



G8 summit : Press conference given by M. Jacques CHIRAC, President of the Republic, after the first day of the summit (excerpts)

St Petersburg, 16 July 2006

MIDDLE EAST

THE PRESIDENT At this G8 and may I add, a perfectly organized one (●●●) we devoted particular attention, as you can imagine, to the situation in the Middle East, a particularly worrying one in our view.

Indeed, we find ourselves faced with an explosion of violence resulting in many deaths in Gaza, Lebanon, Israel, massive destruction, particularly of infrastructure, which is in fact essential for the daily lives of the men and women of this region, and of many injured people who need aid and assistance and especially medicines.

France is worried about this, as you can well imagine. (●●●) Loss of human life, injured people, destruction and also this goes without saying concern for our fellow citizens. There are many French in Lebanon (●●●) who, traumatized by the situation, wish to return to France. I wanted to say that all the necessary steps have been taken so that they can do this and that the means, particularly ships, will be available from tomorrow morning for our compatriots wishing to come back to France from Lebanon.

In the face of this situation, the sole concern we, the G8 members, have is to end the escalation and attacks, the violence. With this in mind, we unanimously adopted a declaration (●●●) stating both our reprobation and our determination that the escalation be halted and the situation returned to normal and, in particular, that there be a lasting ceasefire in Gaza and in Lebanon.

In this spirit, we approved the decision taken by the UN and UN Secretary-General to send a mission immediately. I had a long discussion with the UN Secretary-General the evening before last, and had suggested the urgent dispatch of a mission of that nature to contact all the parties involved and try to put together a common view on the situation.

This mission is currently on the spot with the remit of clearly stating the conditions for this return to a normal situation: the release of the Israeli soldiers held hostage, either by Hamas or by Hezbollah, halting of the firing of Qassam rockets on Israel from Lebanon and Gaza and then the minimum of protection for the infrastructure which hasn't yet been destroyed. It's agonizing thinking about all the people who are going to have to put up, for long months, perhaps years, with the consequences of this massive destruction,



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of roads, motorways, bridges, power stations and other equipment, essential for life.

As regards Gaza, we clearly reaffirmed our feeling that the dialogue had to be resumed with the President of the Palestinian Authority, i.e. with Mr Mahmoud Abbas. This dialogue had seemed to have got off to a good start I'd had the opportunity of having meetings [in Paris] with Mr Mahmoud Abbas and Mr Ehud Olmert a few weeks ago and got the feeling that things could begin moving as regards the negotiation and strengthening of the peace process when the events you know about took place. It's essential to re-establish these relations with the head of the Palestinian Authority so that people can get back to the very principle of the peace process, which is inevitable.

As regards Lebanon, we very strongly underlined, in the statement we unanimously adopted today, how essential it is to implement UNSCR 1559 the others too, of course, but especially 1559. It's wholly unacceptable for a government and we are giving our full support to Mr Fouad Siniora's Lebanese government, that goes without saying not to have full authority over the whole of its territory. All those who are undermining the Lebanese government's authority over the whole of its territory are in fact contributing to its destabilization, insecurity and the denial of sovereignty to the Lebanese people and State. Consequently, we are calling for immediate implementation of the conclusions and recommendations of UNSCR 1559 as quickly as possible.

That's what we talked about today with, I have to tell you, a pang of sadness when thinking about Lebanon, which really hasn't deserved to be treated in this way. And where the initiatives taken by a number of irresponsible people have led to a tragedy suffered by men and women who have already overcome a great deal, who deserve respect, support, friendship, who deserve peace. They don't in any case deserve divisions, of the sort we're seeing, probably with the external complicity of certain operators, jeopardizing the minimum they are entitled to hope for in terms of life, stability, independence and sovereignty for their country.

ENERGY

Obviously we didn't talk just about Lebanon, although this was our essential concern. This morning, we talked, as agreed, about energy security problems: this is a major issue of crucial importance for Europe: as you know, in the framework of the priority given to implementing the "project-based Europe", Europe outlined a European energy policy at the March European Council. Our energy security obviously requires excellent relations with all our suppliers, and, particularly, Russia.

I would add that we respect Russia's national choices in this field, but we needed a number of clarifications with respect to the ground rules, to ensure they were both stable and clear. These are what we agreed on during our meetings with, in particular, the emphasis on controlling fossil energy consumption, and the necessary reduction of greenhouse gas emissions which, as



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things stand at the moment, are highly likely to increase in a particularly painful way for the entire world population.

