



G8 Summit: Remarks made by M. Jacques CHIRAC, President of the Republic, at his bilateral meeting with Mr George W. BUSH, President of the United States of America

St Petersburg, 16 July 2006

I'd like to tell you how delighted I am, once again, to see the US President sadly in the difficult situation we are experiencing in the Middle East and I welcome the fact that our approach to the problems is relatively the same.

It is first of all a great shock for us to see the ordeals the civilians are currently enduring throughout the region, both the Lebanese and you know the special ties France has with Lebanon and also, of course, the Palestinians.

In this respect, we are calling for the protection of the civilians and moderation, with the creation of a lasting ceasefire. Like the US President, I totally approve of the mission decided on by the UN: in particular to obtain the release of the Israeli soldiers currently held prisoner, either by Hamas, or by Hezbollah, and stop the firing of Qassam rockets into Israel.

On this basis, I believe that, as regards Gaza it's a different problem from that of Lebanon, the dialogue has to be resumed with Mahmoud Abbas, who is the authority responsible for Palestine.

As regards Lebanon, I totally share the view the US president expressed. It's essential to implement UNSCR 1559, and to do this, all the forces jeopardizing, endangering Lebanon's security, stability and sovereignty must be stopped./.