

Speech by Mr. Alain Juppé
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Mr. President,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It's an honor for me to speak to you today, here, in this prestigious institution, at a time that is clearly a turning point in international life. I'm thinking in particular of the extraordinary changes that are currently taking place on the southern shores of the Mediterranean.

Our vision and our policies with respect to the Arab world have for years—contradictory as it may seem—been inspired primarily by a concern for stability.

On the one hand, we were developing close cooperation in order to train elites, promote employment and vocational training, encourage university research and projects in support of young people, and offer support for reforms.

But at the same time, we often saw the authoritarian regimes as bastions against extremism, safeguards against chaos. We allowed ourselves, in the name of security and the fight against terrorism, to demonstrate a certain level of tolerance for the governments that were flouting human rights and curbing their country's development. We turned a blind eye to certain abuses, as if this region of the world didn't have the right to freedom or modernity.

The "Arab Spring" changed everything. On December 17, separate from any political or religious movement, we saw a young Tunisian set himself on fire. Little by little, we witnessed the flame of freedom spreading throughout the region. We witnessed the Arab world enter into a process of opening-up, of accelerated change and globalization that is the sign of our times.

France believes that we mustn't be afraid of this "Arab Spring."

- First, because it's the fruit of extraordinary courage. How could we forget the price of democracy, we who so many times fought side by side to defend it? How could our two countries, who together fought for freedom in the darkest hours in the history of mankind, forget what it costs in spilled blood when one rises up against barbarity, when one defies a tyrant?

- We mustn't be afraid of the "Arab Spring" because it's the fruit of a tremendous popular momentum. It doesn't belong to any party or religion. It's not the prerogative of any movement, any civil society actor. It's the cry of revolt of young people with no future prospects but who are open to the world, young people dreaming of a more just and modern society but faced with poverty, unemployment and the rise in food prices. It's the political will of responsible citizens rising up against corruption, police abuse, and human rights violations. It's an act of faith in man's surge forward and his ability to surpass himself.

- Above all, we mustn't be afraid of the "Arab Spring" because it embodies universal values: dignity, freedom, respect for human rights, the right of people to choose their own leaders. Our two countries have never ceased promoting these values, from the French and American Revolutions to the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that Eleanor Roosevelt and Professor René Cassin drafted together in the aftermath of World War II. This "Arab Spring" thus sparks tremendous hope for all of us.

For all that, we know that this irrepressible movement of renewal brings with it real risks: the risk that it will be hijacked by extremist forces, the risk of radicalization, the risk that the freedom of religion or belief will be undermined—I'm thinking notably of continued attacks against the Middle East's Christians and other religious minorities; my country is particularly sensitive to this issue. We also know that the process of change which is getting under way will be long and uncertain, that progress may alternate with backsliding.

That's why we must support the potential for democracy with all our might, without relaxing our efforts. Allowing the flame of hope kindled by the "Arab Spring" to go out, would mean vindicating the defenders of the Clash of Civilizations. It would mean giving free rein to the incitements to hatred and appeals for withdrawal. It would mean allowing these values to be crushed. We've never compromised on these values, and the people from the southern Mediterranean countries—like all other people—are entitled to them. Supporting democratic forces in the Arab world means assuming our moral and political responsibility. It means making a choice that is in keeping with our values and our strategic interests.

We face tremendous challenges.

First and foremost, there is the political challenge: together, everyone in his place, everyone assuming his role, we must mobilize our efforts to guarantee the success of the democratic transition.

➤ *This applies first and foremost to the Arab world, to its leaders and its peoples.*

From now on, in all countries on the southern shores of the Mediterranean, governments know that a regime that fires live ammunition on its population does not have a future and can no longer count on the international community's indulgence. While a new social contract needs to be redefined, everyone knows that they must now allow their citizens to voice their opinions.

But every situation is unique. And it's up to each nation, with its history, its culture and its unique characteristics, to write its own future and to create its own model. That's a conviction that we share with President Obama.

