



## Remarks on Syria/Lebanon

**Ambassador John R. Bolton, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations**

Remarks at the Security Council Stakeout

New York City

January 23, 2006

**AMBASSADOR BOLTON:** Well, we're very pleased with this Presidential Statement. It is a clear delineation of Syria's failure to comply with many significant aspects of Resolution 1559 the Presidential Statement lists them. I won't go through them, but the failure to disarm the Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias, the failure to allow free and fair Presidential elections, the continued terrorist attacks. I think this is a clear, unanimous signal from the Security Council on what Syria still has to do. It is important that we send this signal, and I hope in Damascus, they read it very carefully and then comply fully with Resolution 1559.

**REPORTER:** Ambassador, what message does this send to the Syrians and the Lebanese (inaudible)?

**AMBASSADOR BOLTON:** Three months, three months. There is a 25% difference.

**REPORTER:** (inaudible)

**AMBASSADOR BOLTON:** Well, I think that one explanation is that we were waiting for the Syrians to comply with Resolution 1559. But, it is important that when the Council does speak, it does so clearly, in this case, unanimously, unambiguously cataloguing a continued Syrian non-compliance. So in that sense, that's the important signal that it sends.

**REPORTER:** (inaudible) Why should any of the three parties worry? It's only a Presidential Statement; there are no teeth in it. What are you going to do about that?

**AMBASSADOR BOLTON:** Well, I think there are steps that you take in the regular order of business. I think 1559 is unambiguously clear and this is an emphasis of the Council's continued determination to have 1559 complied with. And I think that's why the Syrians need to take it very seriously. In terms of priority, that's not a list, there are other things as well: exchange of ambassadors, demarcation of the border that 1559 requires as well. I think the free and fair election of the president is one that we are paying particular attention to, but the question of the continued acts of terrorism and the arming of militias remains important as well.

**REPORTER:** (inaudible) push this back to the forefront.

**AMBASSADOR BOLTON:** Well, I think the people of Lebanon have benefited from free and fair elections for their Parliament. I think they are entitled to it for all of the elective offices of government.

**REPORTER:** (inaudible)

**AMBASSADOR BOLTON:** I think that it was clearly the result of manipulating the Lebanese Constitution, but I am not a Lebanese constitutional scholar. I think that is one reason why the statement makes it very clear that the election of the next president should be pursuant to constitutional procedures that are not unduly influenced by foreign pressure. It ought to be a Lebanese decision about a Lebanese President.

**REPORTER:** (inaudible) now the Security Council is taking this issue very seriously, how seriously?

**AMBASSADOR BOLTON:** Well, I think there is not an infinite amount of patience here with the Syrians to comply with the unambiguous provisions of 1559 or, while we are on the subject, 1595 and subsequent resolutions. Syrians have a lot of things that they are obligated to do by the terms of these resolutions and that's why the Security Council has returned, in this case, to their non-compliance with 1559. I think that's what seriousness means. This is a responsibility of the Security Council, to send messages to the governments involved, particularly the non-compliant governments, particularly the government of Syria. That's why we undertook this step. That's why we think it is so important.

**REPORTER:** Is there a deadline for their compliance? And if so, after that deadline, what happens next?

**AMBASSADOR BOLTON:** No, there is no deadline in this Presidential statement.

**REPORTER:** What would happen next?

**AMBASSADOR BOLTON:** Next, I am waiting for the sound of Syrian compliance.

**REPORTER:** Some members of the Council have argued in the past (inaudible)?

**AMBASSADOR BOLTON:** Legitimate political parties are not armed.

**REPORTER:** (inaudible)

**AMBASSADOR BOLTON:** Well, a lot of this has to do with continuing steps by the government of Lebanon to take control of the territory of the country, to restore full sovereignty, and that means one legitimate source of political and military authority, and that's part of what they have to undertake.

**REPORTER:** (inaudible) the demarcation of the border mentioned in the Presidential Statement is something (inaudible)? We know that the Syrian

government does not welcome the demarcation of borders, are they in violation of 1559 because they do not accept the demarcation of borders (inaudible)?

**AMBASSADOR BOLTON:** Why don't we say they are pending compliance at this point. I mean they've got an opportunity. They should undertake it, they are obligated to do it and we expect that they will.

**REPORTER:** On the question of the Ivory Coast, could you give us an update? Are you expecting to see sanctions soon?

**AMBASSADOR BOLTON:** Well, we are following through on the decision of last week and I would expect we would be moving fairly quickly on that. Okay, thank you very much.

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