



CHRISTOPHE DE MARGERIE

Chairman and CEO of Total

This evening I will be talking about the work of a company like Total in a conflict zone. It's an important subject: how do you manage a company like Total, an industrial business, which has high stakes in terms of investments and big problems with acceptability, when it has to supply energy to as many people as possible? Often working in countries which aren't always easy. I would have translated what Thierry de Montbrial said as follows: "How do you manage to work in a difficult, often intolerant, environment?" And perhaps also, why? Why: because that's where it's happening and so that's where we need to be. Can the experiences of companies like Total contribute something? The answer is yes.

I am speaking here about Total – which I shy away from doing, anyone who knows me knows that, especially in the Group – because it is legitimate to bring up this subject. We are present in 130 countries around the world, in some of which we have spent several decades in exploration and production. Not all of these countries are democratic. These countries are not so straightforward, especially in terms of safety and security. But at the same time, that's where it's happening.

Sometimes we are made to understand that it's not good for us to be present in certain countries. And yet the same reproach is not directed at tourists or politicians who go to these areas. So I don't understand why oil companies can't do so. I don't see why we can't do what others do. Even though we're there to supply power to our customers, our consumers, whether they are French or not. Incidentally, if I may make an aside — if I only had one message to pass on tonight, it would be this: let's stop the contradictions, at least in the same sentence. Leaders, wherever you may be, be consistent. You can't ask us to supply power, provide growth and invest while at the same time punishing those who receive money from these investments. Similarly, people keep saying that we need to do away with fossil fuels, while at the same time asking for more power, the majority of which can only be fossil-based.

So, after this digression, let's return to the subject of my speech: how do you work in high-risk countries, where there are considerable difficulties? How do you make sure that a responsible company like Total, which supplies oil, gas and now renewable energies, can work in these countries? Perhaps even losing money in them, which proves that responsibility is not simply linked to safety and the difficulty of working in these countries; but accepting financial losses, not because it's good, but because it happens. That's also our job.

Total has recently experienced crises in countries such as Libya, Syria and Côte d'Ivoire. Crises which have been going on for far too long and which continue, such as Iraq and Sudan. In areas where it is sometimes difficult to understand the – occasionally contradictory – messages of diplomats, like in Sudan. Diplomats, I ask you, what do you do when you want to help South Sudan but not North Sudan, even though it's only one country, where's the truth? What role do you want to make companies play?

Top executives, like those at Total and other companies, need to have the courage to explain that they know that the role of a politician isn't easy. But neither is ours. We have to try to put ourselves in each other's shoes. There have been other crises like Iraq, a difficult, on-going crisis. There's also Iran. There are numerous other countries in which there are problems relating to safety and security: problems for our employees, whether they are – and this is important – French or European or any other nationality. Total's staff come from every country in which we are present. All Total's employees are part of the company. That is really important, because it's the real sign that we're in the same world.

I'm going to stop listing the countries where we have problems, they're the majority. What does this list mean? That it can happen anywhere, but at the same time, that things can change. That we can go through crises such as sanctions, like in Burma, and still manage to make things happen.



It's true that Total is present in many countries, that it isn't easy. Officially, I always say that Total doesn't do politics. Total doesn't do politics, but is completely affected by political issues, because as soon as there is oil, as soon as there is gas, as soon as there is revenue, as soon as there is money, there are problems. But there is no such thing as the "curse of oil". It's not the curse of oil, it's the curse of poorly-managed money. Oil is power, it's useful and necessary and it's certainly not a curse. And you mustn't confuse oil money with the utility of oil.

One last message: it's true that it's difficult, for a company like ours, to have 110,000 people in countries which are, of course, nice, but complicated. We have to prioritise the protection of men and women, women and men, and of our plants. Occasionally, as in Yemen today, we wonder if we can continue to apply our code of ethics, our code of conduct which says: if we can't guarantee safety, we have to leave. And if anyone really thinks that Total's policy is based solely on shareholders and dividends, they are sorely mistaken. They should consider all our teams around the world, of every religion, every nationality, who struggle so that you have, as today, light.

Tonight, I want to say to them: thank you. It's not just Total's employees, there are many others. Thank you all the same for doing what you can, and we executives, for trying to do what is acceptable. For making sure that it's cleaner, produces fewer greenhouse gases and is easier to accept. And for making a link with what I said in Marrakech: "Long live real democracy, which respects people, consistency and not just the politically correct". Thank you.