



## Quotes from Testimony

The English version of the best-selling *Témoignage* by Nicolas Sarkozy

### People

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#### On Jacques Chirac

“ I can even say without exaggeration, that I feel admiration for the qualities of Jacques Chirac. His energy, his tenacity, his strength of character in adversity, his ability to appear, and therefore to be, likeable - characteristics that are not found so often. His career has also been outstanding ... I am not a flatterer and I have no need to be one. In writing these lines I have no ulterior motive beyond expressing as well as possible how I see things. ”

#### On his confrontation with Jacques Chirac

“ No doubt sometimes things went a bit far. I'm happy to admit that I had my share of responsibility for some of the confrontations, which would have been improved for being less violent. ”

#### On differences with Jacques Chirac

“ Different things annoy us. For him it is liberalism, the Americans, certain business leaders and people who do not share his ideas on Europe, who are classified very quickly as irresponsible and incompetent. For me it is lack of consistency, dithering about, and unfulfilled promises, the refusal to see France as she is and conventional thinking. Even in our ways of delivering speeches the difference is clear. He recites speeches that have been revised at length with his advisers. He knows how to generate enthusiasm. I deliver my contributions that I have laboriously written by hand, seeking to convince people rather than inflame them. ”

#### On his relationship with Jacques Chirac

“ Many of those who call themselves his friends have caused him far more trouble than I ever will. Even so I am not on that list. I have accepted it once and for all. It is a fact, I have decided to live with it. ”

#### On his support for Edouard Balladur that caused the break with Jacques Chirac

“ What a business! ”

#### On his relationship with Cécilia, his wife

“ I have been much criticised for wanting to put our relationship in the public eye. I understand this criticism and I do not in any way wish to minimise my responsibilities; But I want to make people understand that there was no 'mise en scène' it was all sincere and true. ”

#### On breaking with Cécilia

“ By the time I realised that I had exposed Cécilia too much, the harm was already done: too much pressure, too many attacks, not enough attention on my part. At the time our relationship gave way. And then there was uproar. Everything happened... ”

#### On his relationship with Cécilia today

“ Today Cécilia and I are back together for good, for real, without doubt for ever. ”

#### On Dominique de Villepin and the Clearstream Affair

“ One may wonder what interest a man like Dominique de Villepin found in meeting them [Gregorin, Lahoud and Rondot]. ”

#### On Lionel Jospin's presidential campaign in 2002

“ ...what a strange idea for Lionel Jospin to kick off his presidential campaign by asserting that his programme was not socialist. Clearly his voters got the

message 100% - in not voting for him! If that was the plan, it was a triumph...  
”

## Foreign

## affairs

### **On learning from other countries**

“ Our public debate is not sufficiently influenced by what others are doing: their successes, their ideas, and their setbacks. I have often wondered about the origin of our propensity to try everything that does not work and to frighten ourselves with everything that works for others. We would have so much to learn from the Danes, the Spanish, the English, the Germans and even...yes, the Americans. ”

### **On the United States**

“ I admire the social mobility of American society. You can start with nothing and be exceptionally successful. You can fail and be allowed a second chance. Merit is rewarded. Society is less hidebound than in France. You are not instantly judged by the way you say hello or how your name sounds. On the other hand I am in no way tempted by the American social model. Social protection there is inadequate and unequal. I do not accept that you should receive less health care, or none at all, because you are poor; that you can live in perpetual fear of illness because you have no health cover. ”

### **On British people buying houses in France**

“ Do we ask ourselves why the English buy our houses in the Dordogne and the Périgord, in the Lubéron, in Savoy and in many other regions? ... I have nothing against the English, who are our friends, but it is not my ambition that the most beautiful villages of France become holiday resorts reserved for the British. ”

### **On globalisation**

“ I am fighting for humane globalisation - meaning the globalisation that promotes the freeing and the progress of man and rejects what enslaves him. Globalisation is a unique opportunity for the widespread promotion of respect for the rights of man and democracy, to make knowledge available to all and to allow millions of men and women to achieve economic development. Too often we forget this. However, it can - and should - be condemned when it results in child labour or the subjection of men and women to a hellish work rate for miserable wages and without any rights. It should be condemned when it forces thousands of people to take to the brutal highways of illegal immigration. It should be condemned when it leads to the pillaging of ideas. It should be condemned when it neglects environmental concerns - when it forgets that the cost of an item is not just its production but equally the environmental damage caused by its manufacture and transport. I hope that the commercial negotiations at the World Trade Organisation take into account the social laws and environmental considerations, in the countries that are our competitors. I also believe that the price of goods ought to reflect the environmental cost of the tonnage of CO2 emitted in their manufacture and transport. However, to convince our partners of the attractiveness, the necessity and the feasibility of humane globalisation - an important project for France - we must embrace globalisation. We must accept the best of it so as to fight the worst of it, rather than behave like the Gauls in their village surrounded by besieging Romans (and conveniently forgetting that the Gauls were only victorious in Asterix ). ”

