

to help heal in the Middle East is to address the root causes of the problems there, and the root cause of the problem is Hizballah and Syria and the Iranian connection.

The President has taken a strong lead on this issue in the past. We are in discussions with his administration, and I'm confident that we'll be able to come up with a clear position between France and the United States on this vital issue.

I look forward to discussing other issues with my friend Jacques Chirac. It's good to be with you, sir. Thank you for coming by.

President Chirac. First of all, I just like to say how delighted I am to have this opportunity to meet with the American President. And I note, albeit it, that this has been difficult circumstances, as we have been witnessing the sad events that have been unfolding in the Middle East. But I'm especially struck and delighted by the fact that we share the same views of the issues at stake here. We witness the tremendous sadness, the hardship of the civilian population in this region. You know what longstanding ties France has always had with Lebanon. And when I say "this region," I refer not only to Lebanon but, of course, to what's happening to the Palestinians. So we would call—[inaudible]—for a show of moderation on the part of all parties involved, so that we can establish the conditions of a long-lasting, lasting cease-fire in the region.

Now, I entirely agree with the American President in what he said about supporting the U.N. mission, which is designed, among other things, to ensure the release of the Israeli soldiers being detained right now both by Hizballah and by Hamas and put an end to the firing of Kassam rockets.

Now, with respect to Gaza, which is a separate issue from that of Lebanon, we feel that it is essential—it is of the essence—that we renew dialog with Mahmoud Abbas.

Now, as regards Lebanon, I couldn't agree more with President Bush in saying that what is at the heart of this is the to-the-letter implementation of Security Council Resolution 1559. That is what must be done forthwith. And we must stop all those who are at present engaging in jeopardizing the security, the stability, and authority of Lebanon.

President Bush. Thank you all. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:14 a.m. in Cottage Nine at the Konstantinovsky Palace Complex. President Chirac referred to Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev, Israeli soldiers captured and held captive by militants in Lebanon since July 12; President Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority. President Chirac spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Following Discussions With President Hu Jintao of China in Strelina July 16, 2006

President Bush. Mr. President, thank you for coming by to say hello. I remember fondly your visit to Washington, DC, a very successful trip to our Nation's Capital and

other parts of our country. I want to thank you for the discussion we've had today.

The United Nations Security Council unanimously passed a resolution dealing with the North Korean issue, and I want

to thank you for your leadership on that, Mr. President. We're working together on the Iranian issue. We talked about the Middle East. I want to thank you very much for our continued dialog on bilateral issues. We spent a lot of time on economics and trade.

All in all, it's a continuation of the very good dialog we had during your trip to Washington, and I want to thank you for coming.

President Hu. Ladies and gentlemen, I'm very happy to have the opportunity to meet you here. As President Bush said just now, we had a very friendly and candid discussion. To start with the discussion, I expressed my heartfelt thanks to the American side for the warm reception afforded to me during my visit to the United States in April this year by President Bush, the American Government, and the American people.

In addition, we also had an in-depth discussion on the China-U.S. relationship and major international issues of mutual interest. Both President Bush and I speak highly of the development of China-U.S. relationship as it is today. We also are happy to see that the agreement President Bush and I reached on comprehensively moving forward the constructive and cooperative China-U.S. relationship is being gradually implemented.

We both agreed to continue to view and handle the China-U.S. relationship from a strategic plane—I mean, a long-term perspective. In addition, we also agreed to work hard to expand the convergent interests between the two countries and step up our pragmatic cooperation in the economic, trade, energy, science, technology, counterterrorism, nonproliferation, and the military fields.

At the same time, we also believe that we need to respect and properly address each other's concerns and properly handle the sensitive issues in the bilateral relationship so that we can continue to move forward this relationship.

We both believe that against the current backdrop of a complex and volatile international situation, to enhance the consultation and the coordination between China and the United States on major regional as well as international issues, serves the interests of both countries. This is also crucial to international peace and stability.

Both sides expressed their commitment to maintain peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia as a whole, and both sides agreed to continue their efforts to move forward the six-party talks so that at the end of the day, the entire Korean Peninsula could be denuclearized in a peaceful way through dialog and in negotiations.

Both sides indicated their willingness to work together to continue to seek a peaceful solution to the Iranian nuclear issue. We also discussed the situation in the Middle East.

In this afternoon's discussion, we also spent quite a lot of time in an in-depth manner on our economic ties and trade and on the Taiwan question.

I am satisfied with the discussion with President Bush. Thank you.

President Bush. Thank you, Mr. President.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:53 p.m. in Cottage Nine at the Konstantinovsky Palace Complex. President Hu spoke in Chinese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

G-8 Leaders' Statement on the Situation in the Middle East *July 16, 2006*

Today, we the G-8 Leaders express our deepening concern about the situation in the Middle East, in particular the rising civilian casualties on all sides and the damage to infrastructure. We are united in our determination to pursue efforts to restore peace. We offer our full support for the UN Secretary General's mission presently in the region. The root cause of the problems in the region is the absence of a comprehensive Middle East peace.

The immediate crisis results from efforts by extremist forces to destabilize the region and to frustrate the aspirations of the Palestinian, Israeli and Lebanese people for democracy and peace. In Gaza, elements of Hamas launched rocket attacks against Israeli territory and abducted an Israeli soldier. In Lebanon, Hizbollah, in violation of the Blue Line, attacked Israel from Lebanese territory and killed and captured Israeli soldiers, reversing the positive trends that began with the Syrian withdrawal in 2005, and undermining the democratically elected government of Prime Minister Fuad Siniora.

These extremist elements and those that support them cannot be allowed to plunge the Middle East into chaos and provoke a wider conflict. The extremists must immediately halt their attacks.

It is also critical that Israel, while exercising the right to defend itself, be mindful of the strategic and humanitarian consequences of its actions. We call upon Israel to exercise utmost restraint, seeking to avoid casualties among innocent civilians and damage to civilian infrastructure and to refrain from acts that would destabilize the Lebanese government.

The most urgent priority is to create conditions for a cessation of violence that will be sustainable and lay the foundation for a more permanent solution. This, in our judgment, requires:

- The return of the Israeli soldiers in Gaza and Lebanon unharmed;
- An end to the shelling of Israeli territory;
- An end to Israeli military operations and the early withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza;
- The release of the arrested Palestinian ministers and parliamentarians. The framework for resolving these disputes is already established by international consensus.

In Lebanon, UN Security Council Resolutions 1559 and 1680 address the underlying conditions that gave rise to this crisis. We urge the UN Security Council to develop a plan for the full implementation of these resolutions.

We extend to the Government of Lebanon our full support in asserting its sovereign authority over all its territory in fulfillment of UNSCR 1559. This includes the deployment of Lebanese Armed Forces to all parts of the country, in particular the South, and the disarming of militias. We would welcome an examination by the UN Security Council of the possibility of an international security/monitoring presence.

We also support the initiation of a political dialogue between Lebanese and Israeli officials on all issues of concern to both parties. In addition, we will support the economic and humanitarian needs of the Lebanese people, including the convening at the right time of a donors conference.

In Gaza, the disengagement of Israel provided an opportunity to move a further step toward a two state solution under the Road Map. All Palestinian parties should accept the existence of Israel, reject violence, and accept all previous agreements and obligations, including the Roadmap. For its part, Israel needs to refrain from unilateral acts that could prejudice a final