government, the Lebanese people, and the democratically elected majority entrusted with leading Lebanon.

ENLARGED G8

As regards the other topics we discussed today, I'd like to reiterate that the G8 is not a global board of directors, it's a group of countries which shoulder, in various capacities, particularly important responsibilities. This is why for the Evian G8 I had suggested and proposed to several important emerging countries that they join us for a broader discussion, since today's great problems can't be discussed only in an overly restricted circle. Hence this circle's enlargement, which was a necessity and has been done again today. President Putin went along with this and today we've had the presidents or prime ministers of China, India, Brazil, Mexico and South Africa, as well as President Sassou N'Guesso, President of Congo, in his capacity of current African Union Chairman in Office.

(...)

WTO

Finally, over lunch, we talked about the prospects for the WTO. I pointed out that this wasn't really the place to talk about it, that we could of course discuss things, but that we weren't in a position to take any decision or initiative whatsoever. As you know, when it comes to the WTO, it's for the European Council, i.e. for the Twenty-five, together, and it alone, possibly, to take an additional step in the concessions that have already very largely



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been made, one which, to my mind, is no longer justified as things stand at the moment unless our American friends or emerging countries make significant concessions on agricultural or industrial products. So it was just said that we would all try to be as constructive as possible.

I nevertheless pointed out that if you took the most recent reports published, particularly those of the World Bank and of the Carnegie Foundation, which produces very detailed, very well-researched and very interesting reports, you have to face the fact that the interests of the poor countries, which weren't represented here there were emerging countries, but not poor countries, except for the African Union Chairman who represented them all, had been forgotten. From both the World Bank and Carnegie Foundation reports, it clearly emerges that, in the current WTO process, the rich and emerging countries' proposals pay scant regard to, and in reality are to the detriment of, the poorest countries.

I wanted to emphasize this, pointing out in particular that no poor country can make its voice heard in our forum on WTO-related problems.

(...)

LEBANON

Q. You and Mr Blair have spoken of an international force and Mr Annan of a stabilizing force for Lebanon. In your view and that of the G8 countries, should the mandate of such a force be to enforce UNSCR 1559, and can we really send it now, when things are going so badly? We've just learned that an Israeli aircraft has been shot down and two pilots captured. Can you tell us a bit about what this international force would consist of, what's your idea?

THE PRESIDENT First of all, the behaviour of a number of people is completely unacceptable. I was unaware that two more Israelis had been taken prisoner, as we were in a meeting. But that only strengthens my idea that there should be a sort of cordon sanitaire. The idea is both to have an international force and a buffer zone to allow monitoring.

We had this at one time in Lebanon you probably remember it and it worked fairly well. I don't know if the UN Secretary-General will back the principle of this proposal he said he would but I believe it really must be done. We can't allow things to continue as they are; there has to be a method of enforcement, or at least of monitoring.

As for its mandate, I can't speak for the UN in determining what it will be, but in my mind, the implementation of UNSCR 1559 is vital. I repeat, one can't have an independent, sovereign, and notably democratic State, which Lebanon aspires to be, whose territory is controlled in part by armed militias. That isn't possible. UNSCR 1559, which provides for disarming all militias on both sides and establishing an official Lebanese army throughout the country is therefore an imperative, without which there won't be a Lebanon.



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I call on all the Lebanese to understand this, regardless of their sympathies and their positions: they won't have a stable, independent country, they won't have democracy if they don't understand that it's essential to have a united country under the authority of a democratically chosen government.

Q. We understand that there's a whole debate under way on the subject of this international force, but it seems a bit confused right now. This morning, Prime Minister Blair spoke of an international force; he seemed to be referring to a force which would bring peace to end the current violence. We've also heard that it would instead be used to stabilize the situation. Others are saying that the force would provide stability once hostilities have ended. Can you specify what the purpose of this international force would be and when it would act? I also don't understand the distinction between the international force and the monitoring perimeter.

THE PRESIDENT We have a situation in which outside intervention is required to guarantee the borders and avoid cross-border attacks. But I don't want to prejudge the form it might take. Only the UN can make that decision.

I've often been criticized for forcing the UN's hand a little, notably two days ago when I quite firmly asked the Secretary-General to send a mission immediately, as rapidly as possible to all the concerned capitals Beirut, of course, Ramallah, and finally that of Syria, for reasons everyone will understand. I've already been criticized for overstepping the mark on this issue, so I don't want to prejudge. The Secretary-General clearly said he supported the principle, was going to examine it, and we'll see what he proposes, at which point we'll see whether or not we should support his proposal, although I have no doubt we will.

Q. On several occasions, you've talked about the forces of destabilization acting in this crisis in Lebanon. Do you think that besides the path of diplomacy, there's a need to envisage other means, coercive means against these destabilizing forces, and if so, what?

THE PRESIDENT The main thing is the implementation of 1559, as I've said, and I told you why. It's a key element and will probably require a few coercive measures. Thank you./.