



# American Lebanese Coalition

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## Press Release

New York Friday, April 28, 2006

### The American Lebanese Coalition (ALC) at the United Nations

A delegation from the ALC headed by its President Dr. Joseph Gebeily and including Vice presidents Joseph Hage and Milad Zohrob, ALC Board members Dr. Elie Semaan and Mr. Adel Sleiman and ALC UN Liaison Officer Mr. Fadi Farhat visited the United Nations headquarters in New York on Tuesday April 25<sup>th</sup>.

The delegation met with members of the UN Security Council and the UN Secretariat General to discuss the situation in Lebanon, the follow-up on the implementation of UNSCR 1559 and other resolutions regarding Lebanon, in addition to the proposed measures to be taken to guarantee Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence.

The ALC delegation visited first the Secretary General's office to discuss the report by Mr. Terje Roed-Larsen to be presented to the Security Council, and the subsequent steps to be taken in order to move on the pending issues mentioned in the report.

Then, at the United Kingdom Mission, First Secretary Mr. Nick Williams, met with the ALC delegation who briefed him on the current situation in Lebanon and discussed the issues that remain deadlocked, both domestically and across the border.

Following that, the ALC visited the Mission of the Slovak Republic. Mission Diplomats, Secretaries Marcel Babicz and Peter Agha, welcomed the delegation and affirmed their country's unambiguous support for the sovereignty and democracy of Lebanon and their rejection of any meddling by one country in the internal affairs of a neighboring country. Specifically, the Slovak government supports the Lebanese position regarding delineating of the border with Syria and establishing diplomatic relations between Lebanon and Syria.

The ALC delegation then had an important meeting at the US Mission with the political team: Ambassador John Bolton, along with Ambassador Jackie Sanders Political Affairs Adviser Melvin Ang and Special Adviser to Ambassador Bolton Mr. Mark Groombridge. Number of issues impacting the situation in Lebanon was debated.

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Ambassador Bolton, a staunch supporter of Lebanon's sovereignty and independence is seeking the cooperation and commitment of all Security Council members to draft plans for the short-term and long-term stability of Lebanon.

At the Russian Federation's Mission, Deputy Permanent Representative Konstantin Dolgov and Counselor Gleb Desyatnikov reiterated to the ALC delegation the Russia's commitment for a free and sovereign Lebanon. The Russians stand behind UNSCR 1559, recognize the importance of the national dialogue, support the international investigation into Prime Minister Hariri's assassination but without politicizing the inquiries, and hope that the Lebanese-Syrian differences be solved in an amicable way.

The Greek's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Mr. Adamantios Vassilakis expressed his government's support for the stability and prosperity of Lebanon. He said that Greece will always stand by the will of the Lebanese people, who share long-term friendly relations with the Greeks. The ALC delegation expressed its appreciation for the Greek support.

The next important stop was at the French Permanent Mission. First Secretary Mr. Ludovic Pouille addressed the needed actions to be taken to help stabilize Lebanon politically and economically. France has been working consistently to keep Lebanon a priority on the UN agenda through UNSCR 1559, 1595 and subsequent resolutions.

The day ended at the Argentine Mission, where First Secretary Mateo Estreme expressed his country's support for implementing United Nations resolutions on Lebanon, 1559 in particular. As a staunch supporter of peace efforts throughout the world, Argentina supports the sovereignty and independence of Lebanon and calls on the Lebanese Government to extend its authority over all its territory.

The ALC delegation presented a Memo to the members of the UNSC and the Secretariat General addressing the Lebanese plight and the UN crucial role in Lebanon's recovery.

The positions of the different diplomats on the Security Council were all in support of Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and stability. They insist on the full implementation of all UNSCRs pertaining to Lebanon, starting with 1559. Many praised Mr. Terje Roed-Larsen's exhaustive and very accurate report. They deplored Syria's stalling to abide by UNSC resolutions, and to agree on delineating the Lebanese-Syrian border or on establishing diplomatic relations between Lebanon and Syria. Furthermore, Syria and Iran's involvement in the transfer of weapons and ammunitions to Lebanese and non-Lebanese militias is considered a threat to the stability of the country. The UNSC representatives recognize the importance of the national dialogue, but admit that the results still depend in many ways on the Syrian will to cooperate. The ALC also noted the esteem that the different members of the UNSC and the UNSG carry for Prime Minister Fuad Siniora, especially after his last visit and presentation to the UN.

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The ALC delegation did raise, as in every visit to the UN, the issue of Lebanese detainees in Syrian prisons. The unanimous response of all the Missions was one of dismay to such tragedy and flagrant abuse of human rights. All Missions committed their efforts to find ways through the Security Council and through human rights organizations to investigate the fate of those Lebanese in Syrian prisons.

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