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## Remarks After the United Nations Security Council Session

### Secretary Condoleezza Rice

UN Headquarters  
New York City  
October 31, 2005

(1:20 p.m. EST)

**SECRETARY RICE:** Good afternoon. I'll make a very brief statement and then take a couple of questions.

The Security Council has just passed unanimously a very good resolution concerning the Mehlis report and the importance of continuing that investigation so that truth and justice can be done for the Lebanese people in bringing the perpetrators to justice of the intolerable assassination of Prime Minister Rafik Hariri.

The resolution is a very good resolution that first and foremost compels Syrian cooperation with the Mehlis Commission, cooperation that to this date has not been forthcoming. The Mehlis interim report made very clear that the Syrians have not been cooperating.

Secondly, the resolution tells the Syrians in no uncertain terms -- very strong language -- that they should not interfere in Lebanese affairs in any way. That is a warning to Syria about interference in Lebanese affairs.

And third, it allows the Council to come back to consider further action should that be necessary, should Syria not comply.

We were very pleased that this resolution could be adopted unanimously. It sends a very strong signal to Syria of its isolation, but of course that signal was simply reinforced by the really unbelievable tirade of Syria's Foreign Minister, Mr. al-Shara, which showed that the Syrians were intent on going to some length to try and discredit the Mehlis investigation after there had been a vote which clearly welcomed the Mehlis investigation, an independent investigation. It was a tirade that made the most bizarre connection of what had happened to Rafik Hariri with somehow the U.S. Government position on 9/11, the British position at the time of the July 7 bombings, and the Spanish position at the time of the March 3rd bombings. At one point, Mr. -- Dr. Shara said that there had been a kind of strange presentation. Well, this was a truly strange presentation.

And finally, I would just note that Dr. Shara himself has been noted by the Mehlis Commission of not having cooperated and, in fact, having provided false statements through his ministry's letter to the Commission. So obviously, there is work to be done, but this is a very clear signal to the Syrian Government that their activities are being noted and that they really must now give full cooperation to the Lebanese Government -- to the Mehlis Commission.

**QUESTION:** Madame Secretary.

**SECRETARY RICE:** Yes.

**QUESTION:** You focused today on the resolution and the Mehlis investigation, but you've also been talking about Syrian noncompliance with 1559, and you have the Terje Roed-Larsen report. Is the U.S. prepared to put forth any further measures to hold Syria accountable for some of the other things that you've been criticizing it for lately?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, we wanted to concentrate on the Mehlis report because Mehlis has until December 15th to complete his investigation and we wanted to make certain that that work could get done and so it made sense to work on the Mehlis investigation. But I am certain that there will be consideration of Terje Roed-Larsen's report and the lack of progress that has been noted there on several aspects of 1559.

I would also note that the Quartet, just a couple of days ago, took a statement that told the Syrians to take all measures so that their territory could not be used for terrorist activities and told them to shut down the offices of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

So Syria's destabilizing behavior in the region is being noted in many ways and I am certain that if it is necessary for the Council to get back together, we will do so.

**QUESTION:** You weren't Secretary about three years ago. About three years ago, the divorce between the French Government and your government in the Security Council could not have been more complete. Beyond letting justice be done in Lebanon now, how far do you expect this alliance with the French to go now?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, we and the French have had excellent cooperation on this matter and many others, including work that we have done together in Afghanistan. I might note, too, that on this particular matter, which is 1559 and Mehlis, we've had the closest possible cooperation.

We had a disagreement about whether or not it was time to hold Saddam Hussein accountable for his acts and for his failure to carry out his obligations under the multiple resolutions that had been passed by the Security Council. But when I talk to my French colleagues, they recognize the importance of a stable and democratic Iraq. They want to contribute to that stable and democratic Iraq, and I am sure we will cooperate on that and many other measures as well.

Last one.

**QUESTION:** What do you say to Arab public opinion, who see this latest UN report as yet another attempt by the UN Security Council, notably the U.S., to tighten the noose on another sovereign Arab country? And do you consider that the passage of this resolution under Chapter 7 gives the U.S. the authority to use force unilaterally, as was the case in Iraq?

**SECRETARY RICE:** What Chapter 7 -- this Chapter 7 resolution is very explicit in what it means, which is that Syria must cooperate with the Mehlis report and then, if necessary, the Council can come back and consider other measures or other action, I think is the way that it's phrased. That is what we take from this report and that is what we intend to live by.

In terms of your first question, I would just note that what the Mehlis report is talking about is what potentially -- and I want to emphasize potentially because this is an interim report -- but potentially the security forces of one state participated in the assassination of a prime minister of another state. And I might just note, Lebanon, of course, is a state with a mixed population but, of course, a part of the Arab world traditionally. So this is not against Arabs.

I would also note that Syria's activities have been noted in the Quartet's statement for the difficulty that it is causing for the Palestinian Authority, as the Palestinians try and build an independent state to live side by side with Israel.

And of course, it has been noted that there are problems on the Syrian-Iraqi border that are allowing the ingress of terrorists who are killing Iraqi people.

So this is not anyone against Arab states. This is holding Syria accountable for activities that are indeed frustrating the aspirations, not to mention the safety, of the Lebanese people, the Iraqi people, and the Palestinian people.

Thank you very much.  
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