

## THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC

Paris, July 26, 2007

Mr State Councillor:

Since 1994, major evolutions have impacted the international environment and the strategic assumptions of our defence and security policy: the 9/11 attacks, the rise of new regional centres of power, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, effects of globalisation and of technological evolution. In parallel the professionalisation of our armed forces and the end of conscription have led to radical evolutions of our defence. As a result, the time has come to make choices which will be decisive for the defence of our country, and which will have to be carried out in the next Military Programme Act. This Act must reinforce the credibility of our defence whilst taking into account the financial constraints weighing on the State.

In order to take full account of these parameters in a coherent approach, I have decided to launch a thorough review of our overall defence policy. This should lead to the production of a new White Paper. This work will be carried under the aegis of a Commission which I have decided to appoint to you as Chairman.

The White Paper shall define a global concept of defence for our country and its interests. It shall address the domains of defence and security. It shall cover the next fifteen years, with the prospect of regular updating.

You will base your review on an analysis of the new international context, from an economic and strategic point of view, and an assessment of risk and potential threats, bearing in mind the protection of our population and territory, as well as of French nationals on foreign soil, whilst ensuring the independence of our country and the preservation of its strategic interests, in the wider sense of these words.

Based on these considerations, your assessment, as well as the recommendations you will formulate, should in particular address an evolution of our alliances and of our defence agreements, and examine the conditions under which our armed forces can be engaged abroad. I expect you to focus specifically on the reinforcement of the European dimension of our defence and security policy as well as on our contribution to the security of the Atlantic Alliance as a whole.

You will examine the conditions pertaining to the credibility of our deterrent. You will assess the relevance of the format and stationing of our armed forces, the coherence of our effort in the field of intelligence, of the industrial, technological and scientific foundations of our defence capabilities, the organisation of our civil and economic defences and how to improve co-ordination with military defence, in order to ensure the effective functioning of public authorities, to develop means of combating terrorism and proliferation, and to improve prevention and management of crises. The economic and social consequences of the suggested orientations will have to be addressed. Lastly, you are requested to express recommendations for a closer involvement of Parliament in the definition and implementation of our defence policy.

Your reflection shall be free of any preconceptions. It should lead to a candid and transparent vision of the choices to be made in order to adapt our defence, to reinforce the link between the Nation and its armed forces, and to organise the evolution of our industrial and research establishment in a

national and European context. It should be based on the premise that the defence share of GDP is to be maintained around 2%.

Your work should pay due consideration to other assessments pertaining to the Overall Review of Public Policies which I have launched, and in particular to the strategic review of our weapons programmes.

You will chair a Commission widely involving a wide array of representatives of civil society, including representatives of Parliament to be appointed by the Presidents of the National Assembly and of the Senate, as well as high-ranking civil and military personnel from the administrations involved. Taking into account the priority I intend to give to European defence, I expect you to organise exchanges as appropriate with our main European partners.

The secretariat of the Commission will be ensured by the Secretary-General for National Defence. I have instructed the various ministers concerned to offer their full support and that of their administrations.

You will submit the White Paper to me by early March 2008. In the interval, I expect a progress report by the end of 2007.

Yours sincerely,

Nicolas Sarkozy