Hence the three priorities we set out for energy policy: energy savings, diversification of energy sources, including renewable energies and safe, high-quality nuclear energy and, finally, respect of the Kyoto agreement as well as the decisions for the post-2012 period. (•••)

INFECTIOUS DISEASES/INNOVATIVE FINANCING/UNITAID

We then discussed at length infectious diseases, which were on the agenda of this G8 (•••).

I pressed the need for innovative financing, particularly in respect of the fight against AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. I can't see, in the current budgets of the major contributor States, the essential additional resources to combat these pandemics if we don't create other sources of financing, it's what we call innovative financing. It's with this in mind that we have succeeded in convincing 40 or 50 countries to raise, experimentally, innovative finance: a tax on plane tickets which will be allocated, in the framework of a body known as UNITAID, to the battle against these main pandemics.

HEALTH INSURANCE SCHEME/AMC

We also emphasized the need for and got adopted the principle of a health insurance scheme in the poor countries. I pointed out that almost a hundred years ago the mortality rate and average income in Europe were more or less the same as those of some developing countries today, and that hadn't prevented us from, at the time, establishing health insurance schemes, which was a substantial step forward at the human and social level.

We got recognition of the principle of tasking the OECD with producing an early report in this area and us being able to embark on the path of bringing health insurance schemes into general use in all the poor countries and particularly the Southern countries, especially the African countries.

Finally, I gave wholehearted agreement to the Anglo-Italian proposal for an Advance Market Commitment (AMC) for medicines.

AFRICA

We then discussed African problems: (•••) here I also stressed the fact that we won't address the needs of an Africa whose population is growing extremely fast in terms of development, and so in terms of political stability, if we don't provide new resources. These couldn't come solely from the budgets of the contributor States, but should be generated by more widespread introduction of innovative financing, making the vast increase in national wealth and international trade contribute to development.



(...)

Q. The G8 is recommending implementation of UNSCR 1559. Yet today, Lebanon is broken, bombed, the government is weak, and isn't in a position to implement 1559. Does the G8 approve Israel's action? Have you, the President of France, Lebanon's friend, asked the US president to ask Israel to stop bombing Lebanon, because the Lebanese are expecting that of France?

THE PRESIDENT First of all, of course, we have, not just me, but all the G8, expressed the greatest reservations on the disproportionate nature of the reactions of Israel who had been provoked. Secondly, we have stated the absolute necessity of stopping the bombing you refer to and which is in fact aimed at targets which have nothing to do with achieving peace. (...)

What's certain is that in this whole affair, there has been provocation and you know, it's the old system talked about in 1958 of "provocation-repression". It's a trap no one can ignore and those who set this trap shoulder a heavy responsibility, particularly with respect to the victims, here I'm thinking of the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the Lebanese. This is why it seems to us essential to exert international pressure for the implementation of UNSCR 1559. I.e. the disarmament of all the militia and restoration of the democratic Lebanese government's authority over the whole of its territory, as fast as possible.

There's no other solution; any other solution or any other initiative will inevitably lead to successive crises, pain, and assassinations. The Lebanese must realize that no State can exist, especially no democratic State, if the government does not have full authority over the whole of its territory and if it allows a free rein to armed militia who are taking instructions from heaven knows where or heaven knows who and who can, overnight, create situations like those we've seen today.

The Lebanese have to understand that they have chosen the path of reconstruction, particularly under the previous governments, that they have chosen the path of democracy, chosen the path of stability and sovereignty, and that they must strongly condemn all those who, driven by outside forces, are in fact jeopardizing its achievements, those of stability and peace to which all Lebanese are entitled.

NORTH KOREA

Q. The UN has unanimously approved the resolution on North Korea and its missile firing. But North Korea immediately rejected it. What can be done in this situation and what can France, with China and Japan, do?

THE PRESIDENT We talked about the Middle East and Lebanon, a region about which France has, indisputably, a certain authority to speak which isn't contested, as we saw again throughout this afternoon.



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On the other hand, on North Korea, we're giving our support, but we aren't taking any major initiative. We're providing our support, it's what we did for the last resolution presented on Japan's initiative, which was passed unanimously, which we supported. This is a sphere in which we're wholeheartedly supporting initiatives taken by the Americans, Japanese, Chinese and Russians. (●●●).

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