



Statements made by M. Jacques CHIRAC, President of the Republic, during his joint press conference with Mr Vladimir PUTIN, President of Russia, and Mrs Angela MERKEL, Chancellor of Germany, during the franco-german-russian tripartite meeting (Excerpts).

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(...)

Q. How much time are you and your partners on the United Nations Security Council going to give the Iranians to go on with the dialogue? When will your patience run out and will we perhaps get to sanctions?

THE PRESIDENT As I've already had occasion to tell you and I think it's a shared feeling we had here to do the utmost to find a solution through dialogue, which is always the best way to settle problems. I'm relatively optimistic, because that's in my nature, regarding the successful conclusion of the discussions taking place between the Six and Iran, and more especially between Mr Solana and Mr Larijani. We haven't got a guillotine date, and hope that an agreement arising from the dialogue can come as soon as possible.

Q. Yesterday, there was a huge demonstration with the Hezbollah leader, who has criticized UNIFIL, particularly the German naval forces, saying that Germany was there to protect Israel's security, as was UNIFIL. What's your view?

THE PRESIDENT I've said this several times: do the Lebanese want a free independent State? Answer: undoubtedly, yes. There's no free independent State if its government hasn't got authority over the whole of its territory. This is exactly the point the United Nations have made by adopting UNSCR 1701. It's essential to settle this problem. It must be settled by the Lebanese themselves, i.e. through an internal process in Lebanon, a commonsense process. Also, obviously since you refer to a demonstration, which is a characteristic of democracies Hezbollah is destined to be a political party in Lebanon, but a political party representing only some of the Lebanese people, a political



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party abiding by the rules of democracy in the normal way. That's what I'd like to see for Lebanon and the Lebanese. (●●●).

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