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**Speech by Nicolas SARKOZY  
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My dear friends,

Each of you understands the importance of this moment for France, for the future of each of your families, and for me. More than anything else, I am surrounded by a profound emotion. I could try and qualify this feeling, try and express it in a word, try and say thank you but thank you does not do justice to the overwhelming passion that I am experiencing in this moment. There are some feelings too strong to be captured in words. Some feelings are so strong that we can not name them.

I ask you to take the emotion that surrounds me now while speaking to you as a testimony of my sincerity, my honesty and my friendship.

On the threshold of this campaign and during the coming weeks, I will give, receive and potentially even sacrifice a great deal. I want every one of you to be convinced of my absolute determination, of the infinite energy I will devote to winning this cause that unites us all. I understand today that I have no right to deceive you, no right to hesitate—to put it simply, no right to fail!

All my life, I have dreamed of being useful to France, my country, my home. Today, you all have helped me reach the first step of this dream. The only thing that matters is the enormous hope that this crowd embodies, oriented towards a single goal: victory for France. This enthusiasm owes respects to you, Alain Juppe. Without the work you did as this party's first president, the victory of Jacques Chirac in 2002 would not have been possible.

Yes my dear friends, when we are all are together, united, connected, all will be possible.

On this day, where everything will change for me, I cannot help but think about those who have made me dream of another destiny, a better life, a more optimistic future. They are for me a source of reflection, hope and confidence.

They are heroes of the Resistance and the liberation of France, people with whom I took my first political steps, people who came from an era when politics were intertwined with patriotism and epic events. They maintained the honour of France. They rebuilt it, they reconciled with Germany.

They made Europe and founded the 5th Republic. They were all ahead of their time. They enlightened me, because they knew better than anyone, what Gaullism meant. It is not a doctrine, General de Gaulle never intended it to be, but it is an ethic, a selfless commitment to the public good, the conviction that France is only strong when it is united, the certainty that nothing is hopeless when the flame of resistance continues to burn in the heart of but one person, it is the refusal to give up, a rupture with the status quo when it is leading France into a decline.



These people were great in war and in peace. They always did what had to be done.

I want to pay homage to Jacques Chaban-Delmas, general in the resistance at 29, who had a vision for the New Society. His last political fight was the first of my life. I was 17; he inspired me to my core. It was the end of an era, after which Gaullism had surpassed the constraints of a political party.

I want to pay homage to Achille Peretti, an important member of the resistance who entrusted in me my first public post as a municipal councillor. I also want to thank Edouard Balladur how had the confidence in me to give my first ministerial responsibilities even though I was still quite young.

I also want pay my respects to Jacques Chirac, who, in 1975, provided me the forum to give my first speech.

They taught me, a young Frenchman of mixed heritage, to love France and to be proud of being French. This love has never weakened and this pride has never abated. For a long time I kept it within me, like a hidden treasure in the depths of my heart that I never felt the need to share with anyone. I thought that politics had nothing to do with my personal emotions. I never imagined that a strong person could share his emotions. I have since realized that he who is strong can still appear human. I have understood that humanity is a strength, not a weakness.

I have changed. I have changed because the moment you designated me, I stopped being the representative of only one party, even if it be the largest in France. I have changed because the presidential election is a challenge of truth that on one can water down. Because I owe you this truth. Because I owe this truth to the French people. I have changed because the ordeals of my life have changed me. It is not easy for me to say it, but I want to because it is the truth, that we cannot fully understand the pain of another unless we have lived through the same type of misfortune.

We cannot empathize with the tales of another's professional or personal failure if we have not endured them ourselves. I have known failure and I had to overcome them.

We cannot extend a helping hand to those who think they have lost all hope if we have never had those same moments of doubt. I have had doubts before. One cannot be courageous if one has never been scared. Courage is obtained by surmounting one's fears.

This humanity was buried in me because for a long time, I thought to be strong was to never show weakness. Today, I understand that weakness, pain and failure all render one stronger. They are companions for those who strive for more.

I have changed because responsibility has changed me. It has made me feel the overpowering moral responsibility of authority. The word "moral" does not make me scared.



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I have changed because no one can stay the same after facing the grief stricken parents of a young lady who was burned alive. Because no one can stay the same when faced with the agony of a husband whose young wife was killed by a multi-recidivist, already sentenced to prison 10 times, including once for murder. When seeing them we understand the incomprehension of those who have seen the unspeakable become a reality. I am revolted by injustice and when a society ignores the victims. I want to speak for them, work for them, even if we must scream their names.

