



FRANCE

Réunion du Conseil de Sécurité

31 octobre 2005

Intervention prononcée par S. E. M. Philippe Douste-Blazy
Ministre des Affaires étrangères de la France

(vérifier au prononcé)

Security Council Meeting

31 October 2005

Statement by H. E. Mr. Philippe Douste-Blazy
Minister for Foreign Affairs of France

(Check against delivery)

Mr. President,

On 14 February 2005, former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafic Hariri and 22 other people were assassinated in a cowardly terrorist attack in the heart of Beirut.

We have solemnly gathered today in this forum to reaffirm our resolve to seek the truth and punish those guilty of this heinous act.

First, on behalf of the government and people of France, I wish to pay tribute to the memory of Rafic Hariri. He embodied Lebanon's indestructible wish for independence, democracy and freedom, a wholly legitimate wish that France, linked to this country by so many ties, has consistently supported and encouraged.

The Lebanese people were deeply shocked by this tragedy which occurred at a time when Lebanon was gradually recovering its sovereignty and regaining control of its destiny. The Lebanese people, like the international community, demanded to know the full truth about this political assassination, so justice is done and there is an end to impunity.

Mr. President,

The United Nations Security Council heeded this call. By deciding unanimously to establish an international independent commission of inquiry last spring, it restored hope to an entire people.

This commission, led by Judge Detlev Mehlis, has done remarkable work under very difficult circumstances. It submitted its report to the Security Council ten days ago.

Its findings, after several months of thorough and rigorous investigation, are extremely serious. I will recall its two main ones: the first is "that there is converging evidence pointing at both Lebanese and Syrian involvement in this terrorist act"; the second is that Syria has not cooperated in good faith with the commission and is obligated to clarify a good many of the unresolved questions.

The Security Council could not remain silent in the face of findings of such seriousness. France, with the United States and United Kingdom, therefore proposed that a firm resolution recognize all the consequences of the report by the independent commission of inquiry.

I am pleased that the Security Council was able to reach an agreement on this text quickly; it has only one aim: the truth, the whole truth about Rafic Hariri's assassination in order that those responsible for it answer for their crime.

By adopting this resolution unanimously today, the Council sends three messages:

-First, and this is essential for France, a message of solidarity with the Lebanese people and government who have shown unwavering courage and determination these past months;

-We also send an important message of support to the independent commission of inquiry and its commissioner who must be able to continue their work alongside Lebanon's judicial officials under the best possible circumstances;

-Lastly, our Council makes a clear, firm and urgent appeal to Syria. The Syrian authorities must today cooperate fully with the commission so that full light is shed as quickly as possible on the attack that took the life of Rafic Hariri. The resolution has been adopted unanimously. Syria's leaders must understand that the Security Council, and through it the international community as a whole, will not tolerate anything less than immediate and complete cooperation, and that it will draw the consequences of any failure by the Syrian authorities to meet their obligations.

Mr. President,

Over eight months have passed since the cowardly and tragic assassination of Rafic Hariri and 22 other innocent people. In spite of continuing attacks and attempts at stabilization, Lebanon has stood firm. The legislative elections in June took place in freedom and transparency; the new government led by Mr. Fouad Siniora is working and moving forward; the Lebanese people, in this difficult period, have shown they are equal to their destiny; they have no intention of weakening or yielding in the face of terrorism.

It is the duty of the international community to help Lebanon at this crucial time in its history. Resolutely continuing the inquiry into the 14 February terrorist attack, revealing the truth and punishing those guilty are essential for strengthening Lebanon's sovereignty and stability. My country is convinced that the resolution we have adopted today will contribute to this.

Thank you./.