### **On changing the right to veto within the European Union**

“ Only a majority voting rule can end the slowness of a process of decision making that is incompatible with the speed of reaction required...Countries that do not want to change their legislation should be free to stay as they are; but the countries that want to move less quickly should not block the others from going ahead more boldly. The increase from 15 to 25 member states has made this situation worse. ”

### **On China and human rights**

“ It would not be disrespectful to the empire, that is China, to question the Chinese about the fate of political prisoners. China is successful enough not to take offence because the world asks for explanations about her democratic shortcomings. It is possible to admire a civilisation, be enthusiastic about its recent and remarkable successes, build a solid relationship and a deep friendship and yet be clear and demanding in areas where nothing can justify silence. To remain silent is to be an accomplice. ”

### **On blaming globalisation and Europe**

“ Even so it is still possible for political leaders to take action and we must stop hiding behind such excuses to justify doing nothing. Globalisation, Europe, our international obligations in no way rule out political action. ”

### **On the United Nations**

“ The reform of the Security Council of the United Nations, amongst international topics, is something that has to happen. I am convinced that the present limited number of permanent members cannot continue. To assure world stability, how can we exclude countries as important as India, Brazil, Japan, South Africa, and of course Germany? It is very much in our interests to demand and support this reform to avoid suffering from it because I believe it is inevitable. ”

## **Domestic policy**

### **On the social integration of young people from immigrant families**

“ American affirmative action is an experiment that can inspire us. ”

### **On stability**

“ In 27 years Great Britain has had three prime ministers; France has had 12. This figure is deeply shocking and demonstrates the vanity of our claims about the stability of our institutions. ”

### **On French people leaving France**

“ London has become the seventh largest French city. She ceaselessly sucks in thousands of young French people, who set up there - including my own daughter, as if it was easier to succeed there than at home. Or worse, as if to succeed here has become so shameful that a young person wanting to get on is obliged to leave. ”

### **On power and democracy**

“ Unlike Great Britain, which remains the model for representative democracy, France has always had difficulty in balancing the different centres of power ... fundamentally France is not a very liberal country in the political sense of the word. She does not have that British passion for seeking the highest level of liberty and independence possible for her citizens. The British expect the law to guarantee the maximum of liberty to the people. The French expect the law to solve the problems of society. ”

### **On the French social model**

“ To sum up, we display the characteristics of the Anglo-Saxon countries in terms of inequality and poverty - without their social mobility and full employment, and the characteristics of the Scandinavian countries in terms of high social security charges and the level of public expenditure - but with the addition of unemployment and deficits. We combine the disadvantages of the two systems without having the advantages. The French social model efficient? French people no longer think so. ”

### **On the presidential election 2007**

“ The truth is that the presidential election will be a photo finish, 50 - 50, with a close Left Right balance. Winning means avoiding mistakes, taking the most risks without arousing antagonism, being the most imaginative without being frightening, showing the greatest desire to convince, whilst at the same time being the candidate who most unites people. ”

### **On the 35-hour week**

“ It will never be possible to stress enough the evil that the 35 hour week has done to our country. How can we retain this mad idea that by working less, we will produce more wealth and create jobs? ”

### **On money**

“ Our problem with money goes much further. We are witnessing a double phenomenon of demonisation and deification. For some, money is only corruption. Corruption of sport, politics, of life in general. It buys everything, transforms everything and destroys everything. François Mitterand cleverly capitalised on the theme of 'evil money'. For others, money is the expression of happiness. Making everything possible, offering everything, making everything

easy. Its quest ending by becoming an obsession. These two extreme and not necessarily contradictory attitudes, translate into an unease regarding material success. Instead of being an example and something to copy, material success is very often thought of as suspect, strange and finally illegitimate. ”

#### **On free trade**

“ To believe in free trade does not stop me from thinking that the liberal economy needs regulation, standards, and constraints, such as labour laws, a minimum salary, trade union law and rules about the representation of employees, laws protecting consumers, and competition law so that free trade serves humanity rather than the other way round. ”

#### **On politicians**

“ The primary mission of a politician remains to give new hope by showing that it is possible to affect the course of events. So the impossible becomes possible and the inevitable not certain at all. ”

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