



## THE WHITE HOUSE

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

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For Immediate Release  
Office of the Press Secretary  
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### Statement by the Press Secretary

Today, the Lebanese parliament acted to amend its constitution so that the current president can remain in office beyond the end of his term. This was not a victory for Lebanese democracy. The vote does not reflect the will of the Lebanese people. It was forced upon them by an occupying force. Syria clearly demonstrated its disregard for Lebanon's sovereignty by summoning key Lebanese leaders to Damascus on short notice and decreeing that the Lebanese constitution would be amended. Other Lebanese officials were pressured, threatened, and intimidated. The Syrian action is in direct contradiction to UNSCR 1559, which was co-sponsored by the United States and France, and approved by the Security Council on September 2, 2004.

Leading religious figures of numerous faiths in Lebanon have publicly spoken out against Syria's interference in Lebanon's presidential elections. This manipulation of Lebanese institutions by outside forces will remain on the international agenda, and UNSCR 1559 calls on Secretary General Annan to report back to the Council in 30 days on this mockery of democracy. The United States adds its voice to the protests of Lebanese patriots, and condemns this interference with Lebanese sovereignty and independence.

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