



EXCERPTS FROM PRESIDENT CHIRAC'S PRESS BRIEFING

SEA ISLAND, GEORGIA

JUNE 9, 2004

Q: Mr. President, I just wanted to assure you that there may be more than a hundred of us journalists here, so your press briefing is larger than it may seem to you over there. I wanted to ask you: This morning, President Bush and Prime Minister Blair mentioned the possibility of an expanded role for NATO in Iraq. That's a subject they want to work on before the summit that will take place in Turkey. Do you, does France, see the possibility of sending NATO troops to Iraq? What do you think of this approach?

Naturally, I am open to all discussions. I won't hide from you that I don't believe it is NATO's vocation to intervene in Iraq and, moreover, I don't have the feeling it would be opportune or even necessarily understood. I therefore have considerable reservations vis-à-vis this initiative. It goes without saying that in any event, it could be considered only if the sovereign Iraqi government expressly expressed this intention.

Q: France was initially rather reticent with regard to the United States Greater Middle East initiative. It seems that today it is much more favorable. Can you explain why France now thinks it is something positive and what are the steps that have been taken to reach a compromise?

France certainly never contested the need for dialogue and for helping a certain number of countries, notably in the Middle East and North Africa, on their path to both economic and political modernization. It contested it all the less in that France was in a way at the origin, was completely at the origin, of this movement, via the Barcelona Process.

On the other hand, France was very attentive to the fact that you cannot impose reforms, you must convince, you must engage in dialogue, you must cooperate, but while respecting peoples' diversity, their history, their culture and the problems they face. We therefore believed that what was essential was an openness to a truly friendly and constructive dialogue that could help those people who wanted to do so to make a certain number of changes. This is to some degree, I repeat, the spirit of Barcelona. It is what we ourselves are doing with a certain number of countries, beginning with Syria, for example, when it comes to our cooperation in helping the administration and administrative systems to evolve.

I believe we have achieved a good frame of mind. We will now hold discussions with the interested parties themselves, and I hope this cooperation may evolve in a positive way.



## PRESIDENCE DE LA REPUBLIQUE

Q: I would like to know how we should interpret the fact that you will not be attending President Reagan's funeral on Friday.

Alas, it's quite simple. I knew President Reagan and his wife. I had the opportunity to meet them and to work with him, and I would have very pleased to go and express personally to his wife the sentiments I had already and immediately conveyed in writing. But I have obligations that can't be set aside, which is why I asked our foreign minister, Mr. Michel Barnier, to replace me, and to see with President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing if he could also represent France, which I believe he is going to do, and which is what I would like to see happen. |