I have changed because we are forced to change when we are confronted by the anguish of a worker who is worried his factory will shut down. I changed when I visited the memorial of Yad Vashem dedicated to the victims of the Holocaust. I remember, at the end of a long hallway, a large room with thousands of little lights and the first names of children ages two, four, five pronounced by a voice without interruption. It was a wall of innocent souls. This is where politics should act: we must make sure that the madness of men cannot be replicated in the future.

I changed when I read about the events at Tibhirine, in Algeria, and the deeply moving testament of father Christian, abducted and killed by fanatics along with six other monks from his monastery.

The GIA had warned: "We will cut throats". Their seven severed heads were found without their bodies.

Two years before, this man of charity pardoned in advance his assassin: "If I am one day a victim of terrorism... I can say that if God wants I will be able see with Him and like Him the children of Islam... And you too, my last friend, who doesn't know what you are doing, yes, for you too I want thank the Lord...and I hope that we will meet again in happy circumstances, perhaps in heaven if God our Father wants it for both of us." For his immense humanity, for his will to unite mankind, he bestowed a deep honour upon a secular and republican France.

From Tibhirine, I understood the invincible force of love and the true meaning of "tolerance".

From Tibhirine, father Christian taught me, by his death, that the great religions of the world engender the best in people better than they can the worst, that extremism and fundamentalism should never be confused with religions that uphold the human spirit.

To say that this religious sentiment is opposite to secular morality is absurd. We are the inheritors of 2000 years of Christian heritage under whose patrimony our secular morals were founded. I believe in secular government, it is not in conflict with religion. It is the respect for all religions.

I changed when I discovered Georges Mandel, that great Frenchman. I wanted to write about his life to repair an injustice, to change opinions about his tragic end. As a result of my exploration, my political views changed. Georges Mandel had a passion for politics. In May 1940, he was minister of the Interior.



In the middle of the unfolding crisis, it was him that pleaded for the creation of the Resistance. He was arrested. On the 7th of July 1944, collaborators broke him out of prison and put him in a car.

Upon arrival in the forest of Fontainebleau they machine gunned him to death.

On the 24th of July, his daughter wrote to Pierre Laval, the Vichy Prime Minister, "I am still young and weak in comparison to you... I want to tell you Mr. Laval that I feel very sorry for your daughter. You have given her a name that is marked for eternity. Mine will be too. Only mine will be that of a martyr."

On that day, France was named Claude Mandel. She was 14; her father was assassinated not of occupiers but by French enemies of France.

France has the face of a 17 year old, Guy Môquet, when he was shot, "17 and a half... my life was short! I have no regret but that of having to leave you all"

France is 19 and has the luminous face of a girl from Lorraine when Joan of Arc stood before her judges.

It is 32 and has the face of naturalized Frenchwoman from Italy, when Gambetta left the besieged

Paris by hot air balloon to organize the resistance against the Prussians.

France is 44 and has the bloodied face of Jean Moulin when he was murdered under torture, "without divulging one secret, though he knew them all."

It is 50 and has the voice of General de Gaulle on the 18th of June, 1940.

It is 56 and has the dark face of the grandson of a slave who became governor of Chad and the first resistor in France's overseas territories. Its name is Félix Eboué.

It is 58 and has Emile Zola's face when he pens 'J'accuse' to defend Alfred Dreyfus and Justice.

It is 60, and has the withdrawn face of Victor Hugo when, as *Les Misérables* began, he wrote: "As long as there is ignorance and misery, books of this nature will always be needed."

It is 77 and has the strength of a tiger when Clemenceau declared in March of 1918, "I will continue to make war, and I will not stop until the last hour because the last our will be ours."

It has the voice, the face, and the dignity of a woman, a mother, and a survivor of the death camps that proclaimed to the National Assembly, "We cannot close our eyes to the 300,000 clandestine abortions that every year mutilates the women of this country". That day, she was named Simone Veil.

It has the voice of a young French Priest, father Pierre, who on the radio one day in the winter of 1954, sent a desperate appeal, "Help. A woman is going to freeze this night, in three hours, on the side walk of the boulevard Sebastopol. Before our dead compatriots die in misery, there is only one option that exists for men: the will to render suffering impossible."

It has the face, during the time of Georges Pompidou when he avoided the worst in May 1968.

France, has the face, the age and the voice of all those that believe in her, that have fought for her, for her ideals, for her values, for her freedom.



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It has the face, the age, the voice of all the French people who from the depths of their heart have the conviction that France is not finished. Because France is not finished. Because in my heart like in my spirit, I know France does not want to be, and is not, dead.

Each time it has been left for finished, it has surprised the world. In each instance it has gotten up off the floor. In each instance it has found the strength within it for a rebirth.