In certain countries, carried by the winds of freedom of the "Arab Spring," the authorities have made the first move. They've resolutely and courageously embarked on a process of opening-up, in order to respond to the legitimate aspirations of their people. This is the case in Morocco, where the King has paved the way for major institutional reforms, which I welcome.

Other countries, like Tunisia and Egypt, are now immersed in the delicate process of managing the post-revolution situation. The path toward freedom is a difficult one which requires satisfying the legitimate thirst for democracy and taking the patient and necessary steps towards democracy, combining the right of everyone to express their views, the freedom

of each individual and respect for the law. Because a State governed by the rule of law isn't just a State that guarantees its citizens' rights. It's also a State based on a hierarchy of norms that everyone has to respect. Together with its European Union partners, France has therefore confirmed its active support for the transition in Egypt and Tunisia.

Finally, other countries have opted to pursue a brutal crackdown that will lead nowhere.

I'm thinking above all of Libya, where in light of the Qaddafi regime's heinous crimes against its people, my country did everything to get the international community to intervene, within the framework of UN Security Council Resolution 1973 and in accordance with the principle of the responsibility to protect.

We must assume this responsibility to protect the civilian populations to the very end. That's why we're continuing to exert strong military pressure on Libya:

- Firstly, so that we don't leave them to continue suffering the attacks being perpetrated against them by Qaddafi's troops;

- Secondly, to generate political room to maneuver, while Qaddafi is on the defensive and increasingly isolated on the international stage. At the G8 Summit on May 26th and 27th in Deauville, we achieved major progress in that Russia took a clear position by affirming the need for Qaddafi's departure. This change of position comes in addition to that of several African heads of state, like President Wade of Senegal, who are beginning to distance themselves from him.

We will therefore be inflexible with respect to Qaddafi, who no longer has any legitimacy and who must leave power—he has also just been indicted by the International Criminal Court. We expect a genuine ceasefire, the liberation of the occupied zones and the establishment of a system of international control under the auspices of the United Nations. At the same time, we are fully mobilized to support national reconciliation and the launch of an inclusive political process based on the National Transitional Council, whose legitimacy is increasingly being recognized. This process will give birth to the new Libya. That is how we conceive of the use of force in Libya, as an instrument serving the law and a political solution that is our shared objective.

As for Syria, the rejection of the reforms and the vicious circle of violence are no less intolerable than in Libya. We don't have two different policies in these two countries. I would like, here, to denounce the crackdown that has once again killed dozens of people in recent days, notably in Hama. Hama, where the Syrian authorities had already massacred their own population in 1982. Hama, where history is tragically repeating itself. Our message to President Bashar al-Assad is clear. It's the same message conveyed by the United States: Either he initiates reforms or he leaves power. There's no other solution.

It's with this in mind that, on France's initiative, the EU decided that Bashar al-Assad should now also be subject to European sanctions. It's also with this in mind that the United States announced the imposition of sanctions against the president and his entourage. Beyond the European and American sanctions, the Security Council must take a position, with each country assuming its responsibilities. The international community must make it clear to the Syrian leaders that the crackdown is unacceptable and they must change course. That is the goal of the draft resolution we are championing before the Security Council.

In Yemen, lastly, we hope that an orderly, peaceful transition can take place. The countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council have developed a transition plan which remains the best way to resolve the crisis. We hope that, on this basis, the Yemenis will swiftly embark on the path of reconciliation in a spirit of national unity and dialogue, and that they will again be able to engage in a democratic process. Together with its European and American partners, France will remain alongside the Yemeni people in order to help them successfully complete this transition.

➤ *So what should we be doing?*

As President Obama said very clearly—and France takes the same approach—it is not up to us to decide for the people of other nations or to provoke regime changes in independent countries. Nor do they expect us to.

First, we must condemn in the strongest possible terms all attacks on human rights, using the whole range of instruments at our disposal to bring an end to them and even intervene if necessary, but only on the basis of international law—notably the principle of the responsibility to protect.

We must also support the countries of the southern Mediterranean as they undergo their transition to democracy, in a spirit of trust, friendship and listening. We have no recipes or lessons to offer them. But we have experience to share and expertise to convey, particularly with regard to constitutional law, political systems, public freedoms and freedom of the press. It was for this purpose that France recently welcomed a delegation of Libyan legal and constitutional scholars.

