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May 12, 2006

Joseph Gebelly, MD
President
American Lebanese Coalition
4900 Leesburg Pike #203
Alexandria, Virginia 22302

Dear Dr. Gebelly,

I am honored by your invitation to the first annual commemoration of the Cedar Revolution. In my absence, please accept a few words of support as I am with you in spirit as I was a year ago when the people of Lebanon rose up against their Syrian oppressors.


The bravery of the Lebanese people finally succeeded in accomplishing what the international community had worked toward for thirty years: the removal of Syrian troops and the end of the Syrian occupation. In fact, on March 9, 2005 the Helsinki Commission, which I chair, held a hearing titled "The Russia-Syria Connection: Thwarting Democratic Development in the Greater OSCE Region." Our hearing was held in support of United Nations Resolution 1559 and all efforts to remove Syrian troops and government officials. We were able to present clear evidence of Russia's role in support of Syria, both in the Lebanese occupation and in training terrorists fighting U.S. troops in Iraq. I was thrilled when Syria withdrew its troops in April of last year, but much still needs to be done.

It is fitting that you will be presenting Ambassador John Bolton with the Cedar Shield Honor. He, above all others, has continued to fight for the Lebanese people at the United Nations. His new proposal for language that calls for the disarmament of the Iranian- and Syrian-backed Hizbollah militia in the south is needed to guarantee the sovereignty of Lebanon. It is my sincere hope that the Security Council will also recognize the need for language that goes beyond Resolution 1559.

I will continue to do all I can to assure Ambassador Bolton the support he needs in the Senate in this matter.

Congratulations to the American Lebanese Coalition on this happy day.

Sincerely,



Sam Brownback
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