



Speech by Mr Jacques CHIRAC, President of the French Republic to the 61st session of the United Nations General Assembly.

New York - 19 September 2006.

Madame President of the General Assembly,
Heads of State and Government,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Lebanon has again been set ablaze by war, a further manifestation of the interminable conflict in the Middle East whose tragedies have, for sixty years now, punctuated the life of the United Nations.

By endlessly deferring its settlement, this confrontation has become the epicentre of global instability, the main source of incomprehension between the different worlds and an easy alibi for all forms of terrorism.

This situation is no foregone conclusion. With Resolution 1701, the United Nations is shouldering its responsibilities. The unanimous adoption of this resolution has brought the fighting to an end. France, Europe and Asia have contributed to the strengthening of UNIFIL.

But the fire is still smouldering. It is now for all the Parties to work towards the consolidation of peace and the recovery of Lebanon.

It is up to Israel to complete the withdrawal of its forces; it is up to the Lebanese Government to affirm its sovereignty throughout its territory; and it is up to the countries in the region to cooperate fully to ensure the success of Resolution 1701, alongside the United Nations.

In this highly sensitive region where the world's dividing lines come together, the status quo has become unbearable. Because the conflict in the Middle East is a threat to global peace and security, the world has no option but to be the guarantor of peace. Let us tread off the beaten track of habit. Let us define a global strategy the key to which is an Israeli-Palestinian settlement.

The parameters for that settlement are well-known, namely the secure coexistence of two viable States as already widely accepted by both of the peoples concerned; safe and recognized borders; a fair solution for refugees and also for Jerusalem. All that still stands between Israelis and Palestinians and the peace to which they aspire is the deep-seated, mutual distrust of two peoples shattered by history and reeling from their sufferings and ordeals.



PRESIDENCE DE LA REPUBLIQUE

Let us now stop extremists from laying down the law! Let us help peoples and leaders bold enough to seek peace! Like, before them, Sadat and Begin, Rabin and Arafat! Before this Assembly, I call on the world to commit itself to restoring the conditions for confidence.

The Quartet should meet shortly to start preparing an international conference. I propose that the conference define in advance the guarantees we are prepared to provide to the Parties as soon as they reach an agreement. I also propose that the conference pave the way for a new future in the Middle East, through a regional framework for collective security, and economic integration and dialogue among cultures.

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

To build peace means fighting terrorism. Means preventing proliferation. Means shouldering the "responsibility to protect" that we enshrined here last year.

International legality must prevail over the threats of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. In the crisis with Iran, confidence has been impaired by the existence of illegal programmes. We have extended to that major country ambitious offers of cooperation, provided it restores confidence by suspending its contentious activities. Dialogue must prevail. Let us talk in order to enter into negotiations.

Given the seriousness of what is at stake, the international community must stand firm and united. We do not aim to call regimes into question. We aim to ensure security in accordance with international law and with due regard for the sovereignty of all countries.

The "Responsibility to Protect" - that was what we affirmed in this very place. In Darfur, millions of people are threatened. A crime against humanity looms. Bloodshed and turmoil are about to convulse the very heart of Africa again.

France entreats the international community to ward off a further humanitarian catastrophe. I call on Sudan - I solemnly call on Sudan - to accept the United Nations peace mission without delay. I call on the International Criminal Court to bring to justice those responsible for these crimes. The time has come for the immense continent of Africa with its wealth of peoples and vibrant youth, which has embarked on the road to growth and reform, to find, at long last, a destiny worthy of the cradle of humanity that it represents.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Humanity must be united and there must be solidarity among its diverse peoples. Humanity more than ever needs a strong and respected United Nations Organization, the irreplaceable tool for shared sovereignty and responsibility.



PRESIDENCE DE LA REPUBLIQUE

It is here that universal and sacred human rights must be defended and protected. With the new Human Rights Council and the International Criminal Court, the UN returns to this primary vocation. Let us not disappoint the hopes of all those who love freedom and justice.

At a time when the world's wealth is increasing as never before, the gulf separating the poor and the rich is becoming absolutely intolerable. From its inception, the UN has stood for the moral imperatives of fairness and solidarity. For this reason France exemplifies the ambition to adopt innovative development financing mechanisms such as the international solidarity levy on airplane tickets, a modern, pragmatic and experimental response to the need to fight poverty and pandemics. In this spirit I am delighted that we will be launching UNITAID this afternoon.

Let us overcome selfishness and dogmatism and give the generous idea of a world united for human progress a chance.

Finally, we all know that uncontrolled human activity is bringing about a sort of slow collective suicide. Disaster can only be averted if nations can come together to support jointly agreed commitments. Let us create a United Nations Environment Organization, the expression of the world's ecological conscience, with the means to assume this responsibility, the forum in which we take common action for future generations. France will be hosting an international conference next year to bring together all those who want to make progress on this project, which is crucial to the future

Ladies and gentlemen,

For ten years now, a man has held high the torch of the United Nations and our universal values. Today, I wish to pay Kofi Annan a solemn tribute, a well-deserved tribute of our deep esteem, of our respect and of our gratitude.

In a few weeks' time, we will appoint a new Secretary-General, who will be faced with immense challenges. He will be able to count on the support of France, on its unswerving commitment to serve peace and justice, fraternity and progress.

Thank you.

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