

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With President Jacques Chirac of France June 14, 1995

The President. Let me say that it's a great honor to have President Chirac here for his first time since his election, although he's been here before and we've had several good visits since I've been President. And I'm looking forward to the conversation. We have had no conversations yet, and we're going to have a press availability at the conclusion of our meetings.

French Nuclear Tests

Q. Have the French set back the world in terms of resuming their nuclear testing?

The President. I think I would—what we want to do is get a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty. That's high on our agenda, and we have agreed not to test while we search for that. And I'll—if there are further questions on that, I will answer them at the—

Iraq

Q. Do you have any information about this happening in Iraq? Do you think it is a coup attempt against Saddam?

The President. I'd rather answer all these questions at the press availability.

[At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered.]

France-U.S. Relations

Q. Mr. President, can you say something about this visit of the French President, newly elected?

The President. First, let me say it's a great honor to have President Chirac here for his first visit as President. But we have known each other since I became President. And I think you met my wife before I was elected. I've had many good visits with him, and we've talked extensively by telephone since his election. But I look forward to this. And of course, after our meeting we will have a press availability, and we'll be able to answer questions about the subject of our talks at that time.

Q. How is the mood between France and the United States today with the new President here in Washington?

The President. I think it's very good. I know that I personally have a lot of confidence in President Chirac. I think he's entered office with a lot of energy and direction and conviction about the things that are good not only for France but for our alliance and our common search for security and for democracy and the world and for peace. And I'm looking forward to it. I think he's going to make an enormous contribution to our common causes.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:48 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

The President's News Conference With European Union Leaders June 14, 1995

President Clinton. It's a great pleasure to welcome President Chirac and President Santer to the White House, the first visit for both leaders in their present positions to the Oval Office.

I begin with congratulations to President Chirac on his outstanding victory last month. From our many contacts with him throughout his long public service, the United States knows that he is a true and reliable friend, and he

will be a strong and effective leader for France and for Europe. In his short time as President, he has already demonstrated this leadership. We applaud his determination to create jobs and economic growth for his own country, and with Jacques Chirac as President, we are sure that the French commitment to peace, stability, and progress is in excellent hands. France, as all of you know, was America's first ally. We know