

H. Res. 273

In the House of Representatives, U.S.,

May 23, 2005.

Whereas the people of the Lebanese Republic have a rich, proud, and honorable history dating from ancient times to the present;

Whereas Lebanon and the United States have enjoyed a history of friendship and cooperation which has been marked by the immigration of many Lebanese to the United States where they and their descendants have contributed greatly to the fabric of American life;

Whereas Syria has dominated the Lebanese political scene, resulting in a deterioration of Lebanon's human rights situation, the manipulation of Lebanese election results to meet Syria's requirements, and the imposition of curbs on Lebanon's media, once the freest in the Arab world;

Whereas Syria has publicly withdrawn its military forces from Lebanon, leaving behind, however, an intelligence structure;

Whereas Congress conditioned the lifting of sanctions on Damascus in the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 2003 (Public Law 108–175) upon the Government of Syria ending its occupation of Lebanon (including the complete withdrawal of intel-

ligence and all other security-related personnel in Lebanon) and upon other factors;

Whereas the international community has, through the passage of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559 (2004), reaffirmed its call for the strict respect of Lebanon's sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity, and political independence under the sole and exclusive authority of the Government of Lebanon;

Whereas there remains unresolved and as a matter of national and world concern the assassination of Rafiq al-Hariri, former Lebanese prime minister, which has justly been condemned as a terrorist act;

Whereas the international community has begun investigations into the assassination of Rafiq al-Hariri and it is the policy of the United States to urge full cooperation with the investigations;

Whereas the international community is considering further action to promote Lebanese sovereignty;

Whereas the emancipation of political prisoners and detainees held in Syrian and Lebanese prisons is a precondition for national reconciliation and a rebuilding of Lebanon's democratic institutions; and

Whereas general elections in Lebanon are scheduled to begin on May 29, 2005: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that—

- (1) Syria should complete its withdrawal of all remaining intelligence and security forces from the Leba-

nese Republic in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559 (2004);

(2) Lebanon should allow unfettered access to international monitors present for the purpose of verifying compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1559 (2004);

(3) Lebanon should hold free, fair, and transparent elections to begin on May 29, 2005, in accordance with all international standards and agreements;

(4) the United States should aid the people of Lebanon in their efforts to restore the separation of powers, the rule of law, and a proper respect for fundamental freedoms of every citizen; and

(5) it should be the policy of the United States Government to—

(A) support free and fair elections in Lebanon by encouraging international election assistance and observers;

(B) support a national dialogue that transcends sectarian divisions and urge the development of democratic institutions and safeguards to foster sovereign democratic rule in Lebanon; and

(C) call for the immediate release of all political prisoners and detainees held in Lebanese and Syrian prisons.

Attest:

Clerk.