My France is the country that is a union of the Ancien Régime and the Revolution, the Capetian state and the Republican state, it is the country that invented secularism so that those who believe in heaven can live side by side with those who do not.

My France is the country that when given the choice between the white of the Monarchy and red flag of the people, it created a tricolour banner; we made a flag for freedom and covered it in glory.

My France is a country for all French people without exception. It is the France of St. Louis and that of Carnot, that of the crusades and that of Valmy. That of Pascal and that of Voltaire. That of cathedrals and the encyclopaedia. That of Henry the IV and the Edict of Nantes. That of human rights and liberty of conscience.

My France is the France that has voted for the extremes not because they believe in its ideas but because they are desperate to be heard. To them, I want to extend a hand.

My France is the country whose workers believed in the Left of Jaurès and Blum and do not recognise the current Left that is immobile and no longer respects work. To them, I want to extend a hand.

My France is the country of all those that do not believe in politics any more as it has so often let them down. I want to tell them: help me break from the politics of disillusion and renew the politics of hope.

My France is the country of all Frenchmen who are not sure that they are Right, Left, or Centrist because they are before all, people of good will. I want to say to all of these people that I need them to make all possible.

Of course there is a Right and a Left. My values are yours, that of the republican Right.

These are the values of equality, order, merit, work and responsibility. But within the values I believe there is also a movement. I am not a conservative. I do not want an intransigent France. I want innovation, creativity, and the battle against injustice. I want to ingrain these ideas in the thinking of the republican Right even if the Left chooses to abandon them.

But even if there is a Right and a Left, there is the irreproachable Republic because it exists for the good of all. It is the state that must be impartial. It is France that has a common goal.



To be on the Right is to refuse to speak of a France where one is against another. It is to refuse the idea of a class war. It is to refuse to stick to ideology as a response to all questions, to be a solution to all problems. It is a refusal to see someone who thinks differently as an enemy and instead recognises them as citizens with a right to express their opinions.

My France is a country that is open, welcoming, and is the patron of human rights. It is that France that has made me what I am today. I am passionate about the country that saw my birth. I do not accept the denigration of it. I do not accept that one can live in France without respecting it and loving it. I do not accept that one wants to move to France without making the effort to read and write in French.

I respect all the cultures the world over. But they must know that if they choose to live in France they must respect the values and laws of the Republic.

The submission of women is contrary to the values of the Republic, those who want to suppress women have no place in France. Polygamy is contrary to the values of the Republic. Polygamists have no place in France. Circumcision is an attack on the dignity of women and is contrary to the values of the Republic.

Those that wish to practice it on their children are not welcome to live in the French Republic.

My France is a nation that embraces its identity, which stands by its history. We gain nothing by hating others but it is to our disadvantage to hate ourselves. We will build nothing by demanding that our children expound upon the errors of our fathers.

De Gaulle did not say to the youth of Germany, "you are responsible for the crimes of your fathers." Instead he said, "I congratulate you for being the children of a great people, who in the course of human history have made big mistakes."

To the people of an ancient empire, we must offer not expiation but brotherhood. To all those who wish to be French, we invite you to share in liberty, equality and the pride of being French. We must be sure not to judge too severely the past with the ideas of the present.

The fishermen of l'île de Sein, the farmers of Vercors were not Pétainistes. Farmers of the Périgord who hid, under threat of death, the Jews of Strasbourg were not Pétainistes. All Frenchmen from the colonies were not exploiters. There were among them simple folks that worked hard, exploited no one, and lost everything.

Frenchmen, swift to hate your country and history, listen to the great voice of Jaurès, "You must not judge all the time, everyday. What is needed is to compare age to age, generation to generation, how people lived their lives, what



types of difficulties they fell prey too, what were the perils and the travails of their time, and render opinions upon them under this light.”

Why does the Left not listen more to the voice of Jaurès?

How can we one day love if all we have ever learned is to detest? At the end of the road to denouncement and the hatred of oneself, we should not deceive ourselves, is communitarianism and the tribal law. I refuse the idea of communitarianism that reduces people to a single identity. I am against tribal law because it is the law of brutal force.

It is of no use for people to forget their history. The children of the Spanish republicans remember the refugee camps, the children of Jews persecuted by Vichy militias; the sons of pro French Algerian soldiers have forgotten none of their history. But they have taken, like me, the son of an immigrant, the culture, the language and the history of the France we share so that we may build a better future together.

Faced with the Algerian drama, Camus said, “the great tragedies of history fascinate men because of their horrors. Men are immobile before them without power to stop what awaits them.”

Await what? Other than the worst?

He would add, “The forces of the heart, intelligence, and courage are what is needed to stop fatal destiny.”

Why does the Left not listen more to the voice of Camus?

