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Joint Statement
Richard Boucher, Spokesman
Washington, DC
May 2, 2005

Joint United States - France Statement on Lebanon

Following is the text of a joint United States – France statement on Lebanon.

BEGIN TEXT:

Lebanon is a sovereign, independent state that aspires to freedom and democracy. The United States and France, together with the rest of the international community, pledged in Resolution 1559 to stand with Lebanon in fulfilling these aspirations. We support the extension of the sole and exclusive control of the Government of Lebanon over all Lebanese territory, and stand ready to assist in this. We expect the full implementation of all provisions of the Resolution. We expect all parties to cooperate fully to this end within the ongoing political process.

The UN Secretary-General's report on the implementation of Resolution 1559 notes Syria's announced withdrawal of its troops and intelligence apparatus. A UN team is now in Lebanon to verify the completion of this withdrawal. The end of any residual Syrian presence or continued interference in Lebanon is necessary to establish a balanced and equitable relationship between the two countries.

France and the United States also expect the immediate implementation of Resolution 1595 establishing an international commission of inquiry to investigate the assassination of Mr. Hariri and the other murdered Lebanese citizens. We expect the parties concerned to cooperate fully to uncover the truth. The commission must deploy to Lebanon soon in order to properly investigate this terrorist attack.

We welcome the formation of a new Lebanese government which has pledged to hold free and fair democratic elections beginning at the end of May in accordance with the constitution and using a balloting method accepted by all parties. We welcome the Lebanese government's acceptance of UN technical assistance to prepare for the upcoming parliamentary elections and we expect the Lebanese authorities to invite an independent international team of observers to monitor the entire electoral process itself. The international community is ready to assist in this effort.

France and the United States stand ready to respond to requests for assistance by a sovereign and democratic Lebanese government formed as a result of the forthcoming elections.

END TEXT.

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