



UNITED STATES MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

USUN PRESS RELEASE # 239(05)
December 12, 2005

Office of Press and Public Diplomacy
United States Mission to the United Nations
140 East 45th Street
New York, N.Y. 10017

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Remarks by Ambassador John R. Bolton, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, on the Mehlis Report and the Assassination of Mr. Tueni, at the Security Council Stakeout, December 12, 2005

Ambassador Bolton: Can I just say something first for everyone who's here? We're very pleased with the Presidential Statement (S/PRST/2005/61) that the Security Council has just adopted. I think it shows as with the Lebanese people the Security Council will not be intimidated by these terrorist acts. You undoubtedly have seen that President Bush and Secretary Rice have also issued statements. Significantly their statements and the statement adopted by the Security Council President all refer to Mr. Tueni as a patriot, as a Lebanese patriot, and the Security Council refers specifically to his important role in defending Lebanese sovereignty and political independence and freedom. We will now proceed to the next step in our deliberation of this subject tomorrow with the briefing by Commissioner Mehlis. I've previously addressed our preliminary view of the Mehlis Commission report (S/2005/775). I don't really have anything to add to that. I'd be available to take one or two questions.

Reporter: (inaudible)

Ambassador Bolton: I'm confident that we will accede to the request of the government of Lebanon to extend the life of the Commission for 6 months. As you know we've been actively seeking Mr. Mehlis' successor for when he leaves the Commission. Obviously once the Commission's life is formally extended for 6 months the imperative of finding a well-qualified successor as soon as possible is right at the top of the agenda.

Reporter: (inaudible)

Ambassador Bolton: Well, there are actually other parts of the Mehlis report that I didn't read that also go to their not just continued lack of cooperation but obstruction of justice. And it's simply not enough to cooperate just a little bit and pretend that meets the requirements of Resolution 1636. Now what precise steps we'd consider have not yet been decided, but there's no ambiguity here to me that Syria isn't in full compliance.

Reporter: (inaudible) any connection between the Hariri assassination and the assassination of Mr. Tueni today and the fact that he had been a witness mentioned in the first Mehlis report as passing along threats that Mr. Hariri had said the Syrian President had made to him?

Ambassador Bolton: Well, I think that to the extent that anyone stands up for Lebanese sovereignty and is killed by terrorist assassination you have to assume that that is at least a part of the basis for which that assassination was carried out. I think President Bush's statement speaks specifically to what we believe about the nature of the assassination. I don't want to go beyond that at this point.

Reporter: (inaudible)

Ambassador Bolton: We have made no decisions on what we're going to do. We are still reviewing the Mehlis Commission report and of course we want to hear what the Commissioner has to say tomorrow. We'll probably have some questions to ask of the Commissioner. I'll be meeting with him tomorrow morning; he'll be meeting with other members of the Security Council. So we need to have a chance to evaluate the report fully and hear his briefing tomorrow before we make those kinds of decisions. Thank you very much.