Who, through the lens of heart, intelligence, and courage, does not see that the key to our unity and our future is the Republic and democracy?

From the first time it appeared in our history, the Republic has been in constant combat for the emancipation of man. The Republic begins when politics ceases to have the will power to be in the service of the good of man.

The goal of the Republic is to remove from the heart of us all the acceptance of injustice.

The goal of the Republic is to ensure that if we have nothing else, we are still free; if we work to have something, if someone starts at the bottom of the ladder, they may still be able to climb as high as their abilities permit.

The goal of the Republic is to make the chance for success available to all. It ensures that a child is educated, sickness treated, the elderly are not solitary, work is respected and misery is vanquished.

The goal of the Republic is to recognise hard work as a source of success and success as the representation of hard work.

The Republic of Jules Ferry is not that of Danton. The Republic of General De Gaulle was not that of Jules Ferry. But it was always the same idea pursued by different means. The Republic is not a religion. The Republic is not a dogma. The Republic is always a project free to be created.

If we want the Republic to once again be a shared project, we must bypass the virtual Republic for the real Republic.

The real Republic is one that is not content to simply write liberty, equality and fraternity on its monuments, but strives to write it upon the reality of everyday life.



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The real Republic is not the one where everyone receives the same thing. It is the Republic where each receives what they deserve due merit or handicap. The real Republic is that one that does all it can for those who want to succeed and less for those who wish to do nothing but live off society's labours. The real Republic is not the one where they are only benefits and no responsibly. It is the Republic where work bestows benefits. I propose that no social minimum be accorded without a benefit for the general good.

It is the one where men and women have the same rights, the same salaries, the same career possibilities, and the same criteria by which they are judged. It is the one where mothers who want to work have access to day-care, where maternity is not a handicap to a professional life, where the years consecrated to the education of infants are counted towards the age of retirement. The real Republic is the one that does not stay indifferent to a destitute child, to whom life has spared no suffering. It is the one that educates and watches over children when their parents are at work. The one that creates centres of excellence for students from modest backgrounds who do not have the place to study at home.

The virtual Republic is the one that makes the student equal with the teacher. The real Republic is the one that wants schools with authority and respect, where the student stands when the teacher enters, where girls do not wear a veil, where boys do not wear caps in class.

The virtual Republic is the one that wants to give diplomas to all, regardless of how they did in their exams. The real Republic is the one that wants to give each person a true education, and is not afraid of recognising success in the classroom as the condition of promotion and success. It is the one that wants schools of excellence and not schools of the lowest common denominator.

The real Republic is one where sports are not a ghetto reserved for the young or visible minorities but as a school for life because the values of sports transcend all ages, all differences, all misunderstanding. Because sports are a universal ethic. The virtual Republic is one that practices generalized assistance, but leaves people to die on the sidewalks. It is the one that claims the right to housing for all but does not build the actual housing. It is the one that proclaims the right of work for all but renounce the objective of the employment plan.

It is the one that says work is a value but does all it can to discourage it. It is the one that proclaims the continuity of public service but accepts that its users are periodically hostages of strikers. It is the one that proclaims the rights to come and go but search without end excuses for delinquents that are poisoning the life of all.

The real Republic is the one that makes effective all of the laws it creates.

It is the Republic that creates work, which builds housing affordable to anyone who works for a living, which gives a chance to poor children, which makes equal the pensions of public and private retirees, one that guarantees minimum services in the case of strikes and expects everyone to follow the law. I want a law concerning minimum public service by June 2007. I want another strike law



that calls for a vote by secret ballot after 8 days for any strike posing the question to all if it should end or continue. This would affect all business, university and administrations.

I believe in the social democracy. I believe in dialogue, negotiation and partnership. But I refuse the idea of being taken hostage, blockages, anarchy, violence... and lack of courage! The real Republic is the one that imprisons the murder of Claude Erignac and treats the hoods and bombers as what they are: murders and cowards.

My Republic is one where there is a universal right to shelter, because if we think that government can do nothing in a country like France to stop people dying on the sidewalks, then the government can do nothing at all.

My Republic is one where there is a right to housing, because if one thinks that the government can do nothing except for building 700,000 lodgings that are missing, then there is nothing the government can do. My Republic is the one where everyone can succeed in becoming the owner of their lodging. For the middle class, to the France that works, there must be an ability to be owners.

I propose that the State guarantee the loans of those who do not have other means. I propose we make tax deductible the interest of these loans. I propose that we make France a country of ownership because when we are owners we respect our buildings, our neighbourhoods, our environment... and thusly each other.