What we must now reinvent is our whole practice of diplomacy with the Arab world. We must notably agree to speak with all actors involved in the changes, including Islamists, without preconceptions, provided they respect the rules of the democratic game and of course the fundamental principle of rejecting all violence. We must expand the range of our interlocutors to include all civil society actors and notably young people and new opinion leaders. This is the mission that I gave to all of France's ambassadors to the Arab world, asking them to reorient our excellent diplomatic apparatus to that end.

The second challenge we are facing is economic and social.

Make no mistake: This challenge is probably the hardest to meet. During my trips to Egypt and Tunisia last March and April, I met with young activists. I ascertained the extent of their hopes and expectations. I also ascertained the intensity of their impatience. If we do not provide them with answers in the short term and if the economic situation in their countries continues to inexorably deteriorate, nothing will prevent the emergence of radical movements. Nothing will quash the temptations of extremism. It is our responsibility and our interest to join forces in order to avert this scenario and promote the emergence of an area of stability and prosperity in this part of the world.

That was the very point of the concrete measures adopted at France's behest at the G8 summit in Deauville, attended by the Tunisian and Egyptian Prime Ministers.

-The first measure establishes a long-term partnership, both political and economic, to be expanded, eventually, to other countries in the region engaged on the path of reform, and to receive the financial support of the Gulf countries that wish to participate.

-The second measure is a \$40 billion effort over three years benefiting Egypt and Tunisia; of that \$40 billion, \$20 billion is to come from development banks, \$10 billion will be in the form of bilateral aid from G8 members, and \$10 billion will come from the Gulf States. This initial figure could be increased, based on what the IMF is prepared to add.

The G8 tasked its members' finance and foreign ministers with implementing these measures. I will work relentlessly in the coming months to this end, in close coordination with Hillary Clinton – and we decided today to organize a meeting of foreign and finance Ministers in September at the time of the UN General Assembly. In succeeding one another to the G8 presidency, our two countries indeed have a particular role to play in this process.

As Europeans, our responsibility is all the greater in that our special relationship with the Arab world forged by geography and by centuries of shared history places us at the heart of the challenges facing the Mediterranean. The EU already reaffirmed this shared destiny in 1995 when, in the framework of the Barcelona Process, it initiated a policy of commercial openness toward its southern neighbors. Now it must embrace it fully. President Sarkozy has clearly expressed my country's strong conviction in this regard.

It is with this in mind that Catherine Ashton, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, proposed a “partnership for democracy and shared prosperity with the southern Mediterranean” as well as a complete overhaul of Europe's neighborhood policy for the 10 countries of the Mediterranean basin.

To meet these challenges, the EU plans to allocate nearly 7 billion euros in donations between 2011 and 2013 in the context of its neighborhood policy. This aid will be incentive-based: the EU will increase its financial support to the countries of the southern Mediterranean that go farther in their democratic and economic reforms. On the other hand, it will reexamine or even reduce its effort to those that do not institute reforms.

We want to make this neighborhood policy a major tool for the Union for the Mediterranean. This ambitious idea, which brings together the 27 members of the EU and all the countries of the Mediterranean basin, was launched in 2008 at President Sarkozy's behest. The objective was to create a balanced partnership between the northern and southern shores based on concrete projects. Unfortunately, the Union for the Mediterranean ran up against the deadlocked peace process.

The “Arab Spring” now shows just how prescient this initiative was. It demonstrates the depth of our shared destiny with our Mediterranean neighbors, and how essential it is to lay out a project that fosters solidarity and tangible achievements between our two shores. If ever the political partnership approach underlying the Union for the Mediterranean is to assume its full meaning, it is now, when our interlocutors will be new governments that embody the will to institute democratic change.

That's why France wants the Union for the Mediterranean to be revived and to focus on concrete projects liable to create solidarity between the two shores of our shared sea. A new secretary-general, Youssef Amrani from Morocco, has just been appointed. His mission will

be to initiate joint projects such as the establishment of a Euro-Mediterranean office for youth and the development of solar energy.