My Republic is one where we have a written right to raise our children, because when we think that government can not, in five years, resolve the problems facing working mothers, than government can do nothing. My Republic is one where all handicapped children have the written write to an education, because when we think that government can not, in five years, ensure that all children receive a proper education, than government can do nothing.

But my Republic is also the one of responsibility. We cannot be complaisant with the rising levels of fraud, abuse and waste which are an insult to the working Frenchmen and which sap the foundations of national solidarity. Rights do not come without responsibilities, and we need to help those who respect the rules.

I want to be President of a Republic that tells its youth: "You want to be recognized as citizens in the fullest sense from the moment you become of age. You will be. You will have the means to decide for yourselves when you leave your parents home. You will have the means to realize your ambitions, to live your life as you wish, to enjoy the way you understand it. You will have the means to become who you want to be. But you must accept to learn and to develop; as an apprentice, as an intern, as a student. If you dropped out of school in your youth, you will have the opportunity at a second chance. If you did not pass the baccalaureate you can take courses that would allow you nonetheless to enter university. Unlike today, the aid given to your family for your education will instead be given to you, if you wish. If you have the need, you can receive a monthly stipend of three hundred euros that, if you do not continue with your courses or stop studying seriously, will be cancelled. You have



the right to take out an interest free loan guaranteed by the state, to finance your personal projects, which you will begin to pay back at the start of your first job. If you are able to find a part time job, and let it be known that everything will be done to make it possible for all students to work and study at the same time, you will have obtained real financial independence.

This is the key to liberty. But you will deserve it for your effort, for your work, for your attentiveness and seriousness. You will be responsible for your own life."

I do not want a society of minimums, because with the minimum we cannot fully live. We only survive. I want a society of maximums. I prefer a youth to whom we offer the possibility to realize these projects rather than a youth that is dependent on assistance.

I want to be the President of a Republic that tells its youth: "You receive much, but you also must give much in return. You must understand that you are taking part in a nation that is counting on you and what you succeed because it is the nation that has made you free. It is for this reason that I propose an obligatory six month civil service requirement that each of you could mould around your studies, your professional work, and your family life. For you it will be an opportunity to engage in the great humanitarian causes, to broaden your horizons, to encounter other young people different from yourselves, an opportunity for those young people, who had previously been excluded, to reintegrate into society." Our Republican model is in crisis. This crisis is foremost a morale one, at the centre of which is the devaluation of work.

Work makes us free; it is the equality of opportunity, the promotion of social mobility. Work is respect, is dignity, is true citizenship. With the crisis of the value of work, hope begins to disappear.

How does one hope for more if their work does not offer them a chance to progress, to succeed?

The worker who sees someone on welfare make more than him or the boss who drives his business to the brink of failure but escapes with a golden parachute does not have any incentive at all. Work has become devalued; the France that works is demoralized. The problem is that France works the least while others work more. Full employment is possible in other countries. It is also possible here. We must love work instead of hating it.

The problem is that there is not enough work in France to support the retired, the increased life expectancy of the retirees, the social services, in other words, to ensure that our integration model works.

For some time the Right has ignored the workers and the Left, which once claimed to represent them, has ultimately betrayed them.

I want to be President of a France that once again places the worker at the heart of society. I want to propose to France a political vision whose ultimate goal is the restoration of the values of work.

When we facilitate household borrowing to finance entrepreneurial creations or the purchasing of a car necessary to get to work, we are favouring work. I want to create a responsive public system that stabilizes the risks of borrowing, while enabling anyone who has a goal to pursue it.



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When we invest more, we construct a future for workers. It is for this reason that I would like to impose a hundred percent tax deduction on research. It is for this reason that I want businesses that invest and that create jobs to pay less tax on their profits. It is for this reason that I want the state to facilitate investment in failing sectors of the economy to reinvigorate them, and not only invest in high-profile projects. When businesses know that they are able to fire employees if problems arise, they are much more willing to hire. I want to protect people rather than jobs. I want to secure career paths rather than inhibiting the ability to fire. I want to create a unique and indefinite contract to replace the fragile existing ones; a contract that will allow for salaries and benefits to progressively increase. I want base salaries to be guaranteed in case the job is lost, yet at the same time for a worker to be obliged to accept one of his first two offers of employment. When you are indemnified by society, you must accept the job offer that corresponds to your qualifications.

Work is not rewarded, valued or respected nearly enough. And it is for this reason that buying power is so low, as salaries are low and financial burdens heavy. Therefore, we must enhance buying power. The socialists promise less work, I want the French to earn more. I want to be the President of the enhancement of our buying power. I want to be the one who guarantees that if you work more, if you risk more, if you engage more, you will gain an advantage. I want to be the President of a people who have understood that the "RTT" does not help at all if we do not have the means to pay for our children's vacations. I want to eliminate social charges and taxes on overtime income, so that finally we understand that in France work is freedom and unemployment is alienation.

It is for this reason that I want an estate tax exemption for every French citizen, so that they are able to pass on the fruits of their labour. We do not have to apologize for having funds saved after working. France must embrace, not shun, private savings. When there is less wealth in a country, it is the poorest who suffer most. Splitting what we no longer have does not aid the prosperity of the people.

I want the State to be able to leave at least fifty percent of individual earnings to the wage-earner. I want to implement a fiscal shield at fifty percent, including the CSG and the CRDS.

Anything is more valuable than taxing a man at work.

Anything is more valuable than to tax the worker who dreams of wealth.

I want to tax the polluter rather than the worker.

I want to tax imports that do not respect international laws rather than the worker.

I prefer to tax consumption rather than work.

It is work that creates work. The work will contribute to equalize our public finances. It will return France to a fraternal Republic.

I want to be President of all the French who think that aid is degrading for human spirit. I want to be the President who enforces the moral dimension of capitalism, because I do not believe in a capitalist system without morals or



ethics, because I do not believe in a capitalism where there are those who try to gain advantage over others who succeed, because I do not believe in a capitalist system where profits are capitalized or, inversely, all the taxes are divided.

I want to be the President who restores morals into the heart of politics. The child who does not learn either morals or civic values in school will never understand that being a citizen is more than just having rights. The youngster who does not do his military service anymore believes that he will never have to give anything in return for what he receives. The honest man, who sees the guilty man go unpunished and a portion of his taxes in the pockets of the fraudulent, begins to ask why he is the only honest one. But if schools no longer teach the values of citizenship, it is not the fault of the teachers. If the State goes bad, it is not the fault of the civil servants. It is the politicians who are responsible. I do not like the way we talk about civil servants in our country. I do not like the idea of comparing public and private salaries. They have an inflated idea of their mission. Civil servants are discouraged because their work is not recognized, because those who make the least earn as much as those who make the most. They are demoralized because the thirty-five hour workweek has complicated everything. You must go look at the disarray in the hospitals and experience the grief of the nurses caused by the disorganization and the lack of personnel that the reduced workweek produced.

I want a State where the civil servants will be numerically reduced but receive higher salaries, where extra work is rewarded, where the spoils of productivity increases are equally divided, where individual merit will be compensated, where internal promotion will be possible, where a nurse can become a doctor, where a technician can become an engineer, where the administrative assistant can become director, where the dignity and protection of public workers will be guaranteed. I want the public sector to stop being a refuge for those who are afraid to take risks. I want it to become once again a vocation for those with a desire to serve the community and the public good. I want an irreproachable democracy.

An irreproachable democracy requires the participation of every citizen in order to define our collective destiny.

An irreproachable democracy is one where it is not necessary to vote for the extremes to make a point. One where it is not necessary to descend upon the streets to scream in desperation. One where every individual recognizes a part of themselves in their leaders. An irreproachable democracy is not one where a child from a troubled neighbourhood who watches television sees no politicians who look like him.

An irreproachable democracy is one that allows children from all neighbourhoods to feel that they have something in common.

An irreproachable democracy is one that prevents the poison that is extremism from spreading to the hearts of all those who suffer from anger or who feel excluded.



An irreproachable democracy is not a democracy where appointments are decided in collusion among old friends, but rather by merit. It is one where the State is impartial. On this I will not compromise. Moreover, these nominations should be ratified by vote of the relevant parliamentary commissions. The will of the Prince is not compatible with the irreproachable Republic. An irreproachable democracy is not a democracy where the executive is everything and the Parliament is nothing. It is a democracy where the Parliament monitors the executive and its actions.

An irreproachable democracy is a President who explains himself before Parliament. It is the President who governs. It is the President who takes responsibility. We do not elect a referee but a leader who will tell us before he acts and who acts after he tells us his will!

An irreproachable democracy is not one where judicial independence is confused with the irresponsibility of judges. It is one where judges are as responsible as any other citizen for the mistakes they make. At the very least the mishap of "Outreau" should serve some purpose.

An irreproachable democracy is one where the government lays out the penal policy and where the people participate in judicial decisions. I hope that juries decide correctional matters as they have already done and in keeping with established process.

An irreproachable democracy is one that is tough on crime but treats the convicted with dignity. I want our prisons to be renovated, as many of them are not fit for France.

Our democracy does not require a new constitutional revolution. We change too often our constitution. We must stop saying that it is good and then propose new modifications every trimester. But we must radically change our behaviour in order to aspire towards impartiality, equality, honesty, responsibility and transparency.

An irreproachable democracy is not one where the top 5 national union's legitimacy and superiority over others is presumed because of their patriotic behaviour during the Second World War. It is one in which the leader proves himself by participating in the process where everyone can freely present themselves in the first round of the elections.

An irreproachable democracy is not only a French democracy; it is also a European democracy as the two share an insoluble connection. After the "no" in the referendum on the European Constitution we cannot continue to treat Europe in the same fashion. I want to be the candidate who says to those who voted "yes:" "I voted 'yes' also and, like you, I believe in a France open to the world and a Europe that allows France to be better. Like you, I think to stand still while others advance would be deadly." But I want to say that it would be even more deadly to judge those who voted "no" instead of attempting to understand them. I want to remind those that voted "yes" that the France which wins will lose



everything if she mistakes it for a France that did not. I want to tell them that all of our destinies are connected and everything that divides France weakens France. I want to tell all those who are not afraid to hold the hands of those who are afraid of being excluded, of those who live in obsessive fear of social degradation, because no one is protected from the accidents of life, because our capacity to live together, understand each other and respect each other is our most precious right. I want to be the President of a France that tells the Europeans: "We want Europe; we want it because without it our nations will be irrelevant in the grand scheme of globalization; without it our values will not be defended; without it the shock of civilizations will become more likely and the human peril will be terrible.

I want to be President of a France that tells the Europeans: "We will not revive the European Constitution. President Giscard d'Estaing did a remarkable job, but the people have blocked it.

The urgency is to make Europe more functional by adopting through a parliamentary vote a simplified treaty. What is important is to find a new way for Europe to work in a subsidiary role, yet endowing a unified economic government. It is that of a Europe in which no one can require a State to engage in policies it is opposed to, in which no one government can prevent another from taking action.

I foresee a united Europe as a multiplier of power not as a debilitating agent, as protector not a Trojan horse bringing fiscal dumping; for action and not for suffering. I believe in a Europe like the one its founding fathers had wanted, as a voluntary community, not as a collective renunciation.

I have lived my entire life as an unapologetic Europeanist. But I would like to have the liberty to say that Europe must define its borders, and that not every country in the world has the right to become part of Europe, starting with Turkey. If we continue to grow without limits we run the risk of destroying the political European Union and I will not accept that. I believe in free exchange and in competition. But I want to stop the naïveté and the forced reciprocity in our commercial negotiations. The competition must be fair. It is not prudent to force our businesses to battle with competitors who do not respect any environmental, social or moral rules.

I want to be President of a France that tells the Europeans: "We can no longer continue with a common currency without an economic policy. We can no longer continue with a Europe that lacks any sense of community, where one country can unilaterally decide to massively overhaul its illegal immigrant policy without asking advice from the people along its open borders."

I want to be President of a France that is proud of its overseas regions which represent opportunities for our country and which have a right to develop the establishment of economic free zones.



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I want to be President of a France that tells the Europeans: "We can no longer continue to turn our backs on the Mediterranean, as it is around this sea where for the last six thousand years, reason and faith have been in dialogue and struggle. On its banks we placed man for the first time at the centre of the universe, and it is a place that once again plays an essential part in our destiny. It is there we can win or lose everything. We can have war or peace, the best parts of global civilization or the fanatics, dialogue of cultures or intolerance and racism, prosperity or misery, sustainable development or the worst ecological catastrophes."

I want to be President of a France that will tell all Mediterranean countries: "Are we indefinitely condemned to vengeance and hate? Nothing should be forgotten, but we must forge here, in this cross section of generations and civilizations, the common destiny of Europe, of the Middle East and Africa, in a relationship of equality and fraternity."

I want to be President of a France that will propose to unite the Mediterranean as it had earlier proposed to unite Europe, and who will ascribe the same ideals of this unity to relations with Europe and Turkey, relations with the Arab world, to the search for a solution to the Israeli Palestinian conflict, but also to selected immigration and the protection of free-exchange and the defence of cultural diversity.

I want to be the President of a France who tells the Europeans and Africans: "In a world where we design vast continental strategies that span hemispheres, it is vital for Europe to create a Euro-African strategy in which the Mediterranean is pivotal."

I want to be President of a France that tells America: "We are friends and France will remain loyal to this friendship that history, civilization, and the values of liberty and democracy have woven between our two peoples."

I want to be President of a France that always speaks of America as a friend, who always tells it the truth and who knows how to say no when it is wrong, to say no when it violates the rights of nations or the rights of people which it contributed so much to create, when it acts unilaterally, when it wants to Americanize the world while it used to always defend the liberty of people.

I want to tell America that I believe in cultural plurality, not in America's culture being the only in the world.