But no area of prosperity and stability can be consolidated in the long term without a lasting solution to the two crises that undermine the entire region.

How can we credibly support democratic transitions if we don't respond to the aspirations for change expressed by the Iranian people since 2009? Faced with an ongoing crackdown, together we must maintain pressure on the Iranian authorities, as we did in Deauville. They must guarantee respect for human rights, illuminate every aspect of their nuclear program, and abide by the international community's demands. This program, whose military purpose is becoming more and more evident, represents an ever-growing threat to the non-proliferation system, to regional stability and to the future of Arab transitions. Because as we know, the Iranian regime's goal is not a prosperous, democratic Middle East, open to the world. I want to solemnly reiterate the French determination in dealing with the authorities who have violated all the international agreements they have signed, whether with regard to the nuclear issue or to human rights.

How can we maintain our credibility vis-à-vis the people of the southern Mediterranean if we don't find a resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? The hopes of the Palestinians are no less legitimate than those expressed through the Arab Spring. And Israel, which has the right to live in security and peace, must further extend its hand so that the evolution in the Arab world continues with it and not against it. The fulfillment of the peace process will make it possible to usher in a new era of security and stability in the region, helping it turn away from the extremism and fundamentalism that has long flourished in the absence of progress on Palestinian rights.

The current situation gives rise to two observations:

- The first, which we share with the United States, is that the status quo is more untenable than ever, particularly in the context of the "Arab Spring." Time is not on the side of peace.
- The second is that a Palestinian diplomatic initiative at the UN this September is clearly fraught with the risks of polarization and deadlock. We ourselves have not yet reached a decision on this subject.

From this I conclude that we must do everything we can to try and revive the credible prospect of a solution as quickly as possible. There is no alternative to a negotiated solution. We must promote a swift resumption of direct negotiations, notably taking into account the approaches mentioned in President Obama's speech, to implement the two-State solution, to which there is no alternative. I conveyed this urgent message to the Israeli and Palestinian leaders whom I just met during my visit to the region last week in order to revive negotiations, the only way to bring an end to the conflict.

To this end, France has proposed parameters that echo President Obama's. We sought a basis for compromise that would respond to the expectations of both parties. This is the framework of our proposals:

- These negotiations would first deal with security and border issues, on the basis of the 1967 borders with agreed-upon land swaps.

-During a second phase, they would deal with Jerusalem and refugees. These talks must not exceed one year.

Should the parties agree to this approach – I have yet to get their answer – France would be prepared to support the resumption of negotiations, in conjunction with the U.S. Administration, by hosting a peace conference in Paris this year.

As for Palestinian reconciliation, I realize that it elicits conflicting reactions. But how can we imagine that a peace agreement would be respected and would guarantee Israel's security if not all Palestinians were to adhere to it? For our part, we believe that this reconciliation could represent a chance for peace. That will be the case if it leads Hamas to evolve in response to our expectations and our demands. An important initial step could be for the national unity government to agree to reject violence and to clearly open peace negotiations with Israel under the authority of Mahmoud Abbas, based on the principles we hold dear.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have an appointment with history. We cannot stand back and witness the extraordinary changes under way as spectators.

I'm sure you understand that France is determined to meet these challenges in the UN, with its allies and within the EU, because our values and our destiny are playing out in this "Arab Spring." That's why we want to remain proactive, proposing new ideas, identifying concrete projects on which we can cooperate, and taking action when the use of military force is necessary to protect civilian populations and democracy.

My country welcomes President Obama's courageous vision and will to act, expressed notably in his speech on May 19, which opens up real prospects for the future and bolsters the choices made by France. With its values and its defining weight, your great country must play a major role.

"Liberty, when it begins to take root, is a plant of rapid growth." Amid the "Arab Spring," these words of George Washington are particularly resonant. Let us unite our efforts to help liberty take root on the southern shores of the Mediterranean. True to the spirit of America's Founding Fathers, true to our shared values of generosity, democracy and respect for human rights, let us, together with the Arab world, make the Mediterranean a place of peace, stability and exchange.

Thank you.