I want to be President of a France that addresses America as one free society to another in a spirit of mutual understanding and respect.

I want to be President of a France that never digresses from its independence or values. I want to pay homage to Jacques Chirac, who made France proud by opposing the ill-conceived war in Iraq.



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I want to be President of a France that treats its defence capacity with the highest regard in line with the eminent role it wants to continue to play in the global scene. I want to be President of a France of human rights. Every time a woman is tortured in the world, France must come to her side. France, if I am chosen as President, would come to the defence of the condemned Bulgarian nurses in Libya. It will come to the defence of those women who risk being stoned if they commit adultery. I will come to the defence of those persecuted who are required to wear burkas, to the defence of those forced into arranged marriages, to the defence of those whose brothers will not allow them to wear a skirt.

To the defence of the exploited or enslaved child.

I do not believe in "Realpolitik" in which values are ignored in order to make deals. I do not accept what is going on in Chechnya, in Darfur. I do not accept the fate of dissidents in many countries. I do not accept the suppression of journalists. To be silent is to be an accomplice. I do not want to be the accomplice of any dictator in the world.

I want to be President of a France who will tell all people: "We can no longer continue to destroying our planet. We can no longer sacrifice the well-being of future generations as a result of our excess today. It is the future of humanity we are playing with. It is world peace that is in danger. Because if we continue with global warming and the wasting of resources, pollution will begin to displace people and cause wars that will be more horrific than any others because these wars will be over water and hunger, and we will be at our most desperate.

We have believed we were entering a world of abundance. Yet it is the world of scarcity that we will need to prepare our children for, and scarcity begets violence.

The globalization of the economy will not offer new hope for the deprived as much as if sustainable development and international cooperation become imperative for all humanity.

I want to be the President of a France who sets an example for the world as the country that enlists its youth to assist in development, that invests in its own technology and new forms of energy, that reduces its waste, that transitions from a society of excess to one of moderation.

Globalization requires us to reinvent ourselves, to think constantly about others and not only about ourselves.

I want to be the President of a united France.

I want to unify France through action. I want this unity to be like a Renaissance. After May 1968, Georges Pompidou said: "The world needs a new Renaissance". The Renaissance was a time when people thought anything is possible.

Everything seemed possible to men of the Renaissance. Everything seemed possible to those of the Enlightenment, those of the Revolution, and those of the Glorious 30 years.



As long as the world is changing at a previously unimaginable pace, as long as astounding forces of creation are at work everywhere, as long as men everywhere compete to invent, to create, to stop misery, to try and build a new world, we cannot be immobile, we cannot respond to a world that invites us to join in this commitment to change by saying: "To what end?"

This is the country that invented the idea of progress, that one day announced to the world:

"Happiness is a new idea"; the country that was the first to say to mankind: "You have absolute rights"; the country that with liberty passed on a multi-secular pact to the rest of the world; the country that is so often in the forefront of civilizations. Today we seem to have lost this belief, this conviction that destines us to accomplish big things and enlighten humanity. A doubt has instilled itself that, little by little, is beginning to grow, little by little is stunting the confidence that gives power to strong nations. This terrible doubt is what we must fight against, so that in art, in science, in the economy, in every part of life, something new emerges, so that everywhere our intelligence and human accomplishment are actively participating in creating fertile ground for our future.

I want to be the President of a France that will understand that future innovation will come from a blending, an openness, or an encounter. Whether it is from the meeting of opinions, the crossfertilization of cultures, methods and knowledge, or whether it comes from the encounter of the artist, the scholar, the engineer, the businessman, or whether it comes from the encounter of communications, economy, science, all forms of art and knowledge, of work, of innovation.

I want to be the President of a France that encourages audacity, intelligence and creation.

I want to be the President of a France that does not get stuck in its history in order to escape the future, that will not be a museum, that will learn from its past in launching itself towards the future.

My friends, the task is enormous. But it is certainly worth it.

I ask my family to help me. I know they have had to suffer. I want them to understand that it is not for me, but for France.

I ask my friends who accompanied me to this point to let me be free—free to approach others who were never my friend, who never took part in our campaign, who may have been in other political camps. Because when it comes to France, there cannot be any more divisions. I ask you all to understand that I will not only be the UMP candidate, because, now that you have elected me, I must now turn towards all of France, to those whose journey this will also be, whether from the Left or the Right, from the city or *Outre-Mer*, whether they live in France or abroad, I promise France will not disappoint those who love it. That I must bring people together and that I must convince them that, together, everything will be possible!



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Everything will be possible for France!  
Everything will be possible if you want it!  
Everything will be possible if you decide!  
Long live the Republic!  